

BULLETS TO BALLOTS: MAOISTS AND THE LURE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

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Executive Summary

How do insurgents give up arms and return to the same political processes that they had once sought to overthrow? A lot has been written on why men and women rebel, but we know very little about how rebels quit. This dissertation lays out the protracted process of retirement of Maoist rebels through informal exit networks that grow in the grey zones of insurgency-democracy interface in India.

Based on fine-grained fieldwork in conflict zones in North and South India, I argue that the biggest fear of retiring rebels is that they could be killed as soon as they disarmed, potentially by their former enemies, by former comrades, or by various state agencies. The state policies for surrender and rehabilitation, however, focus on post retirement livelihood provisions without addressing this apprehension of rebels that hinders retirement. During intimate conversations with the author former rebels complained that while they could possibly lose their lives after disarming, the state would not lose much if retired rebels were killed. This creates a problem of credible commitment, which, I show, is resolved locally by the informal exit networks that flourish in the shadow of grassroots associations of civic participation.

These exit networks are locally embedded. I argue that rebel retirement is exceptionally high in the South due to emergence of a harmonic exit network that weaves together multiple stakeholders in conflict zones in an amalgam of roles and alliances in a way that ensures returning rebels survive and reintegrate. In contrast, rebel retirement is low in the North due to emergence of a discordant exit network that exacerbates the fear and anxiety of retiring rebels and stifles their reintegration. I also show that emergence of a specific exit network is contingent on the social bases of insurgency, the strength of vertical and horizontal ties forged by the insurgent organization, and the everyday dynamics of democracy-insurgency interaction.

To my parents

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Professor Andrew Mertha has been very generous with his time, offering me constant advice, inspiration and criticism through the years. Andy patiently read various drafts of the dissertation and offered me incisive comments from the perspective of a comparativist who did not work on India. In addition to the intellectual engagement, I owe him a deep gratitude for providing the right mix of encouragement, plain speaking and genuine excitement through various stages of this project.

I am especially grateful to Professor Thomas B Pepinsky for steering the dissertation towards a more theoretically engaged exercise. At a time I was drowning in fieldwork details and my narrow interests in left agrarian radicalism in India, Tom pushed me to think how my research would be of interest to someone who does not study left politics in India. I remain in awe of his ability to provide prompt, detailed, insightful and sometimes devastating feedback that demanded important refinements of the arguments.

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Chapter 1: Maoists and the Lure of Democracy in India

Inquilab (Revolution) was in the air. We planted red flags in the cities and the villages. Everybody knew us. My parents were proud of me. We were neighborhood heroes. Then we went underground. No one knows us anymore. The Revolution never came.

-Retired Maoist, Hanamkonda, Warangal District, 2013¹.

1. 1 Introduction

In 2006, the government of India identified the Communist Party of India (Maoist) as the biggest internal security threat the country has ever faced.² Telangana, comprising ten districts in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, has been one of the strongest pockets of Maoist influence in India. The dominant Maoist faction in the South is *Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Peoples' War* [CPI(ML)PW], commonly referred to as PW. (S. Banerjee 1980).³ In 2004, PW merged with two other dominant Maoist factions in the North, the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) and CPI(Party Unity) (PU), to form an all-India united front CPI(Maoist). Post-unification, the Maoist party leaped into national prominence proclaiming control over continuous territory across six states now dubbed as “Red Corridor.” The Union Ministry of Home Af-

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from interviews carried out by the author in 2013 and 2014.

² Man Mohan Singh, “Focus on Good Governance, Reducing Deprivation and Alienation” during the Concluding Remarks at the Second Meeting of the Standing Committee of Chief Ministers on Naxalism, April 13, 2006, available at http://pib.nic.in/release/rel_print_page.asp?relid=17128 (accessed on November 21, 2009)

³ Telangana became a separate state in 2014, splitting from Andhra Pradesh. The Maoists have always considered political economy of Telangana very distinct from Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema, but more akin to the bordering districts of Odisha.

fairs in 2008 indicated that the Maoist movement variously affected a total of 223 Districts across 20 States in North and South India.⁴

The Maoists have grabbed national and international headlines by leading a series of brazen assaults, including beheading an inspector, hijacking a crowded passenger train, kidnapping highest ranking bureaucrats, attacking a convoy of politicians, attempting assassinations of various ruling chief ministers, slaughtering 76 officers of paramilitary counterinsurgency forces and so on. Between 2005-2015, the conflict has claimed a total approximately seven thousand lives.⁵ As the media fixated on the spectacular exploits of the Maoists, the popular insurgency started losing grounds in its strongest foothold in the South (as shown in the map below), where it had deep roots since the 1970s.

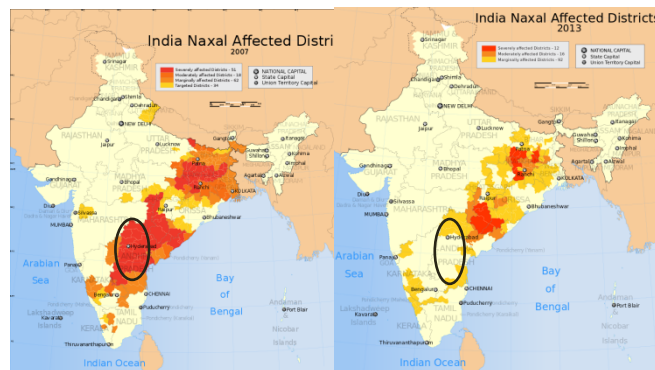


Figure 1

Maps showing decline of Maoist influence in the South

⁴ Confirming these broad trends, partial data compiled from media reports by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) shows that, measured in terms of total number of incidents, total affected Districts dropped from 194 in 2008 to just 141 in 2011. Further, 58 highly affected districts in 2008 were reduced to just 48 in the Highly Affected category in 2011; another 47 and 46 Districts, respectively, were listed in the moderately and marginally affected categories in 2011, as against 54 and 83 Districts in these categories in 2008.

⁵ The casualty is distributed as follows: of which 715 are in Andhra Pradesh, 2262 are in Chhattisgarh, 1364 are in Jharkhand and 699 are in West Bengal Data from South Asia Terrorism Portal available at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/data_sheets/fatalitiesnaxal05-11.htm (accessed on June 18, 2015)

By the time of my fieldwork in the South in 2013-14, ordinary people in most districts in Telangana region have not seen or heard of armed guerrillas visiting their villages and neighboring areas in the last five years or more. It is as if the Indian state, like a giant sponge, absorbed all upheavals in the region and fell right back in shape. The only tangible reminders of the violent uprisings are the numerous tombs that the local Maoist faction (Peoples' War, PW henceforth) had erected across the rural South to honor their dead comrades. Even these modest structures are shrouded in thorny shrubs and animal excreta, lying dilapidated by the pitch-black roads built by state governments to connect villages that were once remote. Standing by one such tomb, a tribal woman in Adilabad district said wistfully that *annalu* (the comrades, referred to as older brother in local dialect) abandoned her, just like rain and good fortune always had. I knew she had deserted her comrades too. The dream of revolution was no more.

Body bags still come to villages of the South when a local boy gets killed in neighboring states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. But Maoists there have mostly disarmed, demobilized and re-integrated back into the mainstream. These retired rebels are known as "majhi". This is a unique local honorific used to refer to former Maoists, with no comparable equivalent in any other Maoist-affected states. I found the dominant popular sentiment in the South respectful towards majhis. Ministers, activists, lawyers, poets, journalists, academics, bureaucrats, and policemen eagerly proclaimed their earlier association with Maoist politics and acknowledged how the uprising in the 70s and 80s left an indelible mark on their personal lives, political views, and public careers. Even in villages, despite initial hesitation, there were hushed admissions of how the revolutionaries gave them hope and self-confidence before they were gone. I have met retired rebels in remote villages, small towns and cities working as life insurance agent, farmer, homemaker, musician, moonshiner, tailor, doctor, auto-rickshaw (ubiquitous public transport) driver, journal-

ist, professor, politician, real estate agent, goonda (hired thug), shopkeeper, tailor, village headman (or woman) and so on. Some former Maoists have also reportedly formed killer criminal gangs.(Kumar and Balagopal 2006)

In the North, however, people were much more critical of the Maoists, and more hesitant to even talk about them. Retired rebels are scarce and them becoming a criminal, politician or both is the norm rather than the exception.⁶ In fact, I have not met any former Maoist in Jharkhand who is not plugged into a political-criminal network, one way or the other. For example, a former rebel I met in a shady roadside dance bar in the North raised my curiosity when he mentioned that his wife was, in fact, elected head (*Sarpanch*) of village self-government in *Chhatra* district. However, it turns out that the timid-looking rebel was, in fact, member of a vigilante group of former Maoists that allegedly works with police to ‘wipe out’ Maoist militancy.⁷

Every mention of Maoists invoked much fear, suspicion, patriotic indignation, and discomfort among ordinary people in the North. In villages, doors were shut on my face and some threatened to call the police. In the neighboring state of West Bengal, intellectuals, politicians, and activists offered customary lip service to the Naxal uprising in the 1960s. But revolutionaries were quickly dismissed as misguided militants indulging in youthful fantasies; retired rebels were disillusioned political turncoats seeking refuge in dominant political parties or in cushy jobs

⁶ While I met and spoke to retired rebels without any hassle in the South, it was very difficult to find them in the North. Jharkhand police gave me the names, addresses and phone numbers of rebels that they ‘encouraged’ me to talk to. But as I tried to visit villages in the North and met former Maoists who joined other armed factions (allegedly set up by police), I was ‘interviewed’ by Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers from New Delhi for several hours, requesting to discuss my notes, my research and identification papers. They knocked on my hotel door at 6 AM, and advised me to reconsider my meetings of the day. My local research assistants and drivers were also questioned.

⁷ The TPC (Tritiya Prastuti Committee) was founded in 2001 in Chatra by Brajesh Ganju, a Dalit, who had left the Maoists Communist Centre (MCC), citing the dominance of Yadavs in the party leadership and discrimination against Dalits. The TPC, which has cadres from Dalit communities including Ganju, Turi and Bokta, is active in parts of Chatra, Palamu, Latehar, Ranchi and Hazaribagh districts in Jharkhand and parts of West Bengal

in academia and nongovernment organizations. I also found that, quite counter intuitively, Maoists in the North were first arrested by the police and then convinced to ‘surrender’. In other words, rebels, already in police custody, were offered money and other incentives to enroll in the surrender and rehabilitation program. Yet there were few successful surrender cases in Jharkhand over the last ten years for them to show for all that. In Telangana, on the other hand, rebels reached out to the police through various channels from their hideouts in jungles to disarm and reintegrate into mainstream.

Summing up, rebel retirement is much higher in in the South compared to that in the North. In addition, life and livelihood of retired rebels in South is very different from their counterparts in the North. The process and pathway out of the movement in the two pockets of Maoist movement are also distinct. While retired rebels in the South experienced broad reintegration into a variety of professions in both urban and rural areas, those in the North remain entrenched in the same political-criminal network that also plagued their insurgent career. It is no coincidence that Maoist retirement is exceptionally high in the South and very low in the North.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 fleshes out the empirical puzzle that lie at the center of this thesis. Section 3 analyzes existing literature that addresses various dimensions of this puzzle and highlights the primary contribution of this thesis to this literature. Section 4 presents a brief summary of arguments presented in this thesis. Section 5 lays out the research design and provides a road map, explaining the structure and contribution of each chapter.

1.2 Rebel Retirement in India: The Empirical Puzzle

The empirical puzzle of Maoist retirement in India has three dimensions: (a) Rebel retirement is very high in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh compared to the northern states of Jharkhand and West Bengal, despite comparable movement intensity in the two regions. (b) Within Andhra Pradesh, rebel retirement is highest in the nineties, before targeted welfare measures, lucrative surrender package and efficient policing by Greyhound commando forces were introduced. (c) Within states, both in the North and the South, rebel retirement tends to concentrate in a few districts and not others. This project is centrally concerned with what this subnational variation in rebel retirement and its concentration in certain times and places tell us about the mechanisms of lure of democracy that brings extremists back into the mainstream in India. The rest of this section will lay out the data that further illustrates various dimensions of the empirical puzzle of retirement of Maoist rebels as laid out above.

1.2.1 What Sets Andhra Pradesh Apart?

The retirement of Maoist rebels is exceptionally high in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. Between 2006 and 2014, over 60 percent of the total Maoist surrenders in India are concentrated in the state of Andhra Pradesh. There were 781 surrenders in Andhra Pradesh between 2006 and 2012, compared to 142 in Bihar, 142 in Odisha, 115 in Chhattisgarh, 54 in Jharkhand and 39 in West Bengal (graph below).

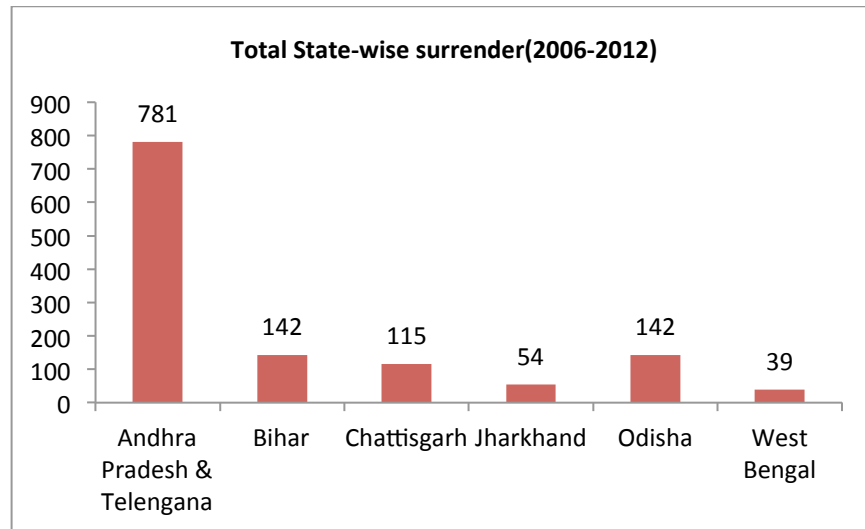


Figure 2

Maoist Retirement Across States (2006-2012)

Andhra Pradesh stands out as exceptionally successful in securing Maoist surrender not only in terms of surrender data but also in the national narrative of counterinsurgency. Data on surrender of Maoists in India are available from two sources: (a) the Naxal Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India (b) South Asia Terrorism Portal (an independent think tank based in New Delhi). The MHA has official data based on reports submitted by respective Maoist-affected states. SATP bases its estimate on media reports of surrender. The following diagram compares MHA and SATP surrender data (2006-2014).

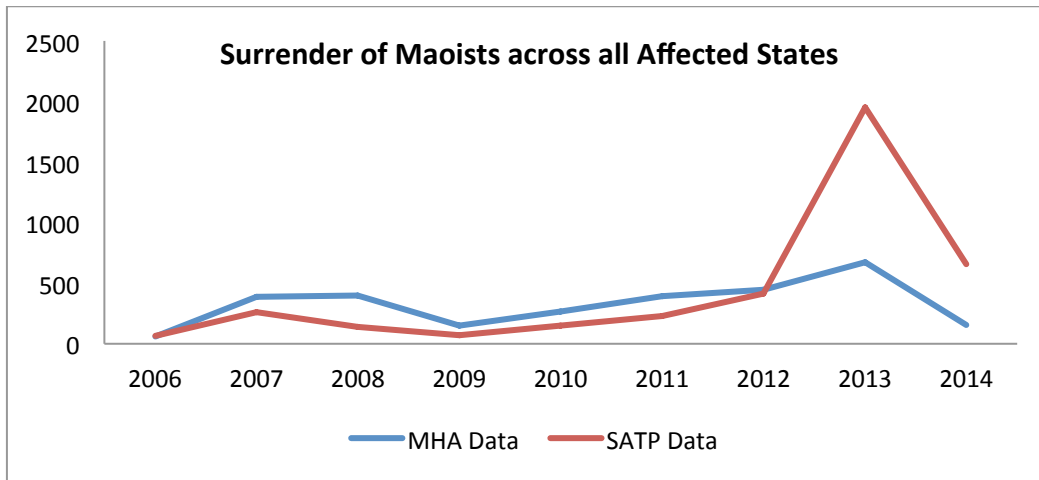


Figure 3

Aggregate Annual Rebel Retirement in India (2006-2014)

The graph above shows that between 2006-2012 there is a rough match in the surrender data drawn from two sources. The MHA data is slightly higher than the SATP data, but both data sources represent a similar yearly trend.⁸ However, SATP misreports exceptionally high number of surrender in Odisha in 2013, which spiked SATP surrender data way above MHA data. On examination of the underlying media reports that SATP used to compile this data, I found that they include *en masse* ‘surrender’ of activists of a popular tribal organization (Chasi Muliya Adivasi Sangh, CMAS), even though New Delhi does not recognize them as Maoists. These are tribals who never went underground, never trained as insurgents or joined Maoist party.⁹ SATP also misreports very high surrender in Chhattisgarh in 2014. However, subsequent media reports,

⁸ During interviews with the author, SATP data analysts explained that their dataset is built on media reports and it is possible that some surrender cases do not get reported. It is also possible that state police departments exaggerate the surrender figures while submitting their annual reports to MHA.

⁹ A very popular local Maoist leader, Sabyasachi Panda, fell out with central leadership of CPI(Maoist) during this time. He complained about Telugu domination of Odiya pride among other things. Media reports gave the impression that with Panda thousands of ordinary people also quit the Maoists in what seemed like an Odiya assertion. In fact, a closer look at the underlying media reports reveal that 1765 or total 1960 surrenders reported in Odisha in 2013 happened in one district (Koraput) between April 6 and 17 from one organization, the CMAS (*Chashi Muli Adivasi Sangha*), which is not considered a Maoist organization in policy circles. At best, it is a tribal landless agricultural workers association and the Maoists are eager to recruit them.

and my personal inquiries with local activists and journalists revealed that high numbers of surrender in Chhattisgarh in 2014 were made up for political expediency. The police allegedly orchestrated fake surrenders events, with an aim to secure political mileage for state government and seek more financial resources from New Delhi.¹⁰

However, despite discomfort over accuracy of surrender data (Odisha, 2013 and Chattisgarh, 2014), there is a consensus among politicians, bureaucrats, mediapersons and scholars that surrender of Maoists is significantly higher in Andhra Pradesh compared to all other similarly affected states.¹¹ During Annual meetings among Chief Ministers of Maoist-affected states, the prime minister of India routinely sings the praise of Andhra Pradesh for its remarkable success in luring rebels away. The example of Andhra Pradesh was repeatedly invoked during my meetings in policy circles in Delhi and in the state capitals of Jharkhand and West Bengal as well. Thus we are faced with the question: What sets AP apart?

1.2.2 What sets the 1990s in Andhra Pradesh apart?

The reputation of Andhra Pradesh as the state that crushed some Maoists and lure the rest back into democracy is built on relatively high surrender incidents in the state between 2006-2014. However, during my fieldwork in Andhra Pradesh, I met many rebels who quit during the early and mid-1990s. This led me to question the dominant narrative in policy circles that surrender increased and the movement waned only around 2010. The nineties were, on the other hand, high noon of Maoist activity and strength in the state. Available data on surrender of Maoists in the

¹⁰ See for example, Ground Report: The Truth About Chhattisgarh's Recent Maoist Surrender <http://scroll.in/article/775849/ground-report-the-truth-about-chhattisgarhs-recent-maoist-surrenders>

¹¹ In Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, I spent time idling around and talking to mid- and high-level bureaucrats in Jharkhand secretariat. It became apparent that they were under pressure from Home Ministry in New Delhi to match up high surrender in Andhra Pradesh. The police officers in charge of anti-Naxal operations in the Police Headquarters in Ranchi expressed frustration over the constant belittling by state bureaucrats and Ministers for their inability to secure more Maoist surrender at par with their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh.

state dating back to the 1990s supported my field discovery: surrender during nineties was, in fact, much higher than that between 2006-2014, approximately 4 times higher than that in the fifteen years between 2000 and 2014.

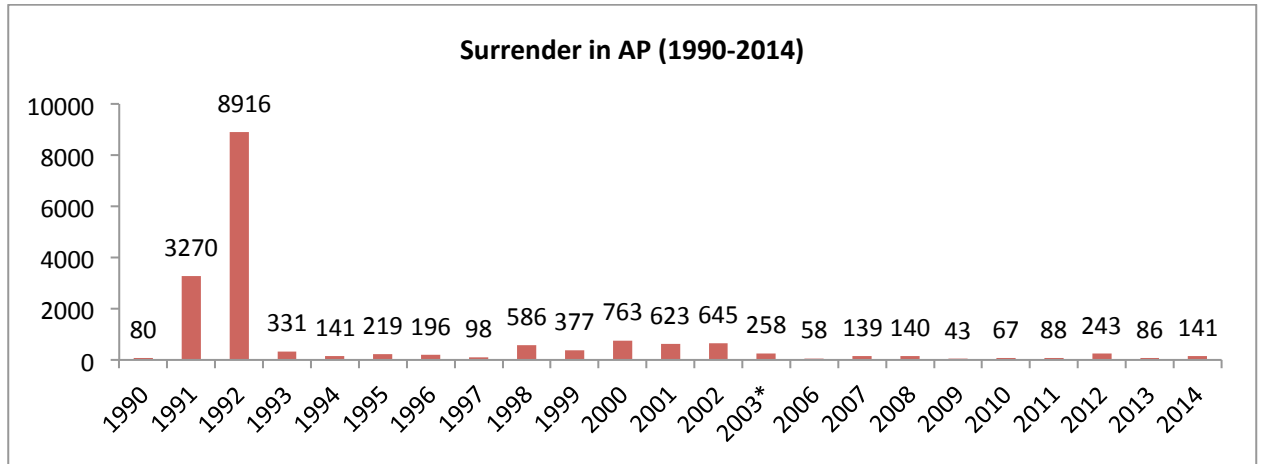


Figure 4

Rebel Retirement in Andhra Pradesh (1990-2014)

1.2.3 What sets certain districts apart?

Another interesting spatial pattern in rebel retirement is that it tends to concentrate in certain districts in Maoist affected states. I found that Maoists, whether they had worked in their home state or in neighboring Chhattisgarh and Odisha, inevitably returned to Andhra Pradesh to surrender. It is a well-known fact. It is not unusual that when rebels retire they come back to what they call home, which is often their ancestral village. The most common explanation of this offered to me by police and administration in Andhra Pradesh is that the state has a lucrative surrender package and has also built a reputation of implementing it.

However, Chandranna, a shy toddy-tapper (backward caste) in his early 50s, who hails from Karimnagar district and worked as Maoist district-committee secretary in Dantewada

(Chhattisgarh), chose to surrender in Khammam district. His wife, Vijaya, also from Manthani, Karimnagar, surrendered in Kothugudem, Khammam. Later they settled down in his ancestral village in Adilabad district. After several meetings with retired rebels both in the North and South, I found that rebels chose to surrender in certain districts and not others in their chosen states. As I looked into the district level surrender data between 2006 and 2014 it showed that surrender cases indeed tend to be concentrated in certain districts in the Maoist-affected states. 75% of total surrender in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh is concentrated in two districts of Warangal and Khammam. In coastal AP, 80% of total surrender is concentrated in Vishakhapatnam.

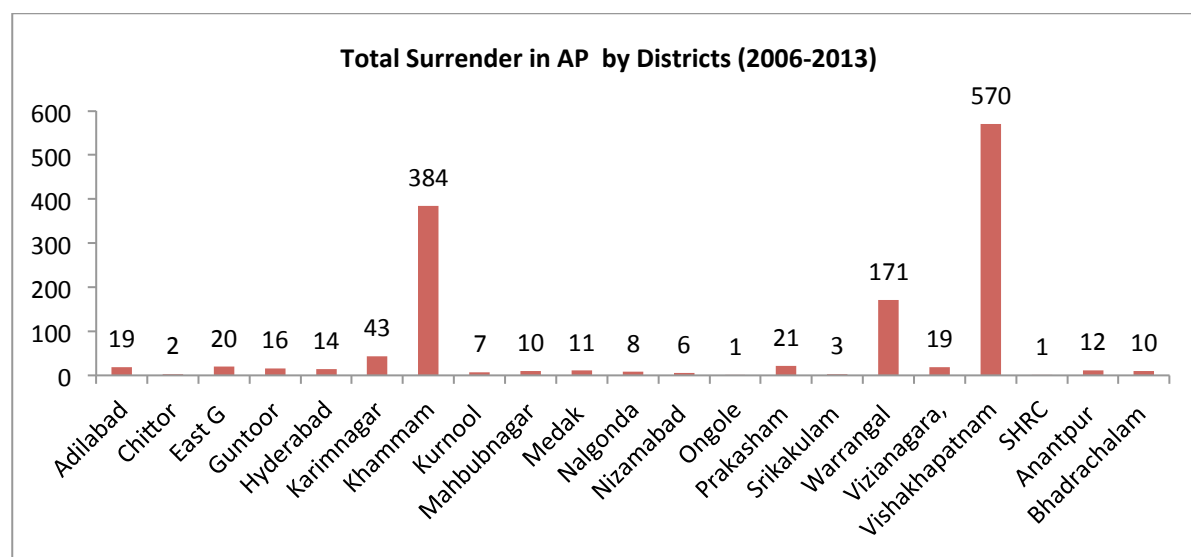


Figure 5

District-Level Rebel Retirement in Andhra Pradesh (2006-2013)

Surrender cases are concentrated in one or two districts in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal as well. In Bihar, surrender is concentrated in Rohtas and Muzaffarpur. In Jharkhand, surrender is concentrated in capital Ranchi and neighboring Khunti district. In Odisha, surrender was concentrated in the district of Koraput. In West Bengal, surrender was con-

centrated in West Midnapore. Chhattisgarh is an exception, where surrender is spread across all affected districts.

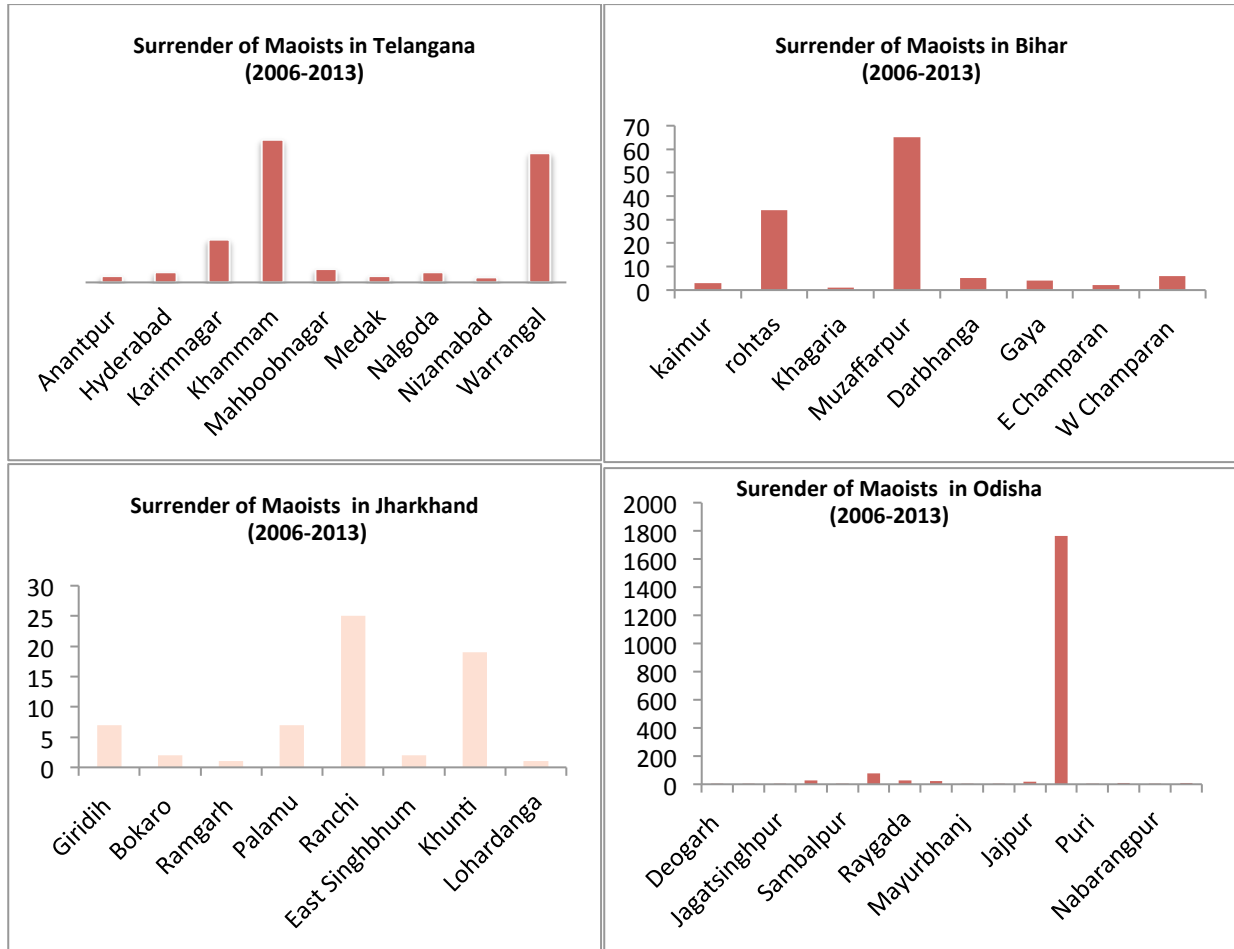


Figure 6

District-Level Concentration of Rebel Retirement in India

State surrender policies do not vary from district to district. Yet rebels choose some districts over others to surrender. What does this tell us about the process of rebel retirement? In addition to the three dimensions of the empirical puzzle of rebel retirement illustrated above, pathways out of the movement and choice of post-retirement life and livelihood of rebels also vary significantly between the two pockets of Maoist influence. There is a systematic regional

variation in the micro-processes that transpire between a rebel's first *desire* to quit and the ultimate step to disarm and finally reintegrate into new life and livelihood. A typical retired Maoist in Telangana, for example, could pursue any career from homemaker to criminal, moonshiner to professor. In the North, however, a typical retired rebel is almost always an aspiring politician clad in stiffly starched white cotton kurta-pajama, the quintessential trademark of an Indian politician. He jumps parties during election cycles, joining any party, right or left that offers him a nomination for local, state or national elections. He moves around heavily guarded by his personal crew of tough guys, who trot around with illegal guns and their faces half masked even in state legislative assemblies in broad daylight. I also grapple with associated questions like how rebels communicate their decision to quit to their comrades and superiors. Who they reach out to in the outside – police, administration, political leaders or family? What are their biggest apprehensions and aspirations?

1.3 Insights from literature: Explaining the puzzle of rebel retirement in India

These questions on rebel retirement and lure of democracy in India are embedded within another enduring puzzle in comparative politics: the old literature on the puzzling contradiction of India's high levels of political violence within a democratic political system. It has long been viewed as a "paradox" in comparative politics. (Weiner 1989; Lijphart 1996) How the world's largest and most heterogeneous democracy survives counter to Mill's proposition (that democracy is "next to impossible" in multiethnic societies and completely impossible in linguistically divided countries) and Selig S. Harrison's prediction of impending democratic failure and/or territorial disintegration remains an enduring puzzle. (Mill 2004; Harrison 2003) During the last 64 years since India gained its independence from the British, several violent political mobilizations rocked her in spells of dooms and despair. However, none of these ethnic, linguistic, religious or

left extremist movements are able to punch a permanent dent on the body politic of the democratic goliath. Like a big sponge, she continues to absorb all shocks and stresses and fall right back in shape. Except a brief interlude in the 1970s, the democracy functions uninterrupted.

Scholars examining India's democratic survival through recurrent violence propose several factors like consociational power sharing (Brass 1994; Wilkinson 2006), pork barrel politics, decentralization and strategic patronage distribution (Sadanandan 2012) as possible factors keeping many violent mobilization at bay. The mantra of radical redistribution (socialism, populism, abolition of princely privileges) chanted alongside the conservative politics sans any substantial reallocation has so far accommodated the most powerful challengers through ad hoc concessions of rights and dignity, even if not of wealth. (Kohli 1991; Kohli 2001) However, with the rising turnout of the poor in Indian elections (Yadav 2004), demise of welfare state, end of Congress domination, and concomitant success of local, regional, religious, ethnic and caste parties (Jaffrelot 2003; Hasan 2004; Chandra 2007) it is becoming increasingly challenging to continue the fine balancing act of serving the interests of the rich and powerful without fully alienating the weak and poor. This project proposes that the lure of democracy even for those who had once violently denounced it provides an important site for searching for reasons for India's surprising democratic survival. The primary assumption here is that democracy is able to co-exercise its benign and brutal face in a way that makes it both feared and desired, hated and endearing. In contexts like India where there are precedents of insurgent groups making an electoral switch, it is inevitable that the Maoist party, which boycotts elections, struggles to undermine the lure of democracy for its cadres.

It is important to note that unlike some other identity based movements in India that seek a greater share of the democratic pie, the Maoists want to destroy it. Therefore, unlike other sep-

artist groups, the Maoists come back to democracy not in vindication of their political demands, but often in total negation of their insurgent ideology and careers. To them, the democratic institutions of India, designed to protect the entrenched class interests of the feudal remnants and the comprador bourgeoisie, are systematically biased against the wellbeing of the proletariat. In such a semi feudal, semi colonial system, elections offer a limited choice among representatives of dominant classes unwilling to make any real changes. Therefore, the Maoists boycott elections and wage an armed struggle to overthrow the current political system and reinstate a new one. Thus they refuse conciliatory power sharing gestures from the state and instead raise a People's Liberation Army from among the poorest of the poor in the country and declared a protracted people's war (henceforth PPW) with the stated goal of violently overthrowing the Indian democracy.

Although the abovementioned questions take particular significance in contemporary India, India is hardly an exception in this regard. The militant leaders of organizations like Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in Nepal, the Tupamaros movement in Guatemala, the Workers Party in Brazil, the Movement for Socialism party (MAS), the *cocalero* trade union in Bolivia, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Ireland have all shunned their militant pasts to embrace the path of legitimate power politics. Not much is known about when, why and how such insurgent democratic transition become more likely.

Related to the questions of subnational variation of rebel retirement is also the question of the impact of rebel reintegration on a functioning democracy. It is probably one of the very few valid generalizations in the literature on social protest and collective mobilization that movements arise only when aggrieved groups cannot work through established channels to communi-

cate new claims into the political process of authoritative decision-making. (Kitschelt 1993) But violent movements do not necessarily further weaken a functioning democracy. Experimental research indicates that the political legacy of violent conflict can be positive: past violence in northern Uganda is shown to lead to increased political engagement among ex combatants. (Blattman and Miguel 2009; Annan et al. 2011; Bellows and Miguel 2009) Although generalizability of these findings requires more evidence to judge, they point to important new avenues of research. These questions acquire particular salience in India. During interviews with this researcher, former combatants turned legislators in India suggested that their experience in violence led to personal growth and political activation, a possibility supported by psychological research on the positive effects of traumatic events. (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004) In the existing political science literature, however, violent political contentions in India have received much scholarly attention. The impact of peaceful reincarnation of violent groups as political parties has gone relatively unnoticed.

In looking to the broader literature on insurgency for clues, one reason rebels retire from violent politics is *material incentives* embedded in reintegration schemes offered by governments. Referred to as DDRR (Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation) in the literature, these schemes try to include positive social, economic, and stabilization benefits for individual rebels to lure them away from violence one at a time. In addition to substantial cash award, states promise education, vocational training, employment and housing assistance. Drawing from Sun Tzu, the US military in Afghanistan calls its approach for reintegration of insurgents ‘golden surrender’, which promises reintegration of former combatants into their communities with ‘dignity and honor’, protection and security’, education, vocational training, and cash awards. (Waldman 2010; Horgan and Braddock 2010; Kurtenbach and Wulf 2012) Insurgent

reintegration programs have been run in Singapore, El Salvador, Mozambique, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and Colombia. Economic dimensions of post-conflict reintegration receive priority in the literature; proponents argue that “ex-combatants must be able to earn a livelihood through legitimate means” (International Peace Academy 2002) Given that a higher risk of conflict is associated with an absence of income-earning opportunities for young men (Collier and Hoeffler 2004), risk-reducing demobilization and reintegration programs seek to create economic opportunities for combatants.

The government of India, taking cue from the DDRR schemes worldwide, argues that its surrender and rehabilitation policy for the Maoists can ‘wean away the misguided youth ...who have strayed into the fold of Naxal movement’. Their rationale is as follows: “As the naxal problem has arisen on account of real and perceived neglect, deprivation and disaffection, mainly towards the downtrodden, the solution should aim at providing gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to the surrendered naxalites so that they are encouraged to join the mainstream and do not return to the fold of naxal movement.”¹²At present, different states in India offer varying 'financial packages' to Maoists who surrender. Recently the federal government moved to increase its share by 15 times to help cash-strapped states offer uniform incentives and to pursue surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy more vigorously. There is a considerable variation in the outcome, with some states like Andhra Pradesh reporting high surrender rates, while others like Chhattisgarh reporting none.

A consensus appears to be emerging in policy circles from Afghanistan to Sierra Leone that material incentives as parts of multidimensional peacekeeping measures improve the pro-

¹² The Naxal Surrender and Rehabilitation Program of the Government of India available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=67973>

spects for peace, democracy, and improved economic performance in the aftermath of conflict (Walter 1997; Doyle and Sambanis 2010; Doyle and Sambanis 2000) Further post conflict case studies in Mozambique, South Africa, El Salvador, Cambodia, and Nicaragua show that if demobilized combatants are not placed into employment or provided with skills-training opportunities, the lack of an income source increases their propensity to commit crimes, even turning them into banditry.(Kingma 2008; Batchelor, Kingma, and Lamb 2004; Knight and Ozerdem 2004; Weiss Fagen 1995) Despite the confidence policy makers have shown in the use of material incentives as a means of inducing rebel retirement, the available literature on the subject is full of country specific reports, which cannot vary either the dependent (policy outcome) or the independent variables. Further, identifying the role of material incentives in facilitating transition from bullets to ballots is difficult at the macro level. These programs rarely take place in isolation. They typically are complemented by other military, social, and economic interventions. But it the lure of lucre remains an important alternative explanation of insurgent democratic transition. The most important shortcoming of the DDRR literature is that it is written from the perspective of policy makers, offering before-after impact measurement of certain surrender and rehabilitation programs. It begins with the assumption that rebels can be bought over, and delves into the debate over what can be the most effective incentive for rebels – land, jobs, cash transfer or some combination of those. I look at the question from the perspective of rebels, focusing on their apprehensions and aspirations. In addition, the DDRR literature has very little to offer the steps before reintegration and livelihood. I shed light on the protracted process of disengagement that transpires between the desire to quit and actually disarming, which come prior to the concerns for livelihood.

Another explanation of insurgent democratic transition is *institutional cooptation*, explored in the literature on social movement organizations. In the classic Weber-Michels model, movement leaders modify organizational goals to accommodate societal norms and avoid conflict. In addition, professional organizers seeking access to dominant institutions through third party sponsors (Jenkins and Perrow 1977) or through the mass media (Gitlin 2003) end up "demobilizing mass defiance" (Jenkins 1983) and thereby pasteurizing the movement's ideological challenge, thereby inciting insurgent democratic transition. This model assumes that external pressure is always towards conservatism. Further, it assumes that the rank and file are inert or only intermittently concerned with movement goals (Schwartz et al., 1981).

Along similar lines are explanations centered upon *elite strategy*. Movement leaders shun bullets and choose ballots if the probability it attaches to being victorious in democratic competition is greater than some minimum. (Przeworski 1991; Weingast 1997; Colomer 2000) These works, analyzing the circumstances under which democracy is preferred to fighting, focus only on the payoffs from democracy with an exogenous payoff to fighting. They conclude that the circumstance most propitious to the consolidation of democracy is evenly matched party competition. However, the factors that influence the probability that a party wins power under democracy (viz. popular support) will also influence its ability to win a fight if it decides to violate the democratic rules. In trying to assess the potential outcome of their choice of insurgent or democratic path, movement leaders choose the democratic option when one group among two fighting sides is dominant. (Chacon, Robinson, and Torvik 2006)

In a functioning democracy like India, where Maoist insurgents contend with legitimate political parties for popular support, the spread of insurgency is a result of rise of regional parties and consequent fragmentation of the party system. Paradoxically enough, as the number of polit-

ical parties in India explodes, high fragmentation makes it impossible and unnecessary for any of these parties to win majority votes in order to emerge victorious. On the contrary, these parties have incentives to remain small clubs with closed membership to win elections with minority support of core group of committed followers. This leaves a large young population, with unsought, unaffiliated allegiance, pushing them into the arms of Maoists, who are the only political platform that try to recruit them. (Chandra 2011) On the flip side, therefore, decrease in *political fragmentation*, with reduction in number of political parties, should lower insurgent recruitment and hence increase the likelihood of insurgent democratic transition.

Recent research in social psychology and anthropology suggests some other plausible determinants of this transition. A rich empirical literature has examined the impact of *exposure to violence on the part of noncombatants* (Dyregrov, Gjestad, and Raundalen 2002; Husain et al. 1998) on prospects of rebel transition. This study argues that civilian casualty in itself is not a good indicator of noncombatant hostility to insurgents, without knowing if it were the insurgents or the police, who were help responsible for the damages suffered by noncombatants. Some single-country studies in Sierra Leone have examined the reintegration prospects of particular subgroups of combatants, notably youth (Richards et al. 2003) and women and girls (Mazurana et al. 2002). Yet another possible explanation comes from the research comes from a specific strand of the literature that emphasizes that to the extent that ex-combatants gain acceptance from family members, friends, and neighbors through formal or informal processes of reconciliation, formers combatants are more likely to integrate into civilian life. Others found that individuals do leave terrorist movements and paramilitaries in Colombia on their own, albeit for largely *idiosyncratic reasons*: fear of excessive punishment, disillusionment with the group's leadership, or recognition of the impossibility of achieving the group's goals. Collective disengagements are typically

executed as a result of calculated strategy on the part of the group's leadership, with fighters returning to democracy still ideologically adherent to their former group's objectives. (Ribetti 2010)

An attempt to understand rebel retirement remains incomplete without looking into the rich and growing literature on rebel recruitment. Moral economists argue that when market economies penetrate traditional societies destroying the security of subsistence in local moral economies, peasants react with a moral outrage, which provides a radical thrust to political protest. (Scott 1977; Wolf 1969) Their rationalist critics argued that unless the shared, non-excludable public good sought by the revolutionaries for all is accompanied by some selective incentives, which are private gains distributed only to those individuals that participate in rebellion, rational individuals abstain from participation and opt to free-ride. (Olson 1965) Within rationalist paradigm, scholars eventually recognized the role of ideology complementing selective incentive (Mark I. Lichbach 1994) and dispelled the assumption that non-participation is relatively costless in insurgency.(Kalyvas and Kocher 2007) Other critics of selective incentive argue that people participate in armed uprising in a quest for moral agency and that risks of participation far outweigh any selective incentives. (Elisabeth Jean Wood 2003) However, moral economists cannot explain how and when moral outrage quenches itself. Rational choice theories of civil war termination on the other hand describe the combatants' process of making a decision to quit either in terms of straightforward utilitarian calculations (Mason and Fett 1996), or in terms of credible commitment ((Walter 1997; Walter 1999; Walter 2004) or in terms of demographic separation model (C. Kaufmann 1996; C. D. Kaufmann 1998).However, rational choice theory can not explain why combatants sometimes choose losing battles over surrender and re-

habilitation, and brush them away as irrational and it struggles with the empirical question of how combatants assess and compare utilities when making choices.

In yet another alternative explanation of how combatants make decisions to continue or quit fighting, scholars employ prospect theory to argue that under conditions of risk and uncertainty surrounding an insurgency, combatants not only employ rational choice decision making for objective measure of options, outcomes and likelihood of each outcomes, but also supplement it by a second step where combatants modify outcome values by employing aspiration levels and salient historical comparisons. Thus, although decisions to quit through compromise might seem rational given the gain compared to status quo, they will confront rebels as losses compared to their aspirations. Since losses must be recouped, combatants will continue to fight and adopt more risk taking behavior contra rational choice expectations. This explanation thus explains rebel participation better than rebel retirement. (Butts 2007)

Based on single case studies, the thin literature on rebel retirement identifies some individual-level factors why individuals shun bullets for ballots: disillusionment with the group; a loss of faith in the ideology; a desire to lead a normal family life; questioning of their involvement after a traumatic event including violence; negativity and a lack of support within the group; internal intolerance and authoritarianism within the group; an individual's positive experiences of wider society or support from someone outside the group. (Horgan and Braddock 2010; Horgan 2009; Horgan 2008)

The policy makers and analysts in India attribute high Maoist surrender in Andhra Pradesh to the two prongs of counterinsurgency literature: repression and development. The “An-

dhra Model”, which, since 2006, evoked much admiration in policy and media circles in India¹³, particularly after the Prime Minister of India identified the Maoist insurgency as the biggest internal security threat, combines ruthless/efficient policing by specially trained commandos (Greyhounds) with rapid financial liberalization and efficient implementation of targeted welfare and lucrative surrender packages. In other words, Andhra model stands for successful three-pronged counterinsurgency: (a) efficient policing forced Maoists to abandon their stronghold in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh¹⁴ (b) aggressive targeted welfare created improved living conditions which dried up Maoist recruitment (c) lucrative surrender and rehabilitation package lured rebels into surrender. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to investigate if these three measures indeed precipitated weakening of the Maoists and their surrender in Andhra Pradesh. In the subsequent chapters on Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand I offer evidence to question the causal connection between counterinsurgency and high surrender as proposed in the Andhra model.

The causal argument in the Andhra model, as propounded by its proponents, generally goes like this: unlike other Maoist-affected states, Andhra Pradesh police built their intelligence network and trained specialized commando forces (Greyhounds) that hunted down Maoist leadership and shut down their organization in the state, subsequently forcing rebels to surrender.¹⁵ (

¹³ KPS Gill, the Director General of Police in Punjab, credited with the counterinsurgency operations that broke the backbones of Punjab insurgency hailed the Andhra model <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/guest-writer/all-states-should-learn-from-andhra-and-defeat-maoists-on-their-turf-kps-gill/articleshow/20405630.cms>

¹⁴ Ajai Sahni, Wilful Blindness, Outlook Magazine, July 15, 2011, available at <http://www.outlookindia.com/article/wilful-blindness-/277672>

¹⁵ D. M. Mitra, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer drafting a proposal for federal funding for raising greyhound like forces in other states said during an interview (Nov 12, 2013) with the author that greyhound fighting units are not only trained by army to fight in the jungles, they are small groups, and made of local young officers familiar with a particular jungle. The force has low age profile, with a mixture of local tribals and outsiders. It is a state agency, unlike central forces sent to fight Maoists, and its personnel would get very high incentives to work in the force. Mitra also argued that to raise greyhounds in other states, this force would have to be equipped with appropriate arms, equipment and food. They will be imparted rigorous training and will not be used for any other kind of work.

Mitra 2005) There are several tenuous links in this causal path that is difficult to substantiate by evidence. For example, it assumes that increased repression compels rebels to quit. Given the high risk-acceptance of rebels who join and stay in an insurgent group, and the high sunk cost involved in quitting, it has to be assumed that police repression in Andhra Pradesh imposed costs high enough for rebels to discount their lifelong sacrifices. We do not get any sense of how the cost of repression was any different from what it was when they made the initial decision to join and the subsequent choice to spend over 10 years of their lives in the movement.

The evidence in the literature on repression and political violence is at best indeterminate. Some have argued in favor of a linear function whereby repression dampens recruitment by raising the costs to individuals of joining insurgent organizations.(Tullock 1971) But there is no evidence that raised costs implore seasoned rebels to quit. Others have specified a concave function whereby participation peaks at intermediate levels of repression but declines thereafter. (Gurr 1970) Finally, others have claimed that the relationship between repression and protest is convex: higher levels of repression increase resentment and, therefore, repression feeds protest and rebellion. In this argument, repression against its own citizens reduces legitimacy of the government, politicizes the apathetic, radicalizes free riders into revolutionaries, thereby spreading conflict and engulfing an entire nation. (M. I. Lichbach 1987) Wood also argues along similar lines that rebels successfully incorporate the government's indiscriminate violence into their appeals to recruit more supporters. (E. J. Wood 2003) Therefore, there is nothing in the literature to support the claim that police repression by specialized commando force can take the credit for inducing high surrender rates in Andhra Pradesh.

Turning to empirical evidence, as shown in the graph below, Maoist fatality in Andhra Pradesh actually decreased over the years as surrender of rebels increased and continued to at-

tract national attention. Thus there is no empirical basis in this case to claim that Maoist rebels in Andhra Pradesh quit in hordes for fear for severe repression causing their death.



Figure 7

Rebel Retirement and Casualty in Andhra Pradesh

Maoist fatalities in Andhra Pradesh are also significantly lower than those in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, where surrender continues to be much lower than Andhra Pradesh. In fact, comparing across states, Maoist arrest figures are also lowest in Andhra Pradesh. It is the only exception, where surrender incidents remain highest despite lower arrests and fatalities of Maoists. In other words, taking arrests and fatality as rough indicators of state repression, rebel retirement in AP increased even when repression was low.

It is true that the Greyhounds hunted down and killed Maoist rebels and leaders (crush the proverbial snakehead), shielded by political support and untraceable accountability. (Balagopal 1981) But as shown in the graph below, every year between 2006 and 2014 Maoist casualty has consistently been highest in Chhattisgarh. Other than West Bengal, all other states

record higher Maoist casualty than Andhra Pradesh. Yet that did not lead to higher surrender in these other states, which indicates that we must look elsewhere for an explanation.

Post economic liberalization boom is also another factor invoked in explaining success of Andhra Pradesh in securing high surrender. In recent years, the interconnection between development and security – or the development–security nexus – has attracted a good deal of academic, donor and practitioner interest. Reducing alienation through satisfying peoples’ basic needs, so it is thought, lessens the risk of social tension and therefore conflict (Collier et al., 2003). Indeed, for most of the post-Cold War period, the promise that development can increase security has been embraced wholeheartedly.(Piazza 2006) Skeptics criticize an overreliance by counterinsurgents on winning hearts and minds. Research on the supply of rebels suggests that popular support is largely irrelevant where states are weak and where government could not act on information if it had it. (Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011)

It is also important to note that this high exodus in Andhra Pradesh in the early 1990s happened before the first lackluster version of their surrender and rehabilitation program was even formulated in 1998. Many retired rebels I spoke to in Andhra Pradesh did not receive any significant cash reward or livelihood assistance. In fact, highest mass exodus from the Maoist movement predates not only the fabled fame of Greyhounds, formed in 1989. It was also before economic liberalization of India, which is said to have unleashed a plethora of new opportunities to lure the youth away from revolution.¹⁶ In the light of these sequence of events entered as new evidence, we need to question the dominant narrative that Andhra Pradesh secured high rebel

¹⁶ In their own analysis, the CPI(Maoist) argues that the economic liberalization of India, and the plethora of self-help groups and World Bank development projects, together with telephone-television took people in the South away from the path of revolution.

retirement due to lucrative surrender package, its spectacular economic development or due to its exceptional policing.¹⁷

Therefore, summing up, the literature on insurgency delves deep into why men and women rebel as well as into how insurgency spreads. But has little to say on why and how rebels quit. The counterinsurgency literature on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) is focused too narrowly on confiscation of arms and livelihood concerns of ex-combatants. It sheds little light on actual process of disengagement that transpires between the desire to quit and the final reintegration of rebels into mainstream. I also depart from existing writings on rebel retirement in psychology, sociology, and criminology that identify ‘push’ (like disillusionment with personnel, strategy and ideology, fatigue/burnout) and ‘pull’ factors (like lucrative surrender package, amnesty, desires to establish a family) influencing rebel retirement. I show that in between push-pull factors that affect insurgents’ *desire* to exit, and DDR programs, is the protracted process of disengagement whereby rebels establish contact with the outside and plan post-retirement safety and livelihood strategies. The various pathways out of violent movements and how these chosen paths vary remains largely unexplored. This project shows how a set of demographic, social, economic and other contextual factors interact with individual level motivations to account for successful reintegration across individual combatants and across various states in India. .

¹⁷ Similar arguments can be made about comparable development in assets and services in other states not producing similar results in terms of weakening and surrender of Maoists. (Appendix, Chapter 3) In fact, the development narrative of AP is also suspect. The strongest advocate of ‘India Shining’ model of rapid economic liberalization, chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, suffered massive electoral defeat in AP in 2004 and 2009 due to massive neglect and decline of agriculture sector. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/South_asia/3756387.stm

1.4 Mechanisms of Rebel Retirement: Introducing Informal Exit Networks

The central argument of this thesis is that rebel quit through exit networks, which are expensive to create, sustain, reproduce and transpose. Exit networks can be ‘harmonic’ like in the South, encouraging higher exit and broad reintegration of rebels. Exit networks can also be ‘discordant’ like in the North, exacerbating fear and insecurities of rebels and restricting their reintegration into the mainstream. Emergence of a particular kind of exit network is contingent on pre-war social bases of insurgency, on the vertical and horizontal ties forged by insurgent organization and on the dynamics of interaction between the state and a banned armed movement in the grey areas that separate them.

This argument is built on my fieldwork in conflict zones, where conversations with multiple stakeholders in the ongoing conflict revealed that the primary concern of retiring rebels is that they would be killed as soon as they disarmed. They feared that family members of former landlords, some of whom perpetuate their feudal domination in the garb of elected offices, would conspire to kill them in retribution. The rebels have fought long battles against the state, and were ideologically primed to distrust the police and the politicians. But former rebels argued that they were, in fact, convinced that given the reputational rewards and career boosts that police officers and career politicians get enough career boost and reputation rewards for orchestrating Maoist surrender for them to not sabotage the process. However, once the dust settles on surrender fanfare, there is nothing in the land/job/cash/training programs in state surrender and rehabilitation package that prevents their former enemies from colluding with local police to attack unarmed former rebels and their families.

Returning rebels, it is common knowledge, will have a heavy price to pay (for example, shot in fake ‘encounter’ or harassment of family members by police) if they reneged on their commitment and returned to the Maoists. However, the democratic state does not lose much if it fails to keep the rebels alive after they disarm. This is a problem of credible commitment. The high and mighty in rural India can kill with impunity. I argue that informal exit networks in the South ensure locally that returning rebels continue to enjoy life and livelihood and thereby compensate for the lack of institutionalized credible commitment in democracy.

A former area commander in Karimnagar district of Telangana described how she was afraid that she will be ‘encountered’ just like her husband, brother, and sister-in-law. She was referring to the practice of police shooting suspects in the back and filing an official report that shots were fired to prevent a criminal from fleeing the scene (Balagopal 1981). The area commander, a Dalit from Karimnagar, quit the Maoist movement, but still feared the same brutal death by hired guns of the sons of former Dora (landlord), one of whom was a influential member of a national political party. So she reached out to her comrades who had retired before her. They put her in touch of with the wife of local elected MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly), who was from the same village as her dead husband. The wife of the MLA, a respected human rights activist in her own right, assured her that she would ensure her safety on return. This MLA was considered trustworthy because the charismatic Maoist leader Ramakrishna was his childhood friend. He was known for his sympathy for the movement, and his reputation for securing safe passage for other rebels before her. There is a pipeline of people in place, police, bureaucrats, and down to village school teacher, who work in the grey areas of democracy, one foot in the state and one foot in the banned movement, to ensure safe return of rebels.

These informal exit networks grow in the shadow of formal organizations. In the South, there is a dense network of voluntary organizations based on caste, religion, gender, profession and so on, that flourish at village/town and district levels, creating routine contact and shared norms among ordinary civic-minded individuals. Above them there is also an overarching powerful and visible network of state-level organizations for civil liberties/human rights, cultural, womens' organizations that include famous poets, academics, lawyers and civil servants, who draw attention to excesses of the rebels and failures of the state with equal commitment and prominence.

In Chapter 4 I show that this two-level infrastructure of vigorous civic participation within democracy creates a platform for civic-minded citizens in cities and villages and across different professions and castes, to come together and work in harmony to ensure safe passage of returning rebels. I also show how this infrastructure of associational culture that energizes the grassroots in Telangana was born out grassroots mobilization by the Maoists but soon emerged as independent informal platform for concerned citizens to build peace in ravaged conflict zones of Telangana. Thus exit networks in the South operate in the shadow of its rich grassroots associational life, sometimes under the radar in extra-democratic capacity, to prevent further loss of lives in the villages and build peace bottom up.

The exit networks are made up of two kinds of actors, the Movement Entrepreneurs and Reintegration Stewards, linked by different kinds of relationship. Movement Entrepreneurs (ME) are highly visible, geographically and socially mobile opinion makers, who share political preferences and normative commitments, control the flow of information and coordinate collective action in conflict zones. They maintain one foot in democracy and one foot in the banned re-

sistance movement and claim limited autonomy from both. Through the leaky walls the state erects around rebels, political actors on both sides are tied to the MEs. They may share pre-war social ties with both rebel leaders and democratic politicians/bureaucrats; for example, they might have grown up together in the same village, trained together in college, or belonged to the same caste group/extended family. The ties may grow outside personal acquaintance, through shared political vision. MEs emerge as influential middle grounds or voice of conscience between state and rebels. On the one hand, they nurture a nascent movement and drum up support for rebel causes. On the other hand, they also critique rebel excesses and concurrently nudge the frontiers of democracy bit by bit. Eventually (and inadvertently) MEs generate a whirlwind of debates and critiques around resistance that sucks core constituents out of rebel movement into democratic platforms.

As they generate a powerful impetus for exit within rebel organization, reintegration stewards (RS) resolve crucial last-mile problems in the process of rebel retirement. RS emerge from the local social base of the insurgency, and they are geographically embedded. Employed in diverse occupations like law enforcement, district courts, coalmines, village administration, primary school, political party, local mafia or rural health centers, these everyday people weave a bulwark of all local stakeholders in rebel return through an informal but effective system. RS compensate for the institutional lack of credible commitment locally by ensuring that retired rebels would not be killed.

I argue that *exit networks* in the South are ‘harmonic’ in that they weave together multiple stakeholders in an amalgam of roles and alliances, who work in sync to build momentum for exit and manage myriad uncertainties of reintegration. These exit networks co-evolve, over years

of conflict, with legitimate/state and illegitimate/rebel politics in conflict areas to facilitate a very high number of retirement and broad rebel reintegration. In contrast, retirement is low in the North (Jharkhand/West Bengal) due to the emergence of a ‘discordant’ exit network that is falling apart at the seams due to relentless skirmish among the primary stakeholders, exacerbating mistrust and fear among key players and deterring rebel reintegration. Pro-social RS connected to ME dominates harmonic exit networks. Anti-social RS, disconnected with ME, dominates discordant networks.

In the North, the most well known face of Maoist return to democracy is Kameshwar Baitha. When I met him in 2013, he was the sitting Member of Parliament (MP) from Palamau constituency in Jharkhand MuKti Morcha (JMM) ticket. He told me how he had a change in heart while he was in jail, facing 46 criminal cases ranging from murder and extortion to killing several policemen in a landmine blast triggered on the Bihar-Jharkhand border in 2002. He fought and won the 2009 parliamentary elections from Palamau, the forested, poor region he dominated as a dreaded Maoist commander. As I talked to several others in Palamau and in JMM it became clear to me that unless he contested elections and made himself a valuable lynchpin in their access to political power and associated patronage network, the informal network of politicians-criminals-police-bureaucrats-loyalists would not offer him their benefaction and protection. He was deeply plugged in this network since his insurgent days. In other words, in Jharkhand Maoists decide to surrender after they are arrested. He would never find his way out of the extensive bulwark of cases and evidence of murder, extortion and kidnaps against him.

Subsequent interviews with other surrendered Maoists as well as the police in the North made it amply clear that Maoists in the state are persuaded to accept a surrender package after

they are already apprehended. The relatively well known among them are encouraged to contest elections at village, state or national levels. The much-publicized return to democracy offers ample career rewards to the politicians, bureaucrats, police, journalists, and criminals overseeing this insurgent democratic transition. In other words, the corrupt nexus that controls rebel retirement in Jharkhand restricts surrender opportunity to a select few who seek a political career in electoral democracy. More importantly, unlike in the South, the northern Maoists take out death warrants against surrendered rebels condemning their electoral ambitions, forcing them to withdraw further in the protection of this corrupt nexus.

Emergence of two different kinds of exit network is contingent on three broad processes (a) pre-war social bases of insurgency (b) organization and mobilization techniques of insurgent groups (c) protracted interaction between (a) and (b) in conflict zones. Depending on the militarization of landed aristocracy and polarization of antagonistic social groups, and on the degree of mass mobilization by rebels, insurgent organization forges strong or weak vertical and horizontal ties, which precipitates a open/virtuous, harmonic exit network or a closed/vicious, discordant interaction among key stakeholders on both sides of conflict (state and rebel). I link macro (environmental), meso (organizational) and micro (individual) conditions to explain the protracted process of rebel retirement. These processes co-evolve spanning different levels of analysis and are connected with each other in feedback loops. Theoretically, I argue that insurgent mobilization unleashes profound social change, transforming social actors, structures, norms, and practices at the local level, reconfiguring existing networks and creating new ones. Local dynamics of insurgent mobilization leaves a lasting legacy on rebel retirement.

The mechanisms of emergence of harmonic versus discordant networks in the South and North respectively are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Harmonic exit makes democracy seem more lucrative. Comparing outcomes of the two different paths of retirement, harmonic exit is likely to facilitate the robust reintegration of retired rebels in various white and blue-collar professions across rural and urban areas. Discordant exit is likely to severely restrict post-retirement livelihood alternatives for rebels. A few retired rebels may still become henchmen of criminal real estate gangs even in areas with harmonic exit network. But it is the dominant trend for retired rebels in discordant exit to latch on to the same mafia-police-politician-bureaucrat nexus that had earlier propelled them to join the insurgents in the first place. With the money, gun power, and readymade local support base, these rebels become political leaders post-retirement, trying to get themselves elected in various levels of democratic governance, from village administration to the national parliament.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The rest of this dissertation is divided into five chapters, and employs a multilevel and mixed-methods approach to analyzing the central puzzle of rebel retirement. In doing so this project offers the first systematic analysis of the process by which armed actors quit extremist groups and return to democracy. Chapter 2 sets the stage for analyzing the emergence of two different exit networks by historically tracing the different ideological lineage, mobilization and recruitment strategies of the northern and southern Maoists. Through interviews with leaders of various factions of Indian Left, particularly the Maoists, as well as archival research of strategic party documents and leaked reports, I lay out the regional specificities of Maoist organization, mobilization and recruitment in North and South India. A significant contribution of this chapter is to es-

establish how the despite unified leadership and ideological commitments that insurgent organizations are locally embedded.

In Chapter 3, I presents results of a series of statistical tests that shows that organizational density, measured at district level in terms of membership in voluntary organizations, is a better predictor of rebel retirement than alternative explanations in terms of development (access to assets), public service provision (access to healthcare and education), industrialization, mining, and repression. Based on household level survey data from Indian Human Development Survey (Phase 1 and 2), I defined civic participation in terms of organizational density, which measures the extent of citizen membership in 12 different kinds of voluntary organization based on cross-cutting markers of identity like caste, religion, profession and gender. Based on Census data (2001 and 2011), district level development is measured in terms of improvement in access to specific household assets (radio/transistor sets, televisions, bicycles, two-wheelers and cars) that give a sense of improved standard of living to the lowest strata (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe) of rural society in conflict areas. Access to education and healthcare service, computed from IHDS and cross checked with Census data, is taken as a proxy for public goods provision at district level. I also obtained data on investment in 6 Industry types: Construction, Energy (Electric), Public, Private-Foreign, Private-Domestic, Mining from the Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy's (CMIE) Capital Expenditure Database (CapEx). I also include data on volume of bauxite, iron-ore and coal extraction for the period 2001-2005 from Indiastat.com. In addition, district level data on Maoist casualty from World Incident Tracking System (WITS) and South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) is used as a proxy for police repression. I do not find any compelling evidence that development/improved standard of living, public service provision, and improved living standards can produce higher rebel retirement. But there is a statistically significant

positive relationship between rebel retirement and organizational density. Thus the findings suggest that rebels are more likely to quit in locations where there is a thriving civic participation. However, this statistical analysis, while useful for testing preliminary intuitions about the role of grassroots democratic participation in rebel retirement, is not useful in uncovering the causal mechanisms.

To explain the vast difference in number of surrender cases in the North and the South, and to uncover the mechanisms and pathways of rebel retirement that explains this difference, I carried out fine grained field research in the two regions, specifically Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh in the South and Jharkhand in the North (known as Paschimanchal-Jharkhand Cultural Zone in Maoist spatial organization). Chapter 4 looks into the process of rebel retirement in the South where both the measure of associational membership as well as surrender of rebels is high. Chapter 5 studies the process of rebel retirement in the North, where both associational membership and surrender of rebels is low. Both these chapters flesh out the causal mechanisms that lead to high rebel retirement in one region and low retirement in the other. To do so, I rely on extensive interviews of current and former rebels, members of different Maoist frontal organizations, their theoretical leaders, police, administrators, ordinary villagers, elected politicians, journalists and human rights activists in the two conflict zones.

I argue that emergence of two different kinds of exit network is contingent on three broad processes (a) pre-war social bases of insurgency (b) organization and mobilization techniques of insurgent groups (c) protracted interaction between democracy and rebel movement in conflict zones. I argue that *exit networks* in the South are ‘harmonic’ in that this rebel-democracy interaction is robust, multifaceted, and protracted allowing an intricate weaving of multiple stakeholders in an amalgam of roles and alliances, who work in sync to build momentum for exit and

manage myriad uncertainties of reintegration. In contrast, retirement is low in the North (Jharkhand/West Bengal) due to the emergence of a ‘discordant’ exit network that is falling apart at the seams due to relentless skirmish among the primary stakeholders, exacerbating mistrust and fear among key players and deterring rebel reintegration. Informal exit networks (harmonic or discordant) grow at the grassroots level, either strengthened through civic participation or stifled by a corrupt nexus dominating the democracy-insurgency interface. In highlighting how social networks compensate for the failings of state institutions in luring rebels back to the democracy, the argument presented here have broader implications for the debates on state-society relationship.

Chapter 2: Setting the Stage: Local Embeddedness of Informal Exit Networks

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the stage for explaining the emergence of two different kinds of informal exit networks, employed by rebels in North and South India respectively, producing divergent retirement outcomes. I delve deep into the historical factors that set the conflict zones on two different trajectories despite being led by the same Maoist party. In this chapter I also show how insurgent organizations as well as the exit paths out of them are embedded in local politics and preexisting class/caste divisions in the conflict zones. I also argue that the democratic allure that draws rebels out of an armed group is forged locally and incrementally via the everyday interaction between democracy and the rebel movement through the leaky walls that separate them. Maoist groups in North and South India, otherwise united in leadership, ideology, broad goals, strategy, and structure, develop locally specific mobilization and recruitment tactics in the face of distinctive social divisions, resource bases, historical learning and target audiences. Moreover, rebel organizational structures, strategies, and tactics in a particular location are not frozen in time; they evolve continually with changing background conditions. I emphasize the importance of the history of an armed movement to understand its strengths and weaknesses, recruitment, and retirement of its rebels. This chapter (and the dissertation as a whole) makes the case that rebel retirement is high in the South, because rebels there led popular mass movements forging a robust democracy-insurgency interface where the rebel grassroots agenda and membership overlapped with democratic civic associations. It is in this overlapping grey area of grassroots politics where harmonic retirement networks emerged in the South. In contrast, rebel retirement is lowest in northern areas where rebels neglected grassroots organizing for greater militarization, creating a

restrictive democracy-insurgency interface where the informal exit network, devoid of popular participation, was discordant (and therefore failed).

This chapter is organized as follows: the next section highlights how the Maoists emerged as the leading faction in communist agrarian struggles in India. In a sweeping overview of the major episodes of communist peasant uprising in India over the last seventy years, I review the persistent precursors of rural rebellion in India. I also show how the mobilization, recruitment, and resistance strategies adopted by Indian Maoists evolved in ways that are distinct from other communist factions in India. I draw upon extensive archival research of Maoist documents, party publications, theoretical treatises, published and unpublished memoirs of Maoist leaders, and my interviews with leaders, members and supporters of various Maoist organizations in India (Mazumdar 1967; Mazumdar 2001).¹⁸ Section 3 highlights the similarities and differences between the northern and southern Maoists. I argue that the Maoists in the North and South are united in organization, leadership and ideology. However, they have grown out of different legacies of agrarian uprisings and distinct local conditions that differ in their underlying caste/class structure. The distinct legacy and local conditions in the North have generated a corrupt, limited, violent insurgency-democracy interface there. In contrast, in the South, a robust, cooperative interface propagates where insurgent mobilization energizes democratic grassroots politics, creating a symbiotic overlap between the two. It is in the underbelly of grassroots civic

¹⁸ The archival research had three main parts: first, at the Taraknath Das Research Center, Calcutta, I was able to access vernacular newspaper reports from the first phase of the Naxalbari uprising in 1967 to the most recent Maoist incidents in West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Second, I was able to access the debates in the CPI(ML) camp that eventually led to fragmentation of the radical left as published in Naxal journals *Deshabrati* (The Patriot), *Liberation*, and the *Peoples' March*. In addition, the *Frontier Weekly* edited by Samar Sen and started in 1968 was the important platform for debate among various ML factions. It is now digitalized and available at <http://www.frontierweekly.com/>. Third I was able to interview the surviving Naxalbari leaders in Calcutta, including Santosh Rana.

life where informal exit networks emerge allowing for rebel retirement. The final section concludes.

2.2 Agrarian Uprisings in India: Emergence of the Maoists

Historically there has been no dearth of agrarian disturbances in India. They were endemic throughout British rule, and go farther back to the Mughals (16th and 17th Century). There are 110 known instances of violent peasant uprisings in 117 years, from 1783 to 1900 (Guha 1999; Guha 1982). Rural uprising has erupted in many forms, ranging from local riots to war-like campaigns that spread over many districts. During British rule, violent uprisings like the Chotanagpur Tribal Revolt (1807-08), Munda Rebellion (1832, 1867-90), Kol Rebellion (1831-32), Santhal Rebellion (1885-86), Rampa Rebellion (1879-90), Madri Kalo Revolt (1898), and others posed a major threat to British administration. In 1946, as India was on the verge of independence from British rule, communist leaders organizing agrarian struggles wanted to make sure that the lingering exploitation of ordinary peasants did not become insignificant and invisible to the indigenous leaders at the time of overwhelming celebrations of national independence.. A July rebellion in South India (Telangana, Madras) was followed by similar uprisings in East India (Tebhaga, Bengal) in September and further South (Punnapra Vayalar, Kerala) in October. Two decades later, however, most of the agrarian issues including rural indebtedness and feudal exploitation remained virtually unaddressed in independent India leading to massive agrarian violence in East and South India in the late 1960s. Most recently, between 2006 and 2008, three more agrarian crises erupted in the state of West Bengal (Singur, Nandigram, and Lalgarh) on issues of land grab and disruptive industrialization, which brought into light persistent agrarian issues and problems of incomplete land reform even in the more modern era.

I argue that while the poorer rural sections, landless laborers, tenants, sharecroppers, and small landholders formed an essential part of the mass base of the Indian National Congress (INC) in its struggle for *swaraj* (self-rule) and *poorna swaraj* (independence), the most militant peasant movements in India have all operated within the ideological framework of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (Herring 1991; Gough 1968; Gough 1974; Panikkar 1989). Even though the theoretical foundations of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism have been questioned and the possibility of an international communist revolution is virtually non-existent (at least in the current sociopolitical environment), the specter of an ‘Indian revolution’ thrives on. In fact, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) re-emerged as “the biggest internal security threat to the Indian state” in 2005 at a time when the Soviet Union no longer existed and the People’s Republic of China had steered itself away from Mao’s vision into a firm embrace of capitalism (Sundar 2011). In the sub-section that follows I provide an overview of these communist-led peasant uprisings in India that highlight the emergence of Maoism as a distinctive faction within the Indian Left.

2.2.1 The Forties: Violent Agrarian Uprisings across India

As India was moving towards independence in the mid-1940s, various parts of the country also witnessed a series of agrarian uprisings. Among them, the Tebhaga uprising in the east, the Warli uprising in the west, and the Punnapra-Vayalar and Telangana uprisings in the South deserve special mention. The *Tebhaga* (literally, three parts) movement of 1946 was a struggle of sharecroppers to keep two-thirds share of their produce instead of just half (Dhanagare 1976; Bandyopadhyay 2001; Sen 1972). It was concentrated in the Jessore and Khulna districts of un-

divided Bengal that eventually went to Pakistan after the partition of India (Panjabi 2010).¹⁹ The idea that the sharecroppers should claim two-thirds of their produce, letting the landlord take only one-third, originated from the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission (published in March 1940) of the colonial British government. The Bengal branch of All-India Kisan Sabha (Communist Peasants' Organization) adopted the idea and quickly mobilized sharecroppers in 19 of the 27 Bengal districts, involving six million peasants within the span of four months (Sen 1972; Rasul 1969).²⁰

During the same time Kisan Sabha led the Warli Tribal Movement (1945-47) in Maharashtra in western India. The organization mobilized Warli tribal communities against bonded-labor, unpaid labor, surrender of half-share of produce to landlords, perpetual indebtedness, and extra-economic exploitation like abduction and rape of tribal women. The landlords were the local face of authority, exploitation and domination, which kept the men under constant fear, so much so that they remained submissive and silent (Parulekar 1975).²¹

In both the Tebhaga and Warli uprisings, violence was not part of the early communists' conscious strategy in confronting the landlords and moneylenders, though incidents of violence

¹⁹ The central grievance that motivated the movement was that sharecroppers, known as *adhiar* (from *adha* meaning half) in North Bengal, *bhagchasi* in other parts of the province, and as *bargadars* in the statutes, had to hand over 50 per cent of the crop to the *jotedar* (landlord) as land rents while the entire cost of cultivation was borne by the sharecropper himself. Historically exploited in the feudal regime, the peasants in the modern day joined the Bengal provincial branch of the All-India Kisan Sabha and the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

²⁰ Some of the most fact-rich writings on Tebhaga are in Bengali. Some examples are Krishna Benode Roy's *Tebhagar Larai*, which is a thin booklet full of rich anecdotes on how the movement started. Sumit Chakravarty's edited work, *Tebhaga Sangram Rajat Jayanti Smarak Grantha* (Calcutta: Kalantar Publications), is a twenty-five year memorial volume on the uprising. The arguments made here are based primarily on the accounts of Bhowani Sen entitled, *Banglar Tebhaga Andolan*, and printed in this edited volume.

²¹ The movement was led by Godavari Parulekar and her husband, Shamrao Parulekar, both urban, educated, members of the Communist Party of India (CPI). The movement was the strongest in the Dahanu and Umbergaon *taluks* (blocks) of the Thane district of Maharashtra, where Warlis formed 55 percent of the total population, and hence the name of the movement.

did occur. In Warli, for example, the farmhouses of landlords were often burned down because tribal women were routinely raped in these houses. These acts of violence against the landlords' property were more manifest acts confirming the activists' self-respect and dignity than an organized expression of their revolutionary zeal to reject the unequal relationship with the landlord, question his moral authority, and overthrow the system and the state. In Tebhaga, as well, the struggle was agitational, not revolutionary, in character, and communist activity was concentrated on enlistment of members, founding of local chapters of Kisan Sabhas, holding provincial conferences and meetings at the district, *taluqa* (block), and village levels, organizing marches, mass demonstrations and rallies, etc. And when they resorted to more direct action, the 'action' was very similar to the one adopted by the avowedly non-violent, non-communist Gandhians, which included refusal to pay government taxes, land revenue, and courting arrests. The communists' altogether lack of group-sanctioned violence stands juxtaposed to the fact that communist movements have no ideological or moral inhibitions against resorting to using force, in whose ideology, in fact, there is a predilection rather than aversion towards the use of force.

The Punnapra-Vayalar revolt, organized against the princely state of Travancore in the southern part of Kerala during ten days of October 1946, was the largest and the only instance of the Indian working class setting up armed enclaves and fighting pitched battles.²² However, despite communist mobilization led by agricultural workers against the corrupt nexus of a feudal landlord and national bourgeoisie, there was no organized attempt at forcefully altering the existing agro-economic structure, property relations, and the nature of the state. In fact, the demand

²² In 1946, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, the Diwan of Travancore, proposed constitutional reforms which the communists opposed as too similar to the "American model" of administration. The communists opposed this move with the slogan "American Model Arabi Kadalil" (chuck the American model into the Arabian sea). The Punnapra-Vayalar uprising was named after the two places in Kerala where it was most intense. It emerged as a continuation of the Coir factory workers strike in 1938 and the Mopala rebellion (by Muslim tenants in Malabar region of Kerala) of 1921.

never shifted from wage reforms, and success was measured in terms of electoral achievements of the communists in *panchayat* (village self-government) elections (Bouton 2014). In fact, the Communist Party was so weighed down by tactical adjustments and confusing signals emanating from Russia that their leadership refused to take a more determined stand on violence and violently changing the status quo (Herring 1986).

Among the agrarian uprisings later in the 1940s, the Telangana movement (1946-1951) stands out as an exception in its use of organized violence against the state and not just the local faces of feudal exploitation. The movement transitioned from being opposed to local landlords, to becoming a resistance against the *Nizam* (King) of the Kingdom of Hyderabad,²³ and eventually against the newly independent Indian state. The primary grievances of the farming community centered around similar economic structural issues as discussed above, like forced unpaid labor, forceful seizure of land by landlords, peasants' dependence on landlords' consumption loans for subsistence, rape of women, extralegal and excessive extortion, and forcible grain levies. The communists organized people into village defense squads to protect themselves from the attacks of the Nizam Police. Eventually, about 4,000 villages in three districts (Nalgonda, Warrangal, and Khammam) became "liberated areas" (called *gram rajyams* meaning village republics) administered outside the control of the Indian state. Local communists redistributed land to the landless, raised guerrilla squads, attacked police camps, prosecuted rape convicts, and expounded women's equality and the abolition of untouchability. However, as soon as the Indian army occupied the kingdom of Hyderabad, the communists withdrew from the struggle abruptly on

²³ Under the patronage of the Nizam, an organization called Majlis-e-Ittehad sent their militant arm known as *razakkars* (paramilitary forces) to plunder, kill, rape, and generally terrorize members of peasant resistance groups.

grounds that they shared rather than opposed the ideological proclivities of Prime Minister Nehru.²⁴

Some of the leaders in Telangana upheld Mao's idea of "New Democracy" in opposition to the 1948 Calcutta thesis that represented the dominant view of the all-India leadership of the Communist Party of India (CPI).²⁵ During this time, CPI General Secretary, B.T. Ranadive, and the peasant leaders of the Andhra region were among the first in the world to debate the legitimacy of Mao's contribution to Marxism-Leninism. When the party leaders like Ajay Ghosh, C. Rajeshawara Rao, M. Basavapunniah, and S.A. Dange terminated the Telangana movement following the victorious march of the Indian army into the princely state of Nizam's Hyderabad,²⁶ the pro-Mao faction strongly resented the party's abandonment of the revolutionary struggle and its squandering of its gains in Telangana to join parliamentary politics (Ghosh 2009).

Inner party resentment became more intense as the Communist Party leadership adopted a resolution condemning "Chinese aggression" during the Sino-Indian War in 1962. The radical left faction within the party decried the war as an aggression by the capitalist Indian state against socialist China. The Nehru government promptly arrested several of these pro-Chinese com-

²⁴ The Communist Party of India (CPI) upheld Khrushchev's thesis of "peaceful coexistence" presented in the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in 1956, which repudiated the need of revolutionary war against class enemies and proclaimed that transition to socialism was possible through parliamentary means. Following Khrushchev's thesis, the Palghat Program (April 19-29, 1956) of CPI paved the way for the party's participation in the Second General Elections in 1957. Subsequently, the CPI government was formed in Kerala. Further, during the Khrushchev-Nehru entente, CPI leadership advocated cooperation with the Congress, which they recognized as a party of "national bourgeoisie" fighting against the principal enemies of imperialism and feudalism on the side of the Indian poor.

²⁵ At the second congress of CPI in Calcutta on February 28, 1948, Ranadive upheld the Zhdanov line of insurrection against Joshi's line of collaboration with Congress. Ranadive's open call for taking up arms is known as the "Calcutta thesis".

²⁶ The Telangana movement, initially organized in protest against the local feudal landlords, soon became directed against the royal family of the Nizam who ruled the state of Hyderabad. People organized into village defense squads to protect themselves from the attacks of the Nizam Police and *razakars*. When the Nizam, aided by the Ittehadul Muslimeen (a Hyderabad-based political party) and its military branch, the *razakars*, resisted accession to India in 1947, the Indian army marched into Hyderabad and defeated the *razakars*. CPI argued against the necessity of the same guerrilla-type struggle when it was fighting against the Congress government.

communists, who conferred in prison to form a separate breakaway communist party. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M), soon became the dominant left party in India. However, the formation of CPI(M) carried within it the seeds of further splits. The pro-Mao radicals within this new party accused the centrist leaders of CPI(M) of undermining class struggle and the revolutionary goal by including peaceful protest as a means of class struggle in India.²⁷ These radicals argued that India remained a “semi colony” because this transfer of power merely replaced the Western imperialists with a local leadership that owed undivided allegiance to their foreign masters. In other words, contrary to the CPI(M) depiction of the Indian bourgeoisie as a national bourgeoisie with somewhat progressive and anti-imperialist character, the pro-Mao radicals insisted that the Indian bourgeoisie was *comprador* (foreign agent) and continued to serve imperial interests.²⁸ The implication of this ideological debate on the character of the bourgeoisie was that while the CPI(M) official position on the national bourgeoisie opened possibilities of selective cooperation with the ruling classes, the Maoists’ characterization of the ruling class as *comprador* made violent struggle inevitable.

Thus agrarian uprising in India in the forties and the fifties witnessed many local instances of heroic sacrifices and even some painstaking grassroots organization in different parts of India. However, the early Indian communists wavered in their use of violence, most drastically evident in the abrupt suspension of the Telangana uprising. The uprising’s suspension triggered furious debates on the appropriate role and nature of violence in agrarian uprisings. Out of this

²⁷ Part VII of the 1964 Party Programme also states that “The Communist Party of India (Marxist) strives to achieve the establishment of people’s democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra parliamentary forms of struggle, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about these transformations through peaceful means.” Quoted from <http://cpim.org/content/party-programme> (accessed on September 12, 2009)

²⁸ Part VII of the 1964 Program held that the party would “not hesitate to lend its unstinted support to the Government on all issues of world peace and anti-colonialism... on all economic and political issues of conflict with imperialism, and on all issues that involve the questions of strengthening our sovereignty and independent foreign policy.” For further details, see <http://cpim.org/content/party-programme> (accessed September 12, 2009)

tussle emerged two separate communist parties: CPI and CPI(M). The newly formed CPI(M), despite moving away from the right-wing old school leaders of CPI, remained fraught with internal tension as the pro-Mao radical left faction within it advocated violent overthrow of Indian democracy rather than participation in it through contesting elections.

2.2.2 The Sixties: Fragmentation of the Indian Left

It was in the context of ideological disagreements on violent revolution versus electoral participation that a prominent leader of the radical pro-Mao faction, Charu Mazumder, fondly called CM, authored “Eight Documents” to help crystallize the alternate political program of the violent radicals.²⁹ Condemning CPI(M)’s electoral participation as revisionism and economism, CM led the Naxalbari uprising in the Darjeeling district of North Bengal in 1967, fortifying hopes of revolution among the radical leftists all over India.³⁰ These were tumultuous times in Indian politics. Economic problems, like chronic food shortages, sharp inflationary price spirals, unemployment, low industrial output, and stagnant rates of public investment, created mounting popular frustration with ruling parties. For the first time since independence, INC was defeated in the 1967 elections in 8 states.

Arguably the most momentous incident in the communist history of India was the aforementioned armed uprising of a group of landless peasants and sharecroppers in the Naxalbari

²⁹ These documents borrowed heavily from the experiences of the Communist Party of China under Mao Zedong. In a feeble attempt to bridge the growing ideological divide between the two warring factions within CPI(M), and to distinguish itself from CPI, the CPI(M) conceded during the 1968 Bardhaman Plenum that the bourgeoisie in India had “dual character” that both collaborates and contends with imperialism. By not explicitly stating which of these two characteristics of the bourgeoisie was dominant, the CPI(M) hoped to prevent another ideological split of the party.

³⁰ Among the radicals, a faction known as the “debatists,” focused on the inner party theoretical polemic to expose the ideological inconsistencies of the CPI(M) path of electoral participation and parliamentary struggle. In contrast, the “actionists,” led by Charu Mazumdar and enamored by the Cultural Revolution in China, advocated that the time was ripe for following up the Naxalbari uprising of March and April of 1967 with nationwide revolutionary armed agrarian movement.

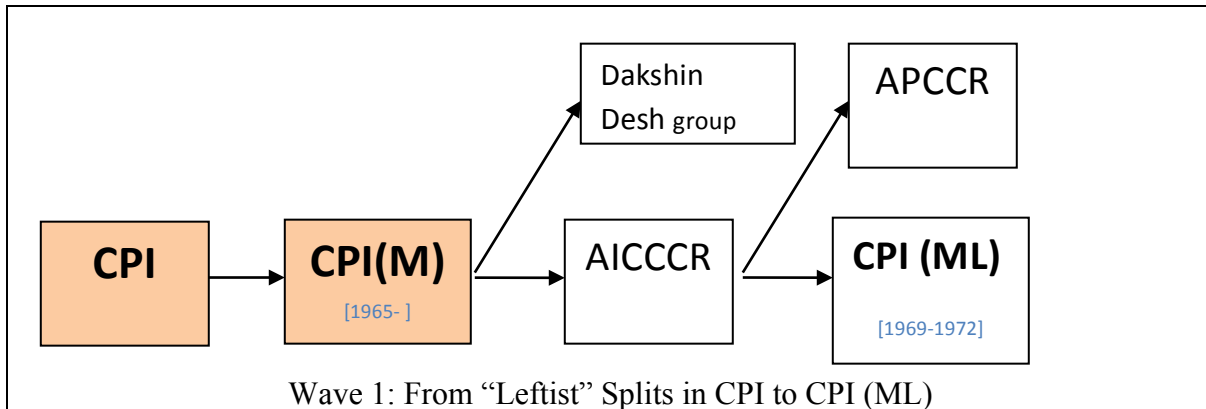
block of Darjeeling district of North Bengal. The landless poor seized plots of land that they had cultivated from landlords and started harvesting the crops they grew, precipitating the first clash between sharecroppers and police/landlord militia in May 1967. This was followed by violent clashes and the forcible seizure of land and confiscation of food grains by armed units of the Kisan Sabha.³¹ The use of violence in Naxalbari, though lower in intensity, scale, and duration than the Punnapra-Vayalar or Warli uprising, it was premeditated by the communist leadership with the long-term goals of structural change in agrarian relations and, ultimately, overthrow of the state.

The significance of the Naxalbari uprising lies in the unleashing of an avalanche of agrarian uprisings attacking the very democratic foundations of the Indian state and not just localized systems of exploitation.³² With the news of Naxalbari spreading to other parts of India (duly aided by Peking radio), CM and his supporters first formed the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) within the CPI(M) on November 13, 1967. Eventually the AICCCR severed ties with the CPI(M) and categorically rejected its parliamentary path in a “Resolution on Elections” on May 14, 1968. One year later, on April 22, 1969, the leaders of the AICCCR in Calcutta decided to form a new communist party called the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) [CPI(ML)] with support from members in the districts of Andhra Pradesh (Srikakulam District Committee), Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The Communist Party of China, formally recognized CPI(ML) in July 1969. Some other radical left factions like Dakshin Desh and a breakaway faction of the Andhra Communists (APCCR) left CPI(M) too in protest against its non-revolutionary, centrist

³¹ The CPI(M) leaders, who were then in power, first tried to pacify the leaders of the movement and having failed, Jyoti Basu, the CPI(M) leader and also the home minister of West Bengal, ordered the police to reign in the situation. Finally paramilitary forces were deployed in the region. The movement lasted for less than six months.

³² They formed a Committee in Aid of Naxalbari and Peasant Struggles in Calcutta as early as June 1967.

politics but they did not join CM. These trends later became part of the current Maoists. The diagram below (Figure 1) depicts the fragmentation of the Indian Left and the most important factions emerging out of it up to the 1970s.



Note: The names in bold font indicate political party. The other factions in the figure are discussed in the next section.

Figure 8

Splits in the Indian Left: Wave 1

Quickly, the CPI(ML) jumped into organizing armed uprisings in parts of Bihar (Mushahari and Lakhimpur Kheri districts), West Bengal (Debra-Gopiballavpur and Birbhum districts, North Bengal region, and in the capital city of Calcutta) and Andhra Pradesh (Srikakulam districts). It advocated the boycott of elections, insurrection by armed squads, and annihilation of class enemies by combat groups. In emphasizing secretive politics and assassination activities, the organization condemned the use of mass mobilization strategies, including trade union activities, terming these as economistic and non-revolutionary (Mazumdar 1967; Mazumdar 2001; Mohan 1971). In a tribal farming community in Srikakulam in South India, communists aligned with CPI(ML), led by two school teachers, revolted against the formidable CPI(M) leadership in Andhra Pradesh and organized forcible harvest of crops and land occupations. They formed guerrilla squads, and on November 25, 1968, in one of the largest uprisings of the time, 250 trib-

al farm workers raided a landlord's house, took out a procession of hoarded food grains, and burned hundreds of documents that fraudulently claimed peasants were indebted to the landlords. By October 1969, the government sent in 12,000 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the movement leaders were arrested, assassinated, or maimed, and the uprising swiftly ended.

A distinctive feature of the armed agrarian uprisings in the 1960s is that, unlike previous episodes, the leadership in these uprisings was convinced that, despite formal independence from British rule in 1947 India, was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country, where *comprador* bourgeoisie was still serving the interests of imperialists. Under such circumstances, grievances of the rural poor were neither coincidental nor local. They were systemic and could only be tackled by systematic violence aimed at complete overthrow of the state and its political-economic infrastructure. The new Indian communists aligned with the CPI(ML) were on a path of protracted people's war, a concept borrowed from Mao Zedong, until a new democratic revolution could be launched in India. They considered violence not a passive self-defense mechanism against ruling class violence, but an integral strategy in their path to liberation through guerilla warfare.

Local leaders joined forces to forge a nationwide strategy of arming and mobilizing peasants, creating rural liberated base areas that would eventually encircle and capture the cities. The radical left leadership of these uprisings rejected parliamentary politics, called for the boycott of elections, and fought against the economism, legalism, and reformism that characterized the Indian mainstream left. Though the Naxalbari uprising and other agrarian uprisings all over India were swiftly crushed, their leadership killed, maimed, or jailed, their significance cannot be clearer as the start of radical Indian politics espousing violent overthrow of the Indian democracy as a solution to agrarian problems.

2.2.3 Twenty-First Century: Agrarian Discontent and New Mobilization

Due to severe repression of communist radicals in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a protracted lull in armed agrarian uprisings in India until the massive land grab by the state of West Bengal to facilitate construction of an automobile factory by the Tata Group occurred in 2006. This land grab threatened the largely agrarian population in Singur, West Bengal.³³ The subsequent resistance movement started with the formation of non-violent civic associations like the *Krishijami Raksha* Committee (Save the Agricultural Land Committee) in June 2006. Violence in Singur was set off by draconian laws passed by state government suspending constitutional rights of free citizens to assemble and protest land acquisition. However, these were only sporadic acts of confrontation with the police or local ruling party operatives, who also belonged to the mainstream left. As soon as the High court declared government land acquisition legal under the 1894 law, recognizing the Tata automobile project as a ‘public good,’ the resistance fizzled out. The Singur uprising, despite its high symbolic value for reviving agrarian resistance in post-liberalization India, was mostly a conservative movement against a specific land grab with no agenda for capturing state power.

The Singur struggle, however, rekindled agrarian mobilization in the adjacent Nandigram block in January 2007,³⁴ where protesters in 28 villages in the region clashed with police for several days and formed human barricades blocking access to their villages. Within a month of the

³³ The town of Singur in West Bengal has very fertile multi-crop land. Agriculture was (and still is) a relatively sustainable economic endeavor, though the majority of the agrarian population (33% directly involved in cultivation) was marginal farmers or landless laborers. Agricultural land was crucial to the livelihood of villagers in Singur, whether directly as farmers, and agricultural laborers or indirectly as vegetable vendors, animal grazers, workers in cold storage, and so on.

³⁴ The Nandigram block, comprising 28 villages with a population of 175,000 people, was selected to be converted into a Special Economic Zone (SEZ): the Salem group was approved to head the establishment of a chemical hub. Nandigram was very similar to Singur: land was multicrop and fertile; over 60% of the population depended on land, directly or indirectly, for livelihood; life was modest, but comfortable; the average landholding was about 1 acre, classifying most farmers as marginal cultivators or landless agricultural laborers.

first uprising, the West Bengal government backed down and declared that there will be no state land acquisition in Nandigram. However, the villagers wanted written assurance from the government and demanded that court cases against protesters be withdrawn. When the CPI(M)-led state government refused, events took a violent turn when state forces killed many protesters, raped women, and unleashed atrocities that catalyzed civilian resistance, until the state government withdrew police forces and instead unleashed CPI(M) party cadres to use unprecedented violence against villagers active in the resistance.

After the Singur and Nandigram uprisings rocked West Bengal in 2006 and 2007, respectively, the Lalgarh uprising began in 2008. Unlike the two earlier uprisings, the population in Lalgarh was primarily tribal and much more impoverished; the area was forested and remote, land not as fertile and agriculture primitive. In 2007, the Jindal group was given land rights to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the area for a steel project. In November 2008, a landmine almost killed the state chief minister visiting the area, which heightened police atrocities against the local tribal population. Soon afterwards, hundreds of tribals armed in traditional weapons descended on police stations, seized arms, destroyed infrastructure, and entered into an armed confrontation with the state. This was distinct from the violent episodes in Singur and Nandigram, because it was a Maoist militant mass mobilization. The Maoists were the most important actors in this mobilization, even though the local population, much like in Singur and Nandigram, formed the People's Committee Against Police Atrocities, immediately after the high profile landmine attack. The area was soon converted into a "liberated areas" with virtually no state control, which lasted up until December 2009, when the state finally regained control.

The Singur-Nandigram-Lalgarh uprisings in the state of West Bengal rocked India in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In analyzing the uprisings, the Polanyi-esque idea of a

‘great transformation’ as a cause of peasant radicalism resonates strongly (Polanyi 2001). The popular uprisings in Singur and Nandigram employed violent agitation methods to resist development-induced displacement. But despite moral outrage, these uprisings merely sought to preserve or resurrect a feudal moral economy that guarantees peasant subsistence. In Lalgarh, on the other hand, the movement went beyond popular uprising against police atrocities and involved organized attack on police camps, hijacking of a popular train and an attempted assassination of the sitting Chief Minister. Mainstream political parties distanced themselves from the Lalgarh uprising even though the socioeconomic condition of the tribal peasants in Lalgarh was worse than that of peasants in Singur or Nandigram.

Summing up, this section highlights the origin and evolution of the Maoist movement in India as it emerged out of the greater communist movement. The grievances that motivated peasants to take up arms remained fairly consistent over the years regardless of who led the country. What distinguished Naxalbari in 1967 and subsequent Maoist uprisings from other agrarian uprisings were not unique gripes or violent means. I argue that preoccupation with classifying struggles as either violent or non-violent is, in fact, misleading. Pushed to the wall in misery and exploitation, peasants everywhere have resorted to violent resistance and heroic acts of sacrifice. But what distinguishes Maoists is that they propound organized revolutionary violence, which targets not the immediate face of exploitation but the state apparatus that perpetuates it. Maoists argue that reforming institutions through compromise and consultation does not eliminate the root cause of class exploitation. They pursue the ultimate goal of overthrowing state institutions and seizing political power. The following two sections elaborate how, despite this shared ideological commitment to the goal and method of armed revolution as well as a unified command structure, the Maoists in North and South India evolved differently due to their distinct ideational

history and heritage, underscoring how insurgent organizations are locally embedded in local socioeconomic and political conditions as well.

2.3 Maoists in North and South India: Similarities and Differences

The arguments and evidence presented in this section illustrate the ideational unity but operational differences between Maoists in North and South India. This section is divided into two parts: the first part underscores the unified command structure of the northern and southern Maoists as well as their shared commitment to ideology of the nature of the Indian state and the appropriate methods of struggle and political-military strategy; the second part highlights how, despite their common leadership, goals, and strategies, the Maoists in North and South India each evolved with their distinctive local conditions such that the legacy of Maoism is distinctly regional. In doing so, this analysis of the divide between North and South Indian Maoists sets the stage for Section 4, which delineates how distinct realities on the ground in the two regions, specifically regarding caste structure and land relations, eventually created conditions for the emergence of regionally-specific rebel exit networks in North and South India.

2.3. 1 Unifying Elements of Maoist Ideology: State, Struggle, and Strategy

Indian Maoists are united in their commitment to three ideological pillars on 1) their understanding of the Indian state as “semi-feudal,” 2) their expectations about the protracted nature of struggle against the state, and 3) their choice of militant mass mobilization strategy in this struggle.

2.3.1.1 Nature of the Indian State: Semi-Feudal, Semi-Colonial

All Maoist factions are united in their characterization of the Indian state as a “semi-feudal, semi-colonial” country. By “semi-feudal” they mean that uneven capitalist development in India has been superimposed on feudal remnants. By “semi-colonial” the Maoists imply that India is not fully independent of imperial control despite official independence in 1947. They argue that the British transferred power to the *comprador* ruling classes who continue to advance foreign imperialist interests over those of Indian citizens. As a result, they advocate a “new democratic revolution” in India, a concept borrowed from Mao, which entails a struggle for “people’s democracy” and liberation from both foreign imperialist and domestic feudal control (Ghosh 2009). Thus Maoists deem the current democratic institutions in India “as an outright fraud framed in the deceptive name of biggest democracy of the world” and build justification for armed confrontation as the only way to restore power to the people.³⁵

The four observable implications of a semi-feudal system are share cropping, perpetual rural indebtedness, landowner as moneylender, and inaccessibility of the market. Indebtedness is a consistent characteristic of a semi-feudal system, particularly because the landlord, after taking away a substantial portion of what the peasant produces, lends some of that back to them as a consumption loan. Thus the peasant is tied to the landowner and the particular piece of land due to this unpaid debt, virtually reducing him to a traditional serf. In this type of economy, the peasants do not have much access to the market – they are not worthy of credit in the commercial banking industry because they have no assets to borrow against. What is more, the peas-

³⁵Other non-Maoist left parties of India critique this somewhat outdated characterization of the Indian state. For example, the parliamentary left recognizes that capitalism, though “slow and uneven,” is the dominant mode of production. Even some ML factions, like CPI(ML) Red Flag faction, active in Kerala, argue that “neocolonial” is a more apt description of the character of the Indian state than “semi-feudal, semi-colonial.” Other factions like CPI(ML) Liberation and CPI(ML) New Democracy, emerging from the *Naxalbari* tradition, while subscribing to the ‘semi-feudal, semi-colonial’ thesis, still participate in state and national legislatures as means of political change. The Maoists consider all these critiques “revisionist;” the other left groups, in turn, dub the Maoists as “left sectarian” and “anarcho-militarist.”

ant-tenant and his family members have to regularly render unpaid labor services. In contrast, in a capitalist system, production is based on wage-labor, it is for the market and not for self-consumption, and surplus value gets invested back in production guaranteeing new research and technological innovation (Bhaduri 1973; Bhaduri 1977; Thorner 1982). In this formulation of capitalist agriculture, landless laborers can negotiate a high price for their labor when their demand is high. Small farmers have access to credit options other than the landlord, and since they are not tied to any particular landlord, they sell their produce to the highest bidder in the market.

Conceiving the Indian state as semi-feudal and semi-colonial has important implications for the Maoists' mobilization. First, it limits the spread of Maoists to primarily rural hinterlands that are weak underbellies of the state with democratic institutions reinforcing rather than replacing deep-rooted feudal structures of exploitation. Second, the Maoists advocate revolutionary violence as the only path to socio-political change when the conditions on the ground are semi-feudal. In remote areas it becomes impossible to differentiate state institutions from traditionally exploitative feudal agencies of landholding and money lending. The Maoists seek to attack the local landlords, moneylenders, forest guards, state police, paramilitary forces, and bureaucrats who together represent the abusive character of the Indian state. These assaults are much more salient in remote tribal villages than in urban areas, because even though economic grievances are as pervasive in urban areas, the state is much more protean in the latter, moving between benevolence, indifference, and inequity.

2.3.1.2 Nature of the Struggle: Protracted People's War

Given this irrevocably exploitative depiction of India as a semi-feudal, semi-colonial state, the Maoists advocate a protracted people's war (henceforth PPW) as "the only correct and appropriate strategy in India for dealing with a superior enemy" by taking advantage of the vast

terrain, weak infrastructure in remote areas, a huge agrarian population, and the internal conflicts in the ruling class. On the military side, PPW denotes an extended and fluid front and bleeds the ponderous war machinery of the Indian state under the strain of tortuous struggle in unfavorable terrain. On the political side, PPW stands for winning popular support in remote neglected parts through sustained mass organizations. Mao conceptualized PPW primarily as a war of Chinese national resistance against foreign (Japanese) subjugation, but the concept of PPW is applied in the Indian context as a political-military strategy of long-term armed revolutionary struggle against the Indian state (Mao 1967a). As long as hunger, starvation, inequality, unemployment, disease, and discrimination exist in India, the Maoists are confident in finding a steady supply of recruits in this “see-saw battle” with the state.³⁶ Further, given their mobile warfare strategy, if the state succeeded in clearing them out of certain pockets, the Maoists would proliferate to other adjacent areas. Thus the Maoist battle call proclaims, “They can kill all the flowers, but they will not hold back the spring” (Mao 1967a).

The Maoists infuse optimism among the foot soldiers that even if the enemy (the mighty Indian state in this case) enjoyed strategic advantage at the beginning of an armed struggle, rebels should persist, consolidate their strength, and grow in battle experience to eventually force the enemy into a strategic retreat.³⁷ Mao conceived PPW in Clausewitzian terms as an extension of politics rather than its alternative. However, PPW is impregnated with the risk of sidelining mass mobilization, without which insurgents fail to generate political consciousness among its

³⁶ This is based on an interview with comrade Katakam Sudarshan aka Anand, Polit Bureau member and the secretary of Central regional Bureau, CPI(Maoist). This article was published in *Maoist Information Bulletin 13*, dated December 7, 2009, which is available on <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPIMIB/MIB-13.pdf> (Accessed on October 2, 2011).

³⁷ For additional reading on the Maoist urban strategy, see the document titled “Urban Perspective: Our Work in the Urban Areas” available at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/Urbanperspective.htm> (Accessed on October 8, 2011)

constituency and public opinion against their purported enemy elsewhere. But it also provides Maoists a clear strategy of recruitment from amongst the poorest of poor, the Dalit (India's lowest class), and the landless, who have little to lose.

2.3.1.3 Maoist Strategy: Militant Mass Mobilization

The current CPI (Maoist) upholds the formation of revolutionary mass organizations as the means to engender public political consciousness in preparation for armed struggle. Militant mass mobilization involves indoctrination of the masses, formation of village defense squads, people's militia groups, and eventually a professional guerilla people's army. The mass organizations that undertake mobilization efforts are distinct from the Party, which remains underground and secretly directs mass organizations and the armed forces. Mass organizations are thus instruments for the revolutionary party to recruit people and raise their political consciousness for an eventual revolution.

The political objective of CPI (Maoist) is to organize a socialist revolution in India through a two-stage process. The first stage, a.k.a. "New Democratic Revolution," includes the overthrow of the current "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" state through a "Protracted People's War" and founding of the "People's Democracy." This lays the foundation for the second stage, socialism, and finally communism. The "New Democratic Revolution" is primarily an agrarian revolution in which the Party wants to exploit the existing class contradictions in Indian society and sharply polarize it into three groups – (a) Motive Forces which will lead and support its objective, (b) Enemy Forces which will oppose its objective, and (c) Middle-of-the-roaders, who are neither enthusiastic supporters nor die-hard enemies. The following table (Table 1) sums up the

class profile of Indian society from the Maoist perspective and highlights what the Maoists consider the most appropriate strategy against them.

Class Name	Class Composition	Position vis-à-vis Maoist Objective
Landlords	Includes rich and middle-class agricultural bosses who own significant amounts of arable land, do little or no farming by themselves, but rent or lease the land and employ sharecroppers and agricultural workers. They often have additional means of livelihood as merchants, agro-based traders, usurers, quarry owners, contractors to local and central governments or large corporations. They are the key backers of the current state.	Enemy
<i>Comprador</i> Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie	Indian “big” capitalists who benefitted from British patronage. They are the key supporters of neoliberal world order. This class also includes the upper stratum of bureaucrats, leadership of major political parties, and some intellectuals and professionals.	Enemy
Urban Proletariat	Class dispossessed of all means of production and compelled to sell physical labor to earn a livelihood. Includes wage earners in organized (both public and private sectors) as well as unorganized sectors (typically, workers in small scale industries, construction workers, and contract and casual laborers in large enterprises).	Motive
Rural Proletariat	Landless peasants including agricultural workers who do not have their own land and agricultural tools and depend mainly on selling their physical labor to earn a living.	Motive
National Bourgeoisie	Middle and small capitalists who neither have any share of state power nor any control over state funds. They are in conflict with and exploited by the <i>comprador</i> bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Politically very weak and vacillating class.	Middle-of-the-roads—some will turn into enemies, some stay neutral, and some support the Maoists once revolution gains momentum.
Semi Proletariat	This class owns limited land or tools. Includes poor peasants, handicraftsmen, carpenters, masons, and mechanics. In urban areas, this class includes street side peddlers (hawkers), rickshaw and auto rickshaw drivers, temporary construction workers, and house servants.	Middle-of-the-roads
Middle Peasants	This farming class owns land and agricultural tools. Does not sell physical labor but does not exploit others. May rent surplus land to landless and poor peasants and employ agricultural workers—but that’s not	Middle-of-the roads

	their primary income.	
Rich Peasants	This class owns considerable amounts of land, but is also involved in day-to-day farming. Over 50% of their income comes from renting lands to landless and poor peasants and they employ a large number of agricultural workers. They may have other means of livelihood too. Unlike landlords, rich peasants are involved in day-to-day farming activities by themselves and do not necessarily support the agenda of globalization, privatization and liberalization like the former overwhelmingly do.	Middle of the roaders—some will support the enemy, some stay neutral, while a small faction will support the Maoists once revolution gains momentum
Petty Bourgeoisie	This heterogeneous group is not a class. It includes small scale producers, small traders, lower level intellectuals including teachers of schools and colleges, students, professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers), lower level management, and supervisory staff in public and private organizations –largely the middle class. It can be divided into three groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A “right wing” section of the petty bourgeoisie benefits from the current state structure and policies of economic liberalization, privatization, and globalization. They generate surplus income. (b) A section of the petty bourgeoisie generates just enough income to support themselves, no surplus. (c) A third “left wing” section of the petty bourgeoisie deals with declining incomes and related drops in quality of life. 	Middle of the roaders – the right-wingers will actively oppose the revolution, while the left-wingers will actively support it, especially when the revolution gains momentum. Intellectuals like teachers and students, professionals like doctors and lawyers, and artisans and traders may be left wingers irrespective of their quality of life.
Lumpenproletariat	Urban and rural unemployed who are actively involved in petty criminal activities, sex trade, human trafficking, and panhandling. While they can be natural allies of communist revolution, their hatred for the current state makes them anarchists, and they are often easily lured by the enemies to counter the revolution.	Middle-of-the-roaders – Maoists have a neutral / cautious outlook towards them.

Figure 9

Maoist Concept of Class Structure in Rural India

The purpose of mass organizations is to sow the seeds of radicalism among the supporters and middle-of-the-roaders, who will eventually nurture and rally around guerrilla forces when they confront the state. As Mao wrote, mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create the conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in the war (Mao 1967b). The Maoists have several mass organizations. The most well-known among them in South India are the *Rythu Coolie Sangham* (Agricultural Laborers Association), *Singareni Karmika Samakhya* (Singareni Collieries Workers Federation), Radical Students Union, and the Revolutionary Writers Association. The *Lok Sangram Morcha* (People's Struggle Front), *Mazddor Kisan Mukti Morcha* (Workers-Peasants Liberation Front), *Jan Mukti Parishad* (People's Liberation Council), and the *Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samiti* (Women's Liberation Struggle Association) operate in the North.

In terms of armed forces, the Maoists have a two-tiered structure—the heavily armed People's Liberation Guerrilla army consisting of full-time combatants and part-time militia squads is supported by smaller village-level defense committees, made up of peasants and other supporters recruited primarily through the mass organizations.

There is an inherent tension in the coexistence of secret Party, trained guerrilla army, and open mass organizations. Even though the Maoists have a detailed blueprint on appropriate mobilization and recruitment strategies, they are compelled to adapt these strategies to local conditions, often due to historical operational strategies of different factions.

2.3.2 Regional Specificities of Maoists: Legacy and Local Conditions

In this section I show that insurgent organizations are locally embedded by demonstrating how the Maoists in North and South India, despite overarching ideological and organizational unity, took different trajectories in mobilization and recruitment, which, in turn, led to emergence of different informal exit networks in the two regions. The Maoists in North India emphasized armed resistance more than building a strong mass organization while their southern comrades painstakingly built robust grassroots networks as a precondition for military mobilization. This section is divided into two parts: the first part demonstrates that the regional specificities of Maoist insurgency were rooted in differences in ideological legacies, and the second section argues that local ground conditions also played a role in the emphasis and operating procedures of the insurgents in the two regions.

2.3.2.1 Fragmentation of the Radical Left in India: Maoist Factions in the North and South

The first wave of Maoist uprising (1967-1972), led by the charismatic Charu Mazumdar (CM) and the breakaway radical faction of CPI(ML), ended abruptly with intense state repression. The short-lived upsurge deployed primarily urban, college-educated, middle-class youths in Calcutta to organize armed agrarian uprisings in far-flung rural areas. The leadership promised swift, bloody revolution in five years through “secret annihilation” of class enemies that perpetrated exploitation and inequality (Mazumdar 1967; Mazumdar 1969; Mazumdar 2001). As the state unleashed police and paramilitary forces, successfully eliminating the entire top and middle level CPI(ML) leadership, including the arrest and suspicious death of CM in police custody in 1972, the CPI(ML) disintegrated into several dozen bickering factions amidst widespread desertions. Over the eighties and the nineties three predominant trends grew out of these factions.

The first trend emerging out of the intense debates and factionalism in CPI(ML) camps staunchly upheld the strategy of secret annihilation without mass organizations. The most promi-

ment leaders and factions of this trend, who worked primarily in the northern pocket, however, eventually abandoned the path of revolution altogether in the nineties to return to electoral politics.³⁸ CPI(ML) Liberation, for example, led the armed agrarian uprisings in Central Bihar, fighting many bloody wars against upper caste militias of big landlords. They established a massive following among the Dalit peasants in the plains of Bihar until they abandoned armed struggle for electoral politics, gradually losing their support base.

The second trend, also concentrated in the North, completely rejected annihilation politics, choosing electoral politics and parliamentary struggle.³⁹ As they merged with the parliamentary left and eventually lost influence in their former strongholds, this trend was unable to influence the gradual militarization of the Maoist struggle in the North through the eighties and the nineties. By the nineties, following their adoption of electoral politics, these two trends in the North lost all support and leverage in Maoist politics. Thus the dominant players in the North

³⁸ The CPI(ML) 2nd Central Committee, formed in 1972 under the leadership of Azizul Haq, Nishith Bhattacharya, and Mahadeb Mukherjee, and represented this pro-CM trend. They supported the Gang of Four line (Mao's wife and her followers) in China, upheld the goal of revolutionary armed struggle in India, and rejected mass mobilization and electoral participation. Soon after formation, however, this faction was further divided when the pro-Lin Biao members led by Mukherjee were expelled from the party. Another important pro-CM, anti-Lin Biao faction (named after Lin Biao, Mao's chosen successor later condemned as traitor) was known as the "Bhojpur Committee." Led by Subroto Dutta (Jauhar), the faction opposed the Gang of Four and supported the leadership of Hua Guofeng in post-Mao China. Rigid in opposition to mass mobilization during its initial period of armed insurgency in Bhojpur (Bihar), this pro-CM group, now known as CPI(ML) Liberation, subsequently plunged into electoral politics. Under the leadership of Vinod Mishra, it emerged as the most successful ML electoral party with representatives in the state assemblies of Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam.

³⁹ Prominent groups in this trend included the CPI(ML) Provisional Central Committee or "CPI(ML)PCC," CPI(ML) Kanu Sanyal and the CPI(ML) New Democracy. CPI(ML) PCC descends from the Bihar State Committee of CPI(ML) led by Satyanarayan Singh, who was expelled from CPI(ML) in November 1971 for accusing CM of left sectarianism. This group, opposed to the Gang of Four and supportive of the leadership of Hua Guofeng and the Three Worlds Theory, was the first among ML groups to contest elections. Kanu Sanyal, the second in command of the Naxalbari uprising after CM, also denounced the left adventurist deviation of CM and formed the Communist Organization of India (Marxist Leninist). His group maintained its own identity and sphere of influence in North Bengal amongst the farmers and tea plantation workers. In the early 2000s, he formed an alternate CPI(ML) by merging with a faction of the Central Reorganizing Committee-CPI(ML) that worked in Kerala and conceptualized the Indian state as a neo-colony, rather than a semi-feudal, semi-colony. Other prominent groups in this second trend were the CPI(ML) Janashakti, which has flip flopped between periods of electoral participation and armed insurgency, and CPI(ML) New Democracy, which participates in elections and has had some success in the states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

post-1990s belong to a third trend emerging from this churning in ML politics that upheld the boycott of elections, rejected annihilation politics, and focused on creating liberated areas through a combination of people's guerrilla army and mass mobilization.⁴⁰ Of the two major factions in this trend, CPI(ML) Party Unity (PU) worked in the North and CPI(ML) Peoples' War Group (PWG) worked in the South.

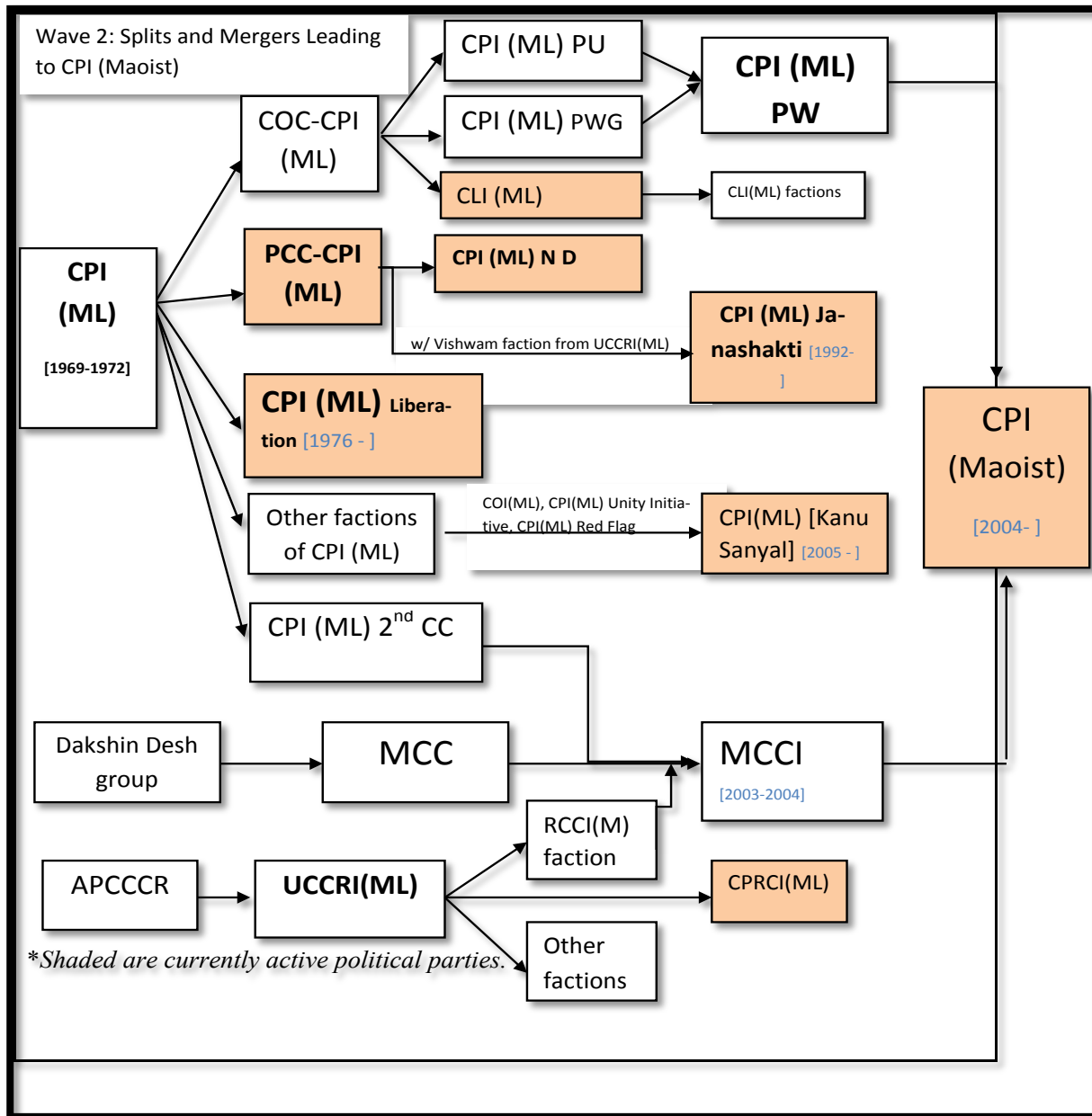
In addition, both in the North and in the South there were some pro-Mao factions that always operated outside CM and his CPI(ML) (shown in Figure 1). Of them the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Committee (APRCC) dominant in the South rejected secret annihilation and advocated grassroots mass mobilization and worker's movement alongside guerrilla warfare.⁴¹ In contrast, the Dakshin Desh faction (shown in Figure 2 evolved into the Maoist Coordination Committee in the North and was the most ruthless and violent Maoist faction. The following diagram shows how different factions of the ML movement divided and united between the 1970s and the early 2000s.

⁴⁰ The CPI(ML) People's War Group (PWG), long-dreaded in Andhra Pradesh, and the CPI(ML) Party Unity, equally feared in Bihar and Jharkhand, were the proponents of this trend. The CPI(ML) PWG was founded on April 22, 1980 in Andhra Pradesh by Kondapalli Seetharamaiah from a faction of CPI(ML) Central Organizing Committee (COC), which descended from the undivided CPI(ML). Another faction of CPI(ML) COC led by M. Appalasuri and operating in Palamau-Jehanabad area of Bihar formed the CPI(ML) Party Unity.

⁴¹ The AICCR met on February 7-8, 1969 and abruptly disaffiliated the APCCCR alleging that they were not loyal to the Chinese Communist Party, that they were not supportive enough of the Srikakulam struggle, and that Nagi Reddy did not resign from the Andhra Pradesh State Assembly (Ghosh 2009). APRCC later split into CPI(ML) New Democracy operating primarily in Andhra Pradesh and the UCCRI(ML) active in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Punjab. One major faction emerging from Unity Center of Communist Revolutionaries of India (Marxist Leninist) [UCCRI(ML)] merged with six other communist groups to form CPI(ML) Janashakti. The new faction retained a fraternal relationship with the Maoists, but never merged. It carried on open mass activities for some time, but later became re-immersed in armed struggle. Currently, it maintains its independent existence in parts of Andhra Pradesh, but has been severely weakened by desertions, state repression, and clashes with CPI (Maoist).

Figure 10

Wave 2: Splits and Mergers in the Radical Left Movement in India



Thus PWG, also known as Peoples' War (PW), and APCCCR dominating the South shared the legacy of emphasizing grassroots mass mobilization as a precondition for successful armed struggle. In fact, APCCCR did not join CM on the ground because he neglected mass organization in his recipe for quick revolution. PW emerged from the Srikakulam group that initially broke

away from APCCR leadership to support CM in his annihilation politics. But after the disastrous defeat in Srikakulam they attributed their failure to resist massive state repression to lack of mass organizations as social safety nets for insurgents fleeing a powerful state. With this realization the surviving PW leaders were devoted to organizing mass movements.

In the North, on the other hand, although PU shared the same ideological legacy as PW and APCCR, there were other dominant northern Maoist trends that did not. For example, the MCC has earned a name for itself as the most violent Maoist outfit that neither developed mass organizations nor raised a people's guerrilla army. They remained an underground organization that ruthlessly punished enemies and suspected informants in brutal beheadings and amputations called for by kangaroo courts, instilling terror among civilians. PU cadres despised MCC as anarchist bloodhounds uneducated in the politics of revolution. MCC and PU became embroiled in two decades of violent turf war, which militarized PU as well (Louis 2000a). The other dominant Northern faction, Liberation, was also embroiled in bloody caste wars against landowner militias in the plains of central Bihar (Bhatia 2005).

Due to sharp ideological differences, mistrust of electoral democracy, and a decade of bloody turf war, the insurgency-democracy interface in the North has been rife with suspicion and mistrust, fear and many secret assassinations. In contrast, Maoist factions in the South, despite ideological differences, have a history of working together, particularly on building a robust mass base. Diverse Southern Maoist factions have worked side by side in mass organizing activities: forging progressive forces and grassroots civic associations from rural areas to college campuses, without fear of ostracism and poaching. In the North, however, this interaction has been severely restricted because the Maoist factions were deeply suspicious of civic actors and terror-

ized them violently, leaving a bloody trail that deterred future collaboration in the democracy-insurgency interface.

Not much changed with the unification of different factions, primarily PW in the South and PU and MCC in the North, into CPI (Maoist) in 2004 even though emphasis on mass mobilization became incorporated as a central Maoist tenet. I argue that mass line, emphasizing open mass organizations alongside secret party and guerrilla army, continues to have very different connotations for rebels in the North and South. The rebels in the North remain suspicious of democracy as an erosive, treacherous trap to be avoided assiduously. Rebels in the South, on the other hand, despite boycotting elections, remain open to exploring agrarian revolution and armed struggle alongside mass mobilization in a way that prepares common people for a protracted revolutionary struggle towards the goal of forcefully overthrowing democratic institutions when the time is right.

2.3.2.2 Pre-War Social Conditions: Democracy-Insurgency Interface in North and South India

The ideological evolution of the Maoists in the North and South did not happen in a socio-political vacuum. There is considerable evidence that pre-existing social conditions which vary in the kinds of social resources they can provide to organizers determine the nature of insurgent organizations (Staniland 2012). In fact, insurgent groups with similar ideologies, ethnicity, state enemies, and even, in this case, organizational unity can grow in dramatically different ways in interaction with their local contexts (Staniland 2014). In this part of the chapter I focus on the mediating role of the underlying social factors, specifically local caste/class structure, in shaping the outcomes of Maoist mobilization in North and South India. I show how southern Maoists were able to mobilize in a way that energized grassroots politics within a democratic

framework, engendering a thriving associational life. In contrast, Maoists in the North, faced with a distinct caste/class structure, were compelled to militarize to an extent that undermined grassroots politics. It is in this distinctive evolution of the democracy-insurgency interface that two different kinds of informal exit networks evolved in the Maoist-controlled areas in North and South India.

[Underlying Caste/Class Structure and The Democracy-Insurgency Interface in the North](#)

In the 1970s, when the Maoists were struggling to establish their foothold in villages around central and South Bihar, the caste hierarchy was divided into three broad groups: the upper castes at the top, the backward castes enjoyed intermediate status, and the Dalits (formerly untouchables) were at the bottom. The upper castes, or rural elites, comprised about 13 percent of the rural population and owned over 80 percent of the land. Although the big landlords belonged exclusively to the upper castes, the majority of these high caste households were small landlords with landholding similar to many upper backward caste rich peasant households. Despite comparable economic status, however, inter-caste marriages were prohibited among upper castes and backward castes. Some backward caste families, in contrast, earned their livelihoods as landless farm laborers alongside Dalits (formerly, untouchable castes) without much social interaction like dining or marrying across caste lines. The Dalits, who comprised 14 percent of the rural population were the rural proletariat, who, due to their landlessness, were historically powerless in local social affairs and invisible in state politics and administration (Frankel 1989; D. Bandyopadhyay 2006; Corbridge 1987).

True to the Marxist theory of mobilization, the Maoists were focused on recruiting and mobilizing along class lines, targeting mostly the landless/land-poor as motive forces against the enemy class of rich landowners. Although Dalits constituted the majority of the rural poor, the

Maoists also enjoyed considerable popularity among the land-poor upper backward castes. However, these upper backward castes, particularly the Yadavs (the single largest caste in Bihar), have converted their numerical superiority into spectacular success in electoral politics in Bihar since the 1990s (Chaitanya 1991; Witsoe 2012; Witsoe 2011; Robin 2004). In fact, the political party based on Yadav identity more than doubled their representation in state legislative assemblies between 1952 and 2002 riding on the wave of popular participation in the electoral process in North India since the late 1980s, described as the “second democratic upsurge” in India (Yadav 1999) and even a “silent revolution” (Jaffrelot 2003). The percentage of upper caste members in state legislatures, on the other hand, halved from 46 to 26 percent (still twice their share of population, 13.6 percent) during the same time (Jaffrelot and Kumar 2012).

The symbolic significance of the rise of the backward castes was enormous, particularly in the villages. The backward caste upsurge also hijacked the Maoists rhetoric of redistribution of land and jobs while also offering greater representation within the democracy (Kumar 2013). Since they virtually promised the same outcome as the Maoists within the limits of legality, eliminating the risks of an armed rebellion, the Maoists started losing their backward castes support base in the 1990s. In fact, as the backward castes got a taste of power within democracy, they used their kinship networks to crush Dalit economic aspirations with severity no less formidable than the upper castes domination of them. The poorest among them also aligned themselves with their caste and kinship networks, because both small and large landowners were fighting the wage increase of the Dalit agricultural labor force.

With their popular support base eroding in the early 1990s, the Maoists also began facing increasingly militant resistance from the landowning, feudal upper castes who, having lost some of their political clout in the face of the rise of the plebeians, were determined to protect their

rural landed interests from Maoist mobilization of Dalits in the villages. In fact, every cluster of 10-15 adjacent villages in northern districts began raising its own upper caste army (locally known as *sena*), led by the locally dominant landowning caste that was devoted to attacking and decimating Dalit neighborhoods (Ashwani Kumar 2008; Das 1986; A. Sinha 1978; Louis 2000a).⁴² The most deadly and infamous of the upper caste private militias in Bihar was *Ranveer Sena* (literally, brave warrior army) founded in September 1994 in Belaur village of Bhojpur district of Central Bihar following the merger of several private caste armies (Arvind Sinha and Sinha 2001; Louis 2000a; Chandran and Gupta 2002).

The caste militias could not have operated with total impunity without active support of powerful caste-based patronage networks pervading political, administrative, and law enforcement circles in Bihar. For example, Bhumihaar (part of the upper caste) landlords had the support of the Congress Party in raising their caste militia called *Brahmarshi Sena*.⁴³ The Rajput landlords in the Congress Party backed the *Kunwar Sena* and the Kurmi caste landlords in the Congress Party backed the *Bhoomi Sena* and so on. Even the upper backward castes, specifically the Yadav among them, had the support of the mainstream left (CPI) in backing the *Lorik Sena*.⁴⁴ Sunlight Sena in South Bihar had the active support of the two-time chief minister of Bihar and of former Governors, elected members of local and central legislatures who all belonged to the

⁴² In the Chhatra-Palamu districts of South Bihar, the dominant Rajput-Pathhan landowning castes formed the Sunlight Sena to counter the most dominant Maoist faction in the region (MCC). Closer to Patna, the capital of Bihar, the Kurmi landowners set up the *Bhoomi* (means, land) Sena. Yadav landowners set up the *Lorik Sena*. Rajputs in Bhojpur set up the *Kunwar Sena*, and the Brahmins set up the *Ganga Sena*. Mere forty kilometers from the state capital city of Patna, *Kisan Sangh* set up its armed wing, the Kisan Security Tigers, patronized by Janata Dal.

⁴³ It had the blessings of 'King' Mahendra, former MP, MLAs like Abhiram Sharma, Sardar Krishna Singh of Arwal, Jagdish Sharma and others, with the present Congress Legislative Party leader, Ramashraya Prasad Singh, then a powerful Minister, backing them in Patna.

⁴⁴ CPI leader and Member of Parliament, Ramashraya Singh Yadav, had, in the meanwhile, set up the Lorik Sena, exploiting the linkages between the Yadav landowners and the contractor-caste criminal combine to take on the left squads.

landholding Rajput caste.⁴⁵ Former Prime Minister name? and defense and home ministers of India belonging to the rightwing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were among the patrons of the Ranveer Sena.⁴⁶ Thus prominent upper caste politicians in opposing political parties across the left-right ideological spectrum joined hands to offer patronage and protection to these caste-based militias.

The Maoists did not back down in the face of escalating violence, a frenzied arms race, and a succession of devastating hate crimes in rural Bihar. The MCC was the first to establish military domination over upper caste landowners in 500 villages in South Bihar by sponsoring extraordinarily vicious massacres of upper caste landlords, the most brutal of which was organized in the summer of 1987 (the Baghaura-Dalelchak massacre) killing 54 upper caste men in a small village. The Maoist army identified every single upper caste (Rajput) man in the village, from 6 months to 87 years, threw some of them alive into a bonfire set up in the middle of the village, and chopped off the heads of the rest with blunt axes, forcing the women to witness. Then they drenched their standing crops in their blood and burned down their houses. This incident frightened upper castes everywhere in the North, and panic pervaded the upper caste networks in the police, legislature, and administration, setting off an avalanche of upper caste retributive carnage across other parts of Bihar (Sinha and Sinha 2001; Jaoul 2011; Sahay 2008; Louis 2000b).

⁴⁵ Prominent political personalities in support of the Sunlight Sena included Ram Naresh Singh, MLA and later MP, who was close to Satyendra Narain Sinha, former two-term Chief Minister of Bihar, and belonged to the princely Deo family of Aurangabad. Among other well-known patrons of Sunlight Sena were Bhisma Narain Singh, of the Manatu family of Palamu, former Governor of Tamil Nadu and Tripura. Ram Naresh Singh was looked upon as a savior of the Rajput landowners of the erstwhile Palamau Paragana and Chatra regions. Ram Naresh Singh's alias was Lootan Singh: *Lootan* means one who loots or grabs. He started his career as a wagon breaker, and later went on to become a contractor.

⁴⁶ In 2015, evidence came to light that many BJP leaders, including Murli Manohar Joshi, C. P. Thakur, and former PM Chandra Shekhar were complicit in the Bihar Dalit massacres committed by the Ranvir Sena, while the backward caste governments of Nitish Kumar, as well as his arch rivals, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi declined to order investigations into the massacres despite knowledge of them.

Upper caste kinship networks also mobilized unprecedented state resources for counterinsurgency against the Maoists in the North, both in the form of repression and development initiatives. To add to this was a highly controversial decision by upper caste Chief Minister in 1986 to arm the landlords against the rebels. By the 1990s, every village in Bihar was armed to the teeth. Thousands of licensed guns exchanged hands in rural Bihar, creating a booming black market of weapons. The enormous and growing arsenal of both licensed and illegal arms spewed a deathly arms race between state-backed upper castes and the Maoist army of Dalits and other poor. Thus the democratic state in the North, with all major institutions from politicians, bureaucrats, and judges down to village police officers, became implicated in daily bloodbath, orchestrated mostly along caste lines. State counterinsurgency against the Maoists became indistinguishable from illegal rampages of upper caste militias, particularly given overlap of personnel, shared camps, and arms.

As illegal firearms became freely available, private gangs of arms smugglers, drug dealers, and traffickers recruited themselves into various Maoist factions. In this feverish escalation in the countryside, the Dalits sought protection of the Maoist groups. However, they became suspicious of non-Dalit Maoist cadres and leaders, disrupting the cohesiveness and military capability of the insurgent organization. In addition, some rebel factions started running protection markets, whereby they offered protection to isolated individual landowners in specific regions for hefty payments, or in exchange for some land or guns. This tactic later took on the form of an

extended protection racket, and competing Maoist factions clashed among themselves in turf wars, and over these protected landowners.⁴⁷

Landlord militancy here built on caste loyalties, and caste militias pitted against Maoists vitiated rural Bihar in multiple layers of police and gang violence, political and administrative corruption, and a mockery of rule of law where lawmakers and law-breakers were indistinguishable from each other (Jaoul 2011; Sahay 2008; Chaitanya 1991). The ordinary people in the villages as well as the urban middle class permanently deserted the Maoists in the middle of the growing militancy in the North. Broken connections with civil society were further exacerbated when some rebel factions became embroiled in a fraudulent network of police-politicians-bureaucrats-smugglers in a corrupt business of extortion and rent-seeking that further terrified and alienated ordinary people. Thus the Maoists lost their revolutionary credibility, the state lost its legitimacy, and their interface became permanently implicated in a vicious cycle of corruption and violence.

Underlying Caste/Class Structure and The Democracy-Insurgency Interface in the South

In sharp contrast, the democracy-insurgency interface in the South evolved very differently, creating multiple crosscutting networks of collaboration that flourished through the porous leaky walls that separated them. I argue that the underlying caste/class structure in the South, shaped by previous left agrarian uprisings, allowed the Maoists there to pursue successful militant mass mobilization against the Indian state without getting sucked into a violent death spiral that amplified body counts and alienated common people.

⁴⁷ This has become a norm in Bihar. See "Where blood is flowing along the Sone": HT/Patna, February 28, 1999. "Exit Policy for landowners," HT/Patna March 12, 1999. "Police tormenting them more than the Naxalites" HT/Delhi, March 1, 1999. "PWG circulates hit list for selective killings", HT Patna, January 30, 1999.

While caste is no less significant in Southern politics (Elliot 1970; Kohli 1988; Vaugier-Chatterjee, Jaffrelot, and Kumar 2009; Karli Srinivasulu and Sarangi 1999), unlike parts of North India, the upper caste (Brahmins) lost their pre-eminent position in Southern society as of the 1930s due to a strong, homegrown anti-Brahmin movement (Irschick 1969; Ramaswamy 1978). Further, upper castes in the southern pocket of Maoist influence (corresponding primarily to the state of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh) also constituted merely two to three percent of the state's population and, due to a head start in education, they had been severing their rural ties by divesting their landholdings and migrating to urban areas since the 1950s.

However, the resistance came from non-Brahmin caste groups, such as the Reddys, Kammas, Kapus and Velamas, whose main occupation had been cultivation and were the most important social groups in the state in terms of numerical strength, land control, and access to political power.⁴⁸ Their socioeconomic status in the villages was comparable to the rich peasants of the upper backward castes (Yadav or Kurmi) in the North. However, unlike their Northern counterparts, they were classified as forward castes in the South. The Reddys, who represented about 8–10 percent of the state's population, were the most prominent among the forward castes primarily because of their firm base in agricultural wealth (Khan, 1969), their early exposure to European education, and substantial economic advancement. These factors enabled them to shed feudal values, challenge Brahminical dominance, and join the communist party in the Telangana region in the South (Suri 1996; Ramakrishna 1993; C. J. Baker and Washbrook 1975; C. Baker 1975; Irschick 1969). In addition, there were about fifty backward caste groups constituting

⁴⁸ The Kammas made up about four to five percent–5% of the state's population, but they are mostly concentrated on the coasts, which is outside the purview of this study. The Velamas constituted another one to two percent of the population. They are as wealthy as the Reddys and the Kammas and are concentrated mainly in the two Telangana districts of Karimnagar and Khammam and in the northern coastal district of Visakhapatnam. The Kapu caste constitutes 10–12 percent of the population and forms the caste base of one of the largest regional parties in the South (Telugu Desam Party).

about 36 percent of the population in the South.⁴⁹ The motive forces of the Maoists in the South were the Dalits, who were the lowest in caste hierarchy, comprising approximately 16 percent of the state's population and working primarily as agricultural laborers. The Maoist support base was primarily made up of the Malas and Madigas, the two foremost Dalit castes that constituted more than 90 percent of the state's Dalit population (Thirumali 2003; Rao 1979).

The pattern of landholding in Telangana was exceptionally concentrated and exploitative. The largest Reddy landlords were known as Deshmukhs/Dora, a combination of feudal lord and revenue official, with control over land as well as land records, which made them powerful arbiter of destinies of thousands of peasant-cultivators. Below them were the rich cultivator-owner class, who were financially well off but socially inferior to Doras (Iyengar 1951). Both the feudal lords and rich peasant classes belonged to the same forward caste groups, Reddy and Velama (Iyengar 1951).

Paradoxically the landowning Reddy peasants targeted by the Maoists in the South were the primary supporters of the communist agrarian uprising in Telangana back in the 1940s. The Reddy peasants had sought recognition as liberal, moderate, reformist representatives of the non-feudal agrarian sector (variedly described as small landlords or rich peasants or market integrated rural rich) against upper caste Brahminical domination. The urban intelligentsia, students, and nationalist elements of the communist alliance were always ill at ease with them (Elliot 1970). But when the first phase of agrarian uprisings in Telangana ended abruptly in October 1951, the Reddy communists, true to their class interests, stopped short of robust land reforms. Once they

⁴⁹ These castes have been given reservation under the Other Backward Castes (OBCs) category since 1961. Out of the 50-odd backward castes listed by the Indian government, the major ones are the Yadava, Gowda, Padmasali, Rajaka, Mangali (who call themselves Nai Brahman), Kamsali (Viswa Brahman), Mudiraju, Boya, Waddera, Uppara, Kummari, Kammari, Medara, Pallekari (Agnikula Kshtriya), Perika, Gandla, Bhatraju and Kalavanthavulu.

redistributed land from feudal lords to Reddy cultivator-owners and broke the power of the traditional elite, they retained a very high landholding ceiling of 50 acres, which let them emerge as the new rural landowning class (Appu 1975; Khusro 1958; Pavier 1974). The failure of the communist uprising in Telangana led to a split in the communist movement in India, with moderate factions defending these small gains and radical Maoist factions advocating the renewal of armed agrarian struggle to redistribute lands further down to the landless Dalits.

The South also saw little agricultural advancement because of soil conditions and limited irrigation. Very few landlords, even in the 1980s, had tractors or cultivated anything other than paddy and millets, which were of the traditional variety rather than the fertilizer-hungry high-yield variety. The surplus appropriated by landlords was not transformed into productive capital but instead was either consumed or “invested” in mercantile activities like Public Works Department contracts, wine shops, and real estate. The land-poor and landless in the South, given their recent communist tutelage, were deeply conscious of land inequality and resentful of their former Reddy comrades, who gradually abandoned communism for a greater share in political power in the centrist Congress Party that had hijacked the policies of the mainstream left. Besides the Soviet Union also approved this bonhomie between mainstream left and the Prime Minister Nehru’s Congress Party due to Nehru’s pro-Soviet stance in macroeconomic and foreign policy of newly independent India. However, Congress Party rule in Andhra Pradesh became synonymous with “Reddy Raj” (rule of the Reddys). In the first 13 out of 16 years of Andhra Pradesh as a separate state (1956-1972), not only was the state ruled by Reddy chief ministers, but also the most important portfolios in various state departments were distributed to Reddys (Bernstorff 1973). As the Reddy political capital was on the rise within democracy through the

eighties and the nineties, the backward castes and Dalits consolidated their village-level local extra-democratic political clout by riding the rise of Maoists.

The Maoists built a potent movement around the abolition of feudal practices, particularly the customary treatment of the Dalit castes as feudal farm-servants and bonded labor. The Dalit farm workers were paid daily or annually, but their wages were not calculated based on their labor-time. They were forced to do an indeterminate amount of non-productive chores in addition to productive work. In addition, the landlords routinely sexually abused the toiling class women, and working men were not allowed to wear a shirt or shoes in the presence of the *dora* (landlord).

One of the strongest weapons in the anti-feudal struggle has always been what they call “social boycott.” When the toiling classes unleashed social boycott of landlords and police camps in villages, the entire village stopped service to landed families – the latter were deprived of cooks, wet nurses, cattle feeders, agricultural labor, washermen, barbers, etc. Social boycott was often sufficient to bring the landlords to their knees and was generally the first tactic employed in most villages. To the poor, low caste villagers, social boycott was the revolution. They had learned to accept a hundred shoe-floggings if they as much as held their heads up in the presence of upper caste landowners. By challenging entrenched social norms of caste domination, the Maoists enlisted the loyalty of the majority of backward caste and Dalit villagers. The Maoists considered it an instance of successful anti-feudal struggle, but to the common people accumulated miseries and anger from caste exploitation was the driving force in the southern villages (Thirumali 2003; Pavier 1974).

Another remarkable phenomenon during the first armed uprising in the South in late 1940s was revolutionizing the institution of “*Panchayat*”. *Panchayat* (village local government) is a traditional institution in the villages of the Telangana region, where any petty dispute is publicly adjudicated with the landlord presiding, and, of course, passing judgment. Panchayats were usurped by armed rebels, the landlords’ authority was displaced and the revolutionary peasants took over the running of *panchayats*, and, in many cases, put the landlords on trial. Shaken by the strength of the movement, a lot of landlords fled to the cities (Balagopal 2006).

The rural proletariat was still submerged in this semi-feudal agrarian system, while the rich Reddy landowning peasants started divesting funds to agriculture-related businesses – seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and in fact to usury and money lending (*girgir* banks in Telangana) and investments in urban institutions like schools and colleges, hospitals, and real estate. This was in addition to their already existing hold over civil and excise contracts they enjoyed due to the political patronage of and control over the regional power structure (K. Srinivasulu 2014).

I argue that the Maoists were able to pursue persistent militant mass mobilization in Telangana because the rural elite were neither able nor willing to match Maoist military domination and area control. The landed class was not able to fight bloody caste wars with the Maoists, like the landlords did in North India, because they were weak and divided in villages. Second, given their political clout and economic diversification (delayed Green Revolution), the Reddy landlords were unwilling to get trapped in massive bloodshed to maintain their rural domination. Instead they preferred to migrate to urban areas and invest agricultural income in profitable enterprises in entertainment, education, or real estate (Prasad 2015; Simhadri and Rao 1997). In addition to high economic clout, the political clout of Reddy landlords also enabled them to earn considerable income by acting as brokers in various government development projects. Specifically,

the landlords reinvented themselves as “village elders” who negotiated with government and international development agencies on behalf of the villagers and graciously accepted what are modestly called “expenses” in return for their services (Balagopal 2007; Balagopal 1990).

The biggest strength of the Maoists in the South was their ability to bridge the rural-urban divide through a painstaking network of grassroots organizations. The Maoists recruited locally. The Dalam members (lowest unit in Maoist organization hierarchy) and commanders, even the area commanders, were all local rural residents. The district and state committee secretaries rose through extensive training in combat and in villages before they were promoted to leadership positions. A popular annual ritual in the Maoist Party emphasizing the importance of local villages were the “Go to Village” campaigns.⁵⁰ These campaigns were meticulously planned structured training programs for the Maoists’ urban cadres. During their summer breaks, hundreds of students attended an intense one-week political school before breaking into smaller groups of about seven to go to villages selected by the Party. The students spent approximately one month in villages with instructions to launch intense propaganda toward peasants on specific agrarian issues and the larger politics of agrarian revolution. They lived in the poorest households and familiarized themselves with the day-to-day hardships of the rural proletariat.

The student-organizers of “Go to Village” campaigns noted names of potential activists among the peasants and passed those names on to local party organizers who followed up with these individuals. By 1980 the Radical Youth League (RYL) was built in villages by these peasant-activists, who later helped trigger historic peasant struggles in the region. Six years after it

⁵⁰ In Hyderabad students rallied around the Rameejabi rape (in police custody) case, in Kakatiya University it was against the Hindu fundamentalists, in Bellampally in support of the workers strike, in Mahaboobnagar in support of the hotel workers - also there were state-wide agitations on ITI and Polytechnic students’ issues and a statewide strike for students demands for better social welfare benefits.

started, the ‘Go to Village’ campaigns had sent 150 propaganda teams of 1,100 students to 2,419 villages.⁵¹ By the mid-1980s, the Maoist students’ organization, Radical Students Union (RSU), had established a significant presence in 18 of the 21 districts of Andhra Pradesh, with hand-picked efficient, locally respected leaders recruiting and mobilizing ordinary people in their local battles.⁵²

It is through these student unions that Maoists in the South trained a dedicated urban intellectual cadre and support base. Some of them eventually quit the movement and grew into prominent positions in academia, activism, media, art, literature, business, law enforcement, bureaucracy, NGOs, and political parties. Many of these former Maoists have not become deradicalized; instead, exploiting their Maoist training in political articulation and grassroots organization, they pursue their progressive political agenda in various democratic platforms. The Maoists in the South have also extended issue-based support to democratic struggles of the progressive democratic grassroots movement, with an aim to recruit and cultivate leadership and opinion-makers within these movements who would push the agenda towards the left, create a crisis, and precipitate a confrontation that exposes state brutality.

This has generated an embedded horizontal network of citizens within democracy who support the extra-democratic endeavor of Maoists while simultaneously working in their respective capacities to demand greater political and administrative accountability. This engenders a vibrant, robust interface between democracy and insurgency in the South, where everyday poli-

⁵² In the 1982 student elections the RSU achieved unprecedented victories in Osmania University (Hyderabad) and in the towns of Warangal, Karimnagar, Nalgonda, Mahaboobnagar, Adilabad, Guntur, Chittoor, Kurnool, Cuddapah, and Khammam district. These election victories further facilitated the spread of revolutionary politics in educational institutions. The inaugural functions, cultural events, all became centers of revolutionary enthusiasm spreading the movement to every corner of the state.

tics straddle legitimate/democratic and illegitimate/rebel politics with ease. It is in these shadowy underbellies of civic associations that informal exit networks for rebels emerge in the South.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a historically grounded analysis of the divergent progression of the Maoist organization and politics in two conflict locations in North and South India. The first part of the chapter traced the emergence of Maoist politics in India through many fragmentations in the Indian Left. I showed that despite unifying ideology and organization, the Maoists in the North face underlying social conditions, including a rigid caste/class structure and landlord militancy, that are very different from the conditions in the South. Northern Maoists have responded to their local challenges with increasing militarization, which disrupts their support bases, and the creation of corrupt networks of bureaucrats-politicians-police-mafia, which act as an impediment of rebel retirement and reintegration. In contrast, southern Maoists have been able to build massive mass organizations bridging the urban-rural divide in a way that has energized grassroots politics and civic associations within democracy, fostering harmony and cooperation in the insurgency-democracy interface. It is in the shadowy underbelly of democratic associational life that informal exit networks facilitating rebel retirement grow in the South; these same types of networks do not exist in the North.

Chapter 3: Origin of Rebel Retirement Network: Probing the Explanatory Factors

3.1 Introduction

*“As the naxal problem has arisen on account of real and perceived neglect, deprivation and disaffection, mainly towards the downtrodden, the solution should aim at providing gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to the surrendered naxalites so that they are encouraged to join the mainstream and do not return to the fold of naxal movement.”*⁵³

-Preamble to Surrender-cum- Rehabilitation Scheme, Government of India

The How does a democracy wean youths away from extremist groups and back into the mainstream? As is evident in the quote above, the Indian government emphasizes on creating improved living conditions and livelihood opportunities to induce surrender of rebels and to facilitate their rehabilitation. Bringing a wide literature on insurgency into conversation with a relatively recent literature on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of rebels, I show in the introductory chapter that policy makers mostly assume that rebels quit when effective repression causes high enough rebel casualty and simultaneously targeted development in conflict zones offers access to improved standard of living and public services. On the one hand, brutal repression resulting in heavy casualties is expected to increase desertions. On the other hand, improved standard of living and livelihood opportunities are expected to entice rebels to re-embrace the benevolent state.

This benign-brutal face of India’s counterinsurgency program is encapsulated in the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) adopted by the union government of India to tackle the spread of Maoists in India. The four key elements of IAP are surrender-cum-rehabilitation scheme (SCR), secu-

⁵³ The policy document titled Guidelines for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation Scheme of Left Wing Extremists of Government of India is available at http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/SCRGuideline_22012016.pdf

urity (law and order), development, and public perception management.⁵⁴As cited in the opening quote above, the SCR scheme is based on two central assumptions: first, social and economic grievances are root causes of Naxal/Maoist uprising; second, development and targeted welfare will alleviate these gripes and encourage rebels to return to the mainstream.

In the introductory chapter I have mapped out how retirement of Maoist rebels tends to vary across states, and within states across districts. This thesis argues that rebel retirement is not driven by improved living standards, public service provision or repression. Rebels succumb to lure of democracy that, in fact, works at the grassroots. Extensive civic participation creates opportunities for rebel return to mainstream through availability of informal exit networks that flourish in the gray areas of democracy and safeguard life and livelihood of retired rebels. The purpose of this chapter is to test how civic participation fares in explaining rebel retirement compared to the other mechanisms –improved standards of living, improved public service provision and repression.

I use district level data on Maoist surrender over a period of ten years (2005-2014) in all Maoist affected states of India, derived primarily from the South Asia Terrorism Portal, but also cross checked with official surrender data made available by the Ministry of Home Affairs of the government of India. Over the years, numerous reports have surfaced, detailing episodes of fake surrenders in which ordinary villagers with no criminal record or petty criminals with no Maoist connection have been paraded by the police as extremists. The trend is at its worst in Chhattisgarh, where even senior officers within the police establishment have raised questions about the genuineness of surrenders. However, given the proclivity to project surrenders as achievements and the state government's willingness to ignore such charges made even by insiders, such poli-

⁵⁴ The Ministry of Home Affairs published the IAP at http://mha.nic.in/naxal_new available on June 7, 2016.

cies are likely to continue with the objective of amplifying the state's achievements. Conflict data is often controversial, and this case is no exception. The subsequent section details how I triangulate data from various sources and correct for individual cases of over reporting to eliminate systematic errors in my dependent variable and obtain the best possible approximation of subnational variation of surrender incidents.

The data for explanatory variables are derived from various sources. I use household level survey data collected from India Human Development Survey (Phase I and II) for data on civic participation, measured in terms of membership in various civic organizations. I draw data on household assets and public service provision from census of India (2001 and 2011) and district level data on landholding from Agricultural Census of India. I get data on repression measured in terms of percentage Maoist casualty from World Incident Tracking System (WITS) and South Asia Terrorism Portal. The constructed dataset is then used to analyze the impact of development indicators, repression and social networks on the surrender of Maoist rebels in India. The India Human Development Survey includes questions on membership in various organizations, trust in government institutions and participation in government based on responses from 44,000 randomly selected individuals in about 320 districts collected in two phases (2005 and 2011-12). I collapsed the individual responses to obtain the district-level mean response on membership of various associations (caste groups, religious groups, womens' groups, *panchayat* office, professional groups, agricultural co-ops etc) as well as trust and participation in various government institutions. I construct a district-level variable called organizational density (*orgdens*), which is then ordered as high, moderate or low to measure grassroots civic participation and act as proxy of grassroots-level lure of democracy in a district. A high *orgdens* would imply high civic participation in a district than a moderate or low *orgdens*. When the ordinary people are members of

multiple organizations, the high contact is more than less likely to foster informal networking to facilitate local peace by safeguarding life and livelihood of rebels who wish to return. Thus I expect that rebel retirement is higher where *orgdens* is higher.

My analysis reveals that organizational density within a district has an effect on the number of retired rebels. When controlling for area and population of the district as well as the percentage of SC caste population, an organizational density level of 3 affects the incident rate by a factor of 1.9. Thus in district with the highest organizational density we expect almost twice as many rebels to retire compared to a district with the lowest level. Therefore, we conclude that organizational density is an important influence on the motivation to retire from the rebel movement. This effect is also stable when we control for the other influences as well as under the IHDS 1 and IHDS 2 data set.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2 discusses the measurement and data sources of the dependent variable. In the next section I discuss how I operationalize lure of democracy as civic participation and how I measure civic participation. Social relationships that link individuals to others may be institutionalized, working through objective linkages created *via* joint membership in formal organizations or through subjective linkages like confidence in various institutions of democracy. I create a variable organizational density measured by extent of organizational membership. Organizational density, signifying civic participation, is a formal/objective measure of lure of democracy at the grassroots. High confidence in state institutions is a formal/subjective measure of high democratic efficacy and its lure for extremists. The purpose of the statistical analyses undertaken here is to ascertain if lure of democracy explains rebel retirement and to discriminate between two different mechanisms of civic participation and confidence in institutions. Section 3 discusses operationalization and measurement of alternative ex-

planations of rebel retirement in terms of development, investment, mining, public service provision and repression. The following section, Section 4, describes my hypotheses and empirical model. Section 5 then presents my main results and robustness tests. The final section concludes.

3.2 Dependent Variable

To test my argument about whether civic participation, development and repression have an effect on the extent of rebel retirement, I create a district level data on Maoist surrender over a period of ten years (2005-2014) in 318 districts of ten Maoist affected states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, generally referred to as the Red Corridor. Of these 318 districts, a total of 77 districts have been reported as affected by Maoist insurgency. (See Appendix for list of affected states and districts) Of these 77 affected districts, retirement of Maoist rebels has occurred at least once in 43 districts over ten years. Over 75% of these retirement events are, however, concentrated in 14 districts in 6 states. The data on rebel surrender is taken from South Asia Terrorism Portal database, which, based on reports of Maoist surrender in the print media, presents district-level surrender data in various Maoist-affected states.⁵⁵

The SATP data roughly matches roughly the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) data on surrender of Maoists between 2005 and 2012.⁵⁶ In 2013 and 2014, however, SATP data on surrender is disproportionately higher than MHA data. In 2013, while the MHA reports a total 671 surrender events, SATP reports 1950, of which 1765 were in one district (Koraput) in Odisha

⁵⁵ It is sometimes argued that some Maoist rebels might have returned without the police and media knowing about it. It is suggested that rebels just quietly quit and come back without going through the ritual of surrender. Based on my interviews with police, administrators, rebel leaders, civil liberty activists I assert that in the period of this quantitative analysis (2005-2014) police vigilance in villages in conflict zones is so high that no one can stop being Maoist and quietly slip back into mainstream without going through the surrender process. Therefore, I consider the surrender data is a very good approximation of total desertion.

⁵⁶ In my conversation with Ajai Sahni who oversees data collection in SATP, he suggested that it is possible that some surrender incidents were not reported in the national media, but logged in police records. MHA, based on police records, can be slightly higher than SATP.

between April 6 and 17. Further investigation of the underlying media reports show that SATP wrongly counted return of tribals belonging to a landless labor organization (Chashi Mulia Adivashi Sangh, CMAS) to their villages as Maoist surrender.⁵⁷ In 2014, SATP records 651 surrenders in Chhattisgarh compared to MHA data of 157. SATP overestimates surrender in Chhattisgarh because of exaggerated media reports that the state hit the jackpot in securing rebel surrender by advertising generous offers in its new surrender policy in BBC radio, which the Maoists regularly tune into.⁵⁸ Subsequent media reports and widely publicized interviews of activists and academics working in Chhattisgarh has, however, raised doubts on the spiked up surrender data of 2013.⁵⁹ As a result I excluded these extreme observations, that had a strong effect on the size of confidence intervals around the regression line, was excluded from further analysis. (Figure 1, in Appendix).

3.3 Lure of Democracy: Operationalization and Measurement

That democracy is the most suitable form of governance is no longer a subject of scholarly debate. The procedural minimum definition of democracy emphasizes regular, free and fair elections in which participation and contestation is open and guaranteed. (Dahl 1971; Sen 1999)

But for the purpose of this study, I argue that the lure of democracy that weans rebels away from

⁵⁷ The MHA does not recognize CMAS, a popular tribal organization, as Maoist. 1765 surrender over a few months in a single year is political propaganda by state governments. I cross checked with police and bureaucrats with work experience in Koraput and Malkangiri. For example, in 2013, during my meetings with R Vineel Krishna, who was abducted by the Maoists when he was collected in Malkangiri in Odisha, he confided that such abruptly high surrender is highly unlikely. He doubted if there were as many Maoists in the area.

⁵⁸ Naturally suspicious of All India Radio(AIR), the rebels are known to prefer BBC because BBC has done reporting from the Naxalite heartland in Chhattisgarh with a reporter stationed in Bastar.

⁵⁹ See, for example, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/chhattisgarh-cops-stage-fake-surrender-drama-for-publicity/story-xzD95wjiquePZbYeZWnqzpM.html> and activist reports <http://scroll.in/article/775849/ground-report-the-truth-about-chhattisgarhs-recent-maoist-surrenders> . BBC's Suvojit Bagchi, who has worked on the Maoists in Chhattisgarh for many years, well known Gandhian activist Himanshu Kumar, and renowned academic Bela Bhatia alleged in independent conversations that Chhattisgarh police faked those high surrenders. The state government and administration had received a lot of flak in the past for its failure to secure rebel surrender. Many tribals peddled as surrendered Maoists in Chhattisgarh do not even have criminal records, despite draconian policing known for arresting anyone on mere suspicion.

Maoists work not through the ritual of elections but through less visible micro political processes that transpires between a banned rebel group and democracy locked in a protracted conflict. The states and the rebels perpetuate a discourse portraying zero sum battle between them separated from each other in watertight compartments. In reality, however, they co-evolve shaping a grey zone between them, where rebel retirement transpires through informal exit networks that, depending on the dynamics of democracy-insurgency interaction, can encourage or stifle rebel retirement and reintegration.

Formation of these informal exit networks in India cannot be understood without reference to the “participation explosion” in the nineties whereby elites felt compelled to include large groups of politically marginalized population. (Dreze and Sen 2002) This participation drive at the bottom, it has been argued, fosters an ‘associational political culture’ forging new grassroots connections between the local and the state that keeps a exuberant democracy from exploding at the seams. (Almond and Verba 1963) I argue that the democratic allure for rebels in India thrives in the cobweb of these micro-level political processes of civic participation. A lot has been written on multidimensionality of associational political culture under the rich conceptual umbrella of social capital. The 2X2 table below shows four distinct conceptualization of social capital.⁶⁰

	Informal	Formal
Objective	Social Networks	<i>Organizational Membership</i>
Subjective	Interpersonal Trust	<i>Confidence in Institutions</i>

⁶⁰ Based on Reeve Vanneman, James Noon, Sonalde Desai, Social Capital in India: Networks, Organizations and Confidence, Working Paper no. 4, IHDS, available at <http://ihds.info/sites/default/files/SocialCapital.pdf>

Figure 11

Conceptualization of Social Capital

In this study, I use formal social capital (organizational membership and confidence in institutions) as proxies for lure of democracy for extremists who desire to quit. The informal social capital, in the form of trust and social networks, reflect more an individual's position within the community and her individual linkages to the powerful than on the characteristics of an individual's immediate context. In contrast, formal social capital is more contextually/geographically rooted, depending on the presence of organizations in the local area, without which individuals can hardly become members or feel confident about them.⁶¹ Local variation in the availability of specific organizations and in performance of democratic institutions, especially in a developing country setting like India, should make organizational memberships and confidence in institutions the most locally determined aspect of social capital.

Much research on social capital approaches it as either a property of individuals “embodied in the relations among persons” (Coleman 1988) or as a feature of the community and the degree of civic engagement and trust among its members. (Putnam 1995) Following Putnam, I argue that as ordinary people get involved in voluntary organizations they also create norms and build trust, which creates spill over of cooperation on other issues of local importance. Social capital at community level has been linked with outcomes such as economic development (Inglehart 1997), crime (Lederman, Loayza, and Menendez 2002), subjective reports of well-being (Narayan and Cassidy 2001), political mobilization (Krishna 2002), and household welfare

⁶¹ In the extreme case, individuals can create new organizations, but the social capital literature agrees that overwhelming numbers of memberships are the result of individuals joining pre-existing organizations. While we can expect systematic differences between individuals who join and do not join organizations, these differences are irrelevant when the organizations are not available to join. So we can expect that where formal organizations are relatively rare, memberships depend more on the characteristics of an individual's immediate context than on the characteristics of the individuals themselves.

and poverty (Grootaert and Narayan 2004). I argue that high community level social capital measured by high incidence of membership in voluntary organizations is likely to foster informal citizen cooperation to safeguarding the life and livelihood of returning rebels. This promotes local peace and stability, prevents further loss of lives and makes democracy a viable option for rebels who want to quit.

I also examine if rebel retirement co-varies confidence in democratic institutions the other formal dimension of formal social capital. The underlying intuition here is that in a climate of high popular confidence in democracy, the higher is the lure of democracy as a viable alternative. By operationalizing an objective and subjective measure of democratic allure, I hope to distinguish between causal mechanisms of lure of democracy.

I use data from nationally representative survey (Indian Human Development Survey) of 41,554 households in India, which measures all four dimensions of social capital.⁶² I focus on organizational membership (objective, formal) and confidence in institutions (subjective, formal) as appropriate proxies for capturing variation of local democratic allure because they are contextual and are expected to show maximum variation across space.⁶³ A household's social position is far less important for organizational memberships than its locational context. This is consistent with the interpretation that what matters most for organizational memberships is whether these

⁶² The India Human Development Survey (IHDS), jointly organized by researchers from the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi, is a nationally representative, multi-topic survey of 41,554 households in 1503 villages and 971 urban neighborhoods across India. The first round of interviews was completed in 2004-5; data are publicly available through ICPSR. A second round of IHDS reinterviewed most of these households in 2011-12 (N=42,152) and data is publicly available.

⁶³ The social networks component (objective, informal) of the survey asks respondents about their ties to acquaintances and relatives who worked in medicine, education, and the government, and record yes/no responses. I excluded this measure of social capital as proxy of democratic allure as it is measured more as an individual characteristic than a political phenomenon. I exclude trust because the survey reports that it feels comfortable abandoning measure of trust by the most commonly used question - "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in life?" - because respondents chose to answer "both" in most cases.

organizations exist in the local community. The presence of these organizations varies greatly over local areas so the primary determinant of memberships is geographic location.

In order to measure group membership, survey respondents were asked if anybody in the household was a member of any of nine types of religious, festival or social groups, caste associations, self-help groups, credit and savings associations, women's groups, unions, business or professional associations, youth, sports, or reading groups, co-operatives, or a development non-government organization. (see Appendix, Table 1). I collapsed the individual responses to obtain the district-level mean response to the questions on organizational membership to create a variable (ORGDENS) that ranges on a scale of 0-3, with 0 signifying low organizational density and low civic participation and 3 high value of both.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Most of the variables measuring membership of various organizations (ME1-ME10) used for the construction of this variable are positively correlated with dependent variable. Some ME variables used in construction of ORGDENS are slightly negatively correlated, possibly causing problems with the interpretation of the relationship between DVa and ORGDENS. Within the data from IHDS#1 the magnitude of negative correlations is low enough to not cause any problems. With IHDS#2 the problem is more severe. The variables ME2, ME3, and ME11 are negatively correlated with DVa, compared to the others which are positively correlated. This is discussed later in results.

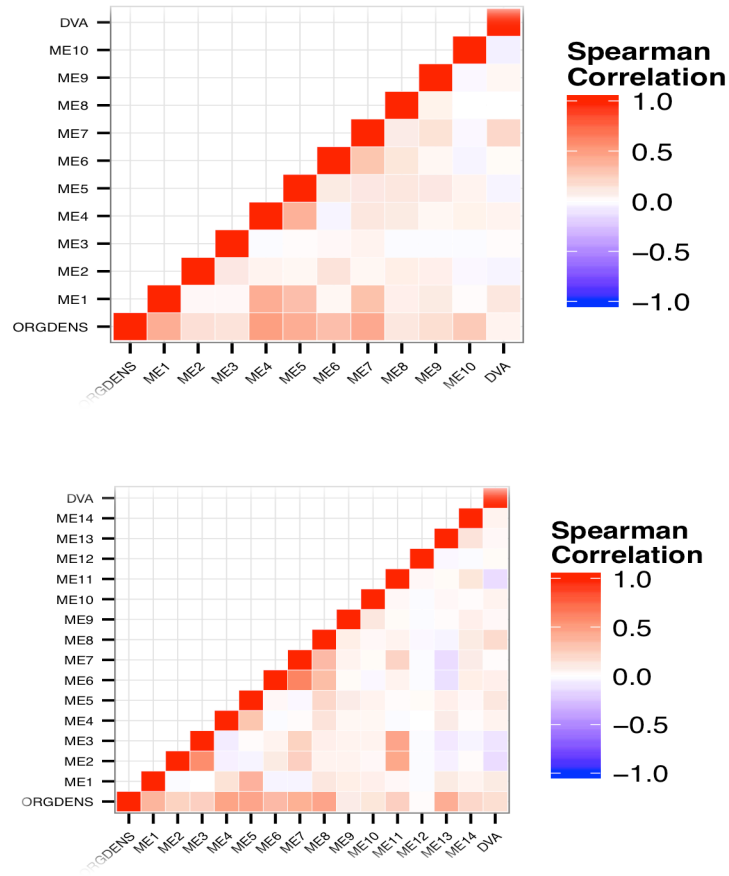


Figure 12

Construction of ORGDENS variable: IHDS-I (top) and IHDS-II

In order to measure confidence in institutions respondents were asked how much confidence they had in ten important institutions in Indian society. (see Appendix, Table 2) They were given choices of “a great deal of confidence”, “only some confidence”, or “hardly any confi-

dence at all”. Analysis revealed that the principal division was between households who had “a great deal of confidence” and the other two responses.⁶⁵

In the survey population confidence in institutions is *negatively* correlated with organizational memberships, although the association is weak (-.06). A principal assumption in the social capital literature is a generally positive association among its various aspects. However, there is a slight tendency for Indian households with better networks and high memberships in various organizations to have less confidence in institutions. In our sample too, truncated for Maoist affected districts, the constructed variable ORGDENS is slightly negatively correlated with the variable CONFINST.⁶⁶

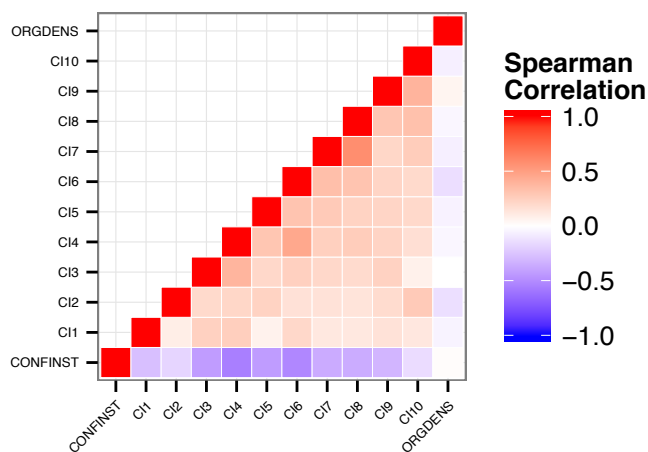


Figure 13

Correlation between organizational density and confidence in institutions: IHDS I

⁶⁵ Most confidence was reported for banks (90%) and the military (87%), followed by schools (67%), medicine (63%), courts (55%), newspapers (37%), panchayats (local governing bodies, 33%), the state government (27%), police (22%), and politicians (11%).

⁶⁶ C19 (confidence in court) is the only institutional confidence variable that is slightly positively correlated with constructed factor ORGDENS in IHDS I. In IHDS II, C10 (confidence in banks) is the only confidence variable positively correlated to ORGDENS

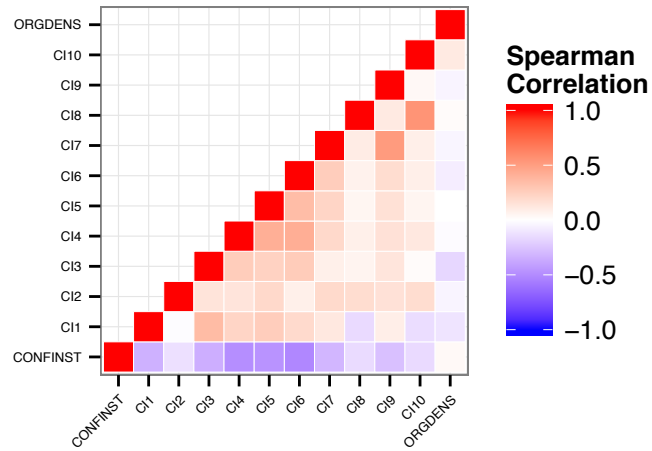


Figure 14

Correlation between organizational density and confidence in institutions: IHDS II

Following construction of the primary variables of interest that proxy for lure of democracy, I ran a correlation analysis to obtain a preliminary intuition of the relationship between the constructed variable measuring organizational density and the dependent variable of rebel retirement, , which, as shown in the graph below, confirmed a positive correlation between organizational density in both phases of IHDS and my dependent variable of rebel retirement.

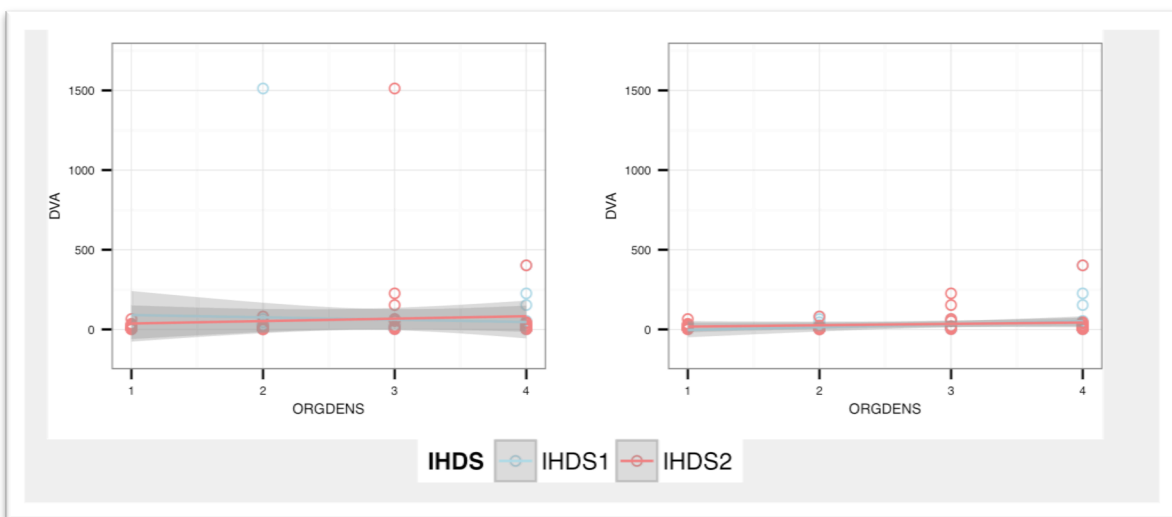


Figure 15

Correlation between Rebel Retirement and Organizational Density

3.4 Development and Repression: Alternative Explanations of Rebel Retirement

In the previous chapters, I have discussed that the early Maoists faced swift, efficient response by the Indian state, which combined brutal repression with benign development and welfare policies. Policymakers tasked with tackling the spread of Maoist movement in India focus on development in the form of industrialization as well as targeted welfare programs that likely improves living standards and creates livelihood opportunities.⁶⁷ Simultaneously the government also launched an all-out offensive by state police and national paramilitary forces to hunt Maoists down from their remote hideouts. Improved life and livelihood combined with severe repression is expected to wean youths away from the path of extremism.

3.4.1 Impact of Development on Rebel Retirement: Conceptualization and Measurement

The planning commission of India, as well as successive central and state governments, has advocated the rooted-in-poverty hypotheses of political violence, which considers insurgency an expression of socioeconomic discontent and desperation. (Piazza 2006) It is assumed that since ordinary people living impoverished conditions join extremists groups, poverty alleviation will lure them back to the mainstream. This is the flip side of Berman et al.'s (2011) general assessment on 'hearts and minds', stating that citizens may choose to support a violent challenger to the state if service provision is poor. I do not use income or GDP as measures of development.

⁶⁷ The most well-known exposition of this viewpoint is the report titled "Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas: Report of an Expert Group to Planning Commission" available at http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/publications/rep_dce.pdf

In order to assess how development impacts the extent to which rebels quit in some locations versus others, I measure development in terms of indicators that ordinary people in conflict zones consider meaningful and desirable signs of socioeconomic status. I also include variables measuring public service provision in terms of access to health and primary education services that is often mentioned as desirable goals in surveys in rural India.

Policy makers often cite development as the panacea of all ills. It is a widely shared sentiment that poor, low caste and tribal groups failed to benefit from economic reforms and the expansion of the industrial economy in India (Banerjee 2005; Banerjee 2009). Development, however, is a double-edged sword, which has a tricky relationship with political violence. While targeted development is expected to wean extremists, uneven development and development-induced displacement is also diagnosed as its cause. (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; Baviskar 1999; Auvinen 1997)

This is a common, if somewhat inconsistent, formulation in the literature on Maoists: on the one hand, we have the development-induced-insurgency reading, which suggests that the Maoists are tapping into popular frustration with strip-mining in the forest and land-grabs by greedy corporations. In a lyrical essay, Arundhati Roy alleges that Maoists are heroic defenders of *adivasi* (tribal) way of life in the face of merciless encroachment by corporate mining.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Maoists leverage development to their advantage by running parallel extortion and kidnapping. A thesis that has found support in some recent scholarly studies is that mining areas are more prone to Maoist insurgent activity than non-mining areas because it creates conditions favorable for Maoist rent seeking activities and extortion industry. (Hoelscher, Miklian, and

⁶⁸ Arundhati Roy. "Walking with the comrades," *Outlook India*, March 29, 2010.

Vadlamannati 2012; Miklian and Carney 2010) Thus I highlight four different ways in which retirement is expected co-vary with development.

3.4.1.1 Development as Access to Household Assets

First, development, it is hypothesized, can lure rebels back into the mainstream by increasing access to specific household assets that give a sense of improved standard of living to the lowest strata (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe) of rural society in conflict areas. Based on Census of India data (2001 and 2011), I measure this formulation of development by a variable (DIFFHHASSETS) that captures difference in aggregate rural SC/ST household access to radio/transistor sets, televisions, bicycles, two-wheelers and cars at district level. In this argument, development is expected to positively impact our variable of interest. The household assets increased in almost all districts, besides two. Preliminary analysis shows that there appears to be no strong correlation between DVa and the difference in household assets.

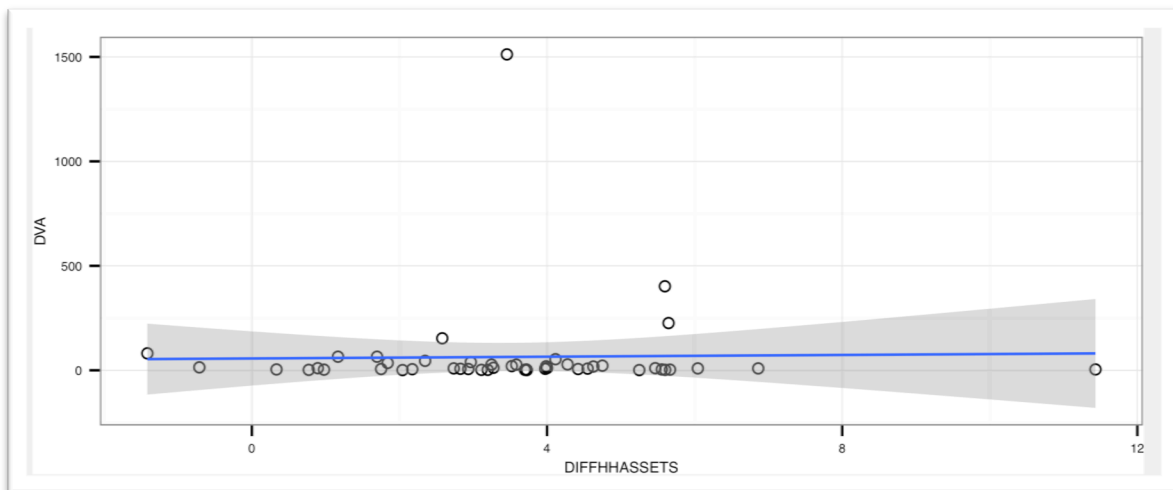


Figure 16

Correlation between DIFFHHASSETS and Rebel Retirement

3.4.1.2 Development as Access to Healthcare

In policy circles, better public service provision, measured in terms of access to health and education services, is the second understanding of development that is expected to increase rebel retirement. The IHDS questionnaires in both phases ask whether a respondent saw a doctor, a nurse, a pharmacist or none in case of minor illness to measure healthcare access. Healthcare service is a good proxy for public goods provision that requires cooperation across multiple levels of government. In addition, there is enough evidence that citizens themselves consider access to healthcare as critically important public goods and indicator of progress and modernization. (A. V. Banerjee and Duflo 2007; A. Banerjee and Duflo 2009) As shown below the correlation between rebel retirement and access to healthcare is very weak in phase I and slightly negative in phase 2.

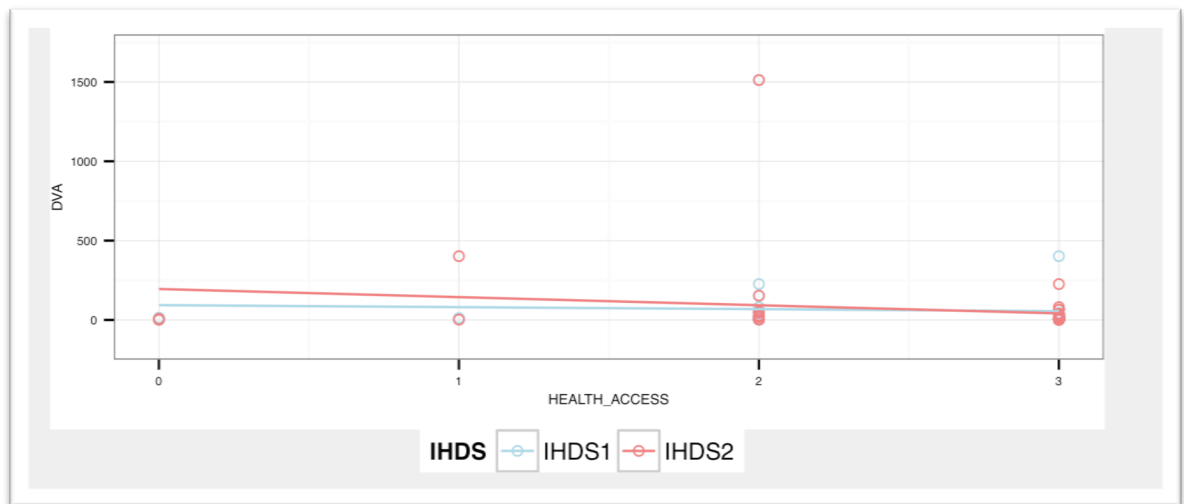


Figure 17

Correlation between Rebel Retirement and Healthcare Access

3.4.1.3 Development as Access to Education

The data on access to education exhibits enough spatial variation for a meaningful interpretation. The variable measuring access to education is constructed by taking into account the highest education level of both male and female members, and not merely presence of schools in the vicinity of a household. Access to education is a primary public service of importance in rural India. (Barakat and Urdal 2009; Datt and Ravallion 1998) I collapse household data to district level to construct an index measuring the access to education on a scale of 0-3. In the Maoist affected districts there are several districts with a very low literacy rate and a few with a high value of literacy. Literacy has slightly improved from survey 1 to survey 2. Preliminary analysis, however, shows that correlation between rebel retirement and access to education (variable name literacy) is slightly negative.

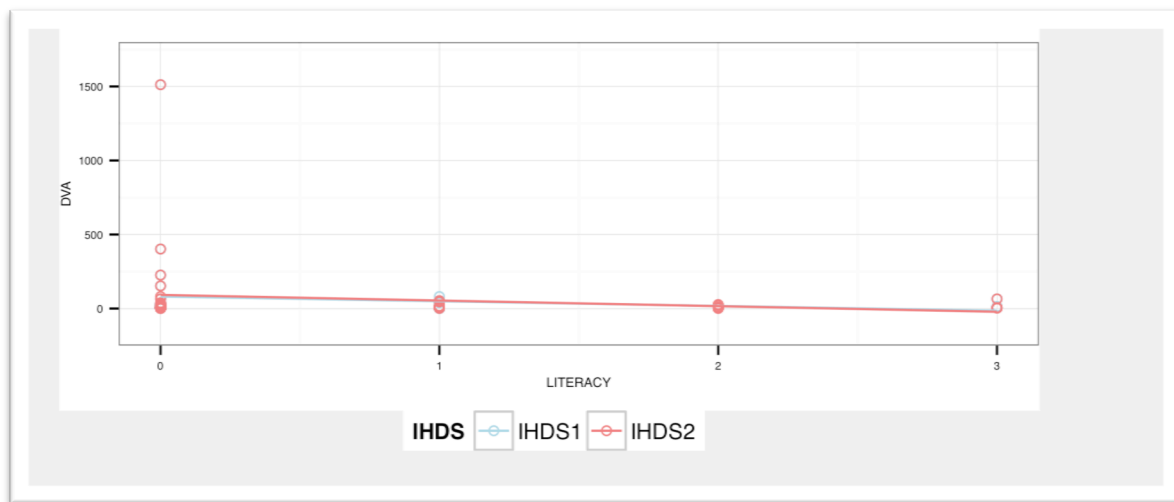


Figure 18

Correlation between Rebel Retirement and Access to Education

3.4.1.4 Development as Industrialization

The hypothesized impact of industrialization on retirement is dubious: development-induced displacement is expected to have an adverse effect on rebel retirement while increased employment opportunities can encourage rebel retirement. I obtained data on investment in 6 Industry types: Construction, Energy (Electric), Public, Private-Foreign, Private-Domestic, Mining from the Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy's (CMIE) Capital Expenditure Database (CapEx).⁶⁹ I find that there is a slight negative correlation between the dependent variable and investments in the electric industry and a positive correlation between dependent variable and investments in construction. Other investments do not appear to be correlated with dependent variable. The scatter plots showing correlations between various investment variables and rebel retirement are attached in the appendix.

3.4.1.5 Development as Mining

In the regression analysis undertaken in this chapter I also include data on volume of bauxite, iron-ore and coal extraction for the period 2001-2005 from Indiastat.com. All mining data is given in levels, with 0 representing no mining and 11 representing high levels of mining. The data on crude petrol exhibits a low level of variance and is excluded from analysis. Preliminary scatter plot (in appendix) suggests a slightly negative correlation between the coal mining and retirement.

⁶⁹ The CapEx database contains cost and ownership information on projects at different stages – announced, under implementation, completed, abandoned, stalled – across a wide variety of industries at the level of a district. The amounts invested in various industries are very heterogeneous for all types of investments. The approximate time period covered by the database is from the mid-1990s to the current year. For purposes of this analysis, all projects that had a date of announcement before or during 2009 were included – projects in all stages were included in the analysis in order to maximize coverage. As the industrial classification of the different projects in the CapEx is at a significant disaggregated level, the particular classification from CapEx was matched against the National Industrial Classification (2008) categories (major industries [E.g. Mining] and their sub-categories [Coal-Lignite]) published by the government of India.

3.4.2 Impact of Brutal Repression on Rebel Retirement: Conceptualization and Measurement

The evidence in the literature on repression and political violence is at best indeterminate. Policy makers seem more convinced than academics that inflicting high casualty on rebels suppresses insurgency, and in this case, will likely increase desertion and return of remaining rebels. Some have argued in favor of a linear function whereby repression dampens recruitment by raising the costs to individuals of joining insurgent organizations.(Tullock 1971) Others have specified a concave function whereby participation peaks at intermediate levels of repression but declines thereafter. (Gurr 1970) Still others have claimed that the relationship between repression and rebellion is convex: higher levels of repression increase resentment and, therefore, repression feeds protest and rebellion, reducing retirement. In this argument, repression against its own citizens reduces legitimacy of the government, politicizes the apathetic, and radicalizes free riders into revolutionaries, thereby spreading conflict. (M. I. Lichbach 1987) Wood also argues along similar lines that rebels successfully incorporate the government's indiscriminate violence into their appeals to recruit more supporters. (E. J. Wood 2003)

In order to test if repression affects retirement, I measure repression in terms of Maoist casualty, obtained from National Counterterrorism Center's World Incident Tracking System [WITS] until 2009, and from South Asia Terrorism Portal between 2010-2014. Since development and repression work in tandem it is difficult to isolate their impact on the extent of rebel retirement.

3.4.3 Control Variables

The data for the controls come from the 2001 Indian census the India Human Development Survey (IHDS). I control for three main sets of alternative explanations.

3.4.3.1 Geography

I included controls for the population and the size of a given district because the state is typically thought to have a harder time rooting out the Maoists in larger districts. Since Maoists are generally thought to control more remote areas and to use the forest for cover, we included controls for the percentage of a district's area covered by forest.⁷⁰

3.4.3.2 Ethnicity and land inequality

I included controls for the percentage of the population that is comprised of scheduled castes (Dalits) and scheduled tribes (tribals), as these are the main aggrieved groups who have taken up arms against the state. (Urdal 2008).

3.4.3.2 Crime

The IHDS also provides data on how people felt about crime in their vicinity, asking respondents if they heard about theft (variable LC1), break ins(LC2), threat at knife point (LC3), street harassment of women in their area (LC4) over the last 12 months. However, I noticed in preliminary analysis (in appendix) that there is not much variation in this crime data between the two surveys. I also found that variables LC1, LC2, LC3 are positively correlated with our preliminary explanatory variable of interest organizational density (orgdens) while LC4 is negatively correlated. That is intuitive because high perception of crime leads to voluntary neighborhood

⁷⁰ The Maoists acknowledge that the forested and hilly tribal areas — and not the plains — are currently the focus of their attention: ‘The forests and mountainous areas quite naturally get priority as these are the strategic areas where Base Areas can be set up’ (Ganapaty and Kisan 2004).

watch programs where ordinary people take turns to guard neighborhoods at night. In construction of the crime variable, I exclude LC4 to avoid confusion in interpretation of results.

Descriptive statistics of all explanatory and control variables are provided in the Appendix, Table 3. As the objective is to run a regression analysis, the correlation between the *RTRMT* variable and the control variables as well as the correlation within the control variables are investigated. (Appendix, Table 4) All control variables besides the percentage of SC population is positively correlated with the *RTMRT* variable. Moreover, the *forest_cover* is strongly correlated with *ln_pop*, *r_pct_sc*, and *r_pct_st*. To avoid multicollinearity, *forest_cover* is excluded from the analysis, as the other controls are more relevant to explain rebel retirement. Also *r_pct_st* is strongly negative correlated with *r_pct_sc*. Since *r_pct_sc* has a stronger correlation with *RTMRT*, *r_pct_sc* is retained and *r_pct_st* is excluded from the analysis.

3.5 Hypotheses and Methods

I argue that rebels quit through informal exit networks that, depending on whether they are harmonious or discordant, can either reduce or exacerbate the fear and uncertainties of the dual processes of retirement and reintegration. I take the variable *orgdens*, constructed as described above on a scale of 0-3, as a proxy for lure of democracy. A high value of *orgdens*, measured by high incidence of membership of voluntary organizations, is likely to foster harmonic exit process producing an outcome of high retirement and reintegration. In contrast, a low value of *orgdens*, measured by low incidence of civic participation, is a proxy for unavailability of exit networks, and is expected to produce low surrender. I also test the alternative explanations of rebel retirement in terms of development and repression, operationalized as described in

the previous section. Based on the discussion so far, I derive the following testable hypotheses summarized below:

H1 (testing if organizational density matters for rebel retirement): A high rebel retirement is expected in those districts where organizational density is high.

H2 (testing if improved standard of living matters for rebel retirement): A high rebel retirement is expected in those districts with an improved access to household assets (transistor radio, television, bicycles, two-wheelers, cars).

H3 (testing if improved public service provision/healthcare matters for rebel retirement) A high rebel retirement is expected in districts with an improved healthcare access.

H4 (testing if improved public service provision in terms of access to education matters for rebel retirement) A high rebel retirement is expected in districts with improved access to education.

H5 (testing if investment in industrialization matters for rebel retirement) A high rebel retirement is expected in districts with high investment in industrialization.

H6 (testing if mining activities matter for rebel retirement) A high rebel retirement is expected in districts with high mining activity.

H7 (testing if high casualty matters rebel retirement) A high rebel retirement is expected in districts with high Maoist casualty.

Given the nature of the dependent variable – widely skewed with a large proportion of zeroes – I used negative binomial regression models. One could also use OLS but there are many values of 1 and 2 for *RTRMT*, which might bias the estimator. Another model of count data is the Poisson

regression. However, the assumption that the conditional variance is equal to the conditional mean is violated. The sample size limits the number of independent variables that can be tested as well as the chances to find significant effects. Therefore, we will pay more attention to actual effect sizes than to just significance

3.6 Results

The analysis reveals that organizational density within a district has an effect on the number of retired rebels. *ORGDENS* is treated as a factor since it is not a continuous variable. An initial box plot suggests that only an *ORGDENS* level of 3 has an effect on *RTRMT*.

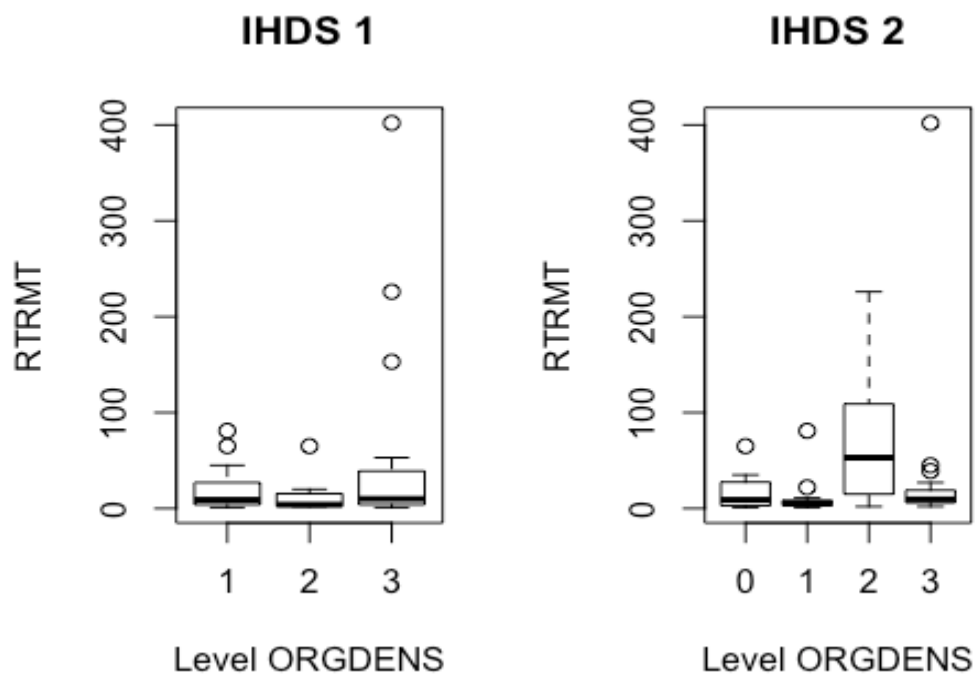


Figure 19

Boxplot Showing Effect of Organizational Density on Retirement

When controlling for area and population of the district as well as the percentage of SC population, an organizational density level of 3 affects the incident rate by a factor of 1.9. Thus in district with the highest organizational density we expect almost twice as many rebels to retire compared to a district with the lowest level of organizational density. This effect is also stable when we control for the other influences as well as under the IHDS 1 and IHDS 2 data set, confirmed by the regression analysis. (TABLE 5, APPENDIX)

I also test if other factors discussed above also influence the retirement of rebels. In the models I include control variables as well as the *ORGDENS* variable. Thus, the analysis will also serve as a robustness check for the initial model. I find that all forms of investments in industry have a negative impact on rebel retirement. On the face of it, this is against the basic assumption of counterinsurgency programs that development in the form of industrialization would increase rebel retirement. Most effects are, however, insignificant. Only domestic investments seem to have a significant impact. (Table 6, Appendix) With mining variables the regression results show a positive effect for mining activities, with an exception of mining of coal., which shows a negative effect. None of the effects is, however, significant or exhibits large effect sizes. (Table 7, Appendix) The effect of *ORGDENS* on *RTRMT* is stable and significant in all models. Over all models, the effect size is larger than estimated in previous models.

The increase in household assets has a negative impact on *RTRMT*, however, not significant, influencing retirement by a factor of 0.62. Health access, on the other hand, shows a positive effect, impacting incident rate by a factor of 11.6. The effect of education access on retirement is positive but very small. Confidence in institutions has a negative impact on the number of retired rebels. On average it impacts the retirement rate by a factor of 0.43. (Table 8) The re-

sults are robust using values of explanatory and control variables from IHDS2 dataset, except access to education has a small negative effect on retirement.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I statistically test my contention that rebels quit not due to access to assets and public services, increased industrialization and mining or repression, but due to bottom up lure of democracy. I argue that the lure of democracy for rebels who want to quit works through grassroots civic participation, which allows active citizens to forge informal exit networks invested in securing life and livelihood of retiring rebels. I defined level of civic participation in terms of organizational density, which measures the extent of citizen membership in 12 different kinds of voluntary organization based on crosscutting markers of identity like caste, religion, profession and gender. Based on census data, I defined development in terms of access to household assets like radio transistor, bicycle, two-wheeler that ordinary villagers in conflict zones value as indicators of good life. I measure public service provision in terms of access to healthcare and education. I also include data on investment in various industries and mining data. Repression is measured by proportion of Maoist casualty. We explored the argument about rebel retirement in the Maoist affected districts of India comprising the red corridor.

In the statistical analysis, I find that controlling for area and population of the district as well as the percentage of SC population, an organizational density level of 3 affects the incident rate by a factor of 1.9. Overall, we can conclude that organizational density has a positive effect on the retirement of rebels. A higher organizational density has a positive robust effect on the number of retired rebels. This effect is robust with respect to model specification as well as to IHDS 1 and 2. Moreover, the percentage of people in the SC has a negative (robust) impact on

the retirement. While access to health care also has a positive effect on retirement of rebels, where the effect size seems to be larger than the effect size of organizational density. Access to education, however, has a negative effect on retirement. Confidence in institutions too has a negative impact on rebel retirement in both with IHDS 1 and IHDS 2 dataset.

Chapter 4: Rebel Retirement in the South: Emergence of a Harmonic Exit Network

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the origin and operation of harmonic exit networks in South India. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Telangana region in the South has been a hotbed of left revolutionary politics since the 1940s and yet two-thirds of the rebel retirements in India between 2005 and 2014 were concentrated in two districts in this region. I argue that high retirement in the South is conditional on the emergence of these harmonic exit networks that weave together multiple stakeholders, who work to build momentum for rebels' exit and manage myriad uncertainties of their reintegration. Although we do not have reliable data on the total number of rebels in North and South India to compute an accurate measure of the proportion of retired rebels in the two regions, high retirement in the South is exceptional given comparable movement intensity in the two regions (measured in terms of incidents and casualties). The Indian government, in recognizing "Southern exceptionalism" in securing a high number of rebel retirements, has applauded the counterinsurgency efforts in the region.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated statistically that organizational density, measured in terms of degree of civic participation via membership in grassroots organizations, explains the subnational variation in rebel retirement better than developmental indicators and police repression. In the current chapter, I parse out an argument that links macro (environmental), meso (organizational), and micro (individual) conditions to explain how civic associations in the Gray zones of the democracy-insurgency interface foster the growth of informal exit networks that enable high rebel retirement in the South. This chapter highlights three sets of factors in explaining the dynamics of rebel retirement in Telangana viz. (a) pre-war social bases of insurgency, where war refers to the guerilla warfare by the Maoists against the state (b) horizontal and vertical ties

within the insurgent organization, and (c) everyday politics at the insurgency-democracy interface. The combination of these three factors across state, district, and individual levels, respectively, achieves high civic participation in democracy, which, in turn, enables the rise of harmonic exit networks in Telangana.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2 sets the stage by situating the history and geography of Telangana and laying out the locations and strategy of my fieldwork in the South. Section 3 presents ethnographic evidence of how Maoist rebels disarm and reintegrate in rural Telangana. Section 4 explains how distinctive macro (social) factors facilitate high caste/class polarization and low militancy of the landowning classes in Telangana, which allow Maoists to build a cohesive insurgent organization with both guerrilla army and grassroots mass fronts. Section 5 shows how, given the distinct configuration of social factors, the Maoists fostered strong vertical ties with the local constituency and equally strong horizontal ties with a broad support base bridging the rural-urban divide, creating conditions for high civic participation in democracy. Section 6 shows how a cohesive insurgent organization with robust internal vertical and horizontal ties interacts with a high associational culture of democracy to produce a harmonic exit network that facilitates high retirement and broad reintegration. I portray the dynamics of insurgency-democracy interaction in Telangana by tracing the origin and evolution of the Dalit and human rights movements, which shows how anti-state, anti-democracy Maoist mobilization successfully energized grassroots political activity and inadvertently strengthened civic participation in the democracy that it wanted to overthrow. Thus paradoxically the lure of democracy drawing rebels back into the mainstream was strongest where the Maoist movement was the strongest.

4.2. Telangana Region of Andhra Pradesh: Setting the Stage

This section is divided into two parts: the first part gives a geographical and historical background of Andhra Pradesh and specifically, the Telangana region, and notes the distribution of surrender events in the region. The second part describes my fieldwork locations and the strategies I used to interact with Maoist rebels in the region.

4.2.1 Telangana: History and Location

In 1953, the state of Andhra Pradesh was created under the State Reorganization Act by uniting the Telugu-speaking areas of Madras Presidency and the princely State of Hyderabad (Rao, 1988; Narayana Rao, 1973; Sarojini, 1968; Venkatarangaiah, 1965).⁷¹ It was the first state in independent India to be formed on linguistic principle by uniting Coastal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalseema.⁷² Despite many similarities in language and culture, each region has experienced different political legacies, levels of economic development, land relations, rainfall, soil fertility, terrain, cropping patterns, agricultural practices, irrigation methods, literacy, and healthcare standards. Thus the separatist movement of Telangana that started in 1969 succeeded in June 2014 when the 10 districts comprising Telangana separated from the two other regions of Andhra Pradesh to become the 29th state of India. The new state is divided into the same 10 districts (grouped into two divisions), which are further divided into 42 revenue divisions and further into 462 *mandals* (administrative unit below district in Telangana). There are a total of 12

⁷¹ At first the Telugu areas of the erstwhile Madras State were separated with Andhra and the South interior region of Rayalaseema forming the 'Andhra State' and Telangana becoming part of the Nizam's princely state. Three years later, on November 1, 1956, Telangana was merged with coastal Andhra and Rayalseema to form the state of Andhra Pradesh with Hyderabad as the capital.

⁷² The coastal Andhra region consists of nine districts (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, and Nellore) and comprised 41.7% of the state population in (year?). *Rayalaseema* (meaning, the land of kings) consists of four districts (Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur, and Kurnool) with 18% of the population. *Telangana* (the land of Telugus) consists of 10 districts (Mahbubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, and Nalgonda) with 40.5% of the population.

cities, which include six municipal corporations and 38 municipalities. The following figure (Figure 1) shows a map of former Andhra Pradesh with the three regions delineated.

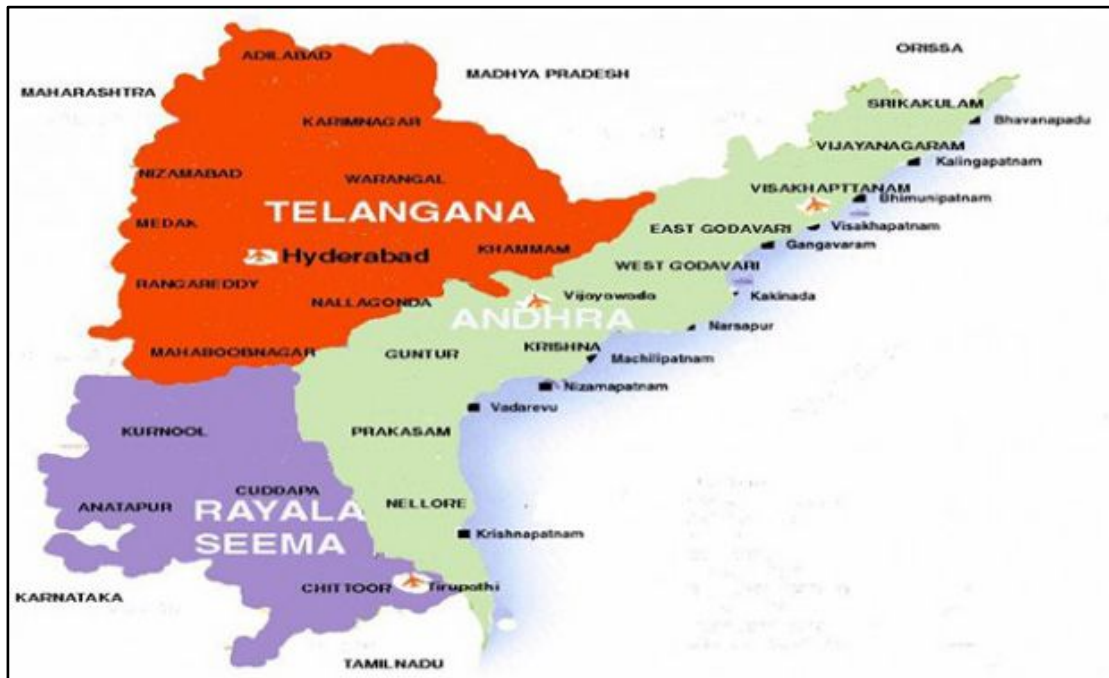


Figure 20

Three Regions of Andhra Pradesh (Source: Deccan Chronicle)

Telangana, when compared to the other regions of former Andhra Pradesh, has a larger population of Dalit (scheduled castes) and scheduled tribes, who are the most backward castes as recognized in the Constitution of India, and whose socio-economic conditions are far inferior to the upper caste population. The following map (Figure 2) shows the uneven economic development that became a driving force of the separation of Telangana.⁷³ Given the distinctive socio-economic profile and political legacy of leftist led armed agrarian uprisings in Telangana, the

⁷³ There are many accounts of this uneven economic development and most of them agree that Coastal Andhra fared better because it has benefited from productivity-enhancing technology during the “green revolution” (rice) as well as from commercialization (such as fruits and vegetables, milk, and meat products) of agriculture.

Maoist movement in the region evolved somewhat differently from that in the coastal Andhra region (K. Kannabiran et al. 2010; Rao 2014; Hanumantha Rao 2011; Simhadri and Rao 1997).

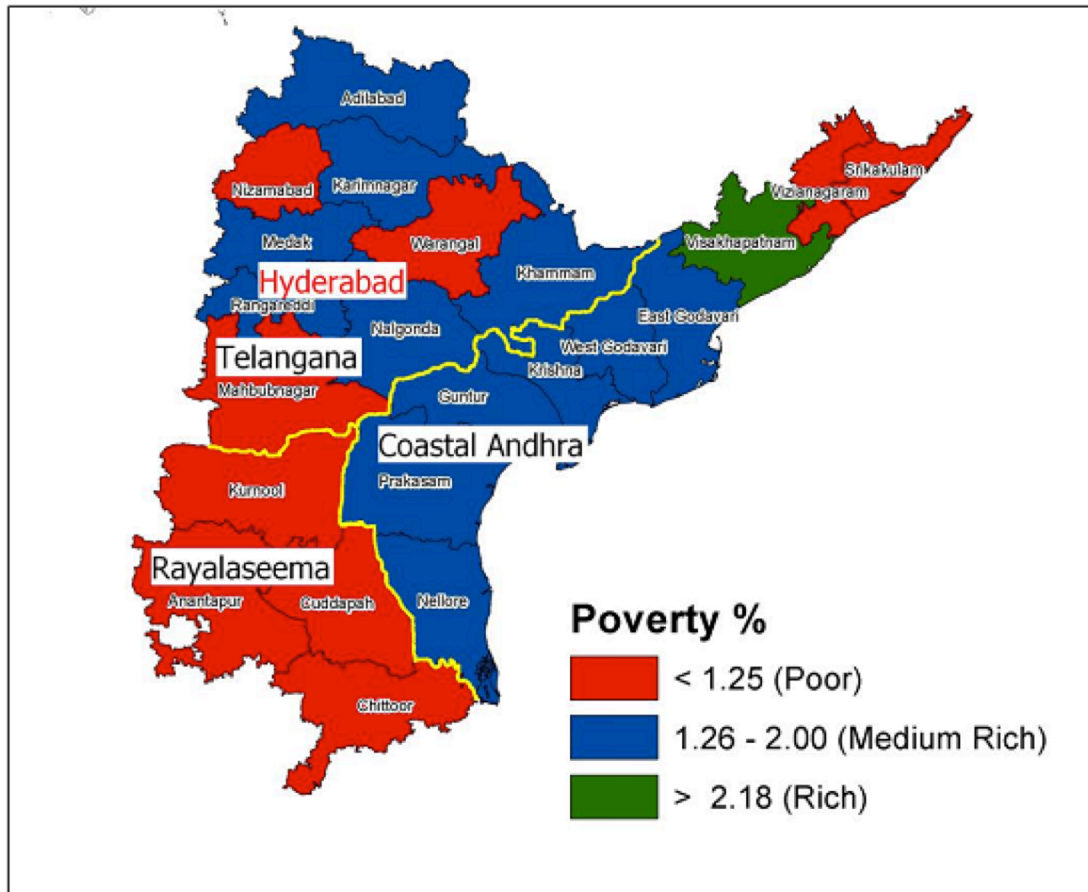


Figure 21

Uneven Economic Development in the Three Regions of Andhra Pradesh⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Districts are grouped into poor, medium rich, and rich based on average monthly per capita expenditure, with 1.25 USD/capita/day as poor, 1.26 to 2.00 USD/capita/day as medium-rich, and above 2.00 USD/capita/day as rich. In 2004/05, more than 10% of the rural population in Telangana lived in poverty in five out of ten districts. In Rayalaseema three out of four districts fell into this category, but in coastal Andhra only two out of nine districts fell into this category.

4.2.2 Fieldwork: Locations, Strategy, Experience

This section is divided into two parts: selection of fieldwork areas and fieldwork strategy. The first part lists the villages where I did my fieldwork in Telangana as well as the method of selection of those villages. The second part makes a few definitional clarifications and describes my strategies in the field.

4.2.2.1 Fieldwork Locations

As discussed in Chapter 1, rebel retirement has been exceptionally high in Andhra Pradesh, specifically in the Khammam and Warangal districts of Telangana and the Vishakhapatnam district of Coastal Andhra. The following district map of the former Andhra Pradesh (Figure 3) presents the geographical pattern of rebel retirement in the state (2005-2012) with the darkest shades of green in three districts representing the highest concentration of surrender – retirement events.

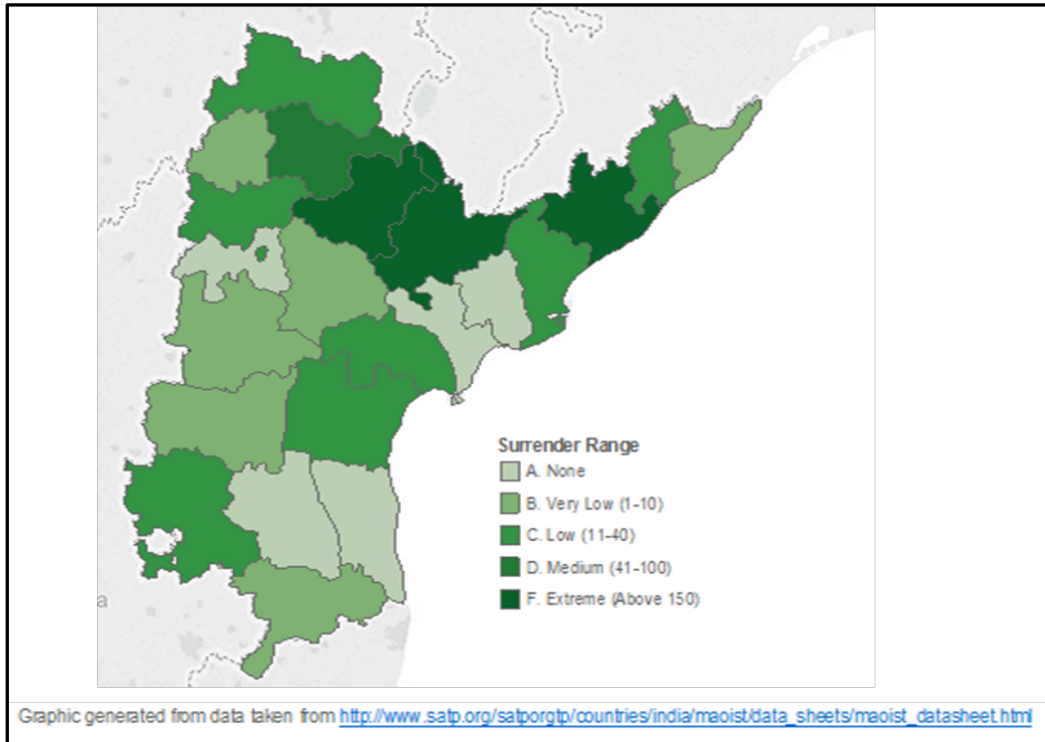


Figure 22

District-Level Surrender of Maoist Rebels in the South

While planning my fieldwork, it seemed intuitive to interview as many retired rebels as possible to create a comprehensive account of the process of leaving the Maoist movement. I wanted to explore the mechanisms that connect a popular grassroots insurgency to a thriving associational culture, nurturing informal exit networks that facilitate rebel retirement. Further, it was crucial to investigate how the curious spatial pattern of Maoist surrenders with a high concentration in certain districts reflects on the process of retirement. With these considerations in mind, alongside interviewing retired rebels, I also designed focus groups with ordinary people, who are not rebels, in conflict zones in Telangana, both in districts of high rebel retirement as well as in those of low retirement.

Given that the thin literature on the topic of rebel retirement has not generated any solid intuition (except for the preliminary evidence from my statistical analysis) on the factors that explain rebel retirement, examining districts with the highest and lowest values on rebel retirement was a conscious attempt to maximize variance on the dimension of interest. This approach reduces the number of study cases, but the combination of careful comparisons within a shared political setting and militant group, attention to path dependence and empirical details make my inferences more credible than those that I might draw from a more heterogeneous and less detailed set of cases.

In the Telangana region, I conducted my fieldwork in five out of its 10 districts (Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, and Nalgonda), of which Warangal and Khammam had the highest incidence of Maoist rebel retirement events in Andhra Pradesh between 2005 and 2015, Karimnagar had a moderate incidence, and Adilabad and Nalgonda had the lowest incidence of retirement events. I excluded Nizambad, Medak, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, and Mahbubnagar, because these were never listed as Maoist “affected districts” released by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the last ten years.

The five selected districts are made up of a total of 256 mandals. I categorized all 256 mandals into three groups – highly-affected, moderately-affected and not-affected by the Maoist movement. The government and other available political datasets do not go below the district level; therefore I categorized the mandals based on my extensive conversations with local academics and journalists, triangulated by input from police and former rebels and crosschecked with newspaper reports on Maoist incidents in the Chennai edition of *The Hindu* between 2005 and 2014.

For each of the five selected districts, I randomly chose one highly-affected mandal, one moderately-affected mandal, and one not-affected mandal, which added up to 15 mandals. In each of the five heavily- affected mandals, I randomly selected two villages (a total of ten highly-affected villages per district). In the five moderately-affected mandals, I randomly selected one village (a total of five moderately-affected villages per district). Finally, in each of the five not-affected mandals, I randomly selected one village (five not-affected villages per district). The following table (Table 1) is the list of mandals and villages selected for fieldwork in the Telangana region of former Andhra Pradesh.

	NALGONDA <i>LOW EXIT</i>	ADILABAD <i>LOW EXIT</i>	KARIMNAGAR <i>MODERATE EXIT</i>	WARANGAL <i>HIGH EXIT</i>	KHAMMAM <i>HIGH EXIT</i>
Highly Af- fected	Munugode Mandal <i>Villages –</i> 1. Munugode 2. Cholledu	Indervelly Mandal (Vaipet forest) <i>Villages –</i> 1. Rajampet 2. Tejapur	Husnabad Mandal <i>Villages –</i> 1. Gouravelli- 2. Ramavaram	Geesugonda Mandal <i>Villages -</i> 1. Mogilicherla 2. Manugoda	Charla Mandal (Chen- napuram forest area) <i>Villages -</i> 1. Pusuguppa 2. Unjapalli
Moderately Affected	Narayanpur Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Rochakonda (Lambada tribal)	Laxetipet Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Pothepalle	Bheemdevarapalli Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Manikyapoor	Station Ghanpur Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Sitarampur- Kondapur	Venkatapuram (trib- al area) <i>Village -</i> Laxmipuram
Not Af- fected	Nalgonda Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Samastha Narayanpuram	Neredigonda Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Kuntala	Manthani Man- dal <i>Village –</i> 1. Pandullapalle	Venkatapur Mandal <i>Village -</i> 1. Vet- turalapalli	Khammam (Urban) <i>Village -</i> 1. Manchugonda

Figure 23

Fieldwork Areas in Rural Telangana

4.2.2.2 Fieldwork Strategies and Limitations

I created a list of retired rebels, based on local newspaper reports. These reports also mentioned the police station where the rebels surrendered and often their home district. I took this list to local journalists and leaders of Maoist frontal organizations to locate former Maoists in Warangal district. The retired rebels introduced me to several other rebels in a snowball fashion. Some were in my original list culled out from newspaper reports, while some were not.

I categorized the rebels I interviewed by their point of entry into the movement (i.e., their home district, rural or urban, student union or peasant organization) and area of operation (in northern Telangana or in Chhattisgarh). Despite snowball sampling, I was able to achieve a considerable variation in the military experience, age, gender, caste, and organizational role of my interviewees. I interviewed a sample of 35 retired rebels, including men and women who served as Maoist squad members, Dalam commanders, area commanders and zonal commanders, and members of district, state, and central committees. My sample excludes many others I met with and interviewed in the field, who were members of various Maoist frontal organizations and civil liberties organizations and who also had firsthand experience in the movement but did not serve in the guerrilla army.

Thus by retired rebels, I refer to former Maoists who have experience in a Maoist guerrilla army, with active deployment of at least five years outside their home village/district. Even though the members of various Maoist frontal organizations including their theoretical leaders and ideologues subscribe to the same ideology, and some have actively participated in recruitment and propaganda, I do not treat them as retired rebels, as they have not been active fighters.

In an ideal world, in order for me to argue why some rebels quit and others do not, I would need the perspective of those Maoist guerrillas who wanted to quit but did not and continue to be de-

ployed. In reality, it is not a practical or safe option to meet an adequate number of active insurgents in an ongoing conflict and ask them if they ever wanted to quit. Since I am more interested in the process and not the reasons for retirement, it was not a necessary research strategy for me to contact active rebels.

In addition to retired rebels, I also met with Maoist supporters. By “supporters” I refer to those who not only provided food and shelter to the guerrillas, but also who faced the wrath of the police and administration and refused to give away any information that could materially damage the safety and security of the guerrillas. Some of these individuals self-identified themselves as supporters, quite enthusiastically describing their roles in aiding the guerrillas and promoting the cause of revolution, while others were extremely cautious before confiding in me of their involvement. Some of them had family and friends who were still active guerrillas; others had lost close ones who died fighting for the cause.

Third, I also spoke to a category of people who were once members of various Maoist frontal organizations. These are people who could have become guerrillas but did not. Not merely supporters, but not formal combatants either, these people wanted to join the military wing of the Maoist party, but could not for some reason, such as poor health and family responsibilities.

Fourth, I met with family members of Maoist rebels, who still have or lost someone close in the movement. Some hoped that their children would return one day; others wondered if the fighters still remembered their families after so many years away. The family members of rebels did not uniformly support the movement. The heartbreak and personal loss, combined with fear of renewed police harassment, made the neighbors and extended family members I spoke with quiet and reticent observers.

Fifth, I also met people who self-identified as strongly opposed to the Maoists. Some of these opponents, however, admitted to having provided food and shelter to the Maoist guerrillas when they frequented their villages, mostly out of fear. I have used the term “helpful opponents”, in my field notes to categorize the abovementioned respondents. However, it is important to acknowledge the complexity with such labelling. In a conflict zone such as the above, fear remains an important consideration. Ordinary people, who are not rebels, are afraid of retribution – from police, from local politicians, and in some areas, also from rebels themselves. Confessing their roles vis-à-vis an armed conflict became easier only when they considered me harmless and trustworthy.⁷⁵

In each of the selected villages I conducted at least two (maximum of five) focus groups. I was not able to stick to my initial plan of randomly selecting villagers and administering a survey that was designed to ascertain how people felt about returning rebels. Meeting an outsider like me, and answering “important” questions is a communal affair in rural India. Even when I walked into a mud house in a village selected at random (say, the 10th house from the village center), neighbors freely walked in and joined the conversation, out of curiosity or concern. Sometimes my respondents wanted me to accompany them to a more “comfortable” house, which inevitably meant one with chairs and a bathroom where they invited other men (and on my request, women) to join. After a few field visits I gradually realized that this was a trend, rather than the exception. Thus the semi-structured interviews I conducted in villages became unintended focus groups, which is the format I eventually chose. Interestingly, none of these meet-

⁷⁵ I made efforts to say (and convince my local contact persons who would eventually publicize it on my behalf) that I was neither a journalist nor from a survey agency working for some politician before an impending election nor connected to the police. Being an academic researcher has its advantages in conflict zones. I admitted frankly that I had no power or connection to make any difference in their plight. As promised to everyone I spoke to in the field, and as written in my IRB form, I will not reveal the name, location, or any identifying characteristic of my informants in the field.

ings saw a flare-up between supporters and opponents of the movement. This might be a result of my village selection strategy.

4.3 From a Rebel's Perspective: Retirement through Informal Exit Networks

This section narrates the story of Raju Anna, a forty-something former Maoist, who gave up arms and returned to his home village in the Warangal district of Telangana.⁷⁶ Travelling together with my research assistant, a local from the Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad. We first took a long-distance bus from Hyderabad, locally called a Volvo that dropped us on the highway. We then waved down a trekker, a type of multi-utility vehicle popular in rural India as public transportation, and rode to Mogilicherla village where Raju Anna lives. The village is a remote hamlet and was a hotbed of Maoist insurgency till a few years back. It was cotton-picking season and the trekker carried about 50 women from neighboring areas who worked as seasonal cotton pickers. Hiring an auto-rickshaw would have allowed us a private and a better ride from the highway into the village, compared to the less than pleasant and one in the overcrowded trekker, but we couldn't get one. The semi-*pucca* road (partially paved) took us to the village center, when I realized that four men, faces partially covered, have been following the trekker in two motorcycles. They waited at the village center as we thanked the women and the driver for the ride. One of them approached my research assistant, who showed them my papers (an introduction letter from the chair of my dissertation committee and another from the Director of the Center for Economic and Social Studies, the research institute in Hyderabad where I was locally affiliated). When my research assistant came back asking for a research paper on the Maoists that I had previously written, as a matter of validation of my status as an academic re-

⁷⁶ Real names of the former rebels have been changed to protect their identities.

searcher on this topic, I tried to look it up on my smartphone. However, I was informed that they had used jammers to block my cell phone signal, to prevent outside communication. Subsequently, they decided to look up the paper themselves. Once convinced about our identities and status as academic researchers, they became friendlier, and gave us directions to Raju Anna's house, that lay about half a kilometer walk from the village center. I asked, but still do not know for sure, if these four men were police, state intelligence, or Maoists. My research assistant, a native of the neighboring Nalgonda district, was convinced that these were *annalu* (literally, elder brothers, used locally to refer to the Maoist cadre).

When Raju Anna asked me about the journey to his house, I told him that the South has remarkably smooth roads and a cheap, fast, reliable bus service. I have travelled to far-flung districts and villages in Andhra Pradesh on these roads, a feat quite impossible in my other fieldwork areas in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The roads are integral to the fabled Andhra Model of counterinsurgency, often praised in New Delhi, for its judicious mix of policing and development that stifles insurgency. A road-sign on National Highway (NH) 7 in Anantpur district, another Maoist hotbed in the recent past, reads "Roads Indicate the Culture of the Nation".⁷⁷ To many these shiny pitch-black roads bear testimony to the state's newfound culture of modernization, urbanization, and relentless pursuit of an "India Shining," where radical agrarian uprisings are merely bad memories best forgotten.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ I encountered some other interesting sign boards on NH7 which read, "Are you in trable?" followed a kilometer later by, "Are you in troble?" then by "Are you in truble?" and finally by "Are you in trouble?" In case the answer to these questions was a 'yes,' there were telephone numbers provided that you were expected to call for help. Incidentally none of the phone numbers worked when I called, just like many other phone numbers of ministers and bureaucrats on their websites that take you to an automated message that the line has been disconnected.

⁷⁸ TDP, the major regional party, fought and lost the 2004 Assembly elections on a platform of development called India Shining, which highlighted roads, infrastructure, and information technology as development indicators.

As Raju Anna served us tea-latte made from milk from goats in his family, I shared with him a conversation with a high-ranking bureaucrat in New Delhi, who had told me that while the latter was posted in the Maoist-affected districts along the Andhra-Odisha border (where Raju Anna also worked as an insurgent) the only way he knew he was on the Andhra side of the border was by the quality of the roads. He posited that the elaborate, well-maintained road network had a key role in overcoming the ‘remoteness’ in rural Andhra, by encircling the Maoist hideouts, and, in effect, eradicating the insurgency.⁷⁹

Raju Anna, the shy, soft-spoken former guerrilla, who never looked me in the eye, as a customary sign of respect in some parts of rural India, and addressed me as *didi* (literally, *elder sister*), however, rejected unequivocally that the Andhra model of counter-insurgency, and in particular extensive road building, was responsible for compelling the Maoists in Andhra Pradesh to surrender. During his twenty-five year tenure in the movement, he rose through the ranks to become District Committee Secretary and was among the chosen few sent to the neighboring state of Chhattisgarh to build the movement there. He explained that roads lull people into a false sense of progress, but ordinary villagers simply bypass those *pucca* (black-topped) roads and continue to walk in diagonal paths reminiscent of dirt roads. Roads have allowed police to move faster. But roads also have taken the element of surprise out of police movement and made it easier for Maoists to plan IED (improvised explosive device) attacks on police and paramilitary convoys.

Post-retirement, Raju Anna lived with his parents and his brother’s family in their ancestral home in the village. Over several rounds of tea-latte and a homemade lunch, he explained

⁷⁹ From author’s interview with R. Vineel Krishna, IAS, principal secretary to the union rural development minister in Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi on July 14, 2013. Krishna, originally from Andhra Pradesh, was once abducted by the Maoists during his tenure as district collector in Malkangiri, Orissa.

that Maoist guerrillas are trained ideologically and militarily to persist, improvise, retreat, and resurge. Shiny roads, ruthless policing, new schools, or token land reforms do not persuade seasoned rebels, who are hardened by decades of surviving in hostile conditions and hardship, to quit. Between tours of his Bt (GMO) cotton farms, he gave me a year-by-year account of the alternating cycle of state repression and accommodation in Andhra Pradesh since the 1970s. He also described the hunger, disease, torture, betrayal, and deaths he endured since he joined the ranked Maoists, following the death of his younger brother in the Giraipalli massacre.⁸⁰ Through the conversation, and during subsequent chats, Raju Anna repeatedly affirmed his unshakable faith in Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) thought as the correct political path. And yet he quit.

He went through formal channels in the Party, informing his immediate supervisor who spread the word. He had long debates with his comrades who tried to persuade him to reconsider his decision. Finally he was required to put his rationale for quitting in a letter in order to receive formal approval. In return, the party expected him not to divulge secrets that would jeopardize his comrades. The newspaper reports of his surrender state that Raju Anna had to quit due to illness, which made it difficult for him to live in inhospitable conditions in the forests of Chhattisgarh. It took me several meetings with a few retired rebels to realize that “illness” was in fact the Party-approved reason for surrender that rebels inevitably cited when they had to elaborate on the reasons of quitting.

Far more intriguing than the rationale for retiring (i.e., why rebels quit) was the process of rebel retirement itself. I was curious to know more when Raju Anna mentioned that after he

⁸⁰ In 1975 four young student activists of the Radical Students Union (RSU) were taken to the Giraipalli forests and shot dead by the police. They are remembered by Andhra Maoists as Giraipalli Martyrs. Raju Anna joined the Maoists immediately afterward and moved to Dandakaranya in 1981. He shared many stories of Dandakaranya, including his meeting with Arundhati Roy, the Booker Prize winning author who wrote her lyrical essay, “Walking with the Comrades,” based on her stay with Maoists in the forests of Chhattisgarh.

received Party approval, it took him over three years to finally surrender to the police. While deciding to surrender, Raju Anna's primary concern was that his former enemies would target him and his family as soon as he disarmed and returned to his village. Nothing in the government surrender policy package of a job, cash, land, and vocational training, even if it was actually implemented, could persuade him to take that risk. Life before livelihood, he said.

First he had to reach out to other retired Maoists, who activated an exit network made up of elected politicians, police, journalists, and activists, down to the village level. This multilevel network, made up of some people personally known to him and others not, worked assiduously to ensure that scions of former Reddy landlords that he had attacked during his insurgent career as part of the PWG political program did not assassinate him as soon as he disarmed. A member of the legislative assembly (MLA), a former classmate of the top Maoist leader in the region, and a Superintendent of Police, whose brother died as a Maoist, played key roles in persuading the enraged landlord family to accept a highly coveted petrol pump license alongside an important new highway, considered a lucrative business proposition, in exchange for promising not to attempt a vengeance against Raju Anna. Such negotiations and deal-making did not work in isolation but alongside trusting relations forged at the local village level to make it credible.

At the village level, Raju Anna's brother persuaded the local Dalit leader to gather together local families as well as the sister of the landlord, who Raju Anna killed, to have long-drawn community dialogues highlighting the need of forgiveness, not altruistically but in self-interest. These meetings revolved around painful memories of gruesome deaths, police brutality, and the destruction of standing crops in the eighties and nineties, which eventually led to a consensus on the need to build peace locally through amnesty and reintegration of former rebels. Local Dalit activists were instrumental in driving these village-level discussions, which im-

pressed upon the villagers, particularly from rich Reddy peasant families who considered the Maoists their enemies. These meetings also highlighted that if they gunned down returning rebels in hatred, anger, and retribution, it would create a reputation that would deter others from returning. The meetings often took place in the village library, built in the name of the well-known Dalit leader and primary architect of the Indian constitution, Dr. Ambedkar. The Dalit uprising in the village started with the Maoists, but eventually found roots within democracy by abandoning Marx-Lenin-Mao and instead adopting Dr. Ambedkar as their ideological fountainhead. Villagers belonging to different castes, with brothers, sisters, husbands, or sons in the movement, coalesced around the local forgiveness project in hopes of facilitating more rebel retirement and reintegration. Interestingly enough, these horizontal trust and forgiveness networks evolved across caste divisions, with Reddy women commiserating with Dalit women, reinforcing side payments offered from above.

It took three years before Raju Anna was convinced that he could quit his twenty-five year rebel career and return to his village. He surrendered in Warangal at the height of CPI (Maoist) success in Andhra Pradesh in 2006. He was offered a monetary award of INR 250,000 (about USD 5000) for his surrender, which he had to accept, as doing that would be considered as a sign of continued allegiance to the Party. However, he did not receive any land or vocational training as part of the surrender package. He decided to pursue agriculture as the family owned a cotton farm. . During subsequent interviews with police officers, it became clear to me that state surrender policies assumed that rebels would give up arms and accept the cash award, in order be considered as officially “surrendered” and have the cases against them to be considered as “closed.”

As I spoke to many other retired rebels in Andhra Pradesh, both men and women, from foot soldiers to central committee members, returning rebels reiterated the fear of reprisal from former landlords and moneylenders as the biggest deterrence from surrendering. Soon it became clear that there are a few, intentional safety nets for retiring rebels that have been put in place to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of Maoists who want to quit. These district-level safety nets facilitate rebel retirement and reintegration by harmonic cooperation of an overarching layer of police, politicians, activists, and professionals connected to local inhabitants in various village-clusters in the district. During my fieldwork, it was no coincidence that these harmonic exit networks were most robust in the Warangal and Khammam districts, which explains why surrender events are disproportionately concentrated in these districts.

4.4 Macro (Environmental) Factors: Social Conditions of Maoist Insurgency

This section of the chapter analyzes the social conditions that brought about the emergence of harmonic exit networks in Telangana. I demonstrate how fundamental social divisions determined the organizational structure, recruitment, and mobilization patterns of the Maoists and ultimately the informal exit networks that worked to push rebels to retire. This section is divided into three parts: the first part highlights the underlying caste divisions in rural Telangana; the second part analyzes how the Maoists constructed a successful discourse of class politics polarizing these caste divisions; the third part analyzes the socioeconomic and political factors that restricted the militancy of Reddy landlords, enabling successful militant grassroots mobilization by the Maoists.

4.4.1 Battle Lines in Rural Telangana: Underlying Caste Divisions

As discussed in Chapter 2, the upper castes (Brahmins) had already exited rural Telangana by the 1940s, following anti-Brahmin movements in South India. The land-rich cultivator-peasants who took their place in the village status/power hierarchy were from the Reddy/Kamma forward castes, inferior to Brahmins but superior to backward castes and Dalits. The college-educated and urbanized Reddys rose to leadership positions in the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) in the forties and fifties. The CPI mobilized all rural agrarian classes, including the Dalits, against one common enemy, the feudal landlords (Deshmukhs) who owned hundreds of acres of land. Three simple statistics demonstrate how much the rich Reddy peasants supported the communist-led agrarian uprising in Telangana in the 1940s. Of the 45 communist prisoners whose names were listed in the Indian government's arrest warrants, 28 belonged to Reddy caste; of the 12 communist rebels killed in the uprising and subsequent state action, 8 were Reddys; and of the 29 leaders that remained at large, 14 were Reddys. (Elliot 1970).

The Reddys were able to forge a broad alliance of middle castes (forward castes), backward castes, and Dalits, despite deep social divisions within them. Exogenous political forces, particularly the growth of nationalism, united all castes against domination of the Muslim royal family that ruled Telangana (Zagoria 1971; Alavi 1965; Moore 1966). Contextual factors like severe repression by the Nizam (meaning Islamic ruler) and acute food shortage in the post-World War II economy created an insurrectionary moment in rural Telangana. As the Nizam misinterpreted the communist uprising as a power grab by the Hindu Reddy opposition and unleashed of the Razakars (Islamic militia loyal to Nizam) to suppress it, the rural poor turned to communists for resistance and to learn how to organize themselves into village self-defense committees. The local feudal lords who were Hindus, became targets of both the communists and Razakars, had to simply desert their rural bases to avoid confrontation on both fronts.

The Reddy communists were uniquely equipped to lead because they enjoyed the benefit of both western education as well as deep and wide kinship ties (Thirumali 2003; Thirumali 1992). The Reddy youth ,who went to colleges, established by the British rulers of India, huddled together in the hostels, where they were the predominant caste, thus strengthening both their kinship ties as well as a deep resentment against feudal domination by the Deshmukhs (Elliott 1974). Eventually in these Reddy dominated hostels sprouted the educated Reddy radicals, who took leadership positions in the communism inspired organization called the Andhra Mahasabha and eventually the Communist Party of India (CPI) (Sundarayya 2006; J. G. Leonard 1967).⁸¹ Even though the Telangana uprising was abruptly withdrawn, the Reddy communists successfully subjugated some big landlords by forcefully redistributing their lands, subsequently aided by government initiated land-ceiling legislation. The land reforms in the early fifties broke the power of the traditional elite (Appu 1975; Khusro 1958; Pavier 1974). But the seized land went primarily to Reddy peasants, who became the new face of rural oppression over the next two decades. This led to the embourgeoisement of Reddy communists, the classic conundrum in left agrarian mobilization whereby transferring land to the agrarian underclasses through successful land reform conservatizes precisely those classes which form the tactical roots of mobilization (Herring 1997).

When the Maoists spread into the villages of Telangana in the early seventies, the Reddy peasants, who were the erstwhile supporters of the early communist uprising, became the new class enemy of landless and land-poor people belonging to the backward and scheduled castes. As they set out to re-launch the rebellion in the Telangana region against the new enemy that was

⁸¹ Andhra Mahasabha was a cultural organization of Telugu speaking people in the erstwhile Hyderabad state of India. Started as a subsidiary of the Indian National Congress, the major faction of it later joined hands with the Communist Party of India.

the erstwhile friend, the Maoists focused on fortifying their mass base even if it required long-winded, painstaking grassroots mobilization & politicization of their support base, without any sight of a revolution in their lifetime.⁸² It is among this new rural proletariat made up of Dalit sharecroppers and landless laborers that the southern Maoists, primarily the People's War Group (PWG), built their formidable organization in rural Telangana (Mao 1961).

4.4.2 Class Polarization of Castes: Insurgent Grassroots Organization in Telangana

In the social science literature on agrarian revolution, Eric Wolf and James Scott argue that the peasants most prone to revolution are village-dwellers who possess landed property. In contrast, Jeffrey Paige argues that smallholding peasants are normally conservative and quiescent, whereas property-less laborers or sharecropper-cultivators who earn income from wages not land are more likely to become revolutionary (Paige 1975; J. C. Scott 1976; Wolf 1969; J. Scott 1977). PWG followed the classic Marxist-Leninist-Maoist framework, which is closer to Paige's line of thinking than that of Wolf and Scott: This line of thinking assumed that anyone who earned their livelihood from land cultivation was a 'peasant,' a category that excluded absentee landlords and rentiers, who constituted the rural aristocracy. Peasants in Telangana were not a homogenous social category, and PWG was mindful of these internal differentiations, contradictions, and conflicting interests among peasants in developing their mass mobilization strategy. Accordingly peasants were categorized into three agrarian classes – rich, middle, and poor peasants in addition to landless agricultural laborers who were at the very bottom of the rural hierarchy.

⁸² As discussed in Chapter 2, PWG, which was the only Andhra faction that supported Charu Majumdar, nevertheless revised Majumdar's emphasis on a recipe for quick revolution in five years through secret annihilation of class enemies and creation of red zones.

The Maoists noticed that in semi-feudal Telangana of the 1970s and 1980s, the remaining landlords (*dora*) and rich peasants had identities and interests that were sharply juxtaposed to those of the rural poor. I argue how this very sharp polarization of identities and interests between castes created fertile ground for radical communists to unleash an unprecedented and potent combination of grassroots activities and militant resistance in Telangana beginning in the 1970s.

Caste has always been an axis of mobilization by the Maoists in India, in the name of class politics. One of the strongest weapons in anti-feudal struggle has always been what Maoists call “social boycott.” As per tradition, the upper caste Hindus in Telangana, primarily the Velamas, and to a lesser extent the Reddys in Telangana, abhorred manual labor. “Social boycott” was the first rebellious tactic employed in most villages and was often sufficient to bring the landlords to their knees. As part of this tactic, the backward castes, like Bayalu, Bestalu, and Chakali, refused to be palanquin bearers for the upper castes. The palanquins, locally called as *pallakis* or *menas* were chariots which were carried by men on their shoulders, and were popular means of long distance travel by the feudal aristocracy. The lower caste palanquin bearers refused to run alongside the carts, and later the motorcars, of landlord families, as their path clearers and escorts. Toddy-tappers refused to set aside five to 10 toddy trees daily for alcohol production exclusively for the landlords’ families. Weavers refused to supply clothes to the landlords. Carpenters and blacksmiths refused to supply free agricultural implements to the landlords and provide free repairs. Washermen refused to wash clothes and cooking vessels, pound turmeric and chilies, and cook in the houses of the Deshmukhs and village officials (Simhadri and Rao 1997; K. G. Kannabiran 1992; K. Balagopal 1990). The Maoists re-invented the concept of social boycott used in India in Gandhian anti-colonial struggles. While doing so, the Maoists high-

lighted the prevailing caste inequality and its inherent injustice which motivated the younger generation of backward castes and some of the progressive thinkers amongst the upper castes to rally in support of the Maoists.

To the poor, low caste villagers, the social boycott was their revolution. They had learned to accept a hundred shoe-floggings if they as much as held their heads up in the presence of upper caste landowners. By challenging the entrenched social norms of upper caste domination, the Maoists enlisted the loyalty of the majority of backward caste and Dalit villagers. In addition to being an anti-feudal struggle, as the Maoist polemics portrayed the boycott as a strike by the productive workers struggling against “capital”. However, in reality the accumulated anger, frustration of the lower castes against the misery & exploitation by the upper & middle castes was the driving force behind the spectacular success of the tactic of “social boycott”.

Another remarkable phenomenon in this period of early mobilization in rural Telangana was revolutionizing the institution of “*Panchayat*.” As I have previously discussed in Chapter 2, *Panchayat* is a traditional village institution in the Telangana region, where any petty dispute is publicly adjudicated - with the landlord presiding, and, of course, passing judgment. With the emergence of the Maoists, panchayats were usurped, and Reddy landlords were unseated and put on public trial. Once the landlords were displaced, revolutionary peasants took over and put the landlords on trial. Shaken by the strength of the movement, a lot of landlords fled to the cities (Balagopal 2006).

Another potent movement was also built around the abolition of unpaid forced labor extracted by upper castes from the lower, professional castes. The peasants, the dhobi (washer-men), the shepherd, the barber, the toddy-tapper, and men, women, and children had to provide

unpaid services on customarily specified occasions. In addition, landlords routinely sexually abused the toiling class women. Lower caste men were not allowed to wear a shirt or shoes in the presence of the upper caste landlord. As a retired rebel confessed to me, it was unprecedented that a Madiga (the dominant untouchable caste in Telangana) could even look a Reddy in the eye. The customary punishment for such infringement of caste lines could entail anything from flogging to burning down houses and raping their women.

Although the Maoists employed the class-based rhetoric, as in understood by Marxists, in all of their mobilization efforts, deeply entrenched caste divisions bonded the rural proletariat. Maoist campaigns like social boycott, overthrow of panchayats, and abolition of unpaid labor were instrumental in cementing grassroots organizations in rural Telangana. They were successful insofar as they excited caste-based anger within the proletariat, and unified them against the common forward caste enemy class.

4.4.3 Low Militancy of Reddy Landlords: Grassroots Mobilization of Maoists

In this section I argue that the Maoists were able to consolidate mass organizations in Telangana because the rural elite was neither able nor willing to match Maoist military domination and area control. Whether peasants become revolutionary or not depends as much on the interests and capacities of their class opponents as it does on the interests and capacities of the peasants themselves (Wolf 1969). Given their political clout and economic diversification (delayed Green Revolution), the adversarial class of Reddy landlords was unwilling to get trapped in violence and bloodshed to maintain their rural domination. Instead they preferred to migrate to urban areas and invest agricultural income in profitable enterprise in entertainment, education, and real estate (Prasad 2015; Simhadri and Rao 1997).

The rich elite in Telangana was divided, both socially and politically. The Dora/Deshmukh (landlords) within the Reddy caste were opposed to the communists within the Reddys. The rural Hindus, who spoke Telugu and earned their incomes predominantly as landowners, had no history of cooperation with the rich Muslims, who spoke Urdu and earned their income and influence as notables in the court of Nizam in Hyderabad. The urban Hindus (Mulkis) and the rural Hindus (Reddys), both rich and upper caste, never sought to unite forces, despite their common agitation against Nizam's administrative reforms (Leonard and Weller 1980). Even when the Nizam threatened to overrun the Hindu estate of Gadwal, a symbolic patron of Hindu culture in the region, the rich Hindus could not unite. This was because urban rich Hindus disliked the feudal ways of Reddy rural notables as much as they despised the Muslim ruling class. The rural Reddys, in turn, historically maintained their distance from Hyderabad.

By the mid-1980s a class of rich capitalist farmers emerged in Telangana, mostly within the Reddy caste. This was influenced by the Green Revolution within Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana actually trailed the Coastal Andhra region in reaping the benefit of this economic upswing. The abovementioned rich Reddy farmers dominated all kinds of agricultural transactions related to commissions, inputs, credit, and marketing of agricultural products. They also diversified their portfolio by investing in highways, road contracts, ports, airports, irrigation contracts, real estate, and SEZs (Special Economic Zones). They channeled huge surpluses into new agro-based industries of aquaculture, large coconut farms, rice milling, and petty investments (for example, in cinema halls, hotels, and restaurants) in semi-urban and urban towns in the region (K. Balagopal 1990). This class also reinvested its surplus in Hyderabad in various "new economy" enterprises (for example, shares in Information Technology and Pharmaceutical enterprises).

There was also significant investment in education (engineering and medical colleges) and health (private clinics and hospitals).

Thus the rich peasant class found increasing opportunities for accumulation outside agriculture. In the literature on agrarian mobilization it has been argued that unless the upper-class non-cultivators derive their income exclusively from land they are unlikely to get locked in a zero-sum game in an agrarian conflict (Paige 1975). As the upper-class in the South was willing and able to plug themselves into capitalism, anti-Maoist resistance here, unlike that in the North, did not escalate into battles of life and death over economic control and political power over land. One important consequence of this was the increase in absentee landownership, higher tenancy, and increased land rents, which have all complicated class–caste relations.

In addition to fortified economic clout, the political clout of Reddy landlords also enabled them to earn considerable income by turning into brokers in various government development projects. Yet they did not act as ordinary brokers working for a share of profit, but instead the Reddy landlords reinvented themselves as “village elders” who negotiated with government and international development agencies on behalf of the villagers and graciously accepted “expenses” in return for their services (K. Balagopal 2007; K. Balagopal 1990). Thus the rich peasant class found increasing opportunities of accumulation outside of agriculture.

Summing up, this section highlights two things: first, the Maoists established deep roots in the South by articulating class interests of the oppressed caste population, who they organized in defiant resistance against historically entrenched norms of oppression. The emergent pattern of Maoist mobilization in the South was contingent on social bases. Specifically a preceding anti-Brahmin movement and a subsequent communist agrarian movement pushed the highest castes

(Brahmins) and the richest feudal lords out of rural Telangana by the fifties. This allowed PWG and other Maoist factions organizing in villages since the seventies to sharply polarize villages into anti-Maoist Reddy landowning peasants versus pro-Maoist Dalit landless peasants. Thus the Maoists created a cohesive insurgent organization united by shared anti-Reddy, anti-landlord identity and interests. Mindful of these underlying caste divisions, the southern Maoists whipped up moral outrage against deeply entrenched norms of caste oppression and socio-economic hierarchies through campaigns like social boycott and the abolition of forced labor and public trials. They harped on the underlying economic logic of caste exploitation, inserting a vocabulary of class politics that was able to gloss over differences among various lower castes that comprised the rural proletariat. They built solid ties with and recruited heavily from the low caste/class majority in villages and formed a cohesive organization that combined mass mobilization with militarization.

Second, this section also analyzed why the rural elites in the South, unlike their counterparts in the North, did not escalate militarily against the Maoists. I argue that faced with low militancy of landed opponents the Maoists were able to build insurgents' social ties and power. Given the sharp polarization of the rural population along caste identity and class interests, as well as the established superiority of Maoist military tactic of area domination over the local elites, the Maoists in the South emerged victorious. However, the Maoist hegemony in the South cannot be understood without reference to the strong vertical and horizontal ties that they forged both locally and beyond, which energized grassroots politics in the democracy-insurgency interface. The next section underlines the conditions under which a popular but banned insurgency paved the way for intensified civic participation within democracy. I show how everyday people in the

South lived one foot in democracy and one foot in a banned movement, carving out a Gray area where a robust and harmonic exit network facilitated high rebel retirement and reintegration.

4.5 Meso (Organizational) Factors: Horizontal and Vertical Ties

As insurgent organizations navigate pre-existing social forces, they proactively forge vertical and horizontal ties (Staniland 2014). The relative strength of these ties interacts variously with the social bases to produce different outcomes for insurgent organizations in their socio-political contexts. Horizontal ties link rebel leaders, organizers, and the intellectual support base across space, embedded in formal organizations, informal relationships, or often in an overlap of the two. Below this firmament of horizontal ties are the local communities, neighborhoods, and villages where recruitment and retirement of rebels actually happen. Vertical ties refer to linkages that the insurgent organization forges with these local communities. Unlike horizontal ties that travel across space, vertical ties are geographically rooted.

In this section, I argue that the Maoists in the South built strong horizontal as well as vertical ties. Unlike the Maoist groups in the North, the Maoists in the South, led by the PWG, did not consider mass fronts as revisionist, reformist, economic, or counter-revolutionary. I argue that when both horizontal and vertical ties are strong, insurgent organizations enjoy political centralization and organizational decentralization. In other words, though vertical ties give organizations an adequate mass base, horizontal ties balance the local emphasis, keep the organization autonomous from local divisions, and allow insurgent organizations to mobilize for broader goals. Thus vertical ties are the social anchors of the Maoist movement while horizontal ties are the sail that steered the organization to solicit local action even on non-local goals. The strong

vertical ties of the Maoist movement galvanized civic participation in democracy, thereby creating conditions favorable for the creation of harmonic exit networks.

4.5.1 Strong Vertical Ties: Energizing Grassroots Democratic Politics

Vertical ties are bonds of trust, information, and belief that link organizers to local communities (Staniland 2012). The Maoists in the South built strong vertical ties by mobilizing on local issues and recruiting locally from the Dalit community. Although local leadership in Telangana enjoyed autonomy in day-to-day mobilization and recruitment, the central committee and politburo of the Maoists had considerable control over the political agenda.

Strong vertical ties mattered most crucially during the early stages of mobilization, when Maoists were most vulnerable and their enemies strong. In the villages, ordinary people either personally knew the local Maoist organizer or knew someone else in their social networks who personally knew them. Further, local insurgent leaders often belonged to the same or similarly placed caste group, which engendered trust. In other words, strong vertical ties provided the social basis for Maoist collective action, not only on local issues but also on non-local ones. They did so by using grassroots politics as a route to armed revolution.

Grassroots politics was organized through two layers of mass fronts. The secret mass organizations were armed and were created to propagate revolutionary goals and recruit rebels. In contrast, the open mass organizations were unarmed and built pressure on the state through legal-constitutional struggles on progressive issues. The latter offered a fertile recruiting ground for a large number of students, agricultural laborers, mineworkers, tendu leaf collectors, writers, intellectuals, and teachers to join the movement and gave rise to the second generation of Maoist

leadership that currently leads the movement. PWG formed mass organizations in the South across every profession, from medical doctors, college professors, school teachers, artists, writers, journalists, students, mine workers, factor workers, construction workers, farm workers, and so on.

Open mass organizations aligned to the PWG were eventually banned by the Indian state. But as the members of these fronts began to be targeted by the state, they abandoned those and started organizing under newer mass organizations. It is to be noted that none of the open mass organizations were armed or engaged in illegal activities. These organizations, however, as one Maoist leader put it to me, were their “ears on the ground,” which allowed them to adopt unique, locally suited strategies of mobilization that further reinforced vertical ties.

Maoist recruitment policies reinforced vertical ties in the South. The Dalam members and commanders, even the area commanders, were all local. The district and state committee secretaries rose through extensive training in combat and in villages before they were promoted to leadership positions.

4.5.2 Strong Horizontal Ties: Supporting Networks Across the Rural-Urban Divide

Horizontal ties link people across space and connect different geographic and social sites. They link mobile individuals, who are drawn from diverse social and geographical locations and who are not pinned to a particular community but operate beyond them. Horizontal ties can be strong or weak, depending on the flow of information, bonds of normative obligations, shared political preferences, and capacity for collective action. Students, activists, government officials, politicians, and business elites, are generally enmeshed in horizontal ties. Strong horizontal ties help a movement get off the ground: they bolster communication, coordination, and cooperation

on movement issues, generate publicity, create a narrative of (in)justice around popular discontent, give legitimacy to anti-state uprisings, and drastically undermine the ability of the democratic state to crackdown on local rebellions.

The Maoists forged connections among their various open front organizations. The mass upsurge of students in the Telangana region in the late 1970s rallied the South around various issues from rape in police custody, workers' strikes, and the boycott of elections to protesting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The student-youth teams of the Radical Students Union (RSU) in urban areas recruited the Radical Youth League (RYL) activists in rural areas. RSU-RYL activists helped mobilize workers for the first State Conference of the, SIKASA (Singareni Karmika Samakhya), the union of the miners of the Singareni coalfields. Together with rural/peasants and urban/students, the Maoists integrated tens of thousands of miners in their working class movement.

In addition to basic issues like a wage increase for agricultural laborers, safety standards for miners, abolition of unpaid labor, and the occupation of waste land and government land by landlords, the Maoists also mobilized on larger issues like police reform, human rights violations, (un)democratic culture, caste-based reservation, patriarchy, secularism, freedom of expression and assembly. In this way, they connected their local movements to broad issues of democratic privileges and constitutional rights of citizens.

Since the early 1970s, the Indian state started responding to mass uprisings with police action that included extremes of torture and incarceration, unlawful detention, destruction of houses, despoliation of drinking water wells, vandalism and burning of crops, and framing rebels

for serious crime. “Encounter” killings⁸³ by police were no longer exceptions; they were the norm (Venugopal 2007; K. Balagopal 1981). The Maoists did not retaliate in a similar fashion for a decade and a half, but once they executed a kidnapped policeman for the first time they could not take it back. The strongest horizontal ties were forged by the Maoists in opposition to police oppression. The Maoists’ urban auxiliary support bases, including democratic associations, critiqued the police excesses.

One of the earliest and strongest organizations of civic participation in the state, the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), was born in 1973. Lawyers and professors in the organization primarily advocated for the rebels.⁸⁴ The civil liberties organizations, APCLC among them, documented and publicized the excesses of the Indian state in conflict zones, at great personal risk to the activists responsible for this work. Although they mobilized legally, the civil rights activists were frequently arrested for confronting law enforcement. But they were also immediately acquitted because prominent lawyers in the civil liberties organizations represented them. Many of the activists were themselves lawyers, who represented ordinary people when they were arrested for participating in protest marches or in suspected anti-state activities.

The urban activists sympathetic to Maoist causes worked within the limits of legality. They networked with journalists, editors, filmmakers, poets, academics, bureaucrats, and democratic politicians, which garnered considerable visibility, sympathy, and support for the Maoist

⁸³ Encounter killing refers to the extrajudicial execution style killing of an arrested person by the police and security forces, and staging it as the consequence of an armed confrontation. This is done to avoid the lengthy trials in a court of law, where the accused may walk away free or with a lesser sentence than the state would like.

⁸⁴ Various Maoist factions in Andhra Pradesh formed their own respective Civil Liberties organizations. For example, the United Civil Liberties Organization was sponsored by the UCCRI-ML, COC-CPI(ML) and the APRCP. The UCCRI-ML faction later floated its own civil liberties organization called the Organization for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR). The Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Commission (APCLC) and the OPDR broadly represented the two different factions of the CPI(ML) in the state

cause. These multi-pronged network players also recruited more approval for Maoist activities in their respective professional, caste, and religious organizations across Telangana. Thus through the eighties it became increasingly difficult for law enforcement in the South to wrongfully arrest or persecute the activists without attracting unfavorable media coverage and political sanctions.

This extensive horizontal network sympathetic to Maoist politics also included prominent democratic actors, civil liberty activists who were always in the gray zone between democracy and insurgency, and insurgent leaders. Bureaucrats personally knew and admired the courage of some of the better known rebel leaders.⁸⁵ Journalists and editors were former guerrillas.⁸⁶ Guerrillas had family members in the ministry and state secretariat. Many prominent leaders in the current Telangana state government, particularly those who came from the Joint Action Committee that was at the forefront of the movement for a separate Telangana, started their political careers in PWG or CP Reddy factions of the Maoists.⁸⁷ The Maoists in Telangana also raised a new crop of women leaders, who left the movement to run well-known NGOs, join academia, become award-winning poets and writers, or become homemakers. It is fairly common in Telangana that the local MLA and Maoist leader went to school together. The Maoist leaders, articulately and consistently, publicized their political arguments in invited columns in popular vernacular newspapers and magazines. Since the last five decades, the Economic and Political Weekly, the widely circulated and arguably the most respected academic journal on contemporary politics in In-

⁸⁵ For example, S. R. Sankaran, an IAS officer and former Principal Secretary of Social Welfare in Andhra Pradesh and Secretary to Union Ministry of Rural Development, was known to be widely respected by Maoists. Sankaran was instrumental in abolishing bonded labor in Andhra Pradesh and was very close to the civil liberty activists in the state. See, <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/peoples-ias-officer-sr-sankaran-no-more/article818981.ece>

⁸⁶ Allam Narayana, the editor of the largest vernacular newspaper, was a former PWG guerrilla.

⁸⁷ This is common knowledge to the local population. In my interviews with them, well known journalists, editors, professors, and politicians all acknowledged that they started their political careers in radical left politics.

dia, regularly carries articles on Maoists which have been written by commentators sympathetic to the movement.

Countless other civil society organizations targeting specific social justice issues operated in Telangana. The Revolutionary Writers Association, popularly known as Virasam from its Telugu acronym, is among the most well-known democratic platforms (K. Balagopal 1982).⁸⁸ Inspired by the Naxalbari and Srikakulam uprisings in the late 1960s, poets and writers like Sri Sri, Kutumba Rao, Varavara Rao, and Ramana Redely formed Virasam on July 4, 1970 (Venugopal 2005). Virasam is an immensely influential organizational umbrella for intellectuals and academics in the state who assert that the very purpose of literature is liberation of the masses from exploitation. The Virasam poets, novelists, and academics created a popular and powerful commentary in support of the Maoist struggle. Varavara Rao, a poet and professor, the figurehead of Virasam, is the current unofficial Maoist spokesperson in Telangana. He speaks regularly in invited events at premier universities in New Delhi and elsewhere on various contemporary social and political issues.

Another unique cultural organization in Telangana was *Jana Natya Mandali* (JNM) the Peoples' Theatre Group). While Virasam spread the revolutionary message to urban, educated elites, JNM spread the tales of Maoists' bravery and sacrifice to rural areas through folk songs and tales. JNM recruited high school and college students who used songs, dance, music, and plays as weapons to resist dominance and to liberate the masses from oppressive social relation-

⁸⁸ Although started by Digambara poets who were opposed to all organized politics, Virasam is far from indifferent to Maoist politics. The Progressive Writers Association (known as Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham, in short, Arasamin Telugu), formed in 1943, was the intellectual predecessor of Virasam. This literary space emerged out of the anti-feudal, anti-colonial, and anti-fascist struggles of the first Telangana peasant struggle of 1946-51.

ships (Kumar 2010). Gummadi Vittal Rao, famous as “Gaddar,”⁸⁹ is a cultural icon in Telangana. He is a balladeer, whose inimitable, folksy rendition of songs spread the message of social justice, revolution, struggle, and sacrifice to the illiterate and semi-literate population unreachable by print media.⁹⁰

Another example of a unique and influential organization in Telangana that has operated legally in democracy with strong ties to the Maoist movement is Amara Veerula Bandhumitrula Sangham (Committee for Martyrs’ Friends and Relatives, or CMAS). This pro-rebel organization was created to recover and claim dead bodies of rebels killed by police. It works to compel the state to follow its own laws. The current state secretary of CMAS, who works in a state government department, negotiates with police that she described as both the perpetrator of atrocities and a harbinger of hope. A former Central Committee member of PWG was the honorary president of the organization.

Among many other prominent civil liberties and rights organizations in the Telangana region are the Human Rights Forum, the Civil Liberties Committee, and the Organization for Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR), all of which are members of the Coordination for Democratic Rights Organizations (CDRO), a union of twenty civil liberties and democratic rights associations in India. CDRO was formed to resist state repression of citizens’ resistance in 2007, and its members (in 14 states) meet four times annually. These organizations grew around the Maoist

⁸⁹ For Gaddar’s interview with NPR see <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5412138>

⁹⁰ Through my interviews with JNM activists, I learned that they are talented one-person troupes who sing, dance, and play instruments, and stitch every presentation with a narrative. They have revived ancient folk traditions, combined contemporary and extinct musical instruments. In the face of arrests, assassinations, and torture, these activists remained mostly unarmed, only wearing a toy wooden gun in defiance of law enforcement. Dapli Ramesh, a JNM activist I met with, described the martyrdom of his colleague, Sudarshan, in a song. Presented from the perspective of the martyr’s mother, the song touched upon her son’s academic brilliance, his selfless sacrifice of everything including his life for social justice, police atrocities, the betrayal of upper castes, and a call for people to resist and protest. JNM was one of the most effective recruitment and mobilization instruments of the Maoists in Telangana.

movement and created a high degree of civic participation within the confines of democracy. One umbrella platform, the Committee for Concerned Citizens (CCC), brought together bureaucrats, activists, academics, and politicians to organize the first and only peace talks between the state and Maoists in Andhra Pradesh in 2004. Thus the Maoists forged extensive horizontal and deep vertical ties with the community around it, which combined to create conditions favorable for a thriving associational culture. It is not exceptional that in their attempts to topple regimes, insurgents normally build more than just an army. It is also not uncommon that insurgent movements engage in extensive construction of networks, alliances, and constituencies, with different organizational and governance arrangements tying together multiple groups and individuals.

The Maoists, in turn, also extended issue-based support to democratic struggles of various grassroots movements among women's, professional, and caste organizations, with an aim to recruit and cultivate a section of leadership and opinion-makers within these movements who could push the agenda leftwards, create a crisis, and precipitate a confrontation that would expose state brutality. Thus were generated embedded horizontal networks of citizens within democracy who supported the extra-democratic endeavor of Maoists while simultaneously working in their respective capacities to demand greater political and administrative accountability⁹¹. Maoists also took sides, made statements, and nurtured sympathetic leadership on many locally salient issues within democratic politics, ranging from treatment of political prisoners, commercialization of education, the women's movement against illicit liquor, caste based reservation, etc. Within democracy, Maoist endorsements of individuals and associations became social

⁹¹ As an example, in 1983, soon after he won the elections to lead the first non-Congress state government in Andhra Pradesh, N. T. Rama Rao (NTR), the charismatic film star turned politician, reduced the age of retirement of government employees from 58 to 55. This was a highly controversial, unpopular measure taken in the name of creating new employment opportunities for the youth and fighting institutionalized petty corruption by lower-division clerks (K. Balagopal 2011). As the powerful non-gazetted officers association took to the streets in protest, the Maoists openly supported and rallied with them.

recognition of their personal integrity, progressive politics, and commitment to a more participatory, accountable democracy.

4.6 Gray Areas in the Insurgency-Democracy Interface: Civic Associations and Informal Exit Networks

This section brings out how everyday interaction between insurgency and democracy in the South eventually carved out a Gray area between the legitimate and the illegitimate, where actors and issues comfortably straddled both realms, gradually dissolving the barriers between the two.

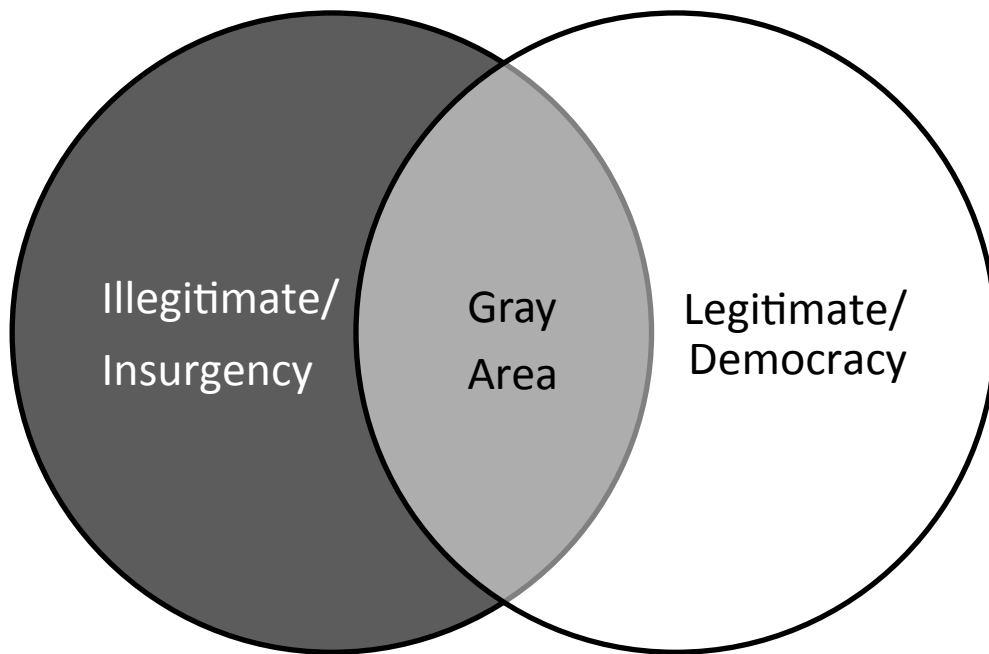


Figure 24

Gray Area in the Insurgency-Democracy Interface

I illustrate the process of the emergence of informal exit networks in these Gray areas in the crucible of civic participation and grassroots democracy in Telangana. Born within radical

left politics in the region, both the Dalit and civil liberties movements migrated to democratic platforms. By focusing on the microdynamics of this protracted process of insurgent democratic transition of two major political movements in the South, I shed light on the ever-present but obscure gray areas between banned insurgency and legitimate state politics. The processes of democratic transition of insurgent issues, ideas, and individuals created enthusiasm at the grassroots level and strengthened democratic politics. These processes also fortified the fluid, porous, spongy gray zone that encroached into democratic institutions and encompassed citizens, from ordinary voters to elected representatives, and activists to law enforcement officials. It is in this leaky, spongy gray zone that harmonic exit networks flourished.

4.6.1 Dalit Movement in the South: Carving out a Gray Zone in the Insurgency-Democracy Interface

Although the Maoists' mass base in Telangana was comprised mostly of Dalit landless laborers and mine workers, their strategy was not articulated explicitly in caste terms. However, the Maoists' contribution in raising the political consciousness of Dalits has been recognized by all prominent Dalit leaders and activists in the state.⁹² In this section I trace the close proximity of Dalit and Maoist politics through the 1970s and 1980s and their eventual separation starting in the 1990s tracing it to the two landmark incidents of caste violence in the state: the Karamchedu Massacre in 1985 and the Chundur Massacre (also known as Chundururu and Tsundururu) in 1991.

No account of contemporary politics in the South can skip reference to the Karamchedu Massacre in 1985. Karamchedu is a prosperous village in the Prakasham district in Coastal An-

⁹² During my conversation with Dalit members of Jana Natya Mandali (JNM), they shared personal experiences of how PWG in Telangana energized Dalits in their areas of influence and gave them the confidence to face their century-old oppressors. Bojja Tarakam, founding member of Dalit Maha Sabha, acknowledged the Dalit movement; writings and lectures of Kathi Padma Rao and K. G. Sathyamurthy, two other Dalit leaders, also refer to the role of Maoists.

dhra, rich from cotton and tobacco cultivation. It was, in fact, a bastion of mainstream left politics in the 1950s when the cultivator-landowners aligned with the early communists against the feudal landlords. The cultivator-landowners, in three decades, amassed enough land and wealth to attack the landless Dalit population, who were primarily of the Madiga caste, in the village, killing six men, raping three women, and seriously injuring many more. Terrified by the savagery of this attack by men they knew through everyday interactions, the Dalits, with their blood splattered clothes still on, carrying their dead and injured with them, fled the village and flooded the nearby towns to seek sanctuary in a nearby church.⁹³

Karamchedu left an indelible mark on Dalit politics, although it was neither the first, nor the last Dalit massacre in the state. Eventually the *Shibiram* (refugee camp) where the Karamchedu victims built their temporary refuge camps became sites of consolidation of Dalit identity and its related movement in the South (Gudavarthy 2005). The primary goal of this new mobilization was to assert autonomy of Dalit politics, from both mainstream political parties and Maoist groups.

Two Dalit leaders, one a government lawyer and the other a rationalist scholar, led the autonomous Dalit movement. Both of them had radical left, rationalist heritage, schooled in various Maoist frontal organizations.⁹⁴ But this new leadership raised slogans denouncing Maoist depiction of the Karamchedu massacre as another instance of class hostility of landlords against laborers. Based on reports of caste-based insults and abuses hurled on the Dalits during and after the attack, even by the relatively poor among the upper castes, they insisted on articulating the

⁹³ For details on events leading to this massacre of Dalits, see the APCLC report on the incident titled, "The Karamchedu Massacre: A Report" available at <https://www.google.com/search?q=karmachedu+APCLC+1985&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=sb#> accessed on October 10, 2014.

caste dimension of brutality in unambiguous terms. Thus the new-found identity asserted by the Dalits challenged the Maoists' rhetoric of class mobilization.⁹⁵

There were some concrete indicators of consolidation of Dalit leadership outside the influence of Maoist politics. In protest meetings, upper caste speakers of Maoist lineage, despite their supportive, pro-Dalit position, were not allowed to take the stage. Dalit leaders justified the move as an attempt to energize the base and engender a new "Dalit organic intelligentsia."⁹⁶ A new term was coined: "Dalit communists." They used new slogans for the "New Dalit Democratic Revolution" both as a continuation of the Maoists' goal of "New Democratic Revolution" and as a challenge to its exclusive focus on class character. Dalit leaders refused to remain mere flag bearers (*jhanda mochetollu*) of the Maoists. They raised the most publicized, damning criticism of Maoists: They posited that Dalits were the cannon fodder in the Maoist movement; they faced hardships, torture, and death for the movement, but they were never offered leadership roles in the Party.

Yet the Dalits' association with the Maoists remained fraternal and strong. The All India Dalit Coordination Committee on Karamchedu included representatives from Maoist organizations. Gaddar, who was a popular Dalit balladeer and a prominent member of PWG, inaugurated the newly formed Dalit organization, Dalit Maha Sabha (DMS). DMS conducted statewide road-blocks, silent marches, *bandhs* (general strikes), and *rail roko* (railroad obstructions) with active participation and support of PWG. DMS and PWG worked in symbiotic unison. When DMS at-

⁹⁵ Dalits within PWG started asserting the need of a caste-class reading of Karamchedu because it was a fact that poor kammas also joined the assault army. An APCLC report details how the kammas organizing the attack insisted that anyone born to kammas must join if they wanted to stay in the village as it was necessary to curb the growing insubordination and assertions of the lowly madigas.

⁹⁶ When PWG sent Gaddar and V. V. Rao as its representatives to the *Shibiram*, Dalit Maha Sabha (DMS) allowed only Gaddar, a Dalit himself, to sit on dias; V. V., a Brahmin, was not allowed. For further details see (Ilaiah 1995).

tempted but could not win the long drawn legal battles to seek conviction of the prime perpetrators accused of the Karamchedu massacre, PWG killed the upper caste mastermind of the massacre.⁹⁷ This infused new life into the exhausted and previously unsuccessful Dalit activism.⁹⁸

Maoist influence was also apparent in the first manifesto of DMS. It defined “Dalits” not only as formerly untouchable castes but as all people subjected to various forms of structural violence, in continuation of the consciousness built by the southern Maoists. Like Maoists, DMS, in its early days, also stayed away from electoral politics. Instead they focused on building strength at the grassroots level and on legal constitutional struggles. Inspired by the Maoist model of developing mass organizations, DMS created exclusively Dalit cultural platforms bringing together exclusively Dalit writers, singers, journalists, and poets to infuse the political ideology of Dr. Ambedkar, the Father of the Indian Constitution and the Dalit icon, among the masses.⁹⁹ DMS also launched an influential journal, *Nalupu* (literally meaning, “The Black”), in 1991, with many Maoist intellectuals and civil liberties activists on the editorial board. During this time a Dalit revolutionary poet, K. G. Sathyamurthy, an erstwhile General Secretary and a founding leader of PWG resigned from the party and joined the Dalit movement. He formed the Marxist Leninist Center (MLC) and launched a journal called *Edureetha* (Swimming Against the Tide). *Edureetha*, described by editors as a journal of revolutionary politics, aimed at synthesizing Ambedkarism and Marxism and set the tone and tenor of the Dalit movement. It became a plat-

⁹⁷ Court cases against Chenchu Ramaiah, the kamma landlord and chief accused of Karamchedu, dragged on. The government-appointed judicial inquiry commission could not find a clear reason behind the massacre. The chief witness of Karamchedu, a woman named Alisamma, was murdered.

⁹⁸ After Karamchedu, the impunity of the kamma landlords demoralized Dalits. Kammass were protected by political connections to the ruling TDP, known statewide as a kamma party. Assertive Dalits were threatened with similar massacres as Karamchedu unless they backed down. With PWG killing Chenchu Ramaiah, Dalits were able to predict dire consequences for assaults against them.

⁹⁹ Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement and campaigned against social discrimination against Untouchables (Dalits). He was Independent India's first law minister and the principal architect of the Constitution of India.

form for all progressive forces to critique the inability of revolutionary groups to integrate emerging caste and gender perspectives within their struggles. It also critiqued the Dalit movement itself for neglecting land struggles and focusing solely on seeking concessions from the same upper caste state that perpetuates caste discrimination in the first place. These journals bear ample testimony to the thriving gray area between democracy and insurgency in Telangana, where rebel leaders, democratic rights activists, poets, and bureaucrats freely exchanged ideas for greater social justice and democratic accountability.

Meanwhile, PWG was uncomfortable with the idea of merging the ideologies of Ambedkar and Mao. They were keen to co-opt the DMS as one of the Maoists' mass movements, metaphorically referred to as 'a stream that flows back into the ocean.' (Gudavarthy 2013). When that did not happen, the Maoists attacked DMS for its reformist, petty-bourgeois leadership and ideology.¹⁰⁰ By the early 1990s, however, some Dalit leaders started arguing that political power for Dalits and active state intervention in their favor was necessary to fight the specific forms of oppression that they faced. Maoists insisted that the Dalit movement stay away from electoral politics, which they did until the Chundur massacre in 1991 in Guntur district where the Reddys, both rich and small peasants, slaughtered Dalits in a planned assault of extreme brutality.

Post-Chundur, the forward castes aggressively defended the massacre as self-defense against the Dalits. During this time, the central government in New Delhi was trying to implement increased reservation for Dalits and Backward castes in government jobs and public uni-

¹⁰⁰ They were particularly wary that a Dalit autonomous struggle exaggerating caste differences would split PWG just like it did rival Maoist group Janashakti into groups like CPI(ML) Janashakti (Rajanna), CPI (ML) Janashakti (Veeranna) and the May 17th Group.

versities.¹⁰¹ As various Dalit castes organized towards a common cause, the Reddys also led the formation of an upper caste coalition, calling it “*Sarvajanabhyudaya Porata Samiti*” (Struggle Committee for the Advancement of All People), countering the affirmative concessions granted to the Dalits and the OBCs. They organized sit-ins, strikes, processions, and road-blocks to publicize the “injustice” done to them.¹⁰² The DMS and Maoists, both in favor of affirmative action for the Dalits, were depicted as violent and casteist.

With the Mandal Commission and upper caste counter-mobilization, DMS leaders felt compelled to seek legitimacy within democracy by distancing themselves from the banned Maoists. Platforms like Edureetha abandoned their initial attempts at Ambedkar-Mao synergy and demanded that leadership positions in Maoist parties be surrendered to Dalits immediately. There were demands for affirmative action within the Maoist party itself. Dalit leaders openly doubted the intent and politics of PWG as long as its leadership remained urban, upper-caste, educated, and male who joined the movement from elite colleges.¹⁰³ Incidentally, it took PWG 13 years

¹⁰¹ The Mandal Commission was set up in 1978 to identify the socially or educationally backward classes to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress caste discrimination. The commission submitted the report to the president on December 30, 1980. In 1989, New Delhi’s V. P. Singh government set out to implement its recommendation of a 27% reservation quota for OBC resulting in a total quota of 49.5% in government jobs and public universities. This led to frenzied protests with instances of open self-immolation.

¹⁰² They raised slogans like 'long live unity of the forward castes', 'those who beg every morsel of food should not be arrogant,' 'beggars should behave beggar-like,' etc., slogans which are the staple of the anti-Dalit mobilization post-Chundur. They talked about the oppression suffered by forward castes at the hands of Dalits in the villages.

¹⁰³ The Naxal groups staunchly rejected the demand initially, arguing that this call for representation in the Maoist leadership was planned sabotage launched by ambitious, educated urban Dalits, also known as the “creamy layer,” who had struck a deal with feudal classes to sell out the rural, poor Dalits. Eventually the PWG relented and decided that should there be an opening within the party for a leadership position and the contenders were a Dalit, a woman, or an upper-caste individual, preference would be given to Dalits and women.

after Karamchedu to sanction a mass organization (Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi, or KNPS) that explicitly recognized “annihilation of caste” as its goal.¹⁰⁴

In 1993 a backward caste and Dalit party alliance of Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh raised hopes among Dalit forces in the South.¹⁰⁵ In 1994 the autonomous Dalit movement in the South entered electoral politics as well (Srinivasulu 2002).¹⁰⁶ They wanted to remedy the powerlessness they encountered during the crucial 1989 State Assembly elections and 1991 Lok Sabha elections, in which DMS, despite their immense popularity among the majority of the population, was excluded from any agenda setting in local politics. In the 1994 Assembly elections, DMS struck an electoral alliance with the BSP and promised new pro-Dalit policies.

However, BSP could not win a single seat in the South during the 1994 Assembly elections, though it contested in 218 constituencies.¹⁰⁷ The post-1994 despondency saw many schisms in the Dalit movement and a new phase of intra-Dalit rivalry (Balagopal 2000; Haragopal and Balagopal 1998).¹⁰⁸ The Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh reached its nadir in

¹⁰⁴ PWG, as can be expected, refused to treat Dalit issues as unique and autonomous from other inequalities and discrimination against impoverished sections of society. Thus annihilation of caste was included in its agenda against privatization, welfare cuts, delay in court cases on atrocities against Dalits and so on.

¹⁰⁵ The DMS leader, Bojja Tarakam, proposed an alliance with the BSP. The public meetings held by the BSP in Hyderabad, Vishakapatnam, and Nalgonda in the early months of 1994 witnessed huge popularity among Dalits. All prominent Dalit leaders of Andhra Pradesh, including Kathi Padma Rao and K.G Satyamurthy, attended BSP chief Kanshi Ram’s public address.

¹⁰⁶ The formation of PPP, announced by Padma Rao without any consultation with the rank and file of the DMS, attracted resentment from the DMS cadre. It also, as DMS activists narrate, led to an intense debate among them as to whether it was an opportune moment to take such a step.

¹⁰⁷ In fact, all except one candidate lost their deposits. Only 12 candidates secured more than 5,000 votes. What contributed to the failure of the BSP to take off in state politics were the internal differences, the inability of Kanshi Ram to coordinate and evolve an appropriate strategy, and, more significantly, the failure to cut into the hegemonic politics of the dominant parties in the state.

¹⁰⁸ The Malas were concentrated in the coastal districts and the Madigas were a numerical majority in Telangana. Due to Christian missionary efforts, exposure to the process of modernization in the British-ruled Madras Presidency, and overall development in coastal Andhra, the Malas have historically been ahead of the Madigas. As a result they could benefit from the special provisions provided for the SCs and gained greater presence in education, employment, and politics. This situation has been presented by the MRPS as the result

(year).¹⁰⁹ In subsequent years Dalit politics within democracy moved more and more towards assertion of cultural identity, demands for dignity, recognition, and representation. This was an acceptable, legitimate, and even privileged rhetoric within democracy.

As the Dalit movement gained ascendancy within legitimate democratic politics, it legitimized former Maoists. In its gradual transition from insurgent to democratic politics between 1985 and 1994, the Dalit movement in the South carved out an expansive, porous Gray zone between insurgency and democracy. Dalit activists, while contesting elections, broadcast their support of Maoists openly. Maoists wrote in popular magazines and newspapers about their commitment to revolutionary goals and violent means. During these ten years, insurgency was normalized as politics by other means. Many Dalit cadres of PWG transitioned into legitimate politics and activism with their commitment to insurgency intact. The next section highlights how the civil liberties movement also cut its umbilical cord to Maoist movement and asserted its autonomous status within democracy, further energizing and legitimizing the democracy-insurgency interface in the South.

4.6.2 Civil Liberties Movement in the South: Fortifying the Gray Zone

The history of civil liberties in Telangana is complex and widely debated (Shah 2013; Sundar 2013; Gudavarthy 2008; Singh 2005), particularly the issue of its convergence with left

of the Malas cornering the benefits of SC reservations, in disproportion to the size of their population; this was projected to be the cause of the Madigas' deprivation. The MRPS raised the issue of a legitimate and proportionate share for the Madigas.

¹⁰⁹ The 1994 Assembly elections also witnessed the poaching of another core area of ML groups by the unlikely competitor, TDP. TDP, the party of Kamma privilege, in sheer twist of irony, pursued a strategy of class mobilization against the BSP-DMS caste strategy. TDP strategy promised prohibition, Rs2 per kilo of rice, and subsidization of the power supply to farmers. The anti-liquor movement by women, which gained state-wide prominence, originated from within ML tradition and subsidization of rice and power was particularly attractive to the poor, both urban and rural.

radical politics and commitment to constitutional guarantees in India. However, there is one overarching consensus: there was a two-way flow of activists from the civil liberties organizations into Maoist groups and vice-versa in the 1970s and 1980s. Some activists in the civil liberties movement decided to work within confines of constitutional methods, like filing motions in courts, petitioning the human rights commission, and talking extensively about it in popular media, while the more radical ones found common cause with the Maoists.

The civil liberties movement and Maoist politics in the South matured hand in hand through the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁰ The Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) was created to organize fact-finding committees on “encounter deaths,” lock-up deaths, custody rape, and caste atrocities, and to provide legal assistance to arrested Maoist activists. Leading APCLC members have written extensively and eloquently on topics like police excesses, use of torture in prison, domestic violence, rape, molestation, dowry deaths, and other atrocities; abolition of child and bonded labor; suppression of worker’s rights such as denial of minimum wages; caste discrimination and people’s right to resistance.

APCLC actively and successfully projected the Maoist mobilization of people’s struggles into the theatre of legitimate democratic politics. APCLC had an organizational set-up in all 23 districts of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, although it was most active in the Telangana region. By exposing caste discriminations and feudal exploitation, and fake encounter and custody deaths, which violated professed democratic ideals, APCLC helped expose the brutal, extra-legal excesses of police, the delays and denials of justice in courts, the upper-caste, elitist membership of the mainstream political parties, the developmental imbalances among different regions, abys-

¹¹⁰ In its second state level convention, held in Warangal on in May 1980, the APCLC manifesto declared that its primary purpose was to struggle for the protection of democratic rights, strengthen peoples' right to struggle against feudal landlords, capitalists and state machinery, and condemn police excesses and violations, all of which were in synergy with the aims of the Naxal movement (Gudavarthy 2013).

mally low minimum wages, the landlord-moneylender feudal exploitation, all of which lend credibility to the militant mobilization of Maoists. All of these attracted the wrath of the establishment (Thomas 2014; Sundar 2013). But it also won them a seat in the table in any discussion on tackling the spread of Maoist movement.

However, after the Karamchedu massacre in 1985, human rights organizations became discredited when they failed to bring the upper-caste perpetrators to justice through legal and constitutional means. It was during this time in the mid-1980s, that the Maoists began militarizing, much to the discomfort of leading civil liberties activists who found it difficult to accept Maoists' violation of the right to life and dignity, acting with the same impunity as the state¹¹¹.

APCLC intervened on two other issues of conflict with the Maoists. First, Dalit leaders sought their intervention when Maoists started killing villagers, almost all members of Dalit and backward communities, as suspected "police informers." Hundreds of Dalits quit the Maoist movement after Karamchedu in 1985. They became vulnerable to police intimidation in villages. Unlike the urban educated leaders who could promptly reintegrate into the mainstream by taking up respectable positions in academia, media, and social movements, rural Dalits were left unprotected. Second, women's rights activists raised issues of discrimination and abuse against women within Maoist groups. Individual accounts of sexual harassment of women comrades within the Maoist Party caused furor among the urban support base of the movement. Prominent activists demanded fact-finding missions by civil liberty activists who, so far, have only looked into cases of violation of women and Dalits by the democratic state.

¹¹¹ As an example, in January 1993, PWG kidnapped a tribal elected legislator and the APCLC declared in a formal statement that kidnapping democratically elected leaders as means of struggle was no different from illegal detention; they condemned both (Kannabiran 1993).

As the criticism came from within sympathetic camps, and as Maoists pushed back against such investigations claiming that such issues were an internal matter of their party, the rift between the Maoists and civil liberty activists widened.¹¹² With increasing militarization of the Maoist struggle in the 1990s, many prominent civil liberties activists found the violence by rebels problematic, indefensible, and indistinguishable from state violence. Both bled the common people dry (Haragopal and Balagopal 1998).¹¹³

Finally influential members of APCLC quit and formed the Human Rights Forum (HRF) in October 1998. This group reserved the right to mobilize public opinion against every “violation or denial of rights [that] arises in all situations of structured oppression and inequality.”¹¹⁴ HRF refused to treat rebel violence as exceptional or distinct from state, or dominant caste, violence. The Maoists lost the uncritical support of prominent activists in a widely publicized split from the civil liberty movement in the South. These activists, who always straddled between the state and rebel movements, by critiquing the rebels and asserting their autonomy, gained greater credibility with diverse actors within the state. However, the tie between the Maoists and civil liberty activists was not entirely broken.

As HRF executed a very public break-up from the Maoist movement, the Committee for Concerned Citizens (CCC) entered the scene around the same time. In 1997 “a group of citizens of undisputed high moral standing” formed CCC with the aim to mediate peace talks between the

¹¹² I met several women activists who narrated their own experiences, or those of their mothers, sisters, and other family members within ML groups, notably PWG. They confided about the nature of abuse by top leaders. In addition, traditional gender roles were enforced even in forests, where women guerrilla, not men, were expected to cook and care for the wounded. Women were also routinely required to undergo risky surgeries to prevent the possibility of having children. I also met a journalist, whose mother, a well-known woman guerrilla, had to abandon her as a newborn child (father was a respected leader in the Srikakulam uprising). The party took the newborn, and gave her to an unknown childless couple in an area of struggle, without telling the parents who had their child.

¹¹³ Another problem pointed out with systematic violence used as a method of struggle was that it created a gap between the leaders and the led, with the led losing all say in crucial decision making.

¹¹⁴ See <http://humanrightsforum.org/>

Andhra Pradesh state government and Maoists (Mander 2004). The CCC was convened by S. R. Sankaran, a retired Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer who was respected for his contributions towards social justice for marginalized people, his personal integrity, humanity, and the austerity of his lifestyle. The committee included prominent lawyers, academics, and journalists with years of experience in civil liberty activism and high name recognition in Telangana.¹¹⁵

Top leaders from PWG, and the other dominant Maoist faction, Janashakthi, attended the meetings convened by the CCC. The then home minister of Andhra Pradesh led the peace talks between the state and the Maoists¹¹⁶. It took six years for CCC to finally convince both state and Maoist representatives to agree to a cease-fire and sit across the table for the first time. The peace talks broke down in 2005. However, the CCC peace talks further fortified the gray area in the insurgency-democracy interface in Telangana. By asserting its independence from both the state and Maoist rebels, while enjoying access to both, CCC established a new trend of active citizen mediation between rebels and the state. CCC was able to bring warring sides to the table and generate an enormous landslide of public support for their endeavor, most visibly demonstrated in thousands of letters to editors of local newspapers. The letters to the editor not only lauded the CCC members' considerable reputation, but also its open commitment to hold the rebels and the state equally accountable to the same democratic and moral principles in evaluating acts of violence (Sankaran 2002). Thus CCC virtually sealed the identity of impartial interlocutors, sympathetic to rebels and committed to democracy, critical of failings on both sides. This went a long

¹¹⁵ Other members of CCC included K. G. Kannabiran, the National President of the People's Union of Civil Liberties and a well-known lawyer, G. S. Hargopal, a political science professor and active in the civil liberties community, D. Narasimha Reddy, an economics professor, Venkateswara Rao, veteran journalist editor, and K. Jayashankar, a former vice-chancellor. In its early years, the committee was assisted by another journalist, Anatakrishna.

¹¹⁶ Home Minister K. Jana Reddy led the official delegation, which included three more ministers -- Dharmana Prasada Rao, D. S. Redya Naik, and Koneru Ranga Rao. Others on the official team were: Paladugu Venkat Rao, T. Purushottama Rao, K. Keshav Rao, and Marri Sashidhar Reddy (all former ministers), and the Tirupati Urban Development Authority chairman, K. Karunakar Reddy.

way in encouraging ordinary people at the grassroots level, who straddled both worlds of rebel and democratic politics to come out in the open. As a consequence, elected representatives agreed to sit with the representatives of the banned rebel groups without a precondition to surrender arms. The Indian government lifted a 12 year ban on Maoists and both sides implemented cessation of hostilities. CCC encouraged ordinary people to seize the initiative by doing the same at the grassroots level. Thus, the CCC established that ordinary people could be patriotic citizens while also recognizing the Maoist contribution to social justice and democratic accountability. CCC also communicated to Maoists that criticism and disagreement with the rebels did not warrant targeted assassination as enemies of revolution. The organization made a broad-based effort to move the debate away from violence-counter violence to democratic aspirations of the people, validating the need of a thriving gray zone, where people can offer unyielding criticism of police excesses while also condemning the insurgents for relentless violence against common people.

CCC initiatives did not take root in a vacuum. The thriving associational life, comprising multiple rights, kinship, and professional organizations, backed it. The Maoist movement penetrated social and political life in the South so completely that there was not one voluntary organization, NGO, political movement, media house, academic institution, village, town, or administrative department that did not have individuals who consider themselves former Maoist, Maoist sympathizer, or know a close family member or friend who was one.¹¹⁷

Finally, I argue that democratic and extra-democratic actors collaborated seamlessly in the South in the physical space created by legal civic associations, the sprouting of which were largely influenced by the Maoist politics. Further, in the South, the Maoists established a dedi-

¹¹⁷ Several people I met in Telangana, from Dalits in villages to intellectuals and bureaucrats, asserted this in various ways. In my own assessment, there is not one women's organization, single-issue political movement, NGO, media house, cultural organization, professional organization, university campus that does not have any Maoist connection.

cated following among poor landless Dalits/backward castes and maintained military superiority over the private militia of the landlords of the upper castes. In their formidable network of horizontal and vertical ties, multiple actors collaborated in an amalgam of roles and alliances to carve out, fortify, and expand a flourishing Gray zone between insurgency and democracy.

Summing up, this section argues that the Maoist movement energized the grassroots level in the South by nurturing many voluntary associations within democracy. Many of these organizations served as their fronts, advocating progressive politics, pursuing legal/constitutional struggle on movement issues, and keeping Maoist issues alive within democratic politics. The Maoists also took a stand on significant issues in local politics, and their approval/opposition on issues like the separate Telangana movement, commercialization of education, etc. had considerable impact on the final outcome of these issues within democracy. In other words, the extra-democratic political clout of Maoists always played an important role in setting preferences and determining outcomes within democratic politics in Telangana. Successive generations of politicians in national and regional parties sought Maoist approval for electoral victory.

4.7 Harmonic Exit Network in Telangana: Actors and Processes

In this section, I demonstrate how a “harmonic” exit network in the South weaved together multiple stakeholders in an amalgam of roles and alliances, who worked in sync to build momentum for exit and managed myriad uncertainties of reintegration. These stakeholders, connected in a web of cross-cutting networks of identity and interests, are made up of two kinds of actors: Reintegration Stewards at the lower/local level and the Movement Entrepreneurs at the upper/state level.

Movement Entrepreneurs (ME) are highly visible, geographically and socially mobile opinion makers, who share political preferences and normative commitments, control the flow of information and coordinate collective action in conflict zones. They maintain one foot in democracy and one foot in the banned resistance movement and claim limited autonomy from both. Civil liberty activists, poets, balladeers, bureaucrats, professors, and lawyers in conflict zones, those whose public reputation is tied to their position vis-à-vis the Maoist movement, qualify as MEs. Through the leaky walls the state erects around rebels, political actors on both sides are tied to the MEs. They may share pre-war social ties with both rebel leaders and democratic politicians/bureaucrats; for example, they might have grown up together in the same village, trained together in college, or belonged to the same caste group/extended family. The ties may grow out of personal acquaintance, through shared political vision. MEs emerge as influential middle grounds or voices of conscience between the state and rebels. On the one hand, they nurture a nascent movement and drum up support for rebel causes. On the other hand, they also critique rebel excesses and concurrently nudge the frontiers of democracy bit by bit. Eventually (and inadvertently) MEs generate a whirlwind of debates and critiques around resistance that sucks core constituents out of rebel movements into democratic platforms.

As they generate a powerful impetus for exit within rebel organizations, Reintegration Stewards (RS) resolve crucial last-mile problems in the process of rebel retirement. RS emerge from the local social base of the insurgency, and they are geographically embedded. Employed in diverse occupations like law enforcement, district courts, coal mines, village administration, primary school, political party, local mafia, or rural health centers, these everyday people weave a bulwark of all local stakeholders in rebel return through an informal but effective system. RS

compensate for the institutional lack of credible commitment locally by ensuring that retired rebels are not killed.

The pro-social cooperation between RS and ME that dominates harmonic exit networks did not develop overnight. As described above, through the evolution of Dalit and civil liberties movement, a popular rebel movement and a strong grassroots democracy co-evolved to produce a robust Gray area in their interface. As various civic associations based on gender, caste, and professional identities sprouted out of the radical left camp, everyday people in these associations had democratic credentials as well as insurgent connections required to guarantee safe passage for returning rebels. Thus social networks in civic associations offered the crucible for the working of an informal exit network made of everyday people. Locally, they compensated for the lack of credible commitment in democratic institutions, ensuring that returning rebels were not killed as soon as they disarmed. The civic associations provided the physical space and organizational resources, and the leadership that built the trust and allowed disbursement of side payments, both of which are crucial ingredients for the smooth functioning of harmonic exit network.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter explains the emergence of harmonic exit networks in the South. It builds a historicized understanding of a popular insurgency that takes into account how pre-war social bases determine the strength of insurgent vertical and horizontal ties, and how these ties set the context for rebel retirement and reintegration. The example of migration of Dalit and of civil liberties movement actors out of the insurgent into democratic platforms shows how a popular rebel movement, inadvertently perhaps, strengthens grassroots civic participation within a democracy.

That such migration did not obfuscate their insurgent origin is a testimony to the vigor and robustness of Maoist mass mobilization. As people and popular issues migrated out of rebel politics in the South, they legitimized the insurgency and further bonded the realms of rebel and state. It is in these realms of state/insurgent convergence, that harmonic exit networks thrive through communication and collaboration among everyday people. High rebel retirement in the South is contingent on these informal exit networks.

Chapter 5: Rebel Retirement in the North: Emergence of a Discordant Exit Network

5.1 Introduction

Rebel retirement is very low in the North, and their reintegration into the mainstream is severely restricted too. The total number of rebel surrender cases in the North, including in the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal, between 2005 and 2014 is about one-sixth of that in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.¹¹⁸ Moreover, former rebels in the South have reintegrated into various roles from farmers, bus drivers, and homemakers to journalists, insurance agents and professors both in the rural and urban areas. In contrast, the only post-retirement career option for former rebels in the North is electoral politics, either as candidates or as strong-arms hired by political parties to manipulate electoral outcomes. Between national, state and local elections, they also leverage their fearsome guerrilla past to coax communities to vote for a certain candidate and not others, or even broker real estate deals in exchange for hefty side payments.

While post-retirement livelihood of northern Maoists is often contingent on instilling fear into ordinary people, they also live in fear themselves. The Maoist party in the North has often circulated death warrants if the rebels decided to quit. On the other hand, the state governments have also announced hefty bounties on Maoists if they did not quit.¹¹⁹ Some have been brutally killed, by the Maoists, police, and by the mafia that has a strong hold over the coalfields and

¹¹⁸ According to the 2011 census, Jharkhand (literally meaning, bush land) is recorded as 74677 sq. kilometers (28833 sq. miles) and it has a population of about 32.9 million.

¹¹⁹ For example, see <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/maoists-declare-three-former-comrades-traitors/article5156826.ece> and <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Jharkhand-announces-Rs-8-69-crore-bounty-on-73-Maoists/articleshow/48157666.cms>

mining areas in the North. In response, some former Maoists in the North have hired a small army of private security companies to protect themselves from potential attackers. Thus the process and outcome of rebel retirement in the North are very different from those in the South where former Maoists are reintegrated as respectable members of society across rural and urban areas.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2 sets the context by situating the history and geography of North and laying out the locations and strategy of my fieldwork. Section 3 presents ethnographic evidence of the process of rebel retirement in the North. The rest of the chapter focuses on (a) pre-war social bases of Maoist insurgency (b) horizontal and vertical ties by the Maoist organization and (c) emergence of discordant exit network in the insurgency-democracy interface in the gray zone between them. In sharp contrast to the South, the combination of these three factors constrains intersection between insurgent grassroots politics and democratic civic participation. In fact, the endemic violence and corruption in the insurgency-democracy interface increasingly encumbers their ability to build horizontal ties with progressive politics within democracy, which, in turn, reinforces the vicious cycle of their further isolation and militarization.

Section 4 highlights how underlying social bases, specifically the incongruity of caste identities and class interests escalated into full-blown caste wars in the North, causing an unprecedented bloodbath, encompassing both democratic and extra-democratic politics as well as their interface. I show how the vicissitudes of caste/class contentions permanently damaged organizational cohesiveness by sparking a crisis of leadership and loyalty along caste lines and eventually breaking the party down into warring caste factions. As the rural North became sucked into frequent caste wars, arms race and a pernicious insecurity dilemma, the northern

Maoists recruited gangsters, swindlers, petty criminals, mafia who helped them fight pitched battles with upper caste militia. Section 5 shows how the daily bloodbath of caste wars reached a feverish pitch that permanently damaged the capacity of the insurgent organization to build horizontal ties with the larger community of urban activist network, who shifted allegiance to alternate democratic, socialist and identity parties. The Maoists, who reject electoral politics, could not join these competing mainstream identity and socialist parties within democracy without ceasing to be ‘Maoist’.¹²⁰ But their local cadres and supporters did.

Section 6 describes how an insurgent organization, entrenched in sectarian divisions, devoid of a broad support base and caught in a bloody arms race, further intensified the political criminality that saturated the democracy-insurgency interface in the North. This led to the emergence of a discordant exit network in the North that severely restricted prospects of rebel retirement and reintegration. Thus, like in the South, the dynamics of Maoist insurgency determines the kind of informal exit network that emerges in the region. Unlike in the South, the discordant exit network further exacerbates the fear and insecurities of retiring rebel, restricting rebel retirement and undercutting the lure of democracy in the North. Section 7 concludes.

5.2 Maoist Pockets in the North: Setting the Context

In November 2000, the southern part of the state of Bihar was carved out to create the 28th state of India, named Jharkhand.¹ It has 24 districts, which are further subdivided into 38

¹²⁰ Up until the 1990s, it was an open secret that local youths would be *Jharkhandis* by the day, and Maoists by night. But the leadership of the two movements had conflicting political ideology and did not share their supporting horizontal networks. Shibu Soren, the leader of Jharkhand movement had strong connections with Marxist Coordination Committee and its charismatic leader, A. K Roy, who ran Janwadi Kisan Sangram Samiti (Democratic Peasants Struggle Association) in the Dhanbad coal mines. Roy trained Soren to lead a radical tribal uprising in the countryside while he led the workers’ movement in urban areas. Roy had deep ideological differences with the Maoists, and Soren carefully avoided any broad linkage with Maoists even though the Maoists wanted to offer their political support.

subdivisions, 262 blocks and 32620 villages. This section is divided into two main parts: the first part gives a snapshot of economic, demographic conditions of South Bihar, which eventually became known as Jharkhand, also highlighting the distribution of Maoist groups and surrender events in the region.¹²¹ The second part describes my fieldwork locations and strategies in the region. This section shows that the history, politics, and economy of this new state, and as such evolution of Maoist insurgency and retirement from it in Jharkhand, cannot be understood independent of those processes in Bihar, and to a lesser extent, in West Bengal.

Jharkhand shares common boundary with West Bengal (east), Chhattisgarh (west), Bihar (North), Uttar Pradesh (North-west) and Odisha (South). Jharkhand has 29% forest cover, one of the highest in the country. The state is primarily rural with rich mineral deposits. The capital of Jharkhand is Ranchi. This new state was created following a lingering indigenous people's movement, which, since the 1920s, sought independence for the tribal majority districts as a federal state within the Indian Union (Munda and Mullick 2003; Devalle 1992). The shaded portion in map below shows the districts of South Bihar that eventually became Jharkhand. It also shows the physical proximity of Jharkhand to Patna (the capital of Bihar) and Kolkata (the capital of West Bengal), which underscores a long history of cultural domination, economic exploitation and political marginalization of Jharkhand region exercised from these two power centers in eastern India (Corbridge 1987).

¹²¹ Historically, Bihar has been divided into three regions: North Bihar; Central Bihar and South Bihar (today's Jharkhand). Central Bihar, made up of 14 districts Patna, Gaya, Nalanda, Jahanabad, Aurangabad, Nawada, Rohtas, Bhabhua, Bhojpur, Buxar, Munger, Jamui, Shaikhpura and Lakhisarai.

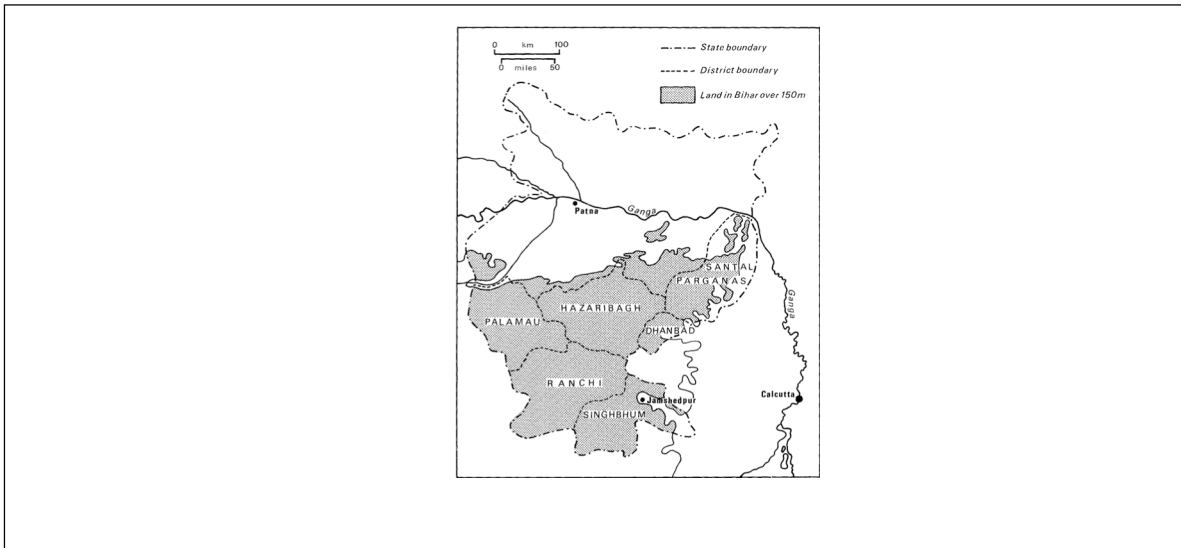


Figure 25

Map Showing Jharkhand as South Bihar

5.2.1 Political Economy of Jharkhand: Poverty and Mineral Resources

Jharkhand is one of the poorest states of India. Its parent state Bihar ranked among the slowest growing regions of India with a GDP growth of merely 2.69 per cent per annum from 1991-92 to 1997-98, compared to about 6 per cent for all the major states of the country (Kohli 2006; Ahluwalia 2002; Ahluwalia 2013). Bihar, and consequently Jharkhand too, is the least urbanized state of India with only 10% living in urban areas.

As shown in the map below, the economy of Jharkhand is concentrated in its eastern districts, in key urban areas Jamshedpur (Tata Steel and Tata Motor plants), Bokaro (thermal and steel plants), Dhanbad (coal mining), Ghatsila (copper mining). The state is known for its rich mineral deposits, specifically coal (32% of national deposits), iron-ore (30% of national deposits), copper (25% of national deposits), uranium, mica, bauxite, granite, gold, silver, graphite, magnetite, dolomite, fireclay, quartz, & felspar. This chapter shows how these rich mineral deposits determined the trajectory of both insurgency and democracy in the North.

Between 1980s and 1990s, India saw an overall decline of population growth rate from 23.9% to 21.3%. However, during the same time period, Bihar saw a sharp increase in population growth rate from 23.4% to 28.4%. The 2011 census shows that the population density of Bihar is phenomenally high at 880, compared to the national average of 234.

The demographic situation, coupled with slow growth, has almost crippled Bihar's economy. In 1960 it was the fifth poorest of India's major states, but by 1990 it had the highest population share below the poverty line of any state (Datt and Ravallion 1998; Ravallion and Datt 2002). 75% of the population of Jharkhand depended on agriculture as primary means livelihood, although agriculture contributes only about 20% of the state GDP. The per capita agricultural income of Bihar is about half that of India as a whole and about one-fifth that of Punjab. The per capita income for the state declined steadily from 60% of national average during the early 1960s, to about 40% in 1993-94 and further to 34 % in 1997-98. Bihar was also India's only state to see per capita income decline in the 1990s (Sachs, Bajpai, and Ramiah 2002; Thakur 2000). Forty thousand government employees in Bihar had not been paid salaries for at least ten years since the early 1990s (Thakur 2002). Concomitantly, Bihar has India's lowest state literacy rate, with only 47 percent of its population able to read and write (Naik, 2001). Thus Jharkhand started its career as a new state on a very weak macro economic foundation.

5.2.2 Demography of Jharkhand: Anti-Migrant Tribal Agitation

Although the state derives its name from the separatist "Jharkhandi" movement led primarily by the tribal population, only 28 percent of population of the state as it is constituted now comprises *adivasis* (means original inhabitants, refers to tribal population).

Half of the remaining 72 percent include backward and other castes settled in the state for centuries, known as '*moolvasis*' (meaning, those who have migrated into the region long back and have now grown roots in the region). The other half of non-tribal population, about 35% of state population were identified by Jharkhand movement as '*diku*' meaning outsiders/exploiters who came to the mineral-rich areas of Jharkhand in search of jobs and opportunities from districts of Arrah, Balliah and Chapra, of neighboring Bihar and from different parts of West Bengal. Roughly 60% of population of Jharkhand is upper & middle caste Hindus. Hindi is the predominant language, Santhali and Mundari are tribal languages popular within adivasis, Urdu is spoken in the Muslim neighborhoods, and Bengali and Oriya are popular in Ranchi, the state capital, and in some industrial pockets bordering areas with West Bengal and Odisha respectively. (Munda and Mullick 2003)

The key tribal groups in Jharkhand are Santhal, Oraon, Munda, Kharian, and Ho, who were at the forefront of the Jharkhandi movement for a separate tribal state. The tribal solidarity across state boundaries, built in opposition to these outsiders, gave rise to the separatist 'sons-of-the-soil' movement in Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand. Central to this ethno-regional movement was the internal colonialism theory, which implied that the outsiders from other parts of India continued a neo-colonial exploitation of extraordinarily rich mineral deposits of tribal areas for fueling economic development and industrialization that deliberately excluded 'original inhabitants' from its benefits. Tribal poor were kept out of newly minted jobs and educational institutions. Their way of life tied to *jal-jameen-jangal* (water-land-forest) was repeatedly undermined by outsiders who plundered their wealth, raped their women and enslaved/emasculated their men. These outsiders were primarily poor workers in mines and factories who migrated from the neighboring state of West Bengal and from northern Bihar. (Minz

1968; Rothermund and Wadhwa 1978; Rothermund, Kropp, and Dienemann 1980; Jones 1978).

Later scholars have contested the ‘internal colonialism’ thesis, but it played a significant role in consolidating the popular mobilization for carving a separate tribal state of Jharkhand out of South Bihar, western districts of West Bengal, primarily the *Jangalmahal* area made up of parts of Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum and West Midnapore districts, and parts of Odisha (Corbridge 1987; Corbridge 1986; Roy 2000; Sengupta 1980; Sengupta 1979; Sengupta 1988).¹²² There are deep historical and cultural ties that unite tribal population in Jharkhand with those in of West Bengal. However, the traditional tribal majority districts in West Bengal that were originally part of the *greater Jharkhand* project were never included in the new state of Jharkhand. The tribal groups were reduced to a minority in the new state that, as a gesture of reconciliation, merely took the name of the separatist movement preceding it.

5.2.3 Maoist Pockets in Jharkhand: Conflict and Co-operation with Democratic Tribal Agitation

There are three pockets of Maoist influence in Jharkhand¹²³: (a) Northern Jharkhand districts of Chhatra, Palamu, Latehar, Gumla, contiguous with the traditional Maoist strongholds in Gaya, Aurangabad, Jehanabad districts of South Bihar; (b) Eastern industrial districts of Bo-

¹²² Three primary arguments against internal colonialism thesis are as follows: (1) there is significant tribal representation in the mining and industrial labor forces of Jharkhand; (2) there are "permanent" tribal workers receiving wages sufficient for savings and capital accumulation; and (3) there are class divisions, economic and political, within the tribal communities. This evidence is used to fashion an alternative account of the dynamics of Jharkhandi politics, and to explain the fracturing of the tribal block vote.

¹²³ Since 2007, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India listed 10 out of 24 districts in Jharkhand (Bokaro, Chatra, Garhwa, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Latehar, Lohardaga, East Singhbhum, Palamu and West Singhbhum) among the 33 worst affected districts across India.

karo, Dhandad , Jamtara, Dumka, Deoghar and Giridih contiguous with Maoist dominated *Jangalmahal* area of West Bengal; (c) South Western districts of West Singhbhum and Simdega surrounded by the Maoist affected districts of neighboring Odisha. The MCC, largely dominated northern and southern Jharkhand and while Party Unity dominated eastern Jharkhand. Despite Maoist concentration in North, South and east Jharkhand, Maoist retirement is concentrated mostly in capital Ranchi and the neighboring Khunti district (dark green areas in the map below). Even though many of Maoist rebels were born in Palamu or Latehar in northern Jharkhand, they mostly surrendered in the police headquarters in Ranchi.

The Maoists in Jharkhand are divided by ideology and a long history of bloody turf wars. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, the three dominant factions in Jharkhand, the MCC (Maoist Coordination Committee), Party Unity and CPI(ML)Liberation, have very distinct origin and ideological priorities (Bandyopadhyay 2006; Misra 1987; Jaoul 2011; F. R. Frankel 1989; Sahay 2008). This chapter shows how the fratricidal conflict among Maoist factions became detrimental to rebel retirement and reintegration in the North.

The Maoist movement in the North had to constantly negotiate and renegotiate its relationship with both other communists in the region and the tribal agitation movement. The other communists, who did not belong the Maoist factions but worked on building labor unions in coalmines of Dhanbad, also actively reoriented Jharkhand movement against casting migrant Bihari working class poor as enemy/outsider. (Roy 2000; Munda and Mullick 2003)These communists envisaged a working class revolution uniting the migrant workers as well as the tribal poor into a class coalition, and resisted the anti-migrant worker rhetoric. The Maoists were also sympathetic to the Jharkhandi project of creating a separate state out of tribal areas in West Bengal and South Bihar (now Jharkhand) as a contiguous unit, which are dis-

tinct in cultural history, geography and demography from mainland Bengal and Bihar respectively. Tribals have also supported Maoists selectively, often offering their loyalty to Jharkhand movement. But the anti-migrant rhetoric of insider-outsider was problematic, particularly because the top leadership of Maoist movement in the North has been non-tribal migrants from West Bengal. These were college-educated, upper-caste/upper-class revolutionaries who considered Bihar as the underdeveloped, feudal hinterland that offered more opportunities for armed agrarian uprising than communist-ruled West Bengal. The Maoists had longstanding deep distrust of the other communists working in the region. The communists, Jharkhandis and the Maoists had an uneasy relationship of overlap and confrontation, and this chapter discusses how their mutual hostility played an important part in the failure of Northern Maoists to forge horizontal ties.

Despite Maoist concentration in North, South and east Jharkhand, Maoist retirement is concentrated mostly in capital Ranchi and the neighboring Khunti district (dark green areas in the map below). Even though many of Maoist rebels were born in Palamu or Latehar in northern Jharkhand, they mostly surrendered in the police headquarters in Ranchi.

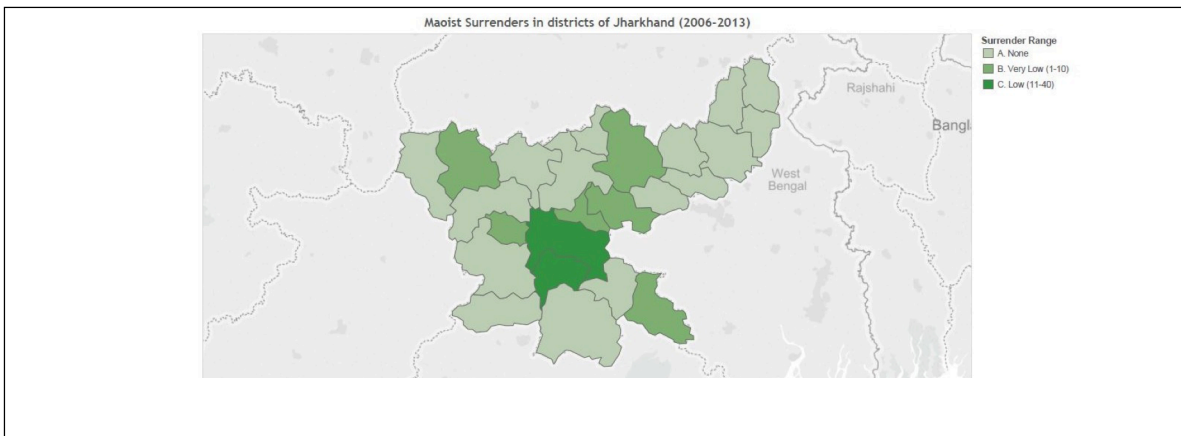


Figure 26

District Level Distribution of Maoist Surrender in the North

Further every surrender incident in Jharkhand in the last ten years occurred after the rebels were apprehended and put in jail, and subsequently persuaded to take a surrender package in return for their confession that they did not want to return to the Maoists.¹²⁴ Defying common sense, Jharkhand police actually offered incentives to already apprehended Maoists, with many criminal cases and murder charges against them, to take a considerable sum of money to walk out of prison.

5.2.4 Fieldwork: Locations and Strategy

Compared to Telangana, retired rebels are scarce and difficult to find in Jharkhand. It is not entirely surprising given that the total number of surrendered rebels in Jharkhand was less than 10 percent of that in the South. However, it was surprising that there were quite a few politicians among the retired rebels in the North, some very high profile politicians, working as elected representatives or prominent members of different political parties. Some surrendered rebels were still in jail. Many had been killed. Significantly enough there were few low level cadres in the list of retired rebels that Jharkhand police shared with me. In fact, most of them were area commanders, who were middle ranking military men in the Maoist army with control over and knowledge of certain blocks and districts. Eventually I found that the low-level cadres found it impossible to quit in the North because they were not offered the protection of the discordant exit network that emerges in the North.

The police headquarters in Ranchi handed me a list of names and addresses of all 37 surrendered Maoists in the state; among them 14 were alive and out of jail on bail. I met all of them

¹²⁴ This is based on the author's interview with in the Police Headquarters in Ranchi, Jharkhand in October 2013.

between October-December of 2013. I have also interviewed police and paramilitary officers in anti-Naxal divisions deputed from out of state to deal specifically with the Maoist insurgency. I have spoken to high and mid-level bureaucrats in the home ministry of Jharkhand, local journalists working in both national and vernacular newspapers, civil rights activists, cultural activists of Maoist groups, academics, elected representatives from Maoist affected districts as well as ordinary villagers in five districts of Jharkhand. I also met members of a rival Maoist splinter group called the Tertiya Prastuti Committee (TPC). TPC members are technically former Maoists, who allegedly quit the CPI(Maoist) party over caste feud with Maoist leaders. TPC has stated on record that they consider the CPI(Maoist) their primary enemy and offer to collaborate with the state to destroy their main enemy.¹²⁵

Unlike Telangana, the two districts with highest surrender events in Jharkhand were not among the 12 Maoist-affected districts in the state. In addition to capital Ranchi, adjacent rural areas and Khunti districts where Maoist surrender is highest and where surrendered Maoists live, I distributed my fieldwork in the three Maoist pockets in North, east and South Jharkhand.¹²⁶ In Giridih (in the east, contiguous with West Bengal), Palamu district (in the North, contiguous with Bihar) and West Singhbhum district¹²⁷ (in South-east, contiguous with Orissa), shown in

¹²⁵ TPC allegedly helps Jharkhand police to nab Maoists, although the police and MHA denied it. Extortion from development projects and contractors constitute the major source of income for the TPC. The outfit specifically targets coal traders in districts including Latehar for extortion. My meetings with a few TPC members, set off an alarm with state and national intelligence agencies, who interrogated me for several hours, checked my notes, and credentials and warned me against meeting 'dangerous elements.'

¹²⁶ I had offers from two competing activist networks and from the police to visit rural areas of Jharkhand. It is impossible to work in rural Jharkhand without an adequate network of protection. I picked an activist network, affiliated with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ranchi. This choice was deliberate, and, in hindsight, might have restricted access to certain areas and persons. In Palamau, I had personal connections with retired Maoists, which helped me step out of this network.

¹²⁷ Rural Development Ministry of India launched *Saranda Action Program* in 56 villages of Saranda in January 2012, and comprised the first ever concerted use of security forces and civil administration in tandem in a Maoist zone. As part of "all-round development" of Saranda, 10 integrated development centers (IDCs), 13 roads, 21 camps for security forces and 10 residential schools were planned, besides a series of programs for livelihood, irri-

medium green in the map above, movement intensity is high and surrender is moderately high. In Dhanbad district, movement intensity is high, but surrender is very low. Contiguous with East Singhbhum district is West Midnapore district (Jangalmahal) of West Bengal, where I met surrendered Maoists in Binpur I & II and in Gopiballabhpur I & II subdivisions.¹²⁸

Districts	Region/State	Movement Intensity	Surrender Events	Village/Block
Ranchi	Around Capital City, Ranchi/Jharkhand	Low	Highest	Ranchi Town, State Secretariat, Police Headquarters.
Khunti	Adjacent to Ranchi	Low	Highest	Lebed and Korba/Arki block.
Palamu	North Jharkhand	High	Low	Bishrampur, Chhatapur, Chainpur, Lesliganj blocks.
Giridih	East Jharkhand	High	Low	Dumri and Jamoa blocks.
West Singhbhum	South Jharkhand	High	Low	Manoharpur block.
Dhanbad	East Jharkhand	Low	Low	Topchachi and Dhanbad
West Midnapore	Adjacent to East Singhbhum	High	High	Binpur I & II, Gopiballabhpur I & II sub-divisions

Figure 27

Fieldwork Areas in the North

5.3 From the Rebel's Perspective: Retirement through Discordant Exit Network

Ranjan Yadav is a former Maoist area commander.¹²⁹ He was arrested in Ranchi in 2003 while visiting his family.¹³⁰ Yadav was in jail for six years before he had a change of heart. While in

gation and watershed management, and Indira Awas Yojana homes. Almost every village in Saranda seemed full of Maoist sympathizers.

¹²⁸ These areas saw the Lalgarh uprising (described in chapter 2 as the most recent Maoist-led agrarian uprising in India) Since 2011, the dominant regional party (Trinamool Congress, roughly translated as Grassroots Congress) came to power ending over three decades of Left rule in the state. Journalists and activists, and eventually villagers themselves often quoted a local saying about people in region : *Din eTrinamooli, raat e maovadi* (TMC by day, Maoist by night)

¹²⁹ Ranjan Yadav has been interviewed by many journalists over the years. See <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/with-aap-comes-hope-for-honest-politics-says-exmaoist-leader/article5566685.ece> , for example.

jail, he surrendered to the police in 2009 and decided to contest the parliamentary elections that same year, which he lost.¹³¹ In October 2013, I was in Ranchi trying to organize my fieldtrip to Palamau district in North Jharkhand. A journalist-cum-activist who worked for the local newspaper, Prabhat Khabar, informed me that Yadav was in town, apparently to lobby with the former chief minister of Bihar, held in Hotwar jail outside Ranchi, for a Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) nomination from Chhatra constituency. However, he eventually contested the 2014 elections on Samajwadi Party tickets and lost again. He had switched his allegiance between 4 parties in 5 years.

Yadav, a former Maoist military commander in dense forests of Palamau, looked like an average politician. He was dressed in starched white cotton kurta-pajama and shiny white shoes, the usual couture of choice of Indian politicians. What was unusual, however, was that private army of ten bodyguards, faces half-covered and rifles hanging from their shoulders, flanked him at all time, even in the broad daylight in the heart of state capital, including in the premises of state legislative assembly. Yadav quipped that these bodyguards, who never spoke to me, were his trusted lieutenants from Latehar. They were loyal to him and came to visit the capital city Ranchi. Later he confessed that his former comrades in Maoist party have issued a six-page statement against him, identifying him as a traitor and awarding a death sentence to him. He feared for his life.

When I met him in the premises of Jharkhand *Vidhan Sabha* (state legislative assembly) in Ranchi, Yadav greeted many RJD politicians. Some of them inquired about his political aspi-

¹³⁰ In interviews with other locals familiar with his story, it has been suggested that this arrest was pre-arranged with police. He wanted to be apprehended.

¹³¹ Yadav contested from Chatra constituency that includes Chatra and Latehar districts. As a Maoist commander, Yadav was well known in these districts. He fought 2009 elections from jail. It has been reported that Yadav had a change of heart and vowed to eschew violence following an Art of Living workshop. However, He never mentioned it to me during our meetings.

rations and assured him of their support. Yadav explained that he knew some of these RJD politicians since his insurgent days. He joked that most of them were corrupt and never did anything for their constituency. He complained that it is politicians like these who made an armed insurgency the last resort. But the insurgents were hounded by the state like criminals and the politicians were respected as patriots.

Yadav joined Party Unity (PU) in the late 1980s. He affirmed that PU was the only pro-poor party in Chatra-Latehar area of then South Bihar. He was inspired by the PU activists, specifically Dr. Vinayan, who worked in the villages of South Bihar for a popular PU mass organization (*Mazdoor Kranti Sangram Samiti*, literally Workers Revolutionary Struggle Group, popularly known as Samiti). Samiti activists organized the Dalit and poor backward caste agricultural workers in villages against caste-based exploitation by rich, upper-caste landowners.

Yadav reminisced how the Samiti activists, upper caste, urban and educated, would drink water in untouchable 'Dalit' houses. In the hierarchical, caste divided rural Latehar district, that was a 'revolution' in itself. He was particularly drawn to Samiti's meetings where, for the first time in his life, he learned that caste inequality is neither given or inevitable; it is, in fact, fabricated by the rich, upper castes, to extract free or cheap labor. Yadav contrasted this political message with those of the national parties. Although his parents went to vote, no one in his village ever met their elected representative.

Yadav joined Samiti because he was convinced that caste exploitation was unjust. During several meetings with him, Yadav explained how he gradually gathered courage to join Samiti meetings and rallies, distributing pamphlets and raising slogans against feudalism, inequality, and exploitation. The earliest Samiti activities Yadav joined was opposition against child mar-

riage, dowry, and domestic violence. Eventually he fled his village, left his family and joined the local Maoist army (known as Dasta). In his two decades of insurgent life, he was most proud of inaugurating an 'English medium' school outside his village, where a dreamy, college-educated revolutionary taught free of cost. Yadav confessed that it was his biggest regret that he could not read the english books of the revolution that his party leaders read.

Yadav even managed to get free stationary supplies for his school. The successive district magistrates applauded his efforts and attended annual handicraft fairs that he organized in his school. It was surprising to me that an area commander of a banned insurgent group maintained regular contact with the top echelons of law enforcement and civil administration. Yadav convinced the people in his area that they should vote for one political party and not another. In return, political parties offered him cash, and other non-monetary rewards including contracts in government road building, dam construction projects. Yadav explained unapologetically that he leveraged his political and administrative connections to get more employment-generating projects for his area, secure resource and respectability for his school, build a hospital near his village and so on.

The retired rebel was reluctant to talk about his role in the caste massacres that happened in the area during his insurgent career. But he was bitterly critical of how the Maoist party began working like other political parties, particularly regarding corruption of its leadership that cost ordinary cadres their lives. He named commanders who stole party funds to build palatial houses and send their children to study abroad, often laundering money through their wives and family members. He described protection rackets, where different Maoist factions took hefty monthly payoffs from big landowners in return for protecting them from rival Maoist factions. Thus the

most notorious of landlords would continue their feudal exploitation of villagers if they were plugged into one of these protection rackets.

Yadav did not surrender. He was arrested. In jail, like other retired rebels in the North, he had a change of heart. Yadav was blunt: he said if he had to be a corrupt politician, it was better to join a mainstream political party. He met CPI (ML) Liberation leaders and cadres in jail. Other political leaders also approached him in jail to exhort him to join their parties. Liberation was a rival insurgent faction that fought the bloody caste wars in the plains of central Bihar. Since mid-1990s, Liberation quit armed insurgency and joined electoral politics in mid-nineties. Yadav decided to surrender and contest parliamentary elections on Liberation ticket. The paltry surrender cash was not enough for funding his electoral bid. He was not offered any land or vocational training.

During our meetings, Yadav insisted that he had complete faith in the ideological underpinning of the armed movement that he joined and served for over two decades. He never once swerved from the assertion that no other political party seriously mobilized the Dalit and Backward Castes in Bihar on issues that mattered on the ground. However, the pro-poor party gradually became militarized and corrupt like other political parties. Yadav did not consider any other post-retirement careers other than that of a politician. He was certain that he would be killed if he quit. As an insurgent, he had spent years watching others contesting elections. Yadav was confident that since he had delivered big chunks of votes from his area to other candidates enabling their victory he could do the same for himself. He also knew that unless he had the 'protection' of some other political party he would be targeted and killed by his former comrades, the police or the former landlords that he had attacked in his insurgent career.

Yadav underestimated the role of party machine in electioneering. Despite popularity, Yadav lost the election because his chosen party (Liberation) did not have the financial resources or the ground game to win elections. From 2006-2016 Yadav hobnobbed with many different political parties, including the right-wing BJP and the regional ethnic parties. To stay alive in the face of violent threats from his former comrades, who consider his retirement a betrayal, Yadav considers politics his only safe haven. Political clout, he argued, was the only countervailing factor against Maoist death warrants. Regardless of ideological bent and policy priorities, the hunted former rebel, who still has criminal cases against him pending in the courts, seeks protection from the insurgency in democratic politics. Yadav lamented that the landlords and politicians that once sought protection from him did not ‘respect’ him anymore. In his own words, when he was ‘illegal’, armed and ‘dangerous’ he was a much sought after political operative that many bureaucrats, police and politicians fear and revered. Retirement has left him disarmed, isolated and vulnerable. But he was confident that he knew enough about the corrupt and crooked ways of electoral politics to eventually achieve success.

5.4 Macro (Environmental) Factors: Social Bases of Maoist Insurgency

The process and outcome of rebel retirement in the North is defined by the limitations of the informal exit networks in the region, which, in turn, evolved contingent on the underlying social bases of insurgency. This section is divided into two parts: In the first part I identify the underlying social divisions in rural Jharkhand on which the Maoists attempted to superimpose a discourse of class politics. I argue that they were far more pervasive and resilient in the North due to confluence of three socioeconomic and political factors that deepened caste cleavages and intensified caste violence in the North.

First, the dynamic connection between land ownership, caste status, and political networks in the North is ubiquitous enough to affect the everyday life of ordinary people in the villages, including subsistence. I argue that agricultural class relations in the North was embedded in caste divisions because land ownership that determined class position was, in turn, determined by caste identity.

Second, the Maoists neither had the political and economic resources nor the incentives and motivation to undercut the “master cleavage” of caste. On the flip side, democratic politics in the North, particularly through dense caste-based patron-client relationships, made caste identities the most obvious way of categorizing citizens.

Third, as the passion of caste-based mobilization reached a feverish pitch within democracy, the multi-caste Maoist organization could not remain immune to it. In the South, the Dalit platform quit the insurgent movement and migrated en masse to democracy. In the North, however, caste-based factionalism disrupted the cohesiveness of the insurgent organization. But the Dalits were not welcome into a democracy, particularly because of stiff resistance of the backward castes who were newly accommodated into democratic representation and participation.

In the second part of this section I show how intense social hostilities in a feudal setting intensified the fear, reach and intensity of upper caste violence, culminating in the creation of private caste militias, known as *senas* (means armies) that attacked the Dalit landless farmers with unprecedented brutality. Mostly Maoist supporters, the Dalits in the North eventually fought back with the active help of Maoist cadres. This unleashed a spiral of violence and arms race in the villages. This discussion also sheds light on the collusion between state forces and upper caste militias in fighting the Maoist “menace”.

Despite frequent clashes and bloodbath, the northern Maoists could not establish military superiority. As a result a persistent security dilemma stifled Maoist strategy of militant mass mobilization. The everyday bloodbath altered Maoist recruitment policies, with a growing preference for unprincipled gang members, mafia and petty criminals who could kill with impunity matching the deadly ferocity of landlord militias. Thus the Maoist organization in the North became a dreaded refuge of bandits and delinquents, which made it unattractive to ordinary villagers, urban working class, intelligentsia, and activists.

5.4.1 Battle lines in Rural Jharkhand: Resilience of Caste Divisions

Over 80 percent of population in Maoist affected districts in the North lived in rural areas, of which 90 percent depend on agriculture as their primary livelihood.¹³² In this setting, to own land is the highest indicator of prosperity and social status. Lack of land, on the other hand, is not only economic subordination; it also condemns the poor to a life of manual labor, which automatically bestows low social prestige. Historically, the double jeopardy of land poverty and low caste nullified the prospect of voice and visibility of rural poor in the North. (Murdia 1975; Chaudhry 1988)

It is no coincidence that land ownership (and livestock possession) is embedded in caste hierarchy. In the 1980s, when the Maoists were struggling to establish their foothold in villages around central and South Bihar, the upper castes that constituted about 13% of rural population owned over 80% of the land. The lowest castes, the Dalits, who constituted 14% of population, on the other hand, due to their landlessness and lack of education, were historically powerless in local affairs and invisible in state politics and administration. Agrarian class relations depend on

¹³² According to 2001 Census, still including Jharkhand as part of Bihar, 95% of population was rural. The 2011 census shows that 76% percent of Jharkhand population is rural. But in Maoist affected districts over 80% of population is rural. For example, 91.4 % of population in Giridih, 88.3 % of population in Palamu, 85.4 % of population in West Singhbhum.

ownership of land, and I argue that land ownership in the North was embedded in caste. Class almost exclusively conditioned whether a person was land-rich, land-poor or landless. In other words, higher caste automatically implied larger landholding and higher-class status and lower caste led to land-poverty and hence lower class status (Habib 1995).

5.4.1.1 Caste is Class: Why Hierarchy Matters in the Rural North

A Sudra must never collect wealth, even though he is able (to do it). A Sudra who has acquired wealth is a pain to Brahmanas.

-The Laws of Manu(1964) ch. X, verse 129, p. 430

In the villages of North, the ancient Hindu legal text cited above (Manu Smriti) regulated ideas of duties, virtue, rights, justice and sin to crystallize a way of life that served the rich upper castes at the expense of the poor lower castes (Bühler 1964). In fact, even in the 1970s and 80s when the Maoists were trying to gain foothold in the rural North, the Sudras or the low serving castes in the villages surrendered to the widespread custom that they deserved to be treated with contempt and prejudice because of their sins in the past life, that allegedly ranged from laziness and alcohol consumption to animal cruelty and atheism. In other words, caste inequality was not only a mode of exploitation from above, the fatalism and “other-worldliness” was deeply ingrained among the lower castes as well as means of justifying and reconciling them to grotesque inequalities. (Kolenda 1964)

Faced with organized political and military challenges from the Maoist supporters among the lower castes (*sudras*), the upper castes in the North frantically activated and fortified their kinship networks to act not only as barricades against social changes but also with militias committed to kill and die to protect their traditional way of life. It is true that economic anxiety of the feudal upper castes, threatened by

leftwing attack on highly profitable traditional modes of surplus extraction, intensified upper caste resistance. But, as discussed later in this chapter, battle calls were invariably articulated in terms of primordial identities in ways that reinforced horizontal kinship networks and weakened class solidarity.

Although broader comparative scholarship on cleavage-based party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Bartolini and Mair 2007; Mair 1994; Burstein and Linton 2003) and India-specific literatures on caste politics (Kothari 1964; Weiner and Kothari 1965; Kothari 2004; F. Frankel 1988) have offered theoretical reasons to expect similar political behavior from communities with shared social profiles, recent researchers have also argued that lower caste voters do not necessarily act as a cohesive bloc at the national level, often taking divergent stances on issues ranging from economic liberalization to public spending priorities (Thachil and Herring 2008). However, the process of consolidation of caste identity analyzed in this chapter transpired at the local level, and the incentives for ethnic (in this case, caste) defection (Stathis N. Kalyvas 2008) were much lower than they are at the level of national electoral politics, where competing parties offer a matrix of choices to poor voters, some appealing to their class positions and others stoking subnational, religious or caste identities.

Caste as a religiously sanctioned system of untouchability and resource transfer is in decline, but caste organization and identity are important forms of social or symbolic capital for rural elites (Jeffrey 2001). The caste basis of class factors become evident in the fact that the upper castes, despite internal economic stratification, were land-owning peasants and the Dalits, lowest in the Hindu caste hierarchy, were almost exclusively landless and the poorest (Chakravarti 2001). This is in sharp contrast to the villages in the South, where the upper castes, including Brahmin, were not land-rich and not tied to rural agrarian economy. Class position was not entirely tied to the caste identity. The college-educated, left-leaning rich Reddys in the South, for example, were reluctant to intermarry in poor rural Reddy families due to mismatch in economic status. The rural North was largely insulated from waves of urbanization, industrialization and western education that threatened upper caste solidarity in the South. A rich Bhumihar (upper caste) family in the North would habitually marry into poor Bhumihar families.

Similarly despite comparable class positions poor backward castes avoided social interaction with equally poor Dalits because their caste identities determined their differential social status. In fact the majority of poor peasantry belonged to backward castes. Despite their daily struggles for subsistence, they distinguished themselves from lower castes by their refusal to work as agricultural labor. They hired Dalit labor for their farming. 92.64% of Dalits worked as landless laborer. In contrast, less than 1% of upper caste population identified themselves as landless peasants (Kunnath 2006).¹³³ This is not an old orientalist argument of essentializing caste. As elaborated below, caste had an instrumental value in perpetuating and justifying blatant injustices and inequalities, power and control.

Unlike their Southern counterpart, who pursued urban careers and business opportunities in non-agrarian sectors, the Brahmins in the North were firmly feudal, tied to land and ensconced in dual social-economic dominance, with concentration of wealth, social status and political power in their hands. When the Maoists entered into villages to fight for the landless poor, they united in fierce determination to preserve their rural predominance.

Another mechanism that aided the all-pervasive reach of caste system in the North is that caste networks compensated for the lack of incomplete or completely nonexistent social safety nets in the rural North. Kinship networks are especially in poor countries, where households must cope with an unforgiving environment of severe poverty and shocks to economic and physical well-being due to violence and governmental neglect. Autonomy of caste networks was not a likely option for a household struggling to make ends meet in the face of looming disasters such as drought, flooding, pestilence, infectious disease and a looming insurgency – especially against a backdrop of inadequate formal credit and insurance markets and a thinly stretched welfare state.

¹³³ Different scholars have worked out different agrarian class combinations. Harriss (1977) called used capitalist farmer, rich peasant, independent middle peasants, poor peasants classification. Beteille used landlord, owner-cultivator, tenant, sharecropper, laborer classification. I use Dhanagare (1983) and Prasad (1994) classification.

There is a large literature documenting the exchange of services and the provision of public goods between households of same castes in informal, non-market ways. (e.g. Rosenzweig, 1988; Rosenzweig and Stark, 1989; Fafchamps and Lund, 2003; Munshi and Rosenzweig (2006). In rural North kinship networks also work as risk sharing mechanisms. If a farmer is ill and cannot complete a critical harvest on time, for example, the work of a whole season may be lost. Labor pooling enables farmers to seek assistance from their neighbors. In their discussion of labor pooling groups in rural India, authors point out the role that caste plays in facilitating the formation of these groups (Munshi and Rosenzweig 2006).

5.4. 1. 2 Crystallization of Caste as a Master Cleavage: The Role of Democratic Politics

I argue that the all-pervasive penetration of caste into social, political and economic lives of ordinary people in the North crystallized it into the “master cleavage” through active aid of electoral politics. The patron-client relations are based on caste alliances. Development outcomes have usually flown through these caste-based vertical linkages. In addition, any understanding of dynamics and implications of democracy in Bihar has to engage with the ways in which electoral practices are embedded in local caste relations of dominance and subordination (Witsoe 2009).

The 1990s witnessed an upsurge in the number of members of backward caste representatives in state legislative assemblies and the national parliament. By the mid-1990s, backward caste politicians dominated the state assemblies in North India, also referred to as Hindi belt. Comparative studies have shown that nowhere else in India have backward castes experienced a more sharp, meteoric rise than in Bihar. (Jaffrelot and Kumar 2012)

In the fifty years between 1952 and 2002 the proportion of backward caste members in state legislative assembly more than doubled from 20 percent to 42 percent, whereas the percentage of upper caste members halved from 46 to 26 percent (still twice their share of population,

13. 6 percent). This upsurge in visibility and impact of backward caste on electoral competition since the late 1980s has been described as the ‘second democratic upsurge’ and even a ‘silent revolution’ (Yadav 1999; Jaffrelot 2003). As upper caste leaders started courting the backward caste ‘vote bank’ in elections, the backward castes, in turn, started driving a hard bargain, sometimes seeking ascendancy in electoral politics vis-à-vis upper castes, through forming own ethnic parties (Chandra 2005).

Since mid 1990s, a regional party, formed predominantly on Yadav caste identity (*Rashtriya Janata Dal*, RJD), dominated state legislative assemblies and formed successive state governments in Bihar. (Chaitanya 1991; Jeffrey Witsoe 2012; Jeffrey Witsoe 2011; Robin 2004) Faced with stringent criticism of his economic policies, which did not improve any indicators of backward caste status, his most significant slogans were ones about giving voice and dignity to the backward castes (‘swarg nehi, swar diya’, meaning ‘may be not heaven, but I gave them voice’). By asserting representation and dignity of backward castes as inherently valuable achievements (for example, *vikas nahin, samman diya*, meaning ‘May be not development, but I gave them dignity’) more important than concrete development indicators the caste relations of domination and subjugation and the memories of exclusion and inequality became inextricable from politics in the North. The competing backward caste party, led by another charismatic leader from another backward caste (Kurmi) party dominated the next ten years of Bihar politics. He added efficiency to RJD rhetoric dignity and social justice. In the last two decades, none of the chief ministerial candidates and ministers in prominent portfolios is from the upper castes. (Ashutosh Kumar 2013)

One hardly comes across a work on politics in Bihar that does not mention caste backgrounds of chief ministers, caste-wise distribution of ministerial berths, and the changing caste

composition of the members of legislative assembly. Thus, a decline in the percentage of upper castes in the cabinet would be interpreted as their declining political power. Likewise, an increase in the percentage of a given caste (say Yadavs) in the Legislative Assembly would be considered as symptomatic of the political ascendancy of that caste. And since no caste can decide on its own the political fortunes at the state level, the relative ascendancy/decline of a political formation would be explained in terms of various permutations and combinations of the major caste groups (Blair 1972; Chaudhary and Shrikant 2001).

In the colonial history of the North, too, caste networks and associations were the channels through which political movements were launched and recast. For example, the movement for the creation of a separate Bihar province in the colonial period is seen as the outcome of the organizational efforts of the upper castes (Kayasthas).¹³⁴ The continual uses of these identities impart substance to the existing or manufactured caste unities and distinctions and thus helps fortify, maintain and perpetuate caste differences among voters in otherwise similar socio-economic circumstances.

The symbolic significance of this rise of the backward caste was enormous, particularly in the villages. This assertion of caste identity by the backward castes (particularly the Yadavs and the Kurmis) within democratic politics sounded similar to Maoists in rhetoric of dignity, voice and promise of redistribution. They did it legally within democracy, with police and ad-

¹³⁴ Like elsewhere, Bihar has had its fair share of caste associations and sabhas, the latter including for instance, Bihar Kayastha Provincial Sabha(1889), Bhumihaar Brahman Sabha, All India Kurmi Mahasabha (1894), Gopajatiya Sabha (1909). Most of them were geared towards the organization of cognate sub-castes and focused on a set of issues that combined the zeal for social reforms with efforts towards accessing public employment. Bhumihaar (Saraswati 1952) and Kayasthas(Carroll 1978) expended significant resources and energy in raising their respective caste statuses in subsequent enumerations of the census of India, for they had been included in the Vaishya Varna in the 1901 census. Likewise, Kurmis put in great efforts to ensure that their caste is removed from the list of criminal castes.

ministration aiding rather than apprehending them. Democracy made legitimate power accessible to the backward castes. But this realization of their numerical preponderance as crucial electoral resource is hardly confined to the political field alone. In a village, the political, ritual and social have always been fused. The control of the state is the control of the village and vice versa.

The backward caste rise in democratic politics not only dried up their support for Maoists in the villages of the North. But more importantly, it set the stage for overzealous, violent push back by the backward castes, blocking the rise of the Dalits who were below them in caste hierarchy. Dalits, who were more severely impoverished and exploited by the upper castes than the backward castes, now faced backward caste armies joining hands with upper castes to hunt them down. In other words, once they got a taste of power, the backward castes used their kinship networks to crush Dalit competition with a severity no less intimidating than upper caste domination of them. Thus rise of the backward castes in democratic politics becomes as much a mechanism for reproducing caste dominance, as they were to challenge the existing upper caste dominance. Although the upper castes fought the rise of the backward castes in electoral politics, the two joined forces to violent crush the extra-democratic Maoist mobilization by Dalits.¹³⁵

5.4.1.3 Fractured Class Coalitions: Internal Cohesiveness of Insurgent Organization

True to Marxist theory of mobilization, the Maoists hoped to mobilize the landless/land-poor against the rich landowners. But they found to their dismay that even the poor among the upper castes (Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayastha) and Backward castes (Bania, Yadav,

¹³⁵ This is not entirely unprecedented in the history of Bihar. It is generally believed that the three upper castes (Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayasthas) closed ranks in 1962 to support K. B. Sahay as the Chief Minister against Bir Chand Patel, a Kurmi leader supported by Maithil Brahmins led by Binodanand Jha. The fraternal wars between Bhumihars and Yadavs during the RJD rule (1990-2005) has had as much to do with secular interests as the former's indignation at the rise of the latter as the ruling group.

Kurmi and Koeri castes) mostly chose to join their caste and kinship networks over class based networks. The upper caste-backward caste unity against Maoists/Dalits was often predicated on economic logic that superseded social distance. For example, Bhumihars in North India are aspiring Brahmins who wear sacred thread. Historically, the Brahmins have considered the agricultural vocation of Bhumihars inferior to their intellectual prowess. Despite social barriers, Brahmins and Bhumihars united in opposition to Maoists/Dalits because of shared economic interests as landowning communities. The Bhumihar as well as the backward caste small landholders also aligned themselves against Maoists/Dalits because they had vested interests in keeping the Dalit subjugated and their cheap labor available. They blamed the Maoists for raising daily wages and making Dalit hired labor unaffordable. Thus aside from caste identity, class interests of small and large landowners, in fact, aligned in wage suppression. The upper castes banded together, closing ranks, not only among the richer landowners, but also embracing every rung of the social ladder, down to the poorest of their caste-men (Kunnath 2006). This is the classic conundrum of left agrarian politics, where small landowning peasants unite with large landowning peasants, despite shared interests with landless agrarian classes, oppose their resistance movements.

On the other hand, the entire phalanx of rural Dalit was deemed Maoists. As other castes gravitated towards their caste network, the Dalit foot soldiers in the insurgent organization began raising suspicions against their upper caste leadership, and refused to trust them with their lives. The early leadership of Maoist movement in Jharkhand in 1970s was mostly upper caste, educated left radicals who migrated from the neighboring state of West Bengal. This elite caste/class committed to 'de-classing' themselves, signifying conscious detachment from the privileges of high birth, through great personal sacrifices. They formed *dastas* (armed guerilla squads), killed notorious landlords and moneylenders, set up *krantikari* (revolutionary) committees, occupied

their land and planted red flags on them. They set up peoples' court to have the farmers publicly try their landlords, impose fines or award death sentences. They overturned feudal domination; changed entrenched power relationships in villages that let the rural poor rediscover their collective self (widely referred to as *Izzat*, or self respect) and reassert their rights.

These achievements harken back to the old Marxian concept of class formation—the transformation from class *in* itself to class *for* itself (Marx 1963). However, the relationship between the middle class ideological 'vanguard' and the illiterate, poor peasantry had always been fraught with tensions between symbiosis and dissonance. The rural poor in Bihar was hardly oblivious of how the Bengali 'babus' came from a culture that historically looked down upon them as culturally inferior race. This divide between leadership and masses became more salient once the 'sons-of-the-soil' movement for separate Jharkhand state (discussed in next section) gathered momentum, and in the reigning "us versus them" politics, the migrant leadership of the Northern Maoists became the proverbial 'them'.

The second-generation leadership in Maoist organizations in South Bihar came from backward castes, primarily Yadavs, Kurmis. By the mid 1990s, the democratic political scenario of Bihar was so saturated with casteist politics and politicized caste (Kothari 2004) that the rhetoric and caste rivalry inevitably spilled over onto the extra-democratic Maoist politics. In the next decade, several small caste-based splinter Maoist groups came up in the North. For example, Dalit, specifically dominant Ghanju cadres in North Jharkhand districts of Chhatra and Latehar accused that the Yadav leadership of Maoist party discriminated against Dalit cadres, reviving memories of feudal domination and violating the overwhelming rhetoric of equality within democratic politics. In the words of a former Dalit Maoist cadre, he would not take up

arms and risk his life to live in the same discriminatory casteist environment that he resisted in his village.

This disrupted organizational cohesiveness of Maoists. Research on conventional militaries has already recognized the potentially positive or damaging effects of strong pre-existing social divides on military cohesion and outcome. (MacCoun, Kier, and Belkin 2006; Ben-Shalom, Lehrer, and Ben-Ari 2005; Griffith 2007) Insurgent military organizations should be no different. In the next section, I show how the state counterinsurgency colluded with the upper and backward caste resistance against Maoists/Dalits, facilitating rise of caste-based militias that confronted northern Maoists and resisted establishment of Maoist military superiority in the villages of the North.

5.4.2 Upper Caste Counter-Mobilization: Collusion of the Democratic State

The landowning classes in the North, including both the upper and backward castes, opposed the Dalit/Maoist insurgency by mobilizing their private militias that murdered with impunity, often with active support of the state. I show how the anti-Maoist coalition worked through caste and kinship networks that penetrated all levels of law enforcement and administration. I argue that frequent confrontation between Maoists and these caste militias in the North intensely militarized the struggle at village level, creating an atmosphere of fear, insecurity and panic among common people, and causing a complete breakdown of law and order.

In the Hindi belt of North India affluent landowning families have always maintained their private squads of assailants, dreaded for their brutal illegal activities that included plunder, rape and extortion. (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009) Faced with Dalit/Maoist upheaval, every cluster of 10-15 adjacent villages in a district consolidated its own upper caste army. These caste militias

could not have operated with total impunity without active support of powerful caste-based patronage networks pervading political, administrative and law enforcement circles in Bihar. For example, *Bhumihar* landlords in Congress party primarily propped up *Brahmarshi Sena*.¹³⁶ *Rajputs* in Congress party backed the *Kunwar Sena*. Kurmi landlords in Congress party backed *Bhoomi Sena*.¹³⁷ Yadavs in the mainstream Left (CPI) backed *Lorik Sena*.¹³⁸ Sunlight Sena in South Bihar had active support of two-time chief minister of Bihar and of former Governors, MLAs and MPs, who all belonged to landholding Rajput caste.¹³⁹ Former Prime Minister, defense and home ministers of India belonging to the rightwing *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) were among the patrons of the *Ranveer Sena*, later declared a terrorist group (Sinha and Sinha 2001; Chandran and Gupta 2002).¹⁴⁰ Politicians could ill-afford to ignore the wealthy landowners who financed the political campaigns of their caste brethren and deliver votes through complex caste alliances in various parts of Bihar. In this charged environment, neutrality was not an option for ordinary civilians (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007).

¹³⁶ It had the blessings of 'King' Mahendra, former MP, MLA's like Abhiram Sharma, Sardar Krishna Singh of Arwal, Jagdish Sharma and others, with the present Congress Legislative Party leader, Ramashraya Prasad Singh, then a powerful Minister, backing them in Patna.

¹³⁷ Bhoomi sena, authors of the Belchi massacre, set up the Bhoomi Sena. , led by the Congress MLA from the Masaurhi area, and later led by his wife, Poonam Devi, also an MLA.

¹³⁸ CPI leader and Member of Parliament, Ramashraya Singh Yadav had, in the meanwhile, set up the Lorik Sena, exploiting the linkages between the Yadav landowners and the contractor-caste criminal combine, to take on the left squads.

¹³⁹ Prominent political personalities in support of Sunlight Sena included Ram Naresh Singh, MLA and later MP, who was close to Satyendra Narain Sinha, former two-term Chief Minister of Bihar, and belonged to the princely Deo family of Aurangabad. Among other well-known patrons of *Sunlight Sena* were Bhisma Narain Singh, of Manatu family of Palamu, former Governor of Tamil Nadu and Tripura. Ram Naresh Singh was looked upon as a saviour of the Rajput landowners of the erstwhile Palamau Paragana and Chatra regions.. Ram Naresh Singh alias Lootan Singh: 'Lootan' means one who loots or grabs. He started his career as a wagon breaker, and later went on to become a contractor.

¹⁴⁰ In 2015, evidence came to light that many BJP leaders, including Murli Manohar Joshi, C. P. Thakur, and former PM Chandra Shekhar were complicit in the Bihar Dalit massacres committed by the Ranvir Sena, while the backward caste governments of Nitish Kumar, as well as his arch rivals, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi declined to order investigations into the massacres despite knowledge of them.

The Maoists did not back down in the face of escalation of violence, frenzied arms race and succession of devastating hate crimes in rural Bihar. MCC was the first to establish military domination over the Rajput-Pathhan landowners in 500 villages in South Bihar. But they did so by sponsoring the extraordinarily vicious Baghaura-Dalelchak massacre of 54 *Rajputs* in summer of 1987. This incident alarmed upper castes everywhere in Bihar and set off an avalanche of caste carnage across Bihar. (Jaoul 2011; Sahay 2008; Chandran and Gupta 2002; Louis 2000b) In a series of revenge attacks, the *Ranveer Sena* notched up a record of several incidents of bloodbaths, by killing Dalit men and boys, and inflicting unprecedented violence on Dalit women and girls that they identified as poisonous wombs breeding impertinent revolutionaries. In villages of central Bihar they gang raped pregnant women, cut open their wombs and paraded human fetus on sword tips.¹⁴¹ The spiral of violence and counter-violence in rural Bihar, death and losses in both camps, banished sane, neutral voices (Narula 1999).

As upper caste landlords lost their families in Maoist attacks, they demanded that upper caste politicians channel state fund and resources into counterinsurgency against Maoists. By mid 1980s, there were police encampments, a majority of them manned by the paramilitary forces, across villages of Bihar. In addition, political largesse in terms of state developmental funds were passed on through caste and kinship networks. Whether it was funds for roads, new hospitals, creation of jobs, or recruitment to the police, the ruling castes chose their upper caste brethren as the favored beneficiaries. This preferential treatment was compounded by the fact that these upper caste groups were largely educated and already in a better position to claim the benefits.

¹⁴¹ When asked why the sena killed children and women, one sena member responded, "We kill children because they will grow up to become Naxalites. We kill women because they will give birth to Naxalites."

The biases worked in myriad ways. For example, since very little was spent on the deployment of the police and paramilitary forces into rural areas, it was only seldom that a police post was actually created. Left to fend for themselves, the forces were sheltered in existing *pucca* structures. This, without exception, would be the palaces of upper caste landlords. The entire deployment of forces thus took on a shape, perhaps inadvertent, that suggested that its purpose was to protect the land, wealth and life of particular caste groups, specifically the rich landowners. Inevitably, the police posts became objects of Maoist retaliation. The police force was constituted, on request of ministers and administrators, under officers of the same castes as the landowners. Often the police and the caste militias would fight together against the Maoists. To add to this was a highly controversial decision by upper caste Chief Minister in 1986 to arm the landlords against the Naxalites. Thousands of licensed guns were issued to upper castes (Chaudhry 1988; Chakravarti 2001). The enormous and growing arsenal of both licensed and illegal arms were eventually loaned out to the *senas* in their fight against Maoists. By 1990s, every village in Bihar was armed to the teeth.

Simultaneously some Maoists started running protection markets, whereby they had started isolating individual landowners in specific regions, offering protection for hefty payments, or in exchange of some land or guns. Many of the landowners agreed. This tactic later took on the form of an extended protection racket, and the Party Unity and Liberation groups started clashing among themselves in turf wars, or over these protected landowners.¹⁴² As illegal firearms became freely available, private gangs of arms smugglers, drug dealers and traffickers

¹⁴² This has become a norm in Bihar. See "Where blood is flowing along the Sone": HT/Patna, February 28,1999. "Exit Policy for landowners," HT/Patna March 12,1999. "Police tormenting them more than the Naxalites" HT/Delhi, March 1,1999. "PWG circulates hit list for selective killings", HT Patna, January 30, 1999.

swamped Bihar. In fact, nowhere in India is the nexus between landlords, police, bureaucrats, Maoists and criminals as naked as in Bihar.

Several roving rebel gangs of erstwhile peasants also developed in different parts of Bihar- particularly in Bhagalpur-Munger districts, hills and forests of Kaimur Range and the Himalayan (terai) terrain in West Champaran-often degenerating into gang warfare. Since 2000s caste-based breakaway Maoist groups, like Tiritiya Prastuti Committee, Jharkhand Liberation Tiger (JLT), Peoples' Liberation Front of India (PLFI), for example, run competing businesses of kidnap and extortion. These apart, there are also numerous smaller gangs of dacoits operating throughout the state. Such was the extreme and all-encompassing reach of caste hatred that people dropped their last names in a bid to hide their caste status in public schools and offices. In the next section, I show how crystallization of caste as the master-cleavage aided Maoists in forging deep, strong vertical ties but hurt their ability to expand the horizontal support network across class and rural/urban divides. High militarization of agrarian struggle, low organizational cohesiveness of Maoists, corruption and extreme caste hostility pervading democracy-insurgency interface bred discordant exit networks in Jharkhand.

5.5 Meso (Organizational) Factors: Strong Vertical and Weak Horizontal Ties

In this section I argue that Maoists in Jharkhand forged strong vertical ties with the rural proletariat by fighting their caste wars, which, as many ethnographic studies have shown, define identities and interests of ordinary people were rooted in Bihar (Witsoe 2013; Witsoe 2009; Singer 1997; Hauser and Singer 1986; Kantor 2016) But in order to fight these wars, the Maoists recruited the most bellicose, fierce and ruthless local youths who could take on the upper caste militias. These Maoist cadres had little regard for ideological training and principled commit-

ment to social justice that originally motivated the party leadership. The unbridled militancy pursued by local commanders attracted more gangs and mafia elements to Maoist arsenal of gun and money, and exposed the organization to more violence.

The strong vertical ties with local Dalit communities weakened the capacity of northern Maoists to build horizontal ties across rural/urban and caste divides. First, the local Maoist military commanders and urban intellectuals could not work together not only because of their divergent goals, but also because of extensive caste barriers between them. Second, competing democratic movements, the Jharkhand movement and the socialist movement by J P Narayan, which, like Maoists, also mobilized on slogans of social justice, dignity, rights and equality and took the wind off Maoist sail. Third, intense factional rivalry among Maoist groups weakened Maoist resistance. Fourth, electoral switch by dominant Maoist factions in Central Bihar further fractured the Maoist support base in North India.

5.5.1 Strong Vertical Ties: Maoist Organization Entrenched in Local Conflicts

The Maoist mass fronts in Bihar were gradually sidelined by the immediate imperative of rebels to militarize. For example, *Mazdur Kisan Sangram Samiti* (MKSS) was a front organization of the Party Unity launched in 1980 to represent agricultural laborers. The MKSS played a significant role in mobilizing Dalit laborers, and most of the former Maoists from Palamau, Laterhar and Chhatra districts that I interviewed entered Maoist movement through MKSS.¹⁴³ By 1986, however, the popular mass leader of MKSS, Dr Vinayan, was suspended by PU for criticizing

¹⁴³ In 1980s, MKKS led many grassroots struggle against sharecropping (*bataidari*), bonded labor (*begaar*) and untouchability. MKSS, popularly referred to as *Sangathhan* (meaning, organization) was led by Dr Vinayan, a medical doctor from neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh.

the “meaningless violence and undisciplined manner of peasant struggle” that hijacked mass mobilization and exposed ordinary people to unnecessary police harassment and upper caste retaliation.¹⁴⁴ Intense militancy of landlord-police counter-violence as well as the ideological proclivities of northern Maoist groups against mass movement contributed to complete marginalization of Maoist-led mass movements in Bihar (Kunnath 2006).

The selection process, induction, training of Maoist cadres in the North, unlike their southern counterparts, did not include methodical ideological training. The biggest challenge of Maoists in Bihar was that local leaders were slow to emerge, and consequently a constant struggle to up the ante against entrenched ‘landlordism’ became the key element in identifying leadership, and this cumulative raising of the stakes in the conflict created an endless spiral of violence. In a context where police refused to register complaints against their caste brethren and the Dalit/Maoist activists, including social workers and lawyers, were indiscriminately arrested for legal political activities; Maoists depended on ruling by fear and hate.¹⁴⁵

At the local level, in the rural North having a gun can make the person immensely powerful in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of others. By supplying guns and a license to kill, the Maoists in the North attracted mafia and gangs, who took control of Maoist arsenal and consid-

¹⁴⁴ MKSS split in 1987, and the pro-Vinayan followers were all forced to form a new organization, named *Jana Mukti Andolan* (Peoples’ Liberation Movement) completely outside of Maoist platform. This tension became irreconcilable due to the differing positions taken by two of the founding members of the MKSS, Dr. Vinayan and Arvind Singh. Arvind Singh, on the other hand, wanted the MKSS to be working in close relation with the PU and its armed squads. In consultation with the PU leaders, he expelled Vinayan from the MKSS. Singh then made the press statement in Patna: ‘Samiti [MKSS] has dismissed its founding president Dr. Vinayan due to his anti-party and reformist activities’ and for taking a ‘wrong class direction’.

¹⁴⁵ Investigations by India's National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the National Human Rights Commission, the National Police Commission, and numerous local nongovernmental organizations all concur that even in few cases where police were not hostile to Dalits, they were generally not accessible: most police camps are located in the upper-caste section of the village and Dalits are simply unable to approach them for protection. In many instances, police and district officials have ignored repeated calls for protection by threatened Dalit communities.

erable funds, and some eventually turned against the Maoist party. (e.g., Jagnandan Yadav group in Bihar).

A former rebel I met in Palamau district described the trend with an example: A local Dalit youth, known for his temper, aggressive personality and intense hatred of Yadavs, joined the Party Unity peasant organization. He displayed great militancy and leadership, and eventually came to exercise a strong influence on the organization. In the middle of intense land struggle in the village, the party detained a villager, a suspected police agent, who was allegedly responsible for the murder of three comrades, and demanded that the armed unit execute him. The commander of the armed unit refused and advised them to free suspected police informer and concentrate on land struggle. The local unit, however, condemned the commander as coward and with tacit approval of the local Dalit leader, they went on to assassinate that person. As it became evident that they mistakenly killed a poor peasant on unsubstantiated allegations, it terrified villagers, discredited the Maoists, brought a temporary setback to the cause of the land struggle. But the aggressive youth who organized this wrongful assassination rose in the organization and committed many other excesses during his long rebel career. This incident is indicative of the general trend of militarization and corruption of Maoist movement across Bihar. Often local commanders, empowered by guns and cash, went against central party leadership. But the leadership failed to reign in their local agents because even though they instigated unprincipled hate crimes they also served the party by scaring landlords away, raising red flags and establishing control over upper caste arms, grains and land.

Northern Maoist commanders 'adopted' local landlords and ran auctions to provide 'protection' to the highest bidders. They used caste and kinship networks to funnel off enormous amounts of money from various public works projects of building roads, dams, and schools into

their personal accounts. Maoists are routinely implicated in kidnap and extortion. They act as hired guns for politicians, big businesses and even police. It became apparent during my fieldwork that there is no dearth of examples of Maoist commanders building palatial houses, sending of children to the most expensive private boarding schools, of having wives and brothers proxy in village elections to control government fund (Shah 2006; Witsoe 2012; Sanchez 2010; Mahadevan 2012). The unbridled violence affected the political culture of the movement, breeding intense intolerance not only against mainstream political parties, but also towards other Maoist factions.

The Maoist Community Center (MCC), the most deadly among the Maoists, dominated the southern pockets of West Singhbhum district. The Party Unity, emerging out of the pro-mass movement tradition in Maoist politics, dominated the northern and eastern districts of Palamau, Latehar, Giridih. In central Bihar, Jehanabd, Gaya, Patna, CPI(ML)-liberation, locally known as Ma-Le (from ML standing for Marxist Leninist), was the dominant Maoist force. MCC, PU and Liberation fought deadly factional wars of area domination through the 1990s, killing many of their cadres and followers in what is now referred to as ‘black chapter’ in Maoist circles. They fought for area domination and killed each other incessantly until PU merged with PWG in 1998, and considerably increased its clout. Skirmishes, however, continued until the leadership of MCC and PU-PWG united into a single Maoist party in 2004.

The CPI(ML)-Liberation, made an electoral switch by late 1990s. Contesting elections, in radical left camps, is the ultimate betrayal of revolution. The two other factions, MCC and Party Unity, rushed in to poach its support base in the region, sparking off a new spree of assassinations. The mistrust and rivalry Maoists of different shades severely limited the possibility of

building horizontal network of supporters. Under such circumstances of overriding fear, the only network that fawned around Maoists in Bihar was either corrupt or deeply sectarian.

It is ironic that a movement that initially promised “liberation” actually ended up making people less free. Maoist leaders, plugged into police-landlord-mafia-politician-bureaucrat network killed, raped and plundered with impunity in the villages of Bihar. Joining or supporting an anti-state movement makes people “target” of the state and ruling classes in various ways, ranging from being implicated in legal cases through false charges to murder. But any proximity to Maoist movement in Bihar invited danger, death, destruction on oneself and one’s family from the Maoists themselves.

5.5.2 Weak Horizontal Ties: Violence, Corruption and Competition

As daily confrontations with landed castes militarized the struggle, local commanders rose rapidly, and their organizational clout was contingent on violent suppression of every dissenting voice within the organization, including those from urban intellectuals and civil rights activists. As salience of caste identities and interests forged strong vertical ties, it gradually made principled commitments to social justice largely irrelevant within Maoist camps.

Caste rivalries penetrated circles of urban intellectuals, rights activists, academics in the state, who were also alienated by the intense rivalry among three most important Maoist factions. Evidence of Maoist-mafia-politician-bureaucrat-police collusion instilled fear among common people. Widely circulated stories of failing personal morality of Maoist commanders did not endear them to the people either.

In addition, three competing grassroots movement within democracy – the socialist movement by J P Narayan, the sons-of-the-soil (Jharkhandi) movement for separate state and the

rise of backward caste parties - also hurt Maoists by poaching the support base on which they could build horizontal ties. Maoists recognized this as a problem. The MCC document, Lal Chingari (The Red Spark), dated September 1995, mentions its inability to find people to serve as political commissars. The Liberation group after disbanding its troops in December 1994 also consciously wooed the middle class because it found that leadership potential was limited among dispossessed groups (Dubey 1991).

The sons-of-the-soil uprisings have a long history in the North (Sengupta 1980; Sengupta 1988; Murdia 1975). Since the sixties, the resistance coalesced around opposition to labor migration from neighboring states to the coalmines and factories of South Bihar that marginalized the local 'tribal' population in South Bihar. These migrant workers, although mostly poor, exploited the poorer tribal population and interfered with their ways of life. The sons-of-the-soil (Jharkhand) movement began campaigning against these 'outsiders', who were essentially workers, petty bourgeois traders, moneylenders, management in mines and administrators. The anti-migration activists formed a political party - the *Jharkhand Mukti Morcha* (JMM, literally Jharkhand Liberation Front) - in 1972. (Corbridge 1987; Dhar 1980; Sengupta 1980; Munda and Mullick 2003)

The Maoist ideologues recognized that classification of poor migrant workers, another oppressed class, as oppressor was problematic. But they also identified the permanent mining workers from 'outside' as 'privileged' and exhorted them to break caste/regional allegiance and rally behind the downtrodden Jharkhandis. But during the 1980s the JMM found followers amongst the big landowners and amongst the 'mafia'. JMM took to electoral politics, and the extremist factions like its militant students unit broke away (Corbridge 1987). When Jharkhand became an independent state in 2000, the Maoists and Jharkhandis parted way. From 2002 on-

wards the Jharkhand state started to mobilize paramilitary troops, and vigilante neighborhood watch committees (Nagrik Suraksha Samiti) against the Maoists in Jharkhand. Eventually JMM moved closer to the Hindu-nationalist party of BJP and took a substantial tribal support with them.

In addition to the JMM, the Maoists also competed with the socialist movement by J P Narayan (popularly referred to as JP) against rampant corruption, hereditary political families, nepotism and other popular issues. One of the most well-publicized aspect of the JP movement was the *Bhoodan movement* (literally, donating land) that aimed at convincing big landlords to redistribute land through peaceful consultation. In it emerged a peaceful alternative to Maoist policy of forceful redistribution of land. It undercut the central thesis of Maoist mobilization that landowners would never agree to reallocate wealth and land except at gunpoint. The Maoist camp identified peaceful land transfer and other similar measures by JP movement as “nothing but part of a wider counter-insurgency move to stamp out armed peasant struggle from the face of Bihar.” Former police officers have gone on the record that “putting in zealous and dedicated social reformers” like JP and his followers in civil liberties movement was as much a part of ‘the counter-insurgency measures’ as ‘concentrated police operations or operations by the special task forces’ (*The Searchlight*, June 11-13, 1975).

The youth platform of JP movement (Chhatra-Yuva SangharshVahini, literally Student-Youth Struggle Front) attracted college-educated urban youths into its fold, drastically affecting the ability of Maoist groups to expand into urban intellectual circles that aided the proliferation of their southern comrades. JP called for ‘total revolution’ within the framework of democratic politics based on the Gandhian principle of fellowship, self-sufficiency, and decentralization.

Maoists have pointed out that JP movement relied on foreign funding and worked with the avowed aim of disrupting the peasant movement.

The civil liberties movement has a complex history (Gudavarthy 2008). There are a variety of people amongst the civil liberties activists and they display a range of perspectives about the people on whose behalf they act. The simplest representation emanating from the civil liberties activists is that the ordinary rural villager is caught between the fires of the state and the Maoists, 'sandwiched' in the middle. This goes against the fundamental Maoist propaganda that they have the willing, active support of the people (Alpa Shah 2013) The Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), the powerful civil liberties movement in the North, critiques the random violence by the northern Maoists, specifically the use of detonators in passenger trains or the murder of party workers and supporters of other Marxist parties (Navlakha 2006). In the South there was a highly publicized break up of the civil liberties movement, with one group critiquing Maoist excesses while simultaneously exposing police brutalities and the other group organized a peace talk between the insurgents and the state. In contrast, the civil liberty activists in the North quietly distanced itself from the Maoists, sometimes critiquing the violent movement excesses. To the public audience, it seemed that the urban activists lost faith in the Maoist resistance (Das 1986).

5.6 Grey Areas in Insurgency-Democracy Interface: Rise of Discordant Exit Network

The northern Maoists became implicated in extensive and brutal caste wars with upper caste militias, which, together with competing movements of social justice and tribal identity within electoral democracy, undercut their popular support. Maoist squads became the preferred refuge of gangs and mining mafia. The North progressively looked more and more like India's Wild West,

locally known as *Jungle Raj*, a violent, pre-modern, rural hinterland where power flows from the barrel of gun.

Jungle Raj is useful shorthand to highlight political criminality in the North. Levels of violent crime in Jharkhand and Bihar have been significantly higher than the national average. Murder accounts for 4.73 percent of total reported crime in Jharkhand compared to a national average of 1.8 percent. Comparison of urban crime rates is even more staggering. The murder rate in Patna, the capital of Bihar, for example, is 23 times higher than that in Kolkata, the capital of the neighboring state of West Bengal.(Sanchez 2010) In feudal, criminalized politics and business in Bihar and Jharkhand, the Maoists who originally claimed to represent dissent and bottom-up anti-feudal resistance, as well as the regional tribal parties of Jharkhand movement have not been immune to criminalization.

The landlord-police-politician-mafia network is a local institution in the North, which drew upon preexisting identities of caste and ethnicity to draw membership and affiliation (Witsoe 2011). As the Maoists set out to upset the stagnant social relations of the North, they adopted the same violent intimidation techniques as the police-politician-mafia did, which further criminalized the politics of Bihar. In course of my fieldwork, interviews with former Maoists, activists, politicians of backward castes became defensive about this counter-network of corruption and criminalization, advocating it as almost akin to a ‘weapon of the weak’, with its own ethical code of conduct.

I argue that the corruption-criminalization complex in the democracy-insurgency interface was more than a sum total of petty corruption of immoral individuals, primarily manifested as bribery (Gupta 1995; Parry 2000). Corruption in the grey areas of North is a systematized

practice of institutions and the state directed towards long-term interests of all participants. It resonates more closely Robert Wade's work on agricultural irrigation corruption in South India (Wade 1982). Here institutions of democracy, capitalism, law enforcement, violence, and corruption routinely intersect in day-to-day life, so frequently and incessantly, that it is hardly noticed or considered an obstacle to the market or the state. 'Corruption' refers to something altogether more systemic and yet tangible. The corruption in question is the mutually beneficial relationship between political influence, violence and industrial capital visible yet obscured by popular discourses.

This continuity between insurgency and state in the North becomes visible in the argument that the northern Maoists, in selling protection, competed in a market previously controlled by the state (Shah 2006). For example, there was a pre-established mechanism of offering bribes to multiple stakeholders in winning government contracts for road or dam construction. Normally, the contractor 'greases the palms' of everyone from village headmen and lowest government clerk who moves the file up to the district magistrate and local politicians to win a contract for a construction project. As the Maoists established control over a particular area they decided to demand a share of this pie and entered as a new and powerful stakeholder into a pre-existing system. Thus Maoist commanders, in their respective areas, were already plugged into the market for protection. In the North, the Maoist factions— like state representatives — sold protection to access the informal economy of the state, but also protection from the possibilities of its own activities (for example, adopting landlords that they protected from Maoist attacks).

Protection is, as Charles Tilly famously argues, an ambiguous commodity, calling up 'images of shelter against danger provided by a powerful friend' or evoking 'the racket in which a local strong man forces merchants to pay tribute in order to avoid damage - damage the strong

man himself threatens to deliver'(Tilly 1985). Short of depicting statesmen and politicians as thieves and bandits, Tilly nevertheless wanted to urge the value of that analogy. He argued that politicians are entrepreneurs selling protection. If protection rackets represent organized crime at its smoothest, then politics and state-making were protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy – the 'largest examples of organized crime'. In this argument terrorism, banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry and state-making all belong on the same continuum, selling protection. It was only axiomatic that Maoist commanders, already plugged into protection networks, would capitalize on these connections during and after their retirement.

In this system violent entrepreneurs are, in fact, respectable businessmen and politicians, professionals and police, who, much like in the post-Soviet context, effectively underwrite the fragile contracts of emerging capitalism through the threat of physical harm (Varese 2005; Volkov 2002). In an environment marked by rapidly expanding opportunity in mining, industrialization as well as large welfare projects, long-term relationships between mutually constituted forms of authority of rebels, crime, violence, politics, corruption, and state authority constitute an 'enforcement partnership' (Volkov 2000).

The Jharkhandi 'mafia', although depicted in Indian films as caricature of Sicilian mafia, 'men of honor' bound by feudal honor and ties of vendetta, is actually as much rooted in a tenacious economic logic and political legitimacy as in kinship. The popular politician, elected with a huge margin, is also a *goonda*, as the strong-arm is locally known. The goonda can also be a collector of debts for large multinational banks, with college degrees and 'normal' families living in middle class neighborhoods. The mafia in democracy-insurgency interface is made up of a wide variety of individuals and institutions of various caste, class, ethnic and work backgrounds, some of whom were obviously criminal, some of whom were probably legitimate but most of whom

were both as and when necessary. The *mafia* is often indistinguishable from law enforcement, civil administration and political elites. In this environment, breaking law does not automatically relegate anyone as a social outcaste. Criminals are trusted lieutenants of elected politicians, who convene party meetings, distribute party pamphlets, organize microphones and chairs for his *mo-hallah* (neighborhood) meetings, standing right next to the elected representative with a social respectability that is not questioned, at least openly. (Munda and Mullick 2003)

I argue that in this all-encompassing corruption, the former Maoists are the most dreaded of *goondas*. They quit insurgency with a plan to pursue the profitable business and political opportunities that they often protected or extorted during their insurgent career. Former Maoists in Palamau described how they worked closely with district police administration to root out dowry and child marriage. A well-known police officer, who later contested elections, was identified as ‘popular’ because he attended village fairs organized by local Maoist groups for entertainment of the poor. Democracy, insurgency and the grey area in between constituted each other by complementary use of political influence, monetary power, and violence. Maoists, when they desire to quit, reach out to this network. They do not want to reintegrate and return to pre-rebel life.

This violent-corrupt power network does not go down to the grassroots. Thus there are no reintegration stewards in this setting. Movement entrepreneurs, in the sense of the overarching network of geographically mobile, opinion makers, are also either non-existent or hostile to former Maoists who, in Jharkhand, are former commanders with dreaded history of violence and terror, sometimes akin to a local Robin Hood. They took the upper caste domination by its horns, and either overpowered or co-opted it by counter-mobilizing their own corrupt mafia-police-politician network. They are lucrative assets to politician-police-mafia network that protects and encourages them to serve their interests by winning elections within democracy. Thus the infor-

mal exit network that emerges in the North exacerbates the fear and insecurity of returning Maoists, severely restricting rebel retirement and assisting safe passage of only those who commit to oil the vast, creaky machine of corrupt politics.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I set out to explain the emergence of discordant exit network in Jharkhand. I build a historicized understanding of a popular insurgency in the North that takes into account how insurgent organizations are embedded into local social bases. I argue that the northern Maoists, embroiled in daily encounters with caste militias, were unable to forge dense horizontal networks encompassing diverse social groups across both rural and urban areas. Instead incessant struggle by the insurgents to establish military superiority over feudal caste armies irreversibly and intensely militarized the struggle. I show how villages in the North became polarized into two camps with the Dalit landless/Maoists facing the wrath of upper as well as backward caste land-owning peasants.

As daily encounters with the state-backed upper caste militias caused unprecedented blood bath in the North, the Maoists recruited thugs, gangs, mafia and criminals to kill and die for them. The ordinary people, already frightened by Maoist viciousness, became further repelled by their participation in the ‘protection markets’. The Maoists were no longer the Robin Hoods, the beloved lawless revolutionary agents of righteous resistance. They were, instead, another clog in the giant wheel of corruption and exploitation.

This irreparably damaged the ability of insurgent organization to forge horizontal networks with broader civil society courted by competing social justice and identity movements within democracy. Popular indigenous upheaval, identity-based socialist movements further undercut Maoist mobilization and recruitment capacity in the North. As the insurgent organization lost popular ground, they undermined and attacked grassroots organizations in the insurgency-democracy interface viciously, including those that were sympathetic but not completely subjugated to their revolutionary program. Thus retiring rebels in the North, unlike their southern comrades, did not encounter any robust, supportive network of movement entrepreneurs and reintegration stewards who would alleviate their fear and insecurities and ease their reintegration. Instead they had to fall back upon the Maoist-mafia-police-politician-bureaucrat network that comprised the protection racket that they were already plugged into. Returning Maoists latch on to pervasive political criminality that was part of their pre-rebel and rebel careers and dominate their post-rebel life as well. The emergent discordant exit network is top heavy with many politicians and bureaucrats, but the connections do not grow into local villages or expand onto urban areas. Thus the retired rebels in the North mostly join various political parties to contest elections at national, state or local levels. Some also reinvent themselves as political operatives who leverage their control over certain rural pockets to deliver votes for their chosen parties. They stay close to the capital city, and are unable to reintegrate into their pre-war professions in their respective villages. The discordant exit network, given that it is embedded in the market of protection and corruption, discourages the return of foot soldiers who do not have the leverage, political capital or area domination to become a cog in this well-oiled machinery of market and the state in the North.

Chapter 6: Understanding the Process of Rebel Retirement

6.1 Introduction: Revisiting the Argument

This dissertation examines how insurgents give up arms and return to the mainstream. Throughout history ordinary men and women have taken up arms hoping to radically improve their social, political and economic circumstances. Equally often, rebels have given up arms to return to the mainstream. But while a lot has been written on why men rebel (Gurr 1970), we know very little about how rebels quit. Over the last decade, policy makers worldwide have devoted extraordinary resources and attention to devise incentives to wean the youth away from extremist groups. Violent political groups have emerged as greatest threat not only to the dream of world peace, but also to more mundane yet proximate woes like child/maternal nutrition and adult literacy. The policy literature is, however, focused on impact evaluation of concrete economic incentives designed to facilitate disarmament and reintegration. It is also fixated on countering extremism of Islamic and right-wing variety, which obfuscates the fact that only in the last century extremism was mostly communist. Left radical groups recruited youth for armed uprisings against the state. But eventually they decided to disarm and return into the fold of electoral competition. Ideology aside, surely there are some insights to be drawn from disarming of left radical and the evolution of leftwing extremism into social democratic struggles within the system.

In this dissertation, I focus on how armed rebels quit a successful and ongoing communist armed struggle in a functioning democracy like India. I show that rebels retire through informal exit networks that grow in the grey areas of democracy in the insurgency-democracy interface. Based on extensive conversations with former Maoists and other stakeholders in conflict locations in North and South India, I argue that the primary fear of retiring

rebels is that they would be killed as soon as they disarmed. There is no institutional guarantee within democracy that the state will protect returning rebels even after the fanfare of rebel surrender, bringing high reputational career rewards for law enforcement officers and politicians, is over. This creates a problem of credible commitment, which unless resolved, is an impediment to rebel retirement and reintegration.

I show how informal exit networks can resolve this problem of credible commitment locally. These networks grow in the shadow of various voluntary organizations of civic participation that flourish in the grey zones of democracy-insurgency interface. In fact, a popular armed insurgency, depending on its social base and organizational ties, can energize the grassroots politics and encourage emergence of various voluntary organizations within democracy. These organizations encourage civic participation within democracy but adopt rhetoric and issues from anti-democratic rebel politics. Some of these voluntary organizations might have originated within rebel politics before migrating into democracy. They operate one-foot in democracy and one-foot-in rebel politics. Thus they open up grey zones in insurgency-democracy interface where informal exit networks facilitating rebel retirement and reintegration eventually evolve. In other cases, due to the nature of pre-existing social forces and their interaction with insurgent mobilization, rebel linkages and ties with democratic politics can be less virtuous, exacerbating the thuggish political criminality and sectarianism in democratic politics which eventually spills over into the grey zones. Under such circumstances rebel retirement and reintegration is stunted. I explain the origin of two different exit networks and two distinct trajectories and outcomes of rebel retirement in two conflict locations of India in terms of three factors that are systemically different in the two cases: (a) pre-war social bases of insurgency, (b) the nature of insurgent organizational ties and (c) insurgency-democracy interaction in the grey areas between

them.¹⁴⁶ Informal exit networks, depending on the evolving dynamics in the grey zone of insurgent-democratic interface can be harmonic or discordant.

Harmonic exit networks, as in the Telangana case analyzed in this dissertation, reveal the critical importance of movement entrepreneurs (MEs) and reintegration stewards (RSs), who work together to safeguard life and livelihood of retiring rebels. MEs are tied to rebel groups via longstanding horizontal ties that are forged through their shared commitment to goals of greater democratic accountability, participation, representativeness that they approach through different means. As one former Maoist put it, many MEs in rights and cultural organizations strive for the same goals of inclusive democracy for the impoverished and marginalized population. MEs do it within the limits of law and constitution and the Maoists take up arms with an aim to precipitate a crisis intense enough to lead to dissolution of the state. RSs grow in the grassroots caste, women's or professional organizations in insurgency-democracy interface. Unlike MEs, their impact and networks are geographically static. Like MEs, they also have/had close family/friends in rebel groups or were themselves part of rebel politics at some point in their lives. They are connected to MEs through shared political activities in various democratic platforms of civic participation and via a common stake in local peacebuilding. As MEs build an overarching consensus within in favor of Maoist political goals, RSs turn the nuts and bolts locally, often under the radar, to ensure that former enemies do not jeopardize the life and liveli-

¹⁴⁶ The usual recommendation of case selection on independent variables was not an option. But in exploratory research, where the thin literature on the topic does not really arm me with any solid intuition (except the preliminary evidence from my statistical analysis) about what factors explain the outcome (rebel retirement), examining the case with the highest and lowest values on dependent variable was a conscious attempt to maximize variance on the dimension of interest. With the same purpose of increasing variation, for state-level comparison I chose West Bengal and Jharkhand with lowest values on surrender as my other area of field research. This approach reduces the number of case, but its combination of careful comparisons within a shared political setting and militant group, attention to sequencing, and empirical details make my inferences more credible than those that I might draw from a more heterogeneous and less detailed set of cases.

hood of returning rebels. The diagram below depicts the process of emergence of harmonic exit network in Telangana.

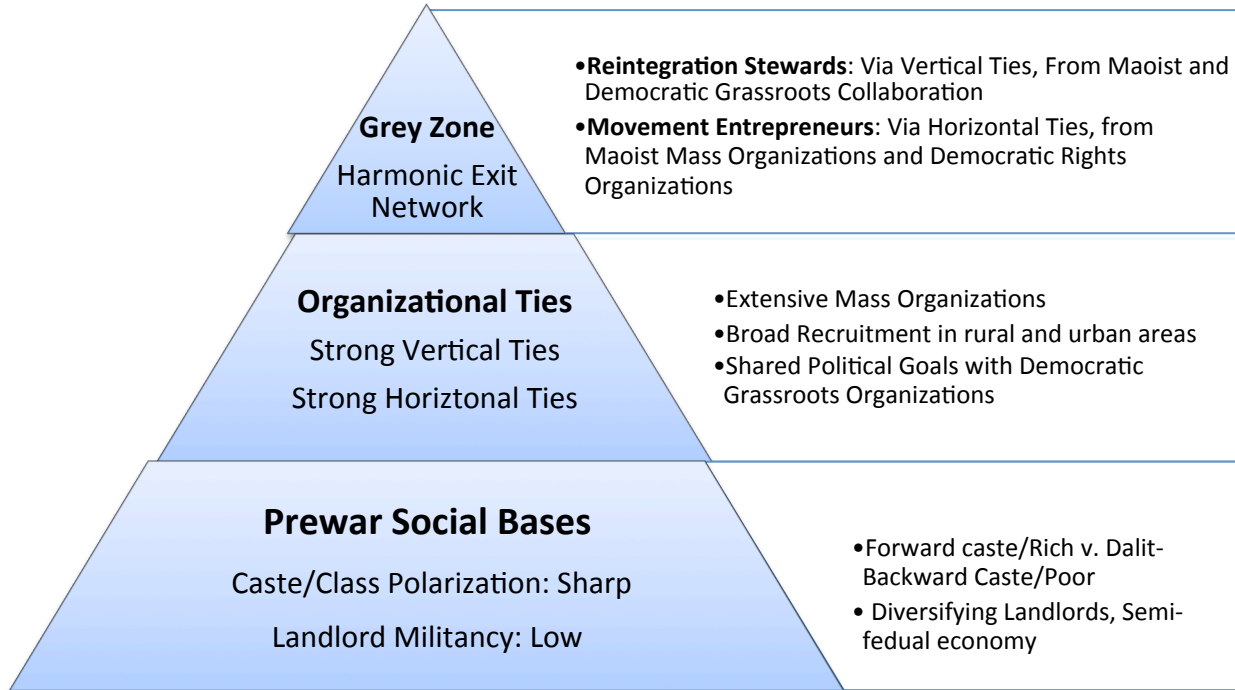


Figure 28

Rebel Retirement through Harmonic Exit Network

In the other process of rebel retirement portrayed in this dissertation, a discordant exit network exacerbates the fear and insecurities of retiring rebels, impeding further retirement and reintegration. This network offers retiring rebels the protection and benefaction of the discordant exit network only in return of their willingness to either contest elections or manipulate elections at gunpoint. When a rebel movement is intensely militarized, their recruitment becomes increasingly restricted to the politically unprincipled, to criminal elements looking for guns and action. Militarization of Jharkhand Maoists did not happen in a socio-political vacuum. Intense sectarian divides in a deeply feudal rural society of North India posed greater challenge to Maoist project of class mobilization than did rural Telangana, which had the benefit of prior com-

munist and ant-Brahmin movements. The Maoists in rural South Bihar/Jharkhand found the Backward Castes divided in their loyalty: while most backward castes were poor and sympathized with Maoist redistribution goals, they had strong kinship ties with their rich caste brethren and often took up arms against Maoist comrades to avoid caste excommunication. Further backward castes scrambled their way up in democratic platforms through Yadav, Kurmi regional political parties, which further distanced them from Maoists. These backward castes are keen to maintain their caste superiority, social distance and inbuilt scorn for Dalits (formerly ‘untouchable’), who stuck to the Maoists.

This fractured support base in Jharkhand weakened Maoists, injected caste mistrust/rivalry into Maoist organization and divided Maoists into warring caste factions. In addition, the divided Maoists had to cope with highly militant feudal landlords, whose stranglehold extended to elected offices and administrations via kinship networks. State institutions, from police to courts, operated via kinship ties deeply biased against Dalits. The local Maoist leadership, not free of these caste dynamics, increasingly adopted an extortionary, rent-seeking behavior as well as sectarian politics to sustain their area of control and local domination. This damaged their horizontal linkages, alienated principled rights activists in democratic grassroots organizations. The same political-criminal networks that infiltrated Maoist organization also dominated the Grey Zone in insurgency-democracy interface. Only those former rebels who could potentially win elections or manipulate election outcomes for other candidates and political parties were offered benefaction of the discordant exit network. Grassroots level cadres, mostly Dalit and tribal, do not receive its assurance that their lives and livelihood would be equally protected. The following diagram depicts the process of rebel retirement through discordant exit network in Jharkhand.

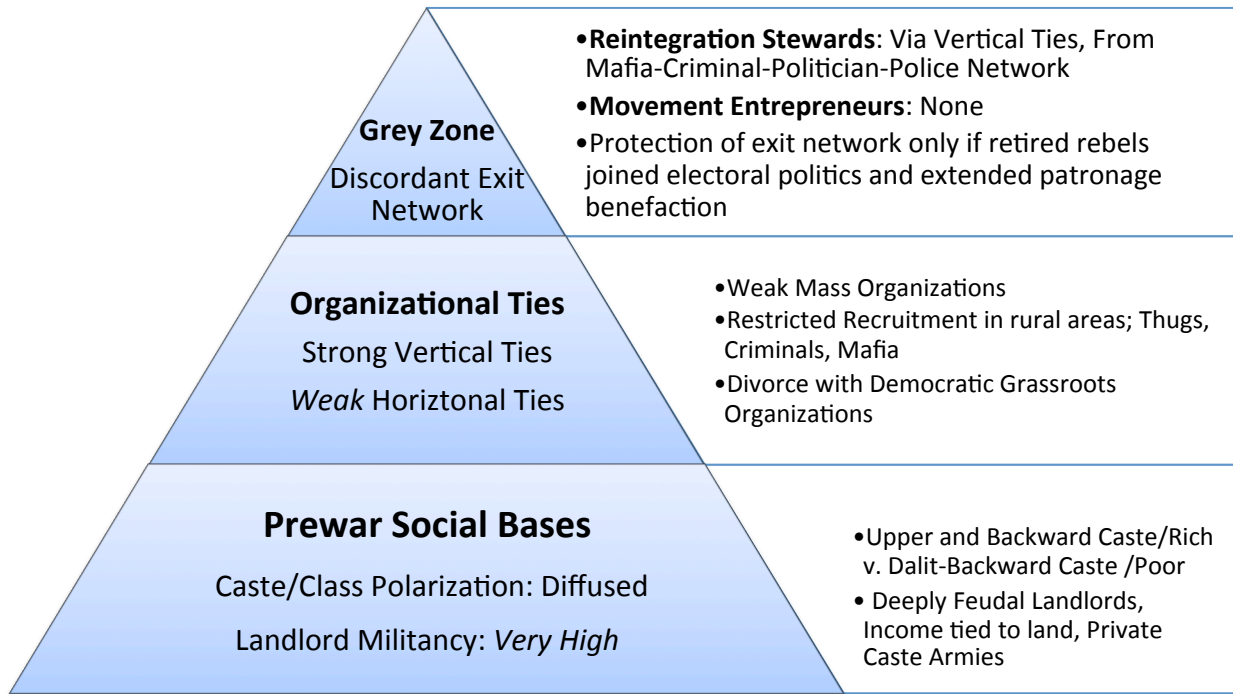


Figure 29

Rebel Retirement through Discordant Exit Network

I conclude that it was not a coincidence that Telangana Maoists forged broad coalition of progressive forces around them and Jharkhand Maoists did not. These divergent tracks built on interplay of local social bases of insurgency, specifically on composition and militancy of antagonistic groups, and on ideological history of Maoist groups dominating the region. I show that ideology has a mediated effect on retirement through influencing mobilization and recruitment strategies of extremist groups. In the rest of this concluding chapter I summarize the theoretical implications of the process of rebel retirement analyzed in this dissertation. I show how pre-war social bases of insurgency and network and ties forged by insurgent organization are expected to interact to influence rebel retirement in the real world. Instead of sacrificing de-

tails for parsimony and generalizability, I have focused on increasing the internal validity of the findings. In the next section I summarize how the insights of this study can be applied elsewhere.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

While this dissertation has been a comparative study of two cases of rebel retirement in one country, its central argument that rebels quit through informal exit networks that grow in the insurgency-state interface can resonate in many other parts of the world. The primary apprehension of retiring rebels that the state does not offer any assurance that retiring rebels will not be killed as soon as they are disarmed and the resulting problem of credible commitment in DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) will also likely resonate in other contexts of insurgent democratic transition. For example, Sinhalese armed forces have killed surrendered Tamil rebels *en masse* deterring further reconciliation.¹⁴⁷ Sometimes rebel groups would execute their former comrades if they suspected that they would surrender.¹⁴⁸ There are massive organized protests in Kashmir against the Indian government's rehabilitation policy of 2010 that lured former rebels back with false promises and later had them killed.¹⁴⁹ The Burundi police and National Defense Force killed at least 47 surrendered rebels in one month (January 2015). Surrendered rebels were beaten to death, shot at point blank range or thrown off cliffs.¹⁵⁰ After the Syrian President Ba-

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/14/srilanka-tamil-leaders-surrender-shot> there are reports of Sri Lankan state colluding to kill Tamil guerrilla throughout the civil war. See some details at <http://white-flags.org/>

¹⁴⁸ <http://kashmirdispatch.com/2016/01/06/anti-india-rebel-killed-by-own-men-who-suspected-him-of-surrendering/4180/>

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/06/kashmir-former-fighters-regret-homecoming-201462214440675226.html>

¹⁵⁰ <https://news.vice.com/article/at-least-47-surrendered-rebels-executed-as-burundi-makes-a-bloody-start-to-2015>

shar Assad offered a general amnesty to militants who surrender to the government authorities, surrendered rebels attending reconciliation camps were butchered.¹⁵¹

I argue that the informal exit networks that evolve in some conflict locations are harmonic and they *locally* resolve the problem of credible commitment. The discordant exit networks in other locations, however, are not robust enough to offer their protection to all retiring rebels. Instead, they exacerbate rebel insecurities and restrict their reintegration to a few professions in limited locations. In the rest of this chapter I summarize my arguments on how emergence of two different kinds of exit networks depend on interaction of two factors: (a) Pre-war Social Bases of Insurgency (b) Vertical and Horizontal Ties of Insurgent Organization

6.2.1 Pre-War Social Bases of Rebel Group

It is fairly intuitive to claim that pre-existing community structure—or the lack thereof—impacts the insurgent organization, its military capabilities, staying power, effectiveness, and group cohesion. (Staniland 2012; Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013; Giustozzi 2008; Kilcullen 2009; Dixon 2009) Insurgent organizations also alter local communities, drawing new battle lines, reinforcing some old ties and fracturing others, breaking trust and forging new alliances.

I argue that pre-war social bases impact group cohesion of insurgent organization through two concomitant processes: (a) degree of polarization of support base (b) militarization of local authority. Social bases of insurgent organizations are made up of supporters and adversaries. By supporters, I mean those who provide information and supplies to insurgents and refuse to cooperate with government forces, beyond what is necessary to survive in conflict areas. (Wood 2003) The adversaries are the local authority or ruling class, who consider rebel politics detri-

¹⁵¹ <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/video-daraa-rebels-disturb-reconciliation-kill-surrendered-fighters/>

mental to their socioeconomic prospects and hence take up arms and/or provide information and support to government counterinsurgency efforts. Generally, the socially dominant groups who benefit from the status quo are adversaries who oppose insurgency. The oppressed groups who seek change in status quo constitute support base of the insurgency.¹⁵²

Polarization of support base of insurgency

Polarization of the support base of an insurgency can be high or low. High polarization implies that rebels recruit exclusively from one, fairly homogenous group and mobilize against other(s). In Telangana the Maoist supporters are Dalit and Backward castes with little or no land. The opponents are forward caste landed peasants.¹⁵³ The opponents share no overlapping social ties or economic interests with Maoist supporters. Therefore, there is a thick line of dividing identities and interests of these two conflicting groups. Low polarization implies that in a location both pro-rebel and anti-rebel elements belong to the same caste groups and share strong kinship ties despite conflicting class interests. For example, in Jharkhand, Yadav and Kurmis were both supporters and opponents of Maoists. Some land-poor backward caste Yadavs joined the Maoists struggle for socioeconomic justice, while others sided with the affluent caste brethren despite conflicting class interests. Poor Yadav peasants would sometimes switch their allegiance from Maoists to their own caste groups, prioritising caste identities over class interests. (Kunnath 2006) Often they did so to avoid caste excommunication, which would, among other things, make it impossible for a family to marry their daughters within their caste. This bred simmering caste mistrust within the Maoist organizations, where Dalits doubted the loyalty of their back-

¹⁵² In the messy reality, this is not a neat, dichotomous categorization. The oppressed group often supplies informants who betray insurgents and assist counterinsurgency operations. But the broad generalization that the oppressed groups support insurgents and the dominant groups oppose it is fairly acceptable.

¹⁵³ This sharp polarization of Maoist supporters and opponents applies to the rural support base. The leadership of the movement is largely upper caste, urban, college educated

ward caste comrades. Thus I argue that high polarization of Maoist support base produces fairly homogenous membership of rebels groups and creates high rebel group cohesion. Low polarization of support base leads to low rebel group cohesion.

Group cohesion refers to interpersonal emotional bonds among rebel soldiers that allow them to trust each other, care for each other and, in the end, fight together (Griffith 2007).¹⁵⁴ Insurgent organizations, in adverse geographies and away from families, meets organic needs of comrades by offering each other affection, esteem, a sense of power and direction, which regulates their relations with leaders, reduces self-concern and distinct individual identity and allows them to commit to insurgent shared tasks and missions. In the face of imminent danger to their lives, rebels from mutually hostile social groups are unable to blend and rally around the flag. Local leaders forced to mediate in conflict among various cliques in the organization are forced to eventually take sides in underlying caste conflicts or are perceived to do so.¹⁵⁵ The central leadership of insurgent organization either plays hands off or become drawn into local conflicts as well.¹⁵⁶ Research on conventional militaries has already recognized the potentially positive or damaging effects of strong pre-existing social divides on military cohesion and outcome (MacCoun, Kier, and Belkin 2006; Ben-Shalom, Lehrer, and Ben-Ari 2005; Griffith 2007). Insurgent

¹⁵⁴ Low group cohesion leads to low task cohesion. Task cohesion refers to the shared commitment among members to achieving organizational goal that requires the collective efforts of the group. High group cohesion however, does not necessarily produce high task cohesion.

¹⁵⁵ In India, caste of an individual is the most potent, enduring, divisive identification characteristic laden with centuries of power relations, social hierarchies, and economic endowments. I argue that Maoist insurgent organization is more cohesive in areas where they polarize society into Dalits v upper castes and their recruitment of cadres is primarily from the Dalits, the formerly untouchable castes. The Maoist organization is less cohesive in areas where it fails to polarize society into Dalits versus others. In such situations, it recruits cadres both from Dalit and other middle castes. Caste animosity travels, and insurgent organization is not immune to its disruptive effect. As they try to deepen the landless versus landowning cleavage, middle castes are caught in a limbo. Thus the organization cohesion is weakened by (a) Dalit v middle caste animosities (b) middle-caste family ties between supporters and opponents of Maoists.

¹⁵⁶ Depending on how the central leadership reacts, there are different outcomes affecting rebel exit networks as well. That discussion is taken up later.

military organizations should be no different. In fact, the effect of social division on insurgent group cohesion is likely to be more pronounced, because they tend to both recruit and operate locally.

Degree of militancy of local authorities

The degree of militancy of local authorities also determines the evolving nature of grey areas in the state-insurgency interface. Local authorities are highly militant if they fight rebels by raising their own militias, who fight side-by-side state forces with total impunity. Local authorities are relatively less militant if they offer information support, shelter, ration and supplies to the state counterinsurgency forces, but do not have their own private militia. They do resist rebels in isolated clashes but prefer to flee to urban areas rather than risk frequent bloodbath. Adversary militancy depends on factors predating and exogenous to the insurgency, like martial traditions of the ruling class, feudal political economy and prevalent thug capitalism (*goonda raj*). (Sidel 1998) The more feudal local elites stay tied to the land; they raise militia and fight rebels in frequent bloody wars. The more capitalist rural elites abandon rural agriculture or outsource to seek alternative urban income. The following table sums up how pre-war social bases impact insurgent organization by the interactive effect of polarization of support base and militarization of local adversary, which, in turn, impacts the emergence of specific exit network through mechanisms described below.

Militancy of local authorities	Polarization of Support Base	
	High	Low
High	<i>A. High group cohesion; frequent clashes;</i> No Grey Area	<i>C. Low group cohesion; Frequent clashes;</i> Vicious Grey Area

Low	<i>B. High group cohesion; sporadic violence;</i> Virtuous Grey Area	<i>D. Low group cohesion; sporadic violence;</i> No Grey Area
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Figure 30

Rebel Retirement and Pre-War Social Bases of Insurgency

Quadrant A: When a highly cohesive rebel group faces a highly militant local authority there will be frequent clashes resulting in high militarization of the rebel movement. Everyone is forced to take sides. (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007; Kalyvas 2007) This is generally the stage of intense conflict when actors who try to straddle across the state-rebel divide are ruthlessly eliminated. Conditions are likely to be unfavourable to emergence of exit networks under such circumstances.

Quadrant B: But when a cohesive rebel group faces weakly militant local authority, rebels establish local domination. Riding on military superiority they are able pursue and implement their progressive agenda at the grassroots, which will engender selective sympathy among broad progressive crowd within democracy. This cracks open a gray area of virtuous collaboration between democratic activists and the rebels. In this setting harmonic exit network is likely to be grow.

Quadrant C: When a weakly cohesive rebel organization confronts a highly militant local adversary in frequent clashes, local commanders anxiously navigate internal divisions in the insurgent organization and try to up the *ante* against adversary in a manner that allows them to maintain leadership. Rebel leaders perpetuate influence through money laundering, extortion, kidnapping, arms trafficking, mining, mafia, smuggling through intricate extensions of filial

networks. A grey area is cracked open, but it is deeply embedded in a nexus of mafia-politicians-police-bureaucrat-rebel leaders. The exit network here is likely to be discordant.

6.2.2 Horizontal and Vertical Ties of Insurgent Organization

Insurgent organizations proactively forge vertical and horizontal ties. The relative strength of these ties interacts variously with their pre-war social bases to produce different organizational outcomes. The type of rebel exit network is also contingent on the dynamics of this interaction.

In this study, *horizontal ties* link rebel leaders, organizers and intellectual support bases across space, embedded in formal organizations, informal relationships, or often in an overlap of two. Below this ideational firmament of horizontal ties are the local communities, neighborhood, and villages where recruitment and retirement of rebels actually happens. The *vertical ties* refer to linkages that the insurgent organization forges with the local communities – villages and neighborhood. Unlike the horizontal ties that travel across space, the vertical ties are geographically concentrated. The following diagram shows the different outcomes for insurgent organization depending on different combinations of strong and weak vertical and horizontal ties forged by an insurgent organization.

Vertical Ties	Horizontal Ties	
	Strong	Weak
Strong	<i>A. Autonomous Organization</i>	<i>B. Entrenched Organization</i>
Weak	<i>C. Centralized Organization</i>	<i>D. Fledgling Organization</i>

Figure 31

Rebel Retirement and Insurgent Organizational Ties

Quadrant A: When both vertical and horizontal ties are strong, insurgent organizations enjoy political centralization and organizational decentralization. In other words, though vertical ties give organizations enough mass base, ideological directives from central leadership and dialogue with democratic forces sympathetic to rebel cause keeps the organizations autonomous from local sectarian divisions. Harmonic exit networks are likely to emerge in areas where insurgent organization forges strong horizontal and vertical ties.

Quadrant B: However, when vertical ties are strong and horizontal ties weak, local demands gain the upper hand over central plans and goals. The central leadership is forced to make ideational compromises in order to accommodate local requirements. Insurgent organizations are cut off from broader democratic actors who do not identify with sectarian politics of insurgent leaders. This produces a locally entrenched organization. Discordant exit networks are likely to emerge in these areas.

Quadrant C: When horizontal ties are strong and vertical ties weak, the insurgent organization has a weak mass base. A highly centralized organization with weak local presence cannot foster local networks of trust. But since leaders have strong horizontal ties, they will likely be absorbed into mainstream in professions and roles commensurate with their ambitions and qualifications.

Quadrant D: When both ties are weak, the fledgling organization is either nascent or decaying. There is no exit network in this configuration.

6.2.3 Insurgency-Democracy Interaction

Despite sharp juxtaposition of the legal state and illegal rebel movement both in state and in rebel communications and documents, millions of men and women in conflict zones every-

where live their everyday lives in a gray zone between the two. Alongside exchange of fire between the two sides in an ongoing conflict, popular political life and governance grow across the state-rebel divide. These pockets of partial belonging and disorder in conflict zones create gray areas. In everyday experiences, state institutions and rebel politics in these gray areas penetrate each other in the constant intersection between the formal and the informal, the legal and the illegal.

Although state law and regulations are flouted at every turn, the presence and power of the state can still be felt. Although rebels are outlaws, they often regulate day-to-day lives and livelihoods. People sympathetic to the movement seek justice for rebels in state courts. State officials take cues from rebel mobilization to identify policy areas in need of urgent remedial measures. The size and energy of the gray area and the rebel-state interaction in it depends on polarization and militarization of pre-war social bases of insurgency and on horizontal and vertical ties forged by the insurgent organization.

For example, civil liberties activists in Telangana formed *Amara Veerula Bandhumitrula Sangham (Committee for Martyrs' Friends and Relatives)* devoted to the task of claiming dead bodies of rebels killed in an exchange of fire with police. This is a pro-rebel organization that is legal and works openly in democracy. There were many other such organizations in Telangana that work within democracy to compel that state to follow its own laws. The state secretary of CMAS described how she negotiates with police, both perpetrator of atrocities and harbinger of hope. She is herself an employee of a public sector bank. Public sector employees with deep sympathy for rebel political causes are hardly uncommon. Police personnel have rebel connections. Bureaucrats personally know and admire rebel leaders. Journalists are former guerrillas. Guerrillas have family members in the government ministry. Opening a local business needs

blessings of both state and rebels. Businesses collaborate with rebels in securing government contracts. Government collaborates with same businesses to weaken rebel control. Perpetrators are victims, and victims are perpetrators. In some conflict locations the grey zone is virtuous, with active, open collaboration among democratic and rebel forces. In other conflict locations, the grey zone can be mired in fear and mistrust dominated by anti-social actors running smuggling, extortion, trafficking with support of both rebels and the state. However, it is unlikely that any protracted conflict grew without creating an ambiguous interface between itself and the margins of the state.

There is also a rich literature in Anthropology on the ‘margins of a sovereign state’, which questions the Weberian ideal of rational, legal state with centralized control over determinate territory and proposes that we explore the state’s “margins”—that is, the places where state law and order is continually renegotiated. (Das and Poole 2004; Das 2004) In other words, the margins of the state are porous. In everyday lives of ordinary people the extra-legal and the legal overlap. The following diagram sums up how (a) pre-war social bases of insurgent groups and (b) horizontal and vertical ties forged by insurgents define the grey zone in insurgent-democracy interface.

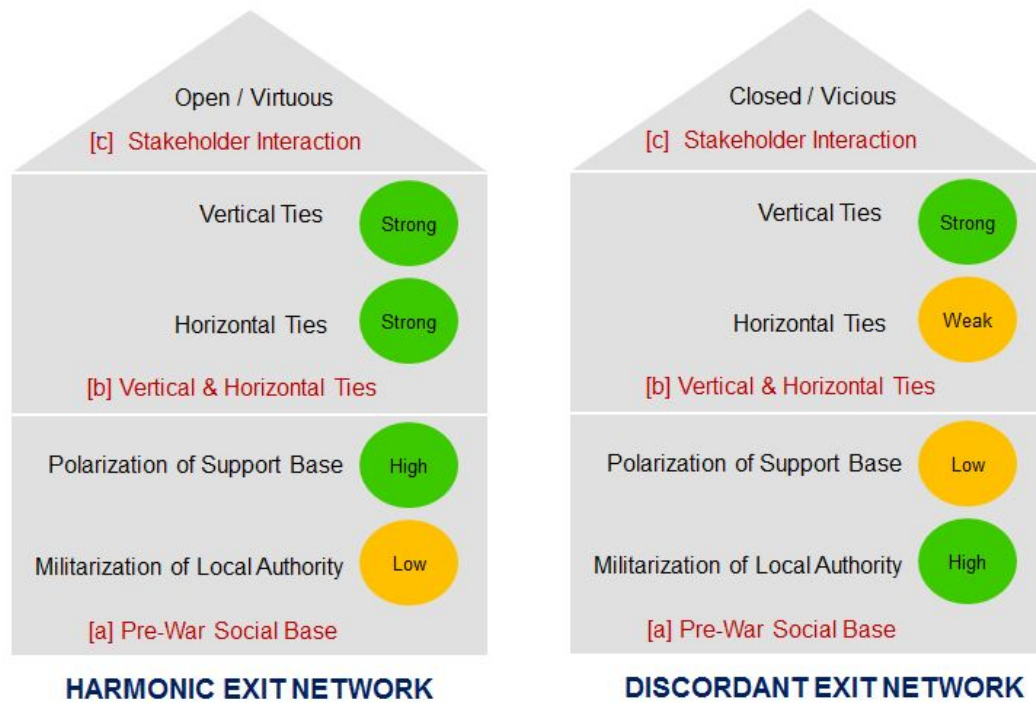


Figure 32

Informal Exit Network in the Grey Zone

When an insurgent support base is sharply polarized into two sides, and local authority weakly militant, a highly cohesive organization grows strong vertical and horizontal ties. They build strong mass movements around broad movement political goals. This energizes the grassroots politics in democracy and instigates high civic participation in cross cutting voluntary organizations. Thus Reintegration Stewards emerge at grassroots level with one foot in democratic mass organizations and other foot in rebel movement. Movement Entrepreneurs, tied to rebels through horizontal network, steer collective discourse around resistance and build broad consensus and social goodwill around rebels. The grey area is marked by the multilevel exchanges between the state and insurgency, ranging from everyday interactions to high-level dialogues, both through the formal institution and informal channels. When rebels retire, the MEs and RSs work

together to produce a harmonic exit network that safeguards rebel life and livelihood. This builds peace locally and encourages a high rebel retirement and broad reintegration in a wide variety of roles. Thus the lure of democracy works bottom up, through thriving grassroots associational life.

On the other hand, when insurgent support base is diffused (not sharply polarized into friends and enemies of rebel mobilization) and local authority is very militarized, an insurgent organization with low group cohesiveness becomes caught in frequent violent clashes. This militarizes state- rebel interaction intensely and rebel mass organizations wither. With the mass organizations, horizontal ties of rebel groups are broken. The rebel movement is divorced from the civic participations within democracy. Movement Entrepreneurs do not emerge. The vertical ties of an insurgent organization fighting bloody sectarian wars are strong. But these ties are strongest with corrupt, violent, thuggish elements who aid local leadership sustain internecine wars. Insurgents groups become mired in local divisions that permeate insurgent organization and disrupt organizational cohesiveness. These anti-social elements eventually dominate the grey area in the interface of state and insurgency. They are the only conduits ensuring safe passage of retiring rebels. Exit networks are discordant, allowing former rebels protection only if they agreed to perpetuate the dominant unholy nexus.

In another likely scenario, when the insurgent local support base is diffused and local authority is not very militarized an insurgent organization with low group cohesiveness but strong horizontal ties (and well-known leaders) sees its insurgent counter-elites seek political rehabilitation in the mainstream. To compensate for weak vertical ties and thin mass base, the leaders give up arms, form new political parties, join existing electoral parties or seek other professional careers. Exit networks do not emerge here due to weak grassroots presence. Grey Zone is restricted

to urban areas, in elite campuses or literary circles. Insurgent elites transition back into diverse roles. Foot soldiers either die or side with local power overnight, in a turncoat exit to escape execution.

6.3 Conclusion

The type of exit network that emerges in a location is conditional on pre-war social bases of insurgency and vertical and horizontal ties forged by insurgents. These factors locally determine the dynamics of interaction between legitimate/state and illegitimate/rebel politics in the gray zones that separate the two. The lure of democracy is contingent on this interaction. Paradoxically, a strong rebel movement with an extensive mass base is likely to increase the lure of democracy. Such a rebel movement energizes the grassroots and encourages proliferation of multiple civic associations, which operate with considerable sympathy to rebel causes but within the democratic platform. This allows emergence of MEs and RSs who facilitate rebel retirement and reintegration.

In explaining rebel retirement I depart from existing writings on rebel retirement in psychology, sociology, and criminology that identify ‘push’ factors (such as disillusionment with personnel, strategy and ideology, fatigue/burnout) and ‘pull’ factors (such as lucrative surrender packages, amnesty, desires to establish a family) influencing rebel retirement. The counterinsurgency literature on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) is also focused too narrowly on confiscation of arms and livelihood concerns of ex-combatants. In between push-pull factors that affect insurgents’ *desire* to exit, and post-exit DDR programs, is the protracted process of disengagement whereby rebels establish contact with the outside and plan post-retirement safety and livelihood strategies. I focus on this in-between protracted process that

plays out in the interface between democracy and insurgency, where macro (environmental), meso (organizational) and micro (individual) factors co-evolve to produce outcomes. Retiring rebels are motivated by the institutional lack of credible commitment to depend on informal exit networks that either ameliorate or exacerbate their fear and insecurities over disarming, particularly the fear of getting killed by former enemies. I highlight how insurgent organizational ties and pre-war social bases interact to determine the grassroots associational life within democracy as well as the type of exit networks that evolve in the shadow of these associations in a particular conflict location.

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Appendix

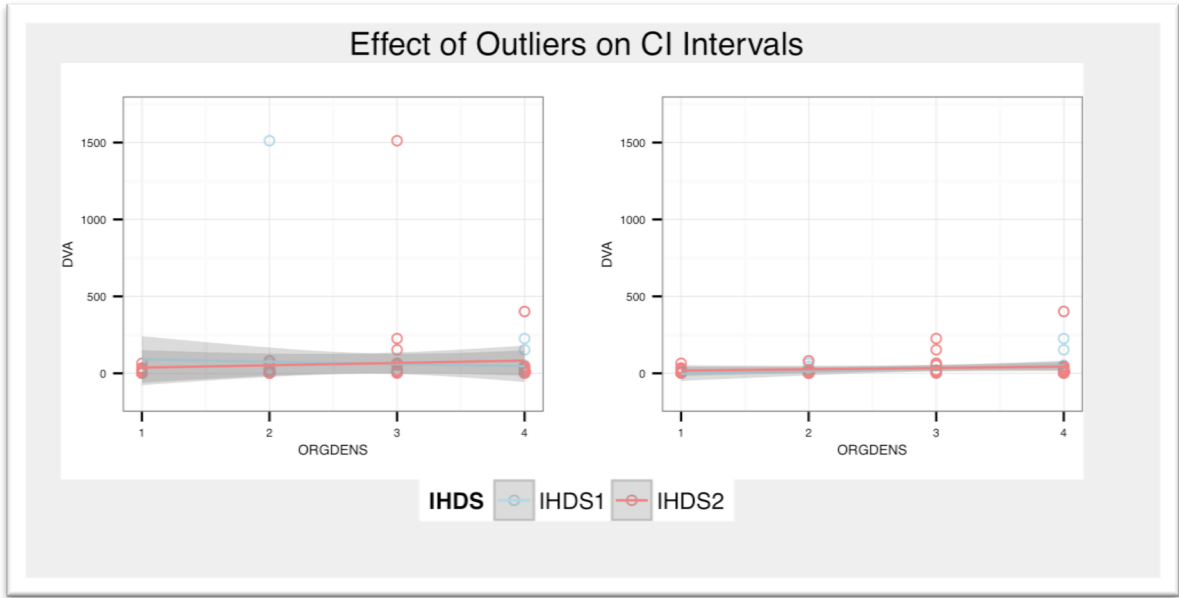


Fig 1: Distribution of Dependent Variable: Effect of Outliers

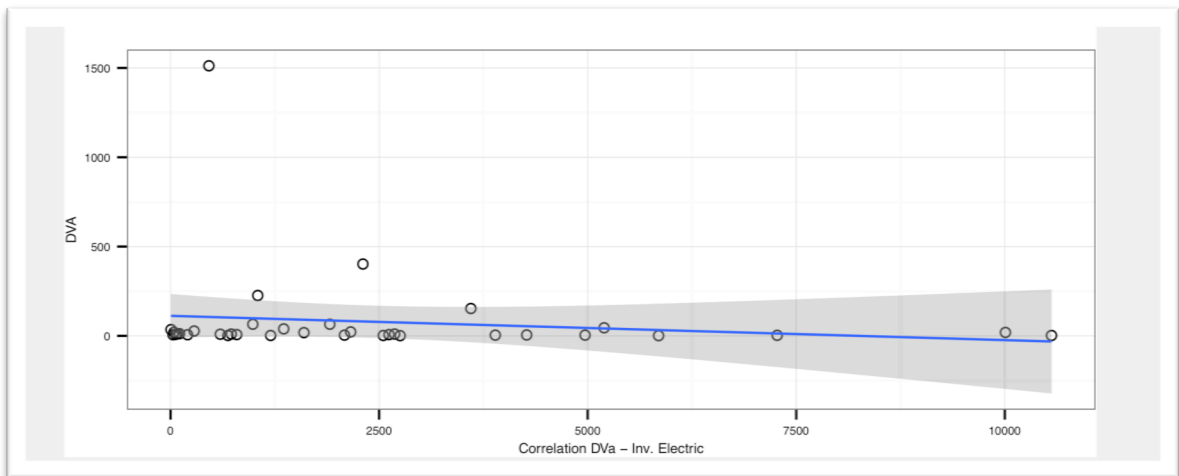


Fig 2: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVA) and Investment in Electrical Industry

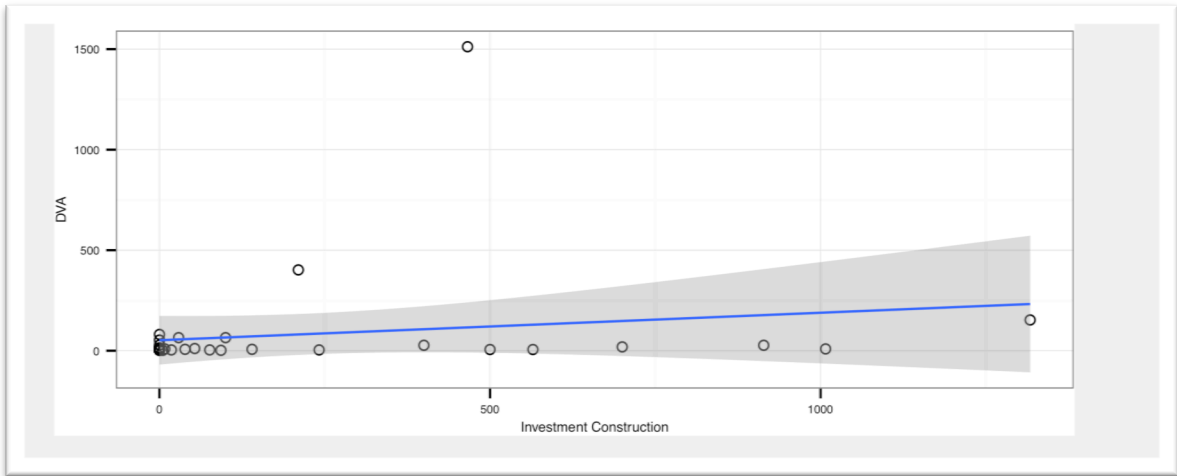


Fig 3: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVa) and Investment in Construction Industry

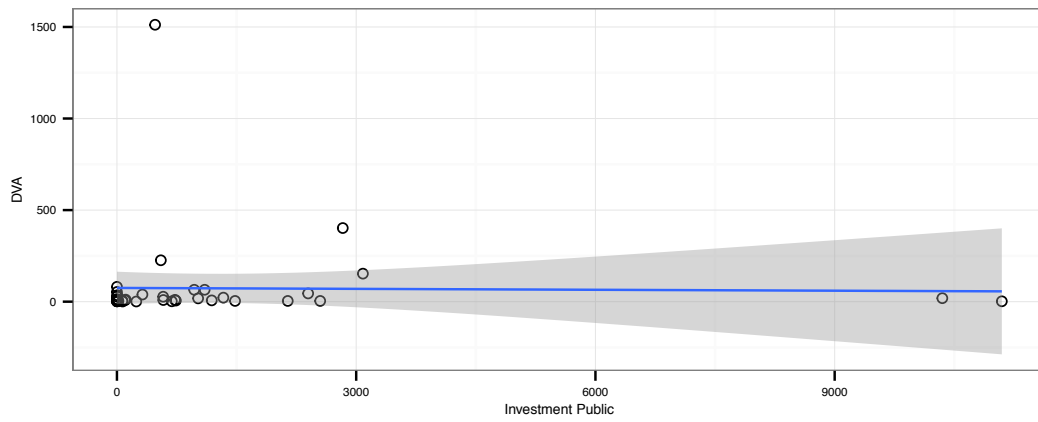


Fig 4: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVa) and Public Sector Investment

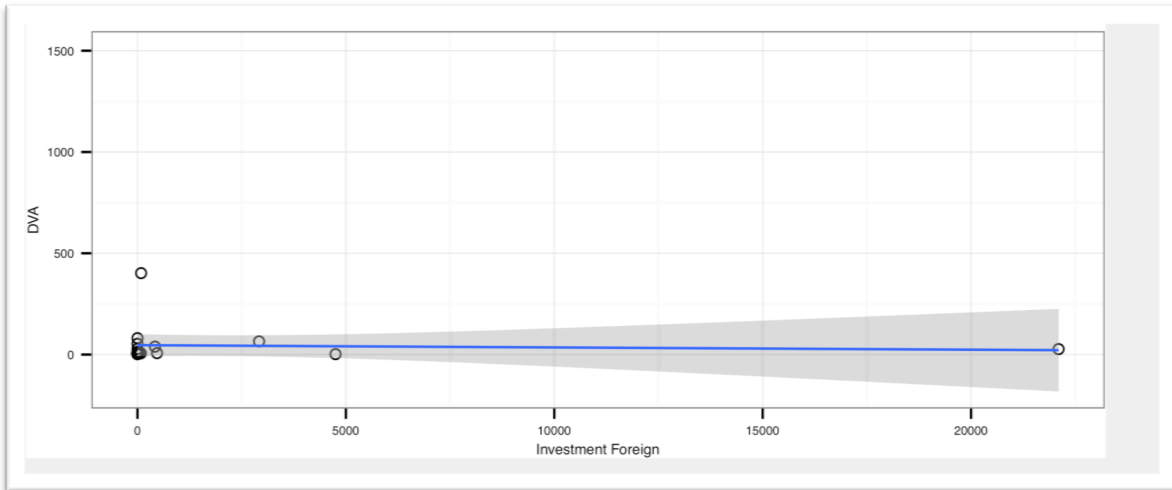


Fig 5: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVa) and Foreign Investment

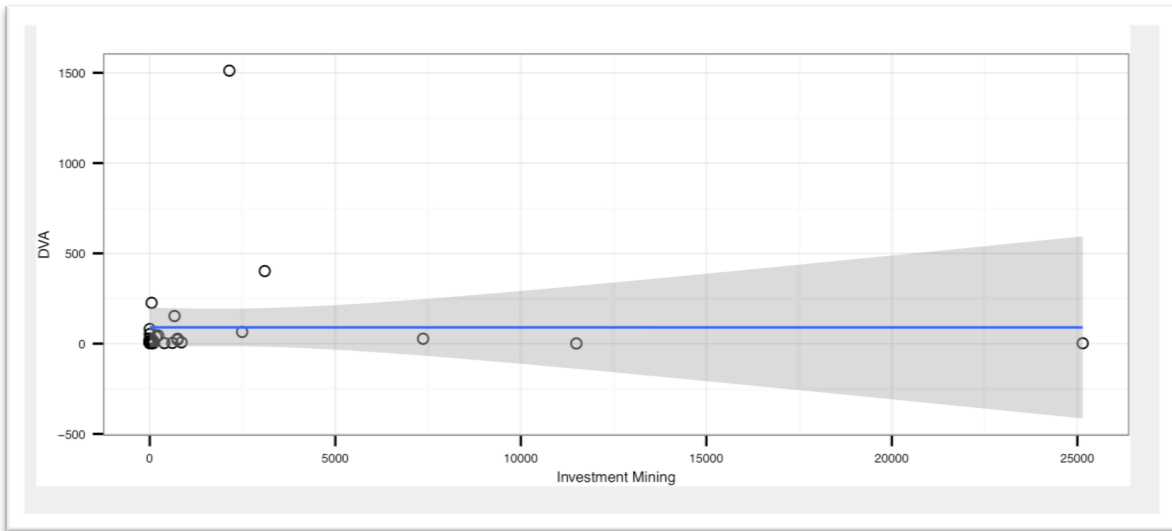


Fig 6: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVa) and Investment in Mining

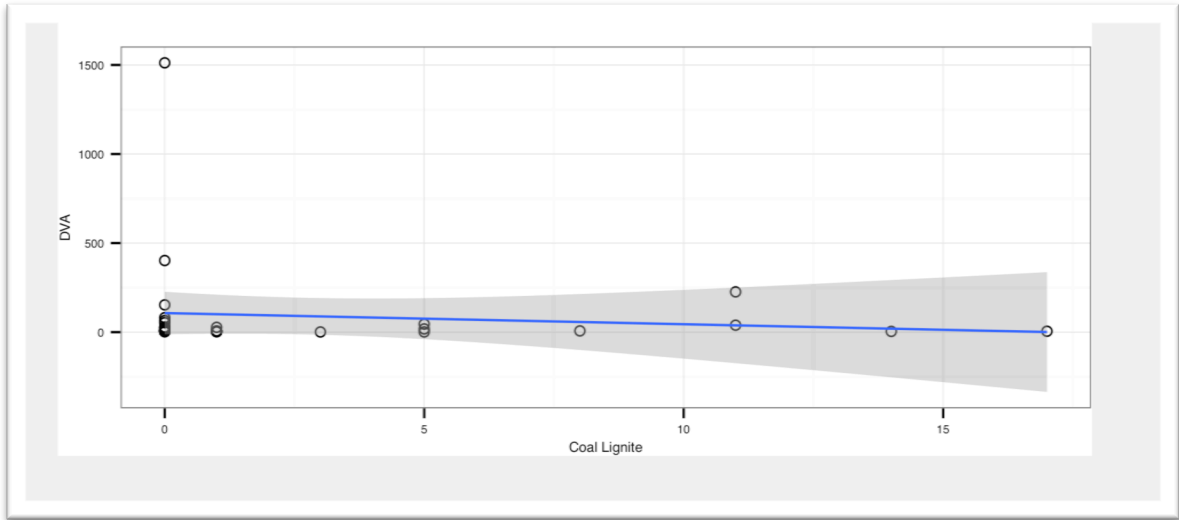


Fig 7: Correlation between Rebel Retirement (DVa) and Mining of Coal/Lignite.

Variable	Survey Question
ME1	Does anybody in the household belong to a <i>Mahila mandal</i> (womens' organization)?
ME2	Does anybody in the household belong to a youth club, sports group, or reading room?
ME3	Does anybody in the household belong to a trade union, business or professional group?
ME4	Does anybody in the household belong to a self help group?
ME5	Does anybody in the household belong to a credit or savings groups?
ME6	Does anybody in the household belong to a religious or social group or festival society?
ME7	Does anybody in the household belong to a caste association?
ME8	Does anybody in the household belong to a development group or NGO?
ME9	Does anybody in the household belong to an agricultural, milk, or other co-operative
ME10	In the most recent national elections, did you vote?
ME11	Have you or anyone in the household attended a public meeting called by the village panchayat/ nagarpalika/ ward committee in the last year?
ME12	Is anyone in the household an official of the village panchayat/nagarpalika/ward committee. Is there someone close to the household, who is a member?

Fig 8: Construction of Orgdens (Organizational Density)

Variable	Survey Question
CI1	Confidence in politicians to fulfill promises.
CI2	Confidence in the military to defend the country.
CI3	Confidence in the police to enforce the law.
CI4	Confidence in the state government to look after the people
CI5	Confidence in newspapers to print the truth
CI6	Confidence in village panchayats/nagarpalika to implement public projects
CI7	Confidence in schools to provide good education
CI8	Confidence in hospitals and doctors to provide good treatment.
CI9	Confidence in courts to meet out justice
CI10	Confidence in banks to keep money safe.

Fig 9 ;Construction of Confidence in Institutions (CI) variables

State	# of Dis- tricts in State	# of Dis- tricts Affected	Districts Affected
Andhra Pra- desh	13	8	Guntur, Prakasam, Anantapur, Kurnool, Vizianagaram, East Godavari, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam
Bihar	38	11	Aurangabad, Gaya, Rohtas, Bhojpur, Kaimur, East Champaran, West Champaran, Sitamarhi, Munger, Nawada, Jamui
Jharkhand	24	18	Hazaribagh, Lohardaga, Palamu, Chatra, Garhwa, Ranchi, Gumla, Simdega, Latehar, Giridih, Koderma, Bokaro, Dhanbad, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Saraikela Kharsawan, Khunti, Ramgarh
Chhattisgarh	27	9	Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Kanker, Rajnandgaon, Sarguja, Jashpur, Koriya, Narayanpur, Sukma

Maharashtra	35	3	Gadchiroli, Chandrapur, Gondia
Odisha	30	9	Malkangiri, Ganjam, Koraput, Gajapati, Rayagada, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Kandhamal
Telangana	10	8	Warangal, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Khammam, Medak, Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar, Nizamabad
Uttar Pradesh	75	3	Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli
West Bengal	19	3	Bankura, West Midnapore, Purulia
Madhya Pradesh	50	1	Balaghat
Total	318	77	

Fig 10: Red Corridor: The Maoist Affected States and Districts

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
InvestmentsElectric (INV_ELECTRIC)	237	0.2353	0.257	0.0004735	1
Investments Construction (INV_CONSTRUCTION)	219	0.1624	0.2669	0	1
InvestmentsForeign (INV_FOREIGN)	154	0.08216	0.2436	0	1
InvestmentsDomestic (INV_DOMESTIC)	310	0.1174	0.1849	0	1
InvestmentsPublic (INV_PUBLIC)	197	0.1071	0.2172	0	1
InvestmentsMining (INV_MINING)	228	0.07216	0.2007	0	1
MiningCrudePetrol (Crude_Petrol)	310	0.4	1.163	0	6
MiningCoalLignite (Coal_Lignite)	310	2.8	4.715	0	17
MiningMetalOres (Metal_Ores)	310	2.033	4.098	0	16
MiningNonFerrousMetal Ores (Non_Ferrous_Metal_Ores)	310	0.1333	0.5713	0	3
Difference Household Assets (DIFFHHASSETS)	318	3.496	2.169	-1.417	11.43
Health Access (HEALTH_ACCESS)	318	2.447	0.928	0	3
Literacy (Literacy)	318	0.5957	0.9007	0	3
Percentage of Argricultural Labor (r_pct_maglb)	310	0.2297	0.09891	0.0803	0.4649

Confidence in Institutions (CONFINST)	318	2.021	0.9205	1	3
Crime (CRIME)	318	1	0	1	1
Natural Logarithm of Area (ln_area)	318	8.778	0.9361	5.22	9.859
Natural Logarithm of Population (ln_population)	318	14.51	0.6125	13.13	15.58
Area Covered with Forest (forest_cover)	315	26.56	17.85	0	67.2
Percentage of SC Population (r_pct_sc)	318	0.1609	0.0726	0.02499	0.3248
Percentage of ST Population (r_pct_st)	318	0.2481	0.2341	0.000751	0.7021

Fig 11: Descriptive Statistics of Independent and Control Variables

	RTRMT	ln_area	ln_pop	forest_cover	r_pct_sc	r_pct_st
RTRMT						
ln_area	0.19					
ln_pop	0.11	0.12				
forest_cover	0.21	0.28	-0.59			
r_pct_sc	-0.26	-0.11	0.24	-0.48		
r_pct_st	0.15	0.06	-0.57	0.75	-0.65	

Fig 12: Correlation Among control variables, and between dependent and control variables

REGRESSION MODELS

	RETRMT (IHDS 1)	RETRMT w/ Controls (IHDS 1)	RETRMT (IHDS 2)	RETRMT w/ Controls (IHDS 2)
(Intercept)	2.875*** (0.269)	1.001 (3.180)	2.880*** (0.374)	1.956 (3.407)
ORGDENS: 2/1	-0.148 (0.548)	-0.015 (0.574)	1.445* (0.594)	0.945 (0.635)
ORGDENS: 3/1	1.138** (0.398)	0.652* (0.413)	0.686* (0.473)	0.096* (0.584)
r_pct_sc		-5.843* (2.733)		-6.932* (2.860)
ln_area		0.331 (0.351)		0.250 (0.385)
AIC	407.177	376.118	409.802	371.400
N	318	316	318	317

Notes: Negative binomial regressions. Dependent variables are number of Maoist surrender events. Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fig 13: Organizational Density and Rebel Retirement

	RETRMT (1)	RETRMT (2)	RETRMT (3)	RETRMT (4)	RETRMT (5)	RETRMT (6)
(Intercept)	1.464 (3.781)	0.401 (3.973)	-17.570** (5.983)	1.121 (3.349)	1.896 (3.636)	-1.524 (4.157)
ORGDENS: 2/1	0.065 (0.658)	0.185 (0.668)	-0.524 (1.324)	-0.195 (0.649)	-0.050 (0.633)	-1.390 (0.805)
ORGDENS: 3/1	0.677* (0.492)	0.001* (0.499)	0.418 (0.720)	0.505* (0.437)	0.835* (0.469)	1.250* (0.555)
r_pct_sc	-8.100* (3.449)	-11.042*** (3.208)	-2.618 (4.523)	-6.152* (2.991)	-6.873* (3.011)	-0.569 (3.663)
ln_area	0.358 (0.406)	0.531 (0.457)	2.438*** (0.692)	0.363 (0.372)	0.262 (0.399)	0.534 (0.465)

INV_ELECTRIC	-1.640 (0.873)					
INV_CONSTRUCTION		-0.282 (0.977)				
INV_FOREIGN			-0.869 (1.095)			
INV_DOMESTIC				-2.492* (1.136)		
INV_PUBLIC					-0.305 (0.966)	
INV_MINING						-0.481 (1.239)
AIC	278.041	244.017	126.771	353.668	315.125	255.815
N	231	218	150	306	190	228

Notes: Negative binomial regressions. Dependent variables are number of Maoist surrender events. Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fig 14: Impact of Investment in Industrialization

	RETRMT (1)	RETRMT (2)	RETRMT (3)	RETRMT (4)
(Intercept)	-0.151 (4.221)	-3.984 (4.112)	-1.444 (4.083)	-1.314 (4.044)
ORGDENS: 2/1	-1.302 (0.788)	-1.657* (0.775)	-1.452 (0.780)	-1.493 (0.772)
ORGDENS: 3/1	1.313* (0.556)	1.304* (0.543)	1.327* (0.557)	1.284* (0.548)
r_pct_sc	-1.563 (3.705)	0.502 (3.542)	1.443 (3.703)	1.232 (3.674)
ln_area	0.385 (0.472)	0.808 (0.464)	0.466 (0.458)	0.462 (0.455)
Crude_Petrol	0.117 (0.191)			
Coal_Lignite		-0.087 (0.049)		
Metal_Ores			0.066 (0.054)	

Non_Ferrous_Metal_Ores				0.579 (0.374)
AIC	255.434	253.540	254.846	254.020
N	301	301	301	301

Notes: Negative binomial regressions. Dependent variables are number of Maoist surrender events. Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fig 15: Impact of Mining on Retirement

	RETRMT (1)	RETRMT (2)	RETRMT (3)	RETRMT (4)	RETRMT (5)
(Intercept)	0.536 (3.172)	-2.311 (2.950)	1.117 (3.556)	2.553 (3.230)	3.769 (3.538)
ORGDENS: 2/1	0.112 (0.590)	0.238 (0.524)	-0.369 (0.581)	-0.321 (0.587)	-0.663 (0.590)
ORGDENS: 3/1	0.909* (0.409)	0.495* (0.395)	0.280** (0.444)	0.526* (0.422)	0.218* (0.431)
r_pct_sc	-6.379* (2.802)	-7.132** (2.509)	-4.535 (2.931)	-7.086* (2.869)	-6.767* (2.953)
ln_area	0.431 (0.347)	0.535 (0.326)	0.319 (0.388)	0.138 (0.365)	0.121 (0.369)
DIFHHASSETS	-0.138 (0.087)				
HEALTH_ACCESS: 1/0		0.088 (1.060)			
HEALTH_ACCESS: 2/0		2.449*** (0.724)			
HEALTH_ACCESS: 3/0		1.583* (0.641)			
LITERACY: 1/0			-0.030 (0.449)		
LITERACY: 2/0			-1.108 (1.350)		
LITERACY: 3/0			0.249 (0.811)		
REPRESSON				1.946	

				(2.188)	
CONFINST: 2/1					-0.841 (0.597)
CONFINST: 3/1					-0.831 (0.477)
AIC	369.969	370.620	382.741	377.123	377.279
N	312	301	310	310	310

Notes: Negative binomial regressions. Dependent variables are number of Maoist surrender events. Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fig 16: ACCESS TO ASSETS AND PUBLIC SERVICE AND RETIREMENT

	RETRMT (1)	RETRMT (2)	RETRMT (3)	RETRMT (4)
(Intercept)	2.573 (3.445)	-4.041 (3.408)	2.772 (3.283)	0.583 (3.699)
ORGDENS: 1/0	-0.176 (0.573)	-0.633 (0.491)	0.027 (0.545)	-1.402** (0.524)
ORGDENS: 2/0	1.174 (0.626)	0.449 (0.622)	1.320* (0.609)	0.729 (0.571)
ORGDENS: 3/0	0.401* (0.601)	-1.320* (0.573)	0.401* (0.617)	-0.547* (0.533)
r_pct_sc	-7.700** (2.899)	2.064 (2.714)	-6.214* (2.752)	-5.147 (2.770)
ln_area	0.226 (0.382)	0.580 (0.346)	0.162 (0.371)	0.400 (0.393)
DIFFHHASSETS	-0.123 (0.093)			
HEALTH_ACCESS: 1/0		5.808*** (1.396)		
HEALTH_ACCESS: 2/0		2.533* (1.014)		
HEALTH_ACCESS: 3/0		1.963* (0.854)		
LITERACY: 1/0			-1.258* (0.505)	

LITERACY: 2/0			-0.730 (0.536)	
LITERACY: 3/0			-1.195 (0.633)	
CONFINST: 2/1				1.473** (0.536)
CONFINST: 3/1				-0.374 (0.455)
AIC	371.826	356.366	369.592	363.254
N	312	310	312	312

Notes: Negative binomial regressions. Dependent variables are number of Maoist surrender events. Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fig 17: Robustness Tests (IHDS II)