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Adivasis, Maoists and Insurgency in the Central Indian Tribal Belt

Abstract

Maoist insurgent or Naxalite activity has expanded markedly in India over the past three decades, especially in the central tribal belt. This paper first uses a unique, district-level dataset to demonstrate that insurgency does not, as is widely argued, occur where tribals or Adivasis have been dispossessed of their land and forced to work as landless labourers. Rather, insurgent activity is most likely to take place in areas where Adivasis retain control of their land. The second part is an in-depth analysis of the Dantewara district. It shows that the Adivasis' grievances are intimately related to the colonial encounter and neo-colonial state's desire to control forests and forest resources. While the insurgent leaders are non-Adivasis, they strive to frame the insurgency in terms that are meaningful to Adivasis, and to provide a combination of collective and selective incentives. Nevertheless, some Adivasis oppose the insurgency because it undermines their status, while others do so because of short-term processes operating during the course of the insurgency. A syncretic theoretical approach, which concentrates on the complex and dynamic relationship between insurgents and their support base, and includes insights from Marxian, Weberian and Durkheimian theory, is best suited to explaining Adivasis' involvement in the insurgency.

Keywords: India; Tribal Belt; Adivasis; Maoist insurgency; Naxalites.

While Maoist insurgents have been active in India since before independence in 1947, they have become an increasingly powerful force over the past three decades. According to the Minister of Home Affairs, the insurgents are currently active in 223 of India's 626 districts and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has repeatedly described the insurgency as "the single biggest internal-security challenge ever faced by our country" (Chidambaram 2009; Singh 2006). Government of India (GoI) reports and qualitative research indicate that Maoist insurgent activity has expanded most markedly in areas inhabited by Adivasis (GoI 2006, 2008, 2010; Banerjee 2008; Guha 2007;

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Sundar 2007).[1] For example, Guha (2007, p. 3308) states, “In recent decades, as the Maoist insurgency has spread, its major gains have been in tribal districts – in Maharashtra, in Orissa, in Jharkhand, but above all in Chhattisgarh”. Figure 1 demonstrates that the number of deaths resulting from insurgent incidents reported in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition) have risen markedly over the past thirty years, but that the increase has occurred disproportionately in the so-called central Indian tribal belt.[2] Notwithstanding, areas of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have large Adivasi populations but have experienced little or no insurgent activity (GoI 2008, p. 3). This paper aims to understand why some areas with large Adivasi communities are affected by insurgent activity while others are not.[3]

To this end there are five sections in this paper. The first considers the origins of the term “Adivasi” and its utility as a concept in sociological research. The second considers extant theories and puts forward an alternative Weberian framework for understanding why Adivasis support Maoists insurgents. Third, we discuss methodology, arguing for an analysis of crucial cases using both quantitative and qualitative data. The fourth section analyses a unique district-level dataset that covers the period 1982 to 2011 to investigate the specific characteristics of tribal communities that are involved in insurgent activity. The fifth section uses fieldwork undertaken in one district, Dantewara in Chhattisgarh, to understand the issue in greater depth.

Adivasis as a category for comparative analysis

The political origins of tribal identity

Before the arrival of British, there was no term equivalent to “tribe” in the South Asian lexicon (Pathy 2000). It was used by the colonial administration to categorize numerous disparate communities that did

[1] Adivasi literally means “original inhabitant” in Sanskrit. It refers to Scheduled Tribes living in the Indian mainland and not those in the northeast, which have a different relationship with Hindu civilization (Bétielle 1986; Guha 2007). The United Nations (2004), World Bank (2005) and Minorities at Risk Project (2009) recognize Adivasis as India’s indigenous population. Nevertheless, some South Asian scholars are critical of this categorization (see Bétielle 1998).

[2] The tribal belt is the “more-or-less contiguous hill and forest belt that extends across the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal” (Guha 2007, p. 3305). We operationalize the tribal belt as districts covered by the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, legislation designed to protect Adivasis from being dispossessed of their lands and natural resources in areas they have historically inhabited (GoI undated b).

[3] For maps showing districts affected by insurgent activity and districts covered by the Fifth Schedule see the web appendix (www.lawrenceking.net/ejs).

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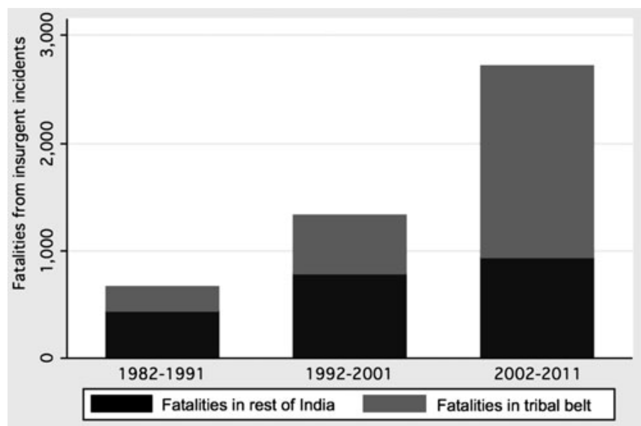
FIGURE 1
Fatalities from Maoist insurgent incidents in India and the tribal belt



not fit into their Brahmin-informed understanding of caste-based South Asian society. Thus, as a result of the colonial encounter, communities that were previously considered to be nations, kingdoms or peoples came to be referred to as tribes (*ibid*.). The process of designating or scheduling tribes acquired a systematic character in the 1931 census (Béteille 1986). Following *the Government of India Act* (1935) – which established a federal structure, introduced direct elections, and granted Indian Provinces greater self-rule – a list or "schedule" of depressed castes and tribes for whom parliamentary seats were to be reserved was created. The Constitution of India (1950) extended affirmative action to higher education and public sector jobs.

In contemporary India, Scheduled Tribes are recognized as a distinct group and are routinely enumerated in national surveys and censuses. Nevertheless, a definition of what constitutes a tribe has been "neither clearly formulated nor systematically applied" (Xaxa 1999, p. 3589). Over 84 million people, belonging to 698 separate communities, are identified as Scheduled Tribes (GoI 2001). They encompass a wide range of communities that vary enormously in terms of population size, geographic spread, mode of livelihood, social organization, language and customs (GoI 2006). Traditional theories of postcolonial violence tend to define factional identities – and explain armed conflict – in terms of class or ethnicity. A number of influential scholars, perturbed by the

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fact that Adivasis cannot be reduced to economic or cultural identities, have criticized the conceptual utility of the term precisely because it is an administrative construct that includes communities with a variety of cultural and socioeconomic characteristics (Cohn 1990; Appadurai 1993). Nevertheless, the concept of Scheduled Tribe is what Mamdani (2002) refers to as a "political identity" – a legally enforced group that can only be understood with reference to state formation during colonialism and its historical legacy (also see Scott 1998). But, while the term was originally imposed from above, it has been appropriated by the communities themselves and forms the basis of political claims made at the national and international level (Xaxa 1999). In Murray Li's (2000) formulation, Adivasis claim the tribal or indigenous "slot" (also see Karlsson 2003).

Tribal communities and Hindu society

Béteille (1986, p. 316) points out that, despite their differences, historically tribal communities had one thing in common: "they all stood more or less outside Hindu civilization". Or as Xaxa (1999, p. 3593) clarifies, tribes "continued to be distinct because they escaped colonisation and subjugation". This is not to say that they were isolated from Hindu society. They existed within, but on the geographical and social margins of, dominant polities of South Asia (Xaxa 1999; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). Thus, Adivasis are similar to Scott's (2009) concept of people who inhabited "shatter zones" or "zones of refuge" – relatively inaccessible spaces that were, until the past century, more or less ungoverned by the state.

Béteille (1986, p. 311) distinguishes between "heterogeneous, differentiated and stratified" Hindu society and "homogenous, undifferentiated and unstratified" tribal society. These categories should be seen as ideal types – abstract models that exaggerate certain essential characteristics – rather than a description of social reality. Indeed, as Sundar (2007) points out, there was some stratification within tribal villages, with the headmen, whose power stems from their supposed ability to mediate with the local gods, tending to have more or better land. Acknowledging this does not, however, undermine the crucial point that, in contrast to the rest of India, there was no landowning class distinct from a landless labouring class in Adivasi communities (Béteille 1986; Xaxa 1999; Padel 2009). Thus, in Weberian terms, while there were differences in status within Adivasi communities, there was no class differentiation.

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The relationship between Hindu society and tribal communities is a dynamic one. In the past, it was widely argued that over the *longue durée* of South Asian history tribes have been slowly but continuously absorbed into Hindu society. Kosambi (1975, p. 25) wrote that the "entire course of Indian History shows tribal elements being fused into general society"; Bose (1941) referred to the "Hindu method of tribal absorption"; and Ghuyre (1963) believed that Adivasis were "backward Hindus" who underwent a process of "Hinduisation". A fundamental aspect of this process is Adivasis being dispossessed of their land and compelled to work as agricultural labourers on other people's land. In the past, tribes would cease to exist as independent entities when they lost their distinctiveness. However, since the Schedule sealed the boundaries between tribals and non-tribals, this is no longer the case (Xaxa 1999; Béteille 1986). Thus, the category Adivasi encompasses communities with a variety of different characteristics, ranging from those who have been absorbed into Hindu society as landless labourers to Adivasis who continue to cultivate the same land as their ancestors did.

From tribal rebellions and Maoist insurgency

During the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, there were a significant number of "tribal rebellions" against the colonial state (Raghavaiah 1971; Guha 1983). Many of these occurred in areas that are now affected by insurgent activity. For example the Muria (1876) and Bhumkal (1910) rebellions in what is now southern Chhattisgarh (Sundar 2007); the Kalahandi rebellion (1882) in eastern Orissa (Padel 2009); and the Kol uprising (1831-1832) and Santal insurrection (1855) in what is now West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand (Duyker 1987).

Since independence, Adivasis have predominately taken part in violent conflict in alliance with the Maoist insurgents (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The insurgent leaders, even at the local level, are non-Adivasis and, most frequently, well-educated, dominant or upper-caste and originating from urban areas of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal (Harrison 1956; Sundarayya 1972; Bhatia 2005; Shah 2006; Guha 2007; Banerjee 2008). The insurgent leaders provide previously discrete rebellions with a unified organizational structure that is capable of sustaining armed conflict against the state, while Adivasis supply the insurgents with various resources needed to fight the insurgency, such as shelter, food, intelligence and recruits (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012).

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The link between Maoist insurgents and Adivasis first manifested in insurgency in Telengana between 1946 and 1951, and then in various parts of the tribal belt from 1967 until the early 1970s (*ibid.*). After the Emergency (1975-1977), most surviving insurgents were released from jail and some attempted to revive the armed struggle. In the 1980s the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG) were the most important insurgent organizations, most prominent in the plains of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh respectively (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006; Balagopal 2006b). Over the past two decades the insurgents have receded in these areas but have expanded their activities in the tribal belt. In 2004 the MCC and PWG unified to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI [Maoist]), which marked the first time in 35 years that the vast majority of Maoist insurgent activity was prosecuted by a single organization.

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

Insurgency and Theory

Marxist, Durkheimian and Millian approaches to understanding insurgency

Over the past twenty years political science and economics have come to dominate research into civil war, while sociology has been side-lined (Tarrow 2007; Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Consequently structural explanations that dominated the field in the 1970s and 1980s are largely ignored, and instead rationalist approaches have become more or less hegemonic (Walder 2009).

The assumptions underlying the dominant rationalist studies of insurgency can be traced through Popkin (1979) and Mancur Olsen to John Stuart Mill (Tilly 1978; Paige 1983). These studies concentrate on insurgent organizations and the state, largely overlooking the socio-economic characteristics of the population in the areas in which they operate. This is because it is assumed that, as long as political

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entrepreneurs provide suitable “selective incentives”, utility-maximizing actors will take part in the insurgency. The most influential large-N cross-national studies emphasize the importance of greed, opportunity or feasibility (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). But several recent qualitative studies of insurgency that have been undertaken by political scientists have clear rationalist foundations (Sambanis and Collier 2003; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007). Rationalist theories have heavily influenced qualitative studies of the insurgency undertaken by scholars based outside India: Shah (2006) argues that the insurgents have not generated mass support based on their political programme, but, in the context of a very weak state, they control the “markets of protection”; Suykens (2010) claims that the success of Maoists is a consequence of their ability to control the market for *Tendu patta* (leaves used to make traditional *beedi* cigarettes); and Miklian (2011) suggests that insurgent activity is largely a function of the various states’ counterinsurgent strategies. Although such studies raise some important points, they ignore a vast amount of scholarship emanating from India that shows how aggrieved local actors play a crucial role in the insurgency.

In order to understand the specific characteristics of Adivasis that take part in insurgency, we must revisit the structural theories. Paige (1976, 1983) argues that a combination of proletarianized rural inhabitants – landless labourers or sharecroppers – and “backward capitalists” who have nothing but their ownership of the land as the basis of their domination, is most likely to lead to insurgency. Further, in the context of the Maya of Guatemala, Paige (1983) claims that indigenous peoples supported left wing insurgents because they were exploited landless labourers rather than because of any distinctive indigenous identity. The dominant accounts of Maoist insurgency from India, which argue that Adivasis support the insurgents because they have been dispossessed of their land and forced to become agricultural labourers, fit in with this neo-Marxist class conflict analysis. Guha (2007, p. 3305) relates Adivasi involvement in the insurgency with the process of “dispossession and exploitation” and Banerjee (2008, p. 27) argues that “Adivasis” who “were ousted from their lands by colonizers” form the Maoist’s support base. The Government of India (2008, p. 9) also sees “land alienation, forced evictions from land and displacement” as causes of Adivasi unrest, and the CPI (Maoist) (2004, p. 21, p. 14) argue that the “vast majority of the Adivasis have long been deprived of their land” and see the solution to this problem is “land to the tiller”.

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The moral economy approach, which shares with Durkheim a concern with the anomie wrought by industrialization and capitalism and its affect on the collective consciousness, has historically been the foil to class analyses (Wolf 1969; Scott 1976). It argues that share-croppers and landless labourers are unlikely initiators of rebellion because they are vulnerable to repression from a distinct landowning class. Landholding cultivators living in communal villages outside direct landlord control are more likely to be involved in insurgent activity for two reasons. First, their relative "organizational autonomy" or "tactical leverage": they own and cultivate their own land, directly control the immediate processes of economic production and are free from the tight control of landlords. Second, rural inhabitants with strong communal traditions and few sharp internal class divisions are more likely to revolt than those that are structurally and hence socially divided. Wolf (1969), again referring to the Maya of Guatemala, argues that the distinctive "closed corporate" nature of indigenous communities provides organizational and material advantages for collective resistance against outside oppressors. Few academics in India advocate this approach, although the CPI (Maoist) (2004) and the Government of India (2008) do acknowledge that Adivasis are distinctive from other sections of Indian society.

An alternative Weberian approach

Prima facie, none of these theoretical approaches appear to provide an adequate framework for understanding the Adivasis' involvement in the Maoist insurgency. The Millian approach concentrates on insurgent organizations but overlooks the role played by local level supporters, whereas Marxist and Durkheimian frameworks stress the importance of certain sociostructural characteristics at the local level but do not take into account the role of insurgent organizations. In addition, none of these frameworks acknowledge the complex and dynamic manner in which social structure and political context interact in the development of social movements (Tilly 1964; Kalyvas 2006; Walder 2006, 2009). In this section we sketch an alternative Weberian approach, which takes into account the role of both the insurgent organization and its support base, as well as the inherent dynamism and complexity of insurgency. Following Kalyvas (2006), we conceptualize insurgency as a transaction between insurgents and their supporters. Insurgents provide disparate groups of supporters with a unified organizational structure, while the supporters endow the insurgents with access

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to resources needed to sustain the insurgency, such as food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. Thus, insurgencies are processes that provide a medium through which a variety of grievances can be addressed within the space of a greater conflict, rather than binary conflicts neatly organized around a single master cleavage (*ibid.*). Although actors might be motivated by fundamentally different objectives, their respective interests are served by pursuing guerrilla warfare and seizing local power.

For insurgents motivated by ideology or the pursuit of state power, the creation of a base area is a step towards the seizure of state power. In seizing local power the insurgents undertake a project of "competitive state building" (Kalyvas 2006, p. 218). That is, they challenge the state's monopoly of violence resulting in a situation that Tilly (1978, p. 191) refers to as "dual sovereignty". The crucial issue here is how the insurgent organization establishes its authority – we could use Weber's term, *Herrschaft* – over the population. All the theories that have been considered so far overlook this issue, even though, as Weber (1968, p. 941) points out, it is "one of the most important elements of social action". It is possible that the insurgents establish control by generating support through the provision of incentives, which might be either selective, as envisaged by the rationalist theories, or "collective", in the sense that they are offered to certain sections of the population (see Skocpol 1982; Goodwin and Skocpol 1989). But the insurgents might also use collective and selective sanctions, most notably violence, to discourage collaboration with the state (Kalyvas 2006). As Weber (1991 [1948], p. 79) points out: "obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope".

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

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violence (*ibid.*; also see Snow *et al.* 1986; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Walder 2006, 2009; Jasper 2011).

Research strategy

Broadly speaking, there are two main research strategies for studying insurgency. The first involves large-N statistical analyses of cross-national datasets (for example Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Cederman and Girardin 2007; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009). This strategy allows researchers to undertake broad, systematic studies and has had some success in identifying variables – such as anocratic regime type, low economic development and ethnic heterogeneity – that systematically co-vary with a higher probability of internal conflict (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Nevertheless, this strategy overlooks a great deal of complexity (Kalyvas 2006; Tarrow 2007; Weinstein 2007). It compares countries and thus the national state is the unit of observation. But most internal conflicts occur in limited parts of a country and can be explained by sub-national variation (Kalyvas 2006). In response to such criticisms, there has been a recent move towards disaggregating quantitative studies of civil war (see Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). Second, it codes conflicts on the basis of their "master cleavage" and therefore fails to account for the possibility that local actors with disparate motives might gather around this cleavage (*ibid.*). Finally, where these studies consider the role played by specific social groups within a nation state – usually referred to as ethnic groups – they tend to be reified, and treated as homogenous and static (for example Cederman and Girardin 2007; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009). But ethnographic studies tend to stress the fact that such identities are, in fact, heterogeneous and dynamic (Sen 2006).

The second strategy is to undertake "thick" analyses of one case or a small number of cases (Collier and Sambanis 2003; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007). The vast majority of empirical studies of Maoism in India consist of in-depth ethnographic research concentrated on a very limited area (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006; Shah 2006; Shah and Pettigrew 2009). Such studies provide important data on the microdynamics of insurgency. But their spatial and temporal scope is narrow and they necessarily focus on the dependent variable. There are obvious limitations in generalising the findings of these studies in a country as vast and diverse as India, and this strategy can tell us very little about the broader pattern of insurgency.

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The inherent complexity of insurgency makes methodological eclecticism productive (Collier and Sambanis 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Tarrow 2007; Weinstein 2007). In this paper we combine statistical analysis at a low level of aggregation with archival and ethnographic research. The first empirical section involves an India-wide district-level statistical analysis covering the period 1982 to 2011. The second section involves a case study of one district, Dantewara, which has been a crucial case for understanding the relationship between Adivasis and Hindu society for the past one hundred years and is currently the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency in India. Thus, we aim to avoid both the vagueness of cross-national studies and the particularism of case studies. Our strategy allows us to undertake an analysis that is systematic and broad in scope, but which pays close attention to the specific context of the phenomenon we are studying.

District-level, India-wide quantitative analysis

Variables

In this section we analyse quantitative data to investigate whether insurgent activity occurs in areas where Adivasis remain in control of their land or where they have been dispossessed. The spatial unit is the district, the administrative level below the state and the smallest division at which all the variables are available.

The dependent variable is insurgent activity. We documented all fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents that were reported in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition), India's most widely read English newspaper, between 1982 and 2011. There were 1,105 fatal incidents in this period, resulting in 4,698 deaths. We then created a dummy variable using the mean number of deaths per decade (four) as the cut off point.

The main independent variables are the percentage of Scheduled Tribes that are either landless "agricultural labourers" and landholding "cultivators". A landless labourer "has no risk in the cultivation, but merely works on another person's land for wages [...] in money or kind or share" (GoI undated c). Landholding cultivators, on the other hand, take on the risk of cultivation on land that they either own or rent. These two categories represent, respectively, Adivasis who have been dispossessed of their land and those who remain in control their land. We control for the total population values in order to ensure

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that it is not simply the general level of landless labourers or landholding cultivators that explains the presence or absence of insurgent activity. We also control for the percentage of Scheduled Tribes in the population to ensure that it is not simply the large Adivasi population that accounts for the increased probability of insurgent activity.

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

Sample

We run our regressions with two different samples. The first, sample A, includes all districts in India, except those in Jammu and Kashmir, and the North East, where there have been non-Maoist insurgencies in the period under analysis. The states of Haryana and Punjab, as well as five districts, drop out of the analysis when we include tribal specific variables because they do not have Scheduled Tribe populations. In 2001 our sample covered 916 million people and 72 million Scheduled Tribes – that is, 89 % of the total Indian population and 86 % of the India's Scheduled Tribe population.

We do not believe that there is only one route – in this case the tribal route – to Maoist insurgency – an assumption that is implicit in rationalist studies of internal conflict. Indeed, ethnographic data indicates that lower-caste landless labourers supported Maoist insurgents on the plains of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh (Kunnath 2006; Bhatia 2005;

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Balagopal 2006b). Sample B is limited to the tribal belt in order to partially isolate the "tribal route" to insurgency. The total population of the area covered by the Fifth Schedule was 166 million and the Adivasi population was 45.5 million in 2001– respectively 18 % and 63 % of sample A. We predict that the effect size will be greater in this sample because it partially excludes other mechanisms that lead to insurgent activity.

Results

Table 1 shows the results of our analysis. As the dependent variable is binary we use logistic regression. We report the odds ratio, the exponentiated regression coefficient. In parentheses we specify robust standard errors clustered by district to account for the non-independence of observations from the same district. As census data is enumerated decennially the temporal units of our analysis are decades. 1981 census data is used to explain the insurgent activity in the period 1982 to 1991, and so on. The one year lag between independent and dependent variables reduces endogeneity.

Table 2 sets out the predicted probabilities at the 5th and 95th percentile on the given variable when all other covariates are held at their mean. Δ percentile is calculated by dividing the 95th percentile by the 5th. Thus, a value greater than one indicates a positive relationship between the variable and insurgent activity, while a value below one indicates a negative relationship. Calculations are based on the models in table 1.

Model 1A demonstrates that there is a significant positive relationship between the proportion of Scheduled Tribes and insurgent activity when we do not control for any other variables. A shift from the 5th to 95th percentile value for the percentage of tribals increases the likelihood of insurgent activity by a factor of two and a half (see Table 2). The percentage of Scheduled Tribes is not significant in model 1B because the sample is limited to the tribal belt – a region in which all districts have a significant Adivasi population.

As areas inhabited by Adivasis were historically on the margins of Indian society, they also tend to be relatively rural and undeveloped – two variables that are also strongly linked with a higher probability of insurgent activity (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Ethnographic studies of insurgency are unable to demonstrate whether insurgent activity occurs in the tribal belt due to the presence of Adivasis, or because Adivasis tend to live in less developed areas that are more remote and thus more suited to

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Table 1
Scheduled Tribes and Maoist Insurgency in India, 1982-2011

	(1A)	(1B)	(2A)	(2B)	(3A)	(3B)	(4A)	(4B)
Tribal landholding cultivators %					1.019*	1.064***		
					(0.008)	(0.021)		
All landholding cultivators %					0.945***	0.934*		
					(0.012)	(0.024)		
Tribal landless labourers %							0.980*	0.914**
							(0.008)	(0.028)
All landless labourers %							1.061***	1.103**
							(0.012)	(0.038)
Tribal %	1.021**	0.992	1.025***	0.991	1.021*	0.993	1.030***	0.989
	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.012)
Total population (log)			2.401***	1.216	1.767*	1.205	2.031**	1.262
			(0.509)	(0.325)	(0.390)	(0.322)	(0.474)	(0.344)
Literacy %			0.979*	0.954*	0.962**	0.959	0.986	0.970
			(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.011)	(0.022)
Rural population %			1.020*	0.993	1.034***	1.005	1.008	0.980
			(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Previous conflict	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pseudo R^2	0.024	0.005	0.276	0.228	0.297	0.264	0.292	0.271
N	1194	226	1194	226	1102	226	1102	226

Notes: * p<=.05 (5%), ** p<=.01 (1%), *** p<=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported. Sample A includes all districts in mainland India, except the northeast. Sample B includes only those in the central Indian tribal belt.

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TABLE 2
Predicted probabilities of key independent variables

Model and variable	A. All India			B. Tribal belt		
	5th %ile	95th %ile	Δ %ile	5th %ile	95th %ile	Δ %ile
1. Tribal %	0.0877	0.2186	2.4926			
2. Tribal %	0.0533	0.1695	3.1801			
3. Tribal landholding cultivators	0.0367	0.1446	3.9401	0.0424	0.5239	12.3561
4. Tribal landless labourers	0.1206	0.0343	0.2844	0.6702	0.0259	0.0386

Notes: The table shows the predicted probabilities for the 5th and 95th %ile on the given variable when all other covariates held at their mean. Δ %ile is calculated by dividing the 95th %ile by the 5th. Calculations are based on models in Table 1. All variables are significant at $p<=0.05$ (5 %).

guerrilla warfare. Logistic regression allows us to distinguish between the relative importance of these variables. Model 2A demonstrates that, even when we control for the level of development and rurality, there is a significant positive relationship between the percentage of Scheduled Tribes and the insurgent activity. The effect size is, in fact, larger than in model 1A: when all other variables are held at their mean, a district at the 95th percentile for the percentage of tribals is more than three times as likely to be affected by insurgent activity than one at the 5th percentile. To our knowledge this is the first time that this has been demonstrated using quantitative data. Once more, there is no relationship in model 2B because the sample is limited to districts in the tribal belt.

Models 1A and 2A support the veracity of the assumptions underlying this analysis: firstly that, despite being politically constructed, "Scheduled Tribe" is a useful category for comparative analysis and, secondly, that there is a significant relationship between the proportion of Adivasis in a district and insurgency. It also demonstrates that accounts of Maoist insurgency in India that concentrate on the insurgent organization or counterinsurgent strategy of the state overlook a crucial aspect of the phenomenon.

Models 3A and 3B show that the probability of insurgent activity is higher in districts where the proportion of Adivasi workers who are

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landholding cultivators is higher. The size effect is larger than in models 1A and 2A. A shift from the 5th to 95th percentile increases the probability of insurgency by a factor of 4 in the all India sample and by a factor of 12 in the tribal belt sample. Models 4A and 4B show that the probability of insurgent activity is higher in districts where the proportion of Adivasi workers who are landless labourers is *lower*. A shift from the 5th to 95th percentile for the proportion of Adivasis labourers *decreases* the probability of insurgency by a factor of 3.5 in the all India sample and by a factor of 26 in the tribal belt sample. Thus, our analysis demonstrates that, contra what Marxist theory would predict and many observers of the situation in India have argued, insurgency activity is not most likely to occur in areas where Adivasis have lost their land and must now work as landless labourers. On the contrary, the probability of being involved in insurgent activity is highest in areas where Adivasis still cultivate their own land. This appears to support the moral economy argument that rural inhabitants with higher levels of communal solidarity and organizational autonomy are more likely to become involved in insurgent activity. As predicted, the effect sizes of key independent variables are higher in sample B compared to sample A because the former partially isolates the Adivasi route to insurgency by excluding non-tribal areas.

In contrast to the findings for Adivasis, our analysis indicates that, among the general population, support for the insurgency is highest among landless labourers and lowest among landholding cultivators. This supports both the class analysis theory of Paige (1975, 1983), as well as ethnographic studies from the plains of Bihar, which argue that insurgent support is strongest among lower-caste landless labourers (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006). Moreover, it confirms our suggestion that a variety of aggrieved actors – oppressed Adivasis, exploited lower-castes and ideologically enthused upper-castes – gather around the Maoist master cleavage. These effects are less significant in sample B but are still present. This is because many districts covered by the Fifth Schedule are only partially hilly, forested areas that have historically been inhabited by Adivasi communities. Other parts of the Fifth Schedule districts may be situated on the plains and have caste-based social structures.

Robustness Tests

We performed a series of robustness tests on our findings. First, we removed potential outliers according to a liberal definition of standard deviations in the residuals greater than $|2|$. Second, we tested whether

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our findings were sensitive to our operationalization of insurgent activity by halving (to 2) and doubling (to 8) the threshold of deaths needed for a district to be affected by insurgent activity. Third, we introduced state dummies to test if our variables were merely a proxy for a state's shared traits. These tests did not materially alter the significance of the main explanatory variables or the models' pseudo R^2.

Case study of Dantewara

Case selection

The statistical analysis reveals several interesting points but leaves crucial questions unanswered. If dispossession and exploitation cannot explain the Adivasis' involvement in the Maoist insurgency, what does? If Adivasis do not share a common consciousness with Maoist insurgents, how and why do they form a lasting alliance? This section addresses these questions by undertaking a case study of one district – Dantewara, the southernmost part of the former "Jungle Kingdom" of Bastar that now forms part of Chhattisgarh state – which is informed by fieldwork carried out in 2008, archival data such as government publications, insurgent documents and newspaper articles, and secondary ethnographic data.

Dantewara is a crucial case in the context of this study for several reasons. First, it is widely seen as the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency. It has been a haven for insurgents since the early 1980s and their presence has undermined the sovereignty of the Indian state, as there are areas of the district where neither the police nor other state employees dare to venture. An Indian Administrative Service report from 1990 stated that the insurgents were running a "parallel government" in the area (Sharma 1990). In 2011, Jairam Ramesh, Minister for Rural Development, admitted that there were "liberated zones" in Southern Chhattisgarh, where "the state's writ doesn't run" and "Our officers [...] don't venture in these places" (Ojha 2011). What is more, since 2005 Dantewara has been the scene of a brutal war between the insurgents and a counterinsurgent militia, Salwa Judum, and this provides a fascinating opportunity to better understand the relationship between Adivasis and Non-Adivasi insurgents.

Second, for several centuries Dantewara has been an important battleground for understanding India's tribal population and its

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relationship with Hindu society. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Deputy Commissioner of Bastar described the tribal population of the region as "the most perfect specimens of the aboriginal race" (Lyall 1868, p. 25). British "anthropologist administrators", such as Elwin (1936) and Grigson [1991 (1949)], lived with and studied the Adivasis of Bastar, and this has been continued by, *inter alios*, Sundar (2007) and Gell (1986, 1997). In 2001 78.5 % of the population were Scheduled Tribes, the third highest proportion in India (Census of India 2001). The socioeconomic characteristics of Scheduled Tribes in Dantewara are representative of those in insurgent-affected districts, as identified by our statistical analysis: 89 % of the Adivasi workers are landholders, whereas only 5 % are landless labourers (*ibid.*).

What is more, it has been noted that the tribal population in the region was relatively well off in the mid-1980s, when the insurgents were expanding their influence. This fits in with our statistical analysis, which challenges the dominant narrative that associates the insurgency with landless and immiserated Adivasis. BD Sharma, Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987, p. 68), described how "The luxuriant forest on the hills and the mighty river Indravati below provide plentiful sustenance to all and even the landless, the old and the infirm". Gell (1986, p. 124) notes that "Despite being a notoriously 'backward' area, supposedly occupied by miserable, poverty-stricken tribals [...] the local economy is in a flourishing condition, prosperous in good years and well able to withstand the rigors of bad ones". Gell also points out that landholdings held by Adivasis in the district are "enormous" by Indian standards (*ibid.*). Even now, the size of the average landholding of an Adivasi in Dantewara is 4.8 hectares compared to the national mean of 1.6 hectares for the sample (GoI undated b).

Tribal history of Bastar

In the pre-colonial period, Adivasis in Bastar, as well as the tribal belt more generally, had strong symbolic and material links to the forests (Elwin 1936; Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). They practised shifting cultivation, hunted and collected forest produce for food, fuel, medicines, buildings materials and alcohol, as well as to exchange with traders for salt, cloth and cash (GoI 1861). Surplus extraction from the tribal areas of Bastar did not occur through taxation on land or the exploitation of a class of landless labourers (Gell 1997; Sundar 2007). The "1861 Report on Bustar and Kharonde

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dependencies" stated that "savage hill tribes [...] pay no tax whatsoever" (GoI 1861, p. 44). Instead, the abundant natural resources – timber, non-timber forest produce and minerals – were the chief source of state income, although commercial exploitation of the forest did not occur in a systematic manner (Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007). The situation changed with the arrival of the East India Company, which set about acquiring control over India's natural resources, using bureaucratic and legal means to recast patterns of ownership and rights to common resources in a manner that was detrimental to the indigenous population.

This is illustrated by two pieces of legislation, which the British encouraged the Rajah and Diwan (Prime Minister) to introduce. First, the Forest Act of 1878 gave the state the right to "reserve" – expropriate, administer and keep Adivasis out of – all forests in colonial India. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that the Forest Act was applied to Bastar, but between 1891 and 1910 one-third of all the forest was reserved (Sundar 2007). Second, from 1889 onwards, the state began to regulate the collection of forest produce by granting monopsonies to non-Adivasi traders and imposing duties on Adivasis collectors (*ibid.*). This legislation led to an influx of Non-Adivasis into tribal areas in the form of forest guards who kept the Adivasis out of the forests and charged them to collect forest produce. It also led to the emergence of traders who dominated the market for forest produce, and officials and police to administer and enforce the system. The manner in which these changes negatively affected the lives of Adivasis is neatly summed up by a tribal who described to Elwin (1936, p. 22) his vision of heaven as "miles and miles of forest without any forest guards".

The changing terms of interaction between Adivasi communities and Hindu society resulted in several "tribal rebellions" in Bastar (Gell 1997; Sundar 2007). The 1910 rebellion, which was the most violent and widespread, was a response to the state's attempt to increase surplus extraction from, and control over, the forests. Five years previously the state had revealed plans to reserve two-thirds of Bastar's forest and the rebellion drew its supporters from precisely those areas in which reservation had taken place. It is interesting to note that the 1910 rebellion was popularly referred to as the *Bhumkal*, a reference to the social solidarity that binds members of a clan to each other and to their specific *bhum* (earth), as well as the political authority of the council of elders. Sundar (2007, p. 133) suggests that "one might read the Bhumkal as a mode of protest juridically sanctioned by local

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authority, that of the elders in the name of the earth, a pitting of indigenous law against colonial law".

From British colonialism to internal colonialism

On paper, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and later legislation protect the Adivasis' rights to their land and permit them a certain degree of political autonomy. But, in practice, the post-colonial Indian state exercises neo-colonial forms of control over Adivasi areas (Guha 2007; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009; Scott 2009; Kennedy and King 2011). The *Forest Act* (1927) remains the foundation of forest administration in India and the Forest Department continues to own and administer the vast majority of forests. In Dantewara 52 % of the forest is reserved and another 31 % is "protected" (Government of Chhattisgarh 2005). The state, currently in the form of the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce, attempts to control the market for non-timber forest produce and aims to keep prices low, passing on the benefits to Non-Adivasi traders and industrialists (Saxena 2003; Sundar 2007). Additionally, large mining and steel companies with strong links to the Indian political elite – most notably ESSAR and Tata – have increasingly coveted Dantewara's sizable reserves of iron ore (Guha *et al*. 2006; Sundar 2007). The state uses the *Land Acquisition Act* (1894) to expropriate Adivasis' land for "development" projects. The *Panchayats* (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) *Act* (1996) should, in theory, allow the local community to veto such projects, but in practice villagers are threatened by "goons" who coerce voters into agreeing to their demands, the minutes of *Gram Sabha* (village meetings) are rewritten, or fake *Gram Sabha* are used to approve a project (*ibid*.).

On the ground, forest guards, traders and policemen continue to have a massive and overwhelmingly negative influence over the lives of Adivasis. In the early 1980s a Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly minister who had recently completed a *padayatra* (journey by foot) through Bastar argued that "An unresponsive administration and exploitation of the tribals by a section of officials of the revenue and forest departments and contractors has prompted the people in Bastar to seek help from Naxalite elements" (*Times of India* 1983b, p. 6). What is more, this worsened as increasing numbers of paramilitary police were stationed in Bastar in response to the insurgency. A report by the People's Union for Civil Liberties from 1989 stated that "the presence of the large contingent of armed police in the interior Adivasi villagers has changed

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the environment completely" (*Times of India* 1989, p. 13). The report documents police raiding villages, stealing property and grain, sexually abusing women, brutally killing some Adivasis, and detaining and torturing others. It is apparent that, in Dantewara, as well as elsewhere in the tribal belt, such incidents continue up to the present day (Guha *et al*. 2006; Nagarajan 2010).

The role of the insurgent organization

Maoist insurgents entered Bastar from Andhra Pradesh in 1980 (*Times of India* 1980; CPI [Maoist] 2005). The first insurgents were non-Adivasi students from Warangal University in Andhra Pradesh and the leaders of *dalams* (guerilla squads) and *sangham* (committees) continue to be, on the whole, Non-Adivasis from Telangana (*Times of India* 1983b, 1987; Balakrishnan 1993). Nevertheless, the insurgents are supported by Adivasis, who provide them with the resources needed to undertake insurgency, such as food, shelter, intelligence and foot soldiers. The insurgent leaders frame the insurgency in terms that are meaningful to the Adivasis. They support the creation of a separate tribal kingdom or Dandakaranya state in Dantewara and contiguous areas, which was a demand of tribal rebellions before independence (Sundarayya 1972; *Times of India* 1981, 1992; Surendran 1992, 1993; CPI [Maoist] 2005; Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The insurgents understand the symbolic importance of the Bhumkal rebellion among Adivasi communities in Dantewara. The CPI (Maoist) (2005, p. i) refers to it as an earlier step on "the path of liberation" and sees "the present generations [of Adivasi insurgents] as their heirs". In 2009, the insurgents issued a pamphlet warning of widespread violence to mark the centenary of the Bhumkal rebellion (Bose 2009) and the insurgents claimed that the ambush that killed 76 paramilitary policemen in April 2010 was timed with this in mind (*Times of India* 2010b).

The insurgents provide sections of the tribal society with collective incentives. In the early 1980s insurgents would visit Adivasi villages at night and enquire about which forest officials, traders, police and government officials were intimidating them, demanding bribes or paying low wages. The accused would be brought before a *Jan Adalat* (People's Court), where the insurgents would "settle the accounts" (*Times of India* 1984a, p. 12). Often they would be humiliated and warned to behave themselves in future. An Indian Administrative Service Report describes how "an errant constable or forest guard is

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made to crawl before a village assembly and seek pardon. A forester is forced to hold his ears, and in schoolboy fashion asked to do 100 situps" (Sharma 1990, p. 9). At other times, the insurgents would threaten to cut off the limbs of contractors or to burn their trucks – and sometimes they would carry out these threats (*Times of India* 1984b, 1987, 1988a; Kher 1991).

It is apparent that the insurgents provided Adivasis with a powerful ally and this brought concrete benefits. They chased away forest guards, improving the Adivasis' access to the forests. The insurgents secured a fifty-fold increase in the price of *tendu patta* over the period that they have been active in the area and they claim that prices are 60 % higher in areas where their organization is strong (GoI 2008; Guha *et al.* 2006). In addition, the insurgents claim to have engaged in considerable development work over the last twenty years, constructing schools, clinics and ponds [CPI (Maoist) 2005]. A Congress MP pointed out in 1988 that "The local population had links with Naxalites because the latter provided them with better protection and help than the state administration" (*Times of India* 1988b, p. 17). This analysis is corroborated by several recent government reports, which admit that Adivasis see the insurgency as "basically a fight for social justice, equality, protection and local development" (GoI 2008, p. 60; also see GoI 2006, 2010).

The insurgents also provide selective incentives to those people that take an active role in the insurgency. It is estimated that throughout India the insurgents generate between 15 and 20 billion rupees ($300 and $400 million) per year, primarily by extorting money from economic actors ranging from forest produce traders to large mining companies (*Times of India* 2009; Satapathy, Ohja and Mandal 2010; also see Shah 2006 and Suykens 2010). The Ministry of Home Affairs recently claimed that insurgents paid their foot soldiers a salary of 3,000 rupees per month together with a cut of extortion money (*Times of India* 2010a). While these reports might or might not be true, they raise an interesting point. For young Adivasis – both male and female – joining the insurgents is an opportunity to enter an organization that commands respect and fear, provides them with access to food, shelter, and perhaps the opportunity to make money. On the other hand, the insurgents also use targeted violence – selective disincentives – against perceived and real opponents within Adivasi communities, such as suspected informers. This is often done in front of the whole village in *Jan Adalats*, and the punishments can be brutal; suspected police informers' limbs are amputated, their eyes are gouged out, and they are frequently killed (for example *Times of India* 1982, 1983a, 1998; Sharma 2011). Such

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displays serve a double role: to punish suspected opponents and to send out a warning to other members of the community.

Insurgents versus counterinsurgents

From 2005 onwards, Dantewara's population have been able to choose between *two* competing political organisations, the insurgents and Salwa Judum, a government-sponsored militia (Guha *et al*. 2006). Salwa Judum aimed to clear the forests of inhabitants in order to deprive the insurgents of their support base. With the help of regular security forces, they forcibly removed Adivasis from their villages and herded them into fortified roadside camps, which acted as "strategic hamlets". The Government of Chhattisgarh appointed 5,000 Salwa Judum members as Special Police Officers (SPOs). They were given a gun and paid 1,500 Rupees a month to protect the camps and hunt insurgents (Balagopal 2006a).

The presence of two competing political organizations polarized society. Before the formation of Salwa Judum, the options available to inhabitants of insurgent controlled areas were to either support the insurgents or remain indifferent. After the introduction of a second political organization they were compelled to actively support and seek the protection of either the insurgents or the counterinsurgents. As the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh declared, "those in the camps are with the government and those in the forests are with the Maoists" (quoted in Balagopal 2006a, p. 2184). 644 out of 1,220 villages in Dantewara were forcibly evacuated, and between 40,000 and 50,000 people lived in roadside camps at the height of the counterinsurgency (Balagopal 2006a; Guha *et al*. 2006). The total district population was almost 720,000 in 2001 (Census of India 2001), indicating that approximately a quarter of a million people chose to remain in insurgent controlled territory or flee to neighbouring areas. In such a situation it is enlightening to ask why some people decided to seek refuge in Salwa Judum camps while others refused.

Many Salwa Judum leaders are Non-Adivasi traders and contractors from the Hindi heartland of northern India. Some were adversely affected by the insurgents' attempts to provide collective benefits to Adivasis, while others previously profited from trading with the insurgents but came to realize that there was money and influence to be gained from supporting the counterinsurgency. Indeed, Guha *et al*. (2006) point out that there was little or no oversight or accountability for the huge funds that poured into Dantewara during the counterinsurgency. Notwithstanding, the counterinsurgency cannot simply be presented as a

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Non-Adivasi movement. Significant numbers of Adivasis were also involved with Salwa Judum at various levels and there were large numbers of Adivasis living in their camps. Why was this so?

It was apparent from talking to Adivasis in Salwa Judum camps that they all had reason to resist or fear the insurgents. In many cases they previously held a privileged status as a result of descending from a particular lineage or collaborating with dominant society. But, in the process of establishing control, the insurgents challenged and undermined their authority. They include *kotwars*, the traditional administrators in the village who have a reputation for demanding bribes for services such as registering births, and *sarpanches*, the elected community leaders who are often said to embezzle a proportion of money from government projects. Adivasi teachers and forest guards, who are seen by the insurgents as agents of the state and are often involved in local level corruption, also form a sizeable proportion of Salwa Judum sympathizers.

It is, however, not possible to depict all Adivasis opposing the insurgents as having vested interests that are harmed by an otherwise popular insurgency. There are cases where factional identities result from short-term processes operating during the course of the insurgency – endogenous mechanisms – rather than Adivasis' relationship to the structure of power and privilege. First, a large proportion of Special Police Officers (SPOs) were Adivasi youth motivated by the promise of a government job, meagre salary and the status of carrying a gun. They did not realize that they were taking sides in the conflict and, in fact, became SPOs for the same reason that others had become insurgents before 2005. In both cases they were "seduced by their new-found – and essentially unearned – authority" (Guha 2007, p. 3311). Once they had made this choice, however, they were unable to leave Salwa Judum for fear of reprisals by the insurgents. Second, some Scheduled Tribes who joined the counterinsurgency were previously *sangham* members who were captured and forced under pain of death to join Salwa Judum. The fear of reprisals for their treachery, as well as shame for what they had done, kept them on the side of the counterinsurgents and prevented them from returning to the insurgents. Third, because the decisions as to who to target are taken in stressful situations and based on imperfect information, insurgent violence is sometimes misplaced. Consequently, some victims and their family and friends do not resent the insurgents and seek the protection of Salwa Judum because of their position in Adivasi society, but due to fear or the desire for revenge as a consequence of being the unintended victims of insurgent violence.

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Conclusions

This paper has two distinct empirical sections. The first undertook a statistical analysis of district-level data for the period 1982-2011. It demonstrated that, even when we control for other variables, such as the level of development and suitability of terrain to insurgent activity, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the proportion of Adivasis and insurgent activity. This demonstrates that studies – both more general ones and those dealing specifically with Maoist insurgency in India – that concentrate on the insurgent organization only cover part of the story. Non-Adivasi insurgents play a crucial role providing an organizational structure that is capable of making a credible challenge to state power. But the insurgents do not exist in a social vacuum; they rely on Adivasis, as well as other supporters, to provide them with resources, such as food, shelter, recruits and intelligence, that are essential for guerrilla warfare. Further, it is not, as widely argued – by academics, the insurgents and the state – those Adivasis who have been dispossessed of their land and been forced to work as landless labourers that are most likely to be involved in insurgent activity. Rather, insurgent activity is most likely to occur in areas of the tribal belt where a large proportion of Adivasis remain in control of their land.

The second section used fieldwork data, archival resources and secondary ethnography to undertake a case study of the Dantewara district. This shows that Adivasis' grievances are intimately related to the colonial encounter and the neo-colonial state's desire to reserve forests, control the market for forest produce, and the consequent influx of forest guards, traders, police and officials. But the Adivasis' participation in the insurgency is not merely a reaction to these stimuli. The largely Non-Adivasi insurgent cadre were successful at framing the insurgency in terms that were meaningful to Adivasis, most notably by emphasising the continuities between previous tribal rebellions and the present insurgency. They provided Adivasis with collective incentives: for example by chasing away forest guards and increasing access to the forest, or by coercing traders into paying higher prices for forest produce. The insurgents also provided selective incentives to those who joined their organisation, as well as the threat of violent disincentives to potential informers. Nevertheless, not all Adivasis in Dantewara supported the insurgents. Some supported the counterinsurgents because they had previously collaborated with the state and were threatened by the

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insurgents, while others did so because of short-term processes related to the presence of the insurgents and counterinsurgents.

How do these empirical findings relate to theory? First, contrary to what is argued in many recent accounts of insurgency, social structures do matter. Our statistical analysis demonstrates that Adivasis who own their land and directly control the immediate processes of agricultural production are most likely to be involved in insurgent activity. This supports Durkheimian moral economy theories, which argue that landownership results in organizational and material advantages for collective resistance against outside oppressors. But our qualitative analysis revealed that conflict over access to forests and its resources is the defining feature of the Adivasis' relationship with state and Non-Adivasi society. Thus, it seems apparent that the Adivasis' insurrectionary capacity is a result of both their organizational autonomy and communal solidarity as moral economists suggest, and, as class analysts argue, the position they occupy in a system of surplus extraction that generates intense inter-group conflict. Our analysis does not, however, indicate that structures are deterministic. Rather, as Weber points out, structures load the historical dice. Structural explanations fail to accurately identify a mechanism by which structural potential leads to insurgent activity because they overlook the manner in which the insurgents provide Adivasis with an organizational structure through which they can challenge the power of the state at the local level.

Explanations based on rationalist theory also have limitations. Although selective incentives do motivate the decisions of some to join or support the insurgents, Dantewara's Adivasis were not "rational peasants". While they supported the insurgents or counterinsurgents for a variety of reasons, these choices were limited and strongly influenced by social, political and economic context. What is more, as the insurgency and counterinsurgency progressed, the options available to Adivasis were increasingly restricted, made under severe pressure, with imperfect information.

In order to fully understand the relationship between Non-Adivasi insurgents and their Adivasi support, the insurgency should be conceptualized as a process of competitive state building. The insurgents set out to establish authority over the Adivasi population by providing a combination of selective and collective incentives and disincentives. The Adivasis' socioeconomic characteristics affected their receptivity to these benefits. Nevertheless, in some cases factional identities were strongly influenced by short-term processes operating during the course of the insurgency, rather than the Adivasis' relationship to the structure

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of power and privilege. This underlines the point that perceptions of the insurgent's and state's legitimacy are not an internalized constant but an emotional feeling. Our analysis indicates that a syncretic theoretical approach, which concentrates on the complex and dynamic relationship between insurgents and their support base, and includes insights from Marxian, Weberian and Durkheimian thought, is best suited to explaining the Adivasis' involvement in Maoist insurgency in India.

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Annexes

Appendix A
Descriptive Statistics

	N	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Insurgent activity	1194	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.0
Tribal landholding cultivators %	1102	33.3	25.0	0.0	95.0
All landholding cultivators %	1194	41.9	17.6	0.1	85.1
Tribal agricultural labourers %	1102	30.7	21.0	0.0	87.1
All agricultural labourers %	1194	22.5	12.9	0.0	60.5
Tribal population %	1194	9.5	16.4	0.0	94.0
Log. total population (000s)	1194	7.4	0.7	3.4	9.3
Literacy %	1194	43.9	15.4	3.0	85.4
Rural %	1194	78.0	16.8	0.0	100.0
Previous insurgent activity	1194	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.0

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

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Appendix B
Correlation Table

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Insurgent activity	1.000									
2. Tribal landholding cultivators	0.111	1.000								
3. All landholding cultivators	-0.047	0.461	1.000							
4. Tribal agricultural labourers	0.044	-0.151	-0.353	1.000						
5. All agricultural labourers	0.212	-0.1	-.0319	0.664	1.000					
6. Tribal %	0.143	0.559	0.243	-0.050	-0.033	1.000				
7. Log. total population/1000	0.095	-0.270	-0.377	0.227	0.271	-0.287	1.000			
8. Literacy %	-0.096	-0.321	-0.578	-0.004	-0.208	-0.175	0.055	1.000		
9. Rural %	0.092	0.240	.0583	0.032	0.212	0.162	-0.295	-0.421	1.000	
10. Previous conflict	0.511	0.060	-.0064	0.048	0.180	0.079	0.085	-0.031	.0044	1.000

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Résumé

La rébellion maoïste ou naxalite s'est fortement répandue depuis trente ans notamment dans la zone tribale du centre de l'Inde. L'article utilise d'abord une base de données unique au niveau du district pour montrer que, contrairement à une idée reçue, la contestation ne se développe pas là où les tribus ou Adivasis ont été dépossédés de leurs terres et contraints de travailler comme ouvriers agricoles. C'est tout le contraire. La deuxième partie présente une étude en profondeur du district Dantewara. Les revendications des Adivasis sont intimement liées à la colonisation et à la volonté qu'a l'État postcolonial de contrôler forêts et ressources forestières. Les leaders ne sont pas adivasis mais ils s'efforcent de présenter la contestation dans des termes qui fassent sens pour les Adivasis avec une combinaison d'éléments incitatifs collectifs et sélectifs. Cependant certains groupes adivasis s'opposent à une contestation qui affaiblit leur statut ; d'autres pour des raisons conjoncturelles. Une interprétation dynamique complexe est proposée qui emprunte à Marx, Weber et Durkheim.

Mots clés: Inde ; Zone tribale ; Adivasis ; Insurrection maoiste; Naxalites.

Zusammenfassung

In den letzten 30 Jahren hat sich die maoistische oder naxalitische Rebellion in Indien stark ausgebreitet und dies besonders in mittelindischen Stammesgebieten. Aufbauend auf einer einzigen, distriktbezogenen Datenbank zeigt diese Untersuchung, dass der Widerstand sich nicht, wie meist vermutet, dort verbreitet hat, wo die Stämme oder Adivasis enteignet und zu Feldarbeiten gezwungen worden sind. Ganz im Gegenteil. Der zweite Teil der Untersuchung ist dem Distrikt Dantewara gewidmet. Die Forderungen der Adivasis stehen in enger Beziehung zur Kolonialisierung und dem Willen des postkolonialen Staates die Wälder und deren Erträge zu kontrollieren. Selbst wenn die Anführer keine Adivasis sind, verstehen sie es dem Widerstand eine Form zu geben, die für die Adivasis Sinn macht. Es handelt sich um eine Mischung aus kollektiven und selektiven Anreizen. Manche Adivasis lehnen den Widerstand ab, weil er ihre Position schwächt, während andere ihm aus konjunkturellen Gründen zustimmen. Eine dynamische und komplexe Interpretation, unter Einbeziehung von Marx, Weber und Durkheim, erlaubt es, die Beteiligung der Adivasis am Widerstand zu erklären.

Schlagwörter: Indien; Stammesgebiete; Adivasis; Maoistischer Aufstand; Naxaliten.

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