

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Extracting a Living:
Labour, Inequality, and Politics
in a Tribal Coal Mining Village in India**

Itay Noy

A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology at the
London School of Economics and Political Science for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London, September 2019

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without the prior written consent of the author.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 73,612 words.

Abstract

In the mineral-bearing tracts of Jharkhand, eastern India, coal mining operations have for decades been concentrated in areas inhabited by *adivasi*, or tribal, populations, and brought about dispossession, displacement, and the erosion of land- and forest-based ways of life. Based on 18 months of fieldwork in a mining-affected *adivasi* village, this thesis examines the variegated ways in which mining industrialisation has affected different groups of villagers – from informal coal peddlers to colliery employees – and its impact on the community as a whole. By providing an insight into their lives, livelihoods, and perspectives, the thesis challenges common understandings of the effects of mining and dispossession, and contributes to related debates on labour and politics.

First, by contrast with prominent critical theories of dispossession, the thesis shows how rather than simply the destruction of rural communities, dispossession can lead primarily to socioeconomic differentiation within them, creating new and enhanced internal inequalities. By exploring these inequalities in relation to the different types of work, formal and informal, that have emerged locally as a result of mining, the thesis contributes to the literature on labour and precarity. It illustrates how different forms of informal labour can carry different degrees of precarity and meanings for labourers – in terms of stability, autonomy, work rhythms, and gender dynamics – that inflect their present and longer-term livelihood strategies.

Second, contrary to the prevalent narrative of resistance to mining and dispossession by rural – and especially indigenous – communities, the thesis shows how such processes can produce not protest but acquiescence. By examining local forms of co-optation and clientelism in relation to mining operations, the thesis contributes to debates on the politics of dispossession and (non-)resistance. It illuminates how political leaders and potential activists can become brokers between dispossessing projects and villagers, and how this can lead to shifts in everyday sociopolitical relations that act to curb rather than facilitate possibilities of collective action.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	6
List of figures	8
List of characters	9
Glossary	10
Prologue	13
I. Introduction	16
The village	16
Mining and dispossession	20
Theoretical framing	24
Methodology	42
Thesis outline	47
II. Karampot	52
Karampot before mining	53
The advent of mining	56
Politics and resistance	62
Displacement	65
Conclusion	67
III. Coal peddling	68
From private mines to Pandu Project	72
The work process	75
The different sides of precarious work	81
In praise of precarious work?	90
Conclusion	93
IV. Truck loading	96
Wage labour for the mining-affected	97
The hitches of truck loading	101
Truck loading and women labourers	105
Conclusion	109

V. Migration	111
Coal migration	113
The significance of land	117
Work migration from Karampot	123
Planning for the future	127
Conclusion	130
VI. Coal company employment	130
The origins of <i>naukri</i>	133
Upward mobility and class differentiation	136
Class reproduction?	149
Solidarity breakdown	154
Conclusion	160
VII. Dispossession and compensation	162
From protest to negotiation	162
Emergence of a broker	170
Brokering company employment	174
New patronage dynamics	177
<i>Adivasi</i> activist or unprincipled politician	181
<i>Netas</i> and CCL: story of a partnership?	190
Conclusion	191
VIII. Politics	193
Differentiation and political solidarity	196
<i>Netas</i> and the monopolisation of politics	200
Conclusion	203
IX. Conclusion	205
Labour and the production of inequality	206
The politics of dispossession	209
Implications	212
Bibliography	214

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible, first of all, without the people of Karampot, who kindly let me into their village and lives, and shared with me their stories and thoughts. The work would also not have been possible without the support of the Imam family in Hazaribagh – Bulu, Elizabeth, Philo, Justin, Gustav, June, Juliet, Nitin, and Alka – who not only made sure I have a home away from home in India, but also helped tremendously with some of the more challenging organisational aspects of fieldwork. Bulu, in particular, generously made available to me his extensive knowledge of the region, while Justin was the one who introduced me to Manish Ekka, my research assistant. A genuine fieldwork collaborator, Manish was not only absolutely key to carrying out the ethnography, but also provided invaluable companionship and friendship throughout the time we spent together in Karampot, for which I am grateful. My thanks also go to Kathinka Sinha Kerkhoff and Vinod Sinha, who were the first to receive me in Jharkhand and, later on, patiently listened to my fieldwork doubts and quibbles; and Father Tony Herbert, who put me in touch with the Imam family in the first place, and provided insights into the local mining and activism scene.

At the London School of Economics, my supervisors Alpa Shah and Laura Bear have guided my way through this project with dedication and infectious enthusiasm, provided brilliant advice, criticism, and inspiration, and pushed me to work harder and better. All infelicitous mistakes and errors, of course, remain entirely my own. I have also been lucky to be around a group of nurturing friends and colleagues, who have been a source of both intellectual support and more general cheering up. Special thanks go to Chiara Arnavas, Rita Astuti, Lewis Beardmore, Becky Bowers, Ivan Deschanaux, Brendan Donegan, Agustin Diz, Michael Edwards, Tom Hinrichsen, Yan Hinrichsen, Deborah James, Katy Gardner, Liisa Kohonan, Megan Laws, Sara Lenehan, Jonah Lipton, Giulio Ongaro, Johnny Parry, Andrea Pia, Gabriela Piña Ahumada, Mitch Sedgwick, Charles Stafford, Connor Watt, and Teo Zidaru.

Finally, outside the realm of anthropology, the last few years have been brightened up by the presence and constant encouragement of my close friends and family: Anat, Eli, and Shachar; and my grandparents, Ziona and Moshe, to whom this thesis

is dedicated. Hollie arrived at a later stage of this project, but bravely put up with me during the final and often stressful stage of writing with kindness and care.

This PhD project was funded by an LSE studentship and a Wenner-Gren fieldwork grant. It also benefitted from the support of the Royal Anthropological Institute's Radcliffe-Brown Memorial Fund.

List of figures

Figure 1: A view from Karampot of the overburden dump	18
Figure 2: Pandu Project's quarry	18
Figure 3: Jharkhand, India	53
Figure 4: Maharam and Maiko arranging their coal pile	69
Figure 5: Women carrying coal from the depot yard.....	76
Figure 6: A woman covering her burning coking pile with coal dust.....	76
Figure 7: Villagers loading their bicycle with coal.....	77
Figure 8: Villagers pushing their bicycles through the forest to the highway	77
Figure 9: A group of labourers loading a truck in the depot	98
Figure 10: A Nayak villager in the coking ground	113
Figure 11: Ramesh's house in Karampot.....	140
Figure 12: Pandu Project offices.....	175
Figure 13: The Ryat Visthapit Morcha's annual rally	184
Figure 14: Pandu Project employees preparing maps for the land surveyor	199

List of characters

- Arun:** Santal coal company employee
- Babulal:** Santal coal peddler
- Birsa:** Nayak coal peddler and Sukhram's brother
- Budhram:** Santal political worker and coal company employee
- Chitu:** Santal politician
- Ganaram:** Karampot's *manjhi haram* (Santal headman)
- Jagdis:** Santal coal peddler and Naresh's brother
- Janki:** largest Santal landowner in Karampot
- Kamal:** retired Santal coal company employee and Surendra's father
- Maharam:** Santal coal peddler and Maiko's husband
- Maiko:** Santal coal peddler and Maharam's wife
- Naresh:** Santal coal peddler and Jagdis's brother
- Parmeshwar:** Santal coal peddler
- Puja:** Nayak coal peddler and Vishal's wife
- Puran:** Santal coal company employee
- Rajkumar:** Santal coal company employee and Sikanti's husband
- Ramesh:** Santal coal company employee
- Ruso:** Karampot's *jogwa* (Santal assistant to the *manjhi haram*)
- Savitha:** Santal coal peddler and Shiv's wife
- Shankar Lal:** former Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUCH) activist
- Shiv:** Santal coal peddler, Siamlal's nephew, and Savitha's husband
- Siamlal:** Santal Hindu temple priest and Shiv's uncle
- Sikanti:** Santal housewife Rajkumar's wife
- Somra:** former Munda coal peddler
- Sukhram:** Nayak coal peddler and Birsa's brother
- Suraj:** Santal coal peddler
- Surendra:** Kamal's son
- Tundwah:** former Munda coal peddler
- Vishal:** Puja's husband

Glossary

Organisations and acronyms

BCCL	Bharat Coking Coal, a subsidiary of CIL
BDO	Block development officers
BJP	Bharatya Janata Party
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BSF	Border Security Force
CBA	Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act
CCL	Central Coalfields Limited, a subsidiary of CIL
CIL	Coal India Limited
CMM	Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (Chhattisgarh Liberation Front)
INTUCH	Indian National Trade Union Congress
JCMI	Jharkhand Colliery Labour Union
JMM	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Jharkhand Liberation Front)
NCDC	National Coal Development Corporation
R&R	Rehabilitation and Resettlement
OBC	Other Backward Caste

Hindi and local terms

<i>adivasi</i>	Scheduled Tribes; used as a common term for 'tribal'
<i>adkati</i>	a local wage labour procedure; literally, splitting
<i>andolan</i>	protest movement
<i>anganwadi</i>	rural childcare centre
<i>baharia</i>	outsider
<i>bhaichara</i>	brotherly
Bihari	a person from Bihar, of which Jharkhand was part until 2000; usually meant to indicate a higher-caste person in relation to <i>adivasis</i>
block	the most local unit of district administration
<i>anukampa</i>	compassionate appointment
<i>bandh</i>	strike, closure

<i>chai</i>	tea
<i>crore</i>	ten million
<i>dalal</i>	middleman
<i>dalit</i>	Scheduled Castes; those previously known as Untouchables
<i>dhan</i>	husked rice
<i>ek sath</i>	togetherness
<i>ekta</i>	unity
<i>gair majurwa</i>	deedless land, without occupancy rights
<i>gotiya</i>	relatives, extended kin
<i>jungli</i>	uncivilised, savage
<i>jhopri</i>	makeshift shack
<i>jogwa</i>	assistant to the <i>manjhi haram</i>
<i>kaliyug</i>	age of downfall in Sanskrit scriptures
<i>karam</i>	Santal festival and type of tree
<i>lakh</i>	one hundred thousand
<i>mahua</i>	an Indian tree with edible flowers
<i>madaiti</i>	help; voluntary exchange of labour between households
<i>manjhi haram</i>	Santhal headman
<i>naike</i>	Santhal priest
<i>naukri</i>	permanent, regular employment in the formal sector
<i>neta</i>	political leader
<i>netagiri</i>	self-interested politics
<i>panchayat</i>	village council
<i>puja</i>	Hindu religious ritual
<i>pukka</i>	a solid, permanent dwelling built of materials such as brick, cement or concrete, as opposed to a mud house
<i>raity</i>	tenancy land
<i>sal</i>	<i>shorea robusta</i> , a tree species native to the Indian subcontinent
<i>sambandh</i>	relationship

<i>sarkari</i>	
<i>naukri</i>	permanent government employment
<i>sarna</i>	sacred grove
<i>seva</i>	disinterested service
<i>zamindar</i>	landlord

Prologue

Shiv and his wife Savitha left their mud house before dawn and set out on foot to the opencast colliery near the village, as they did almost every morning. Taking advantage of the absence of security guards in this early hour, Savitha entered the mine's depot yard and started gathering lumps of coal, using the metal bowl she had brought with her. Shiv stayed behind, on a patch of land on the edge of the mine. Using large woven plastic bags, he started packing the coal Savitha had collected the previous days, which was piled in a heap in front of him. Later, Shiv would tie the bags onto his bicycle and set off to the highway next to the village to sell the coal to roadside restaurants and informal petty coal brokers, which is how he and Savitha eke out their living. Meanwhile, on the other side of the village, Rajkumar's day was off to a very different kind of start. He buttoned his shirt and slipped into his (plastic) leather shoes, left his concrete-built house, and got on his motorbike to ride to the colliery, where he has a permanent job in the machinery workshop. The dirt road to the workshop took him around the depot, where Shiv, Savitha, and other villagers were still toiling away, their hands and feet covered in a thick layer of coal dust.

This typical morning in the *adivasi*, or tribal,¹ village of Karampot,² in the coal-bearing tracts of Jharkhand, eastern India, encapsulates some of the changes brought about by the arrival of mining activities in its vicinity in the 1970s. Populated predominantly by *adivasis* from the Santal tribe, the largest in the state (Government of India 2001), Karampot is located next to Pandu Project, an opencast colliery run by the state-owned Central Coalfields Limited (CCL). Faced with a lack of employment options in the mine and area more generally, and with only a small and un-irrigated plot of land to farm, Shiv and Savitha, like the majority of Karampot's residents, depend on the illegal scavenging and selling of coal from the mine as a precarious source of income. Rajkumar, by contrast, is one of the minority of Santals in Karampot who are employed in Pandu Project, in a regular salaried job. Rajkumar is, in fact, not originally from Karampot but a nearby Santal hamlet by the name of

¹ The term *adivasi* refers to India's indigenous peoples, also known as Scheduled Tribes. My use of '*adivasi*' and 'tribal' is interchangeable in the Indian context, as is my use of 'tribal' and 'indigenous' in more general contexts.

² A pseudonym, as are most names of places and people in the thesis.

Dharutar, which in 2010 had been displaced by the mine. He had obtained his job a couple of years later, in 2012, as part of a compensation scheme operated by CCL for villagers who have been dispossessed of land for mining. Consequently, Rajkumar now belongs to a small, exclusive group of Santals in Karampot who have formal employment – gained mostly under circumstances similar to his – and a secure, gainful income.

Before arriving in Karampot, I had read a good deal about the egalitarian values and structure of India's *adivasi* communities (e.g. Bailey 1961; Shah 2018a) – at least compared to rural Hindu society, riven by inequalities of caste, class, and gender. It did not take long for me to become aware, however, that such accounts were at serious odds with the everyday reality I was encountering in the village, which was marked by noticeable differentiation within the community. This, I gradually realised, was the result of relatively recent economic, social, and political transformations, which in one way or another followed from the relatively recent entry of coal mining activities into the village's environs.

On the one hand, there were coal peddlers like Shiv and Savitha, who made up roughly 85 percent³ of Karampot's 146 households. In addition to peddling coal – and, around the monsoon season, subsistence agriculture – these households also participated in casual, and scarcely available, wage labour in Pandu Project's depot yard, manually loading coal on trucks for dispatch. Coal-peddling households also included a smaller group of villagers who were not Santal but from low castes (Nayak, Bhuiya, and Chamar) and other tribes (Karmali, Munda, Mahli, and Oraon), whose families had migrated to Karampot several decades ago. Like most of their Santal counterparts, this non-Santal minority, who made up 21 percent of all households in the village, peddled coal and occasionally participated in truck loading work. But unlike the Santals, they did not own any land in Karampot – either agricultural or even that on which their own houses stood – which made their position especially precarious. Finally, by contrast with the large coal-peddling section of the village, there were the 15 percent of households – like Rajkumar's –

³ Based on a household survey.

who had a member who either was or had previously been employed by CCL, with the sizeable salary and security that such a job entailed.

*

In line with global patterns – from Asia (Welker 2014) to Latin America (Perreault 2013) to Africa (Zamchia 2019) – around Karampot too mining activities have brought with them expropriation of land, both common and private, which has had a profound impact on people's livelihoods and lives. While both land and forest resources had earlier been central to livelihoods in Karampot, it is now on coal that villagers primarily depend for their social reproduction – most of them informally, through its scavenging and peddling, and some formally, through employment in the colliery. Indeed, as the above vignette already evinces, different people in the village have been impacted by the dynamics of mining in different ways, and found themselves in distinct positions in the new, mining-induced political economy. This political economy is characterised by processes of uneven accumulation and stratification, which have rippled through the community in different ways.

This thesis seeks to illuminate the everyday lives of people engulfed by mining operations, through exploring, from different local positions and perspectives, what it is like for *adivasis* to live and work at the heart of India's coal belt. More concretely, the thesis examines how different groups of villagers have been variously affected by, experienced, and responded to the effects of mining industrialisation in their proximity – including coal peddlers, CCL employees, non-Santal migrants, and local political leaders. While so doing, the thesis also investigates the relations between these different groups, and the broader consequences of mining and dispossession for the community as a whole.

The picture revealed in the following chapters is far removed from the more common view of tribal societies as homogenous, egalitarian, and sustainable peasant communities (Li 2014; Sundar 2001; Xaxa 2011: 15) that are ravaged through the encounter with extractive industries (e.g. Padel & Das 2010; Shiva et al. 2011). In Karampot, as I show, the arrival of mining has not so much impoverished the community as resulted in differentiation within it, leading to the emergence of intra-

village inequalities on a new scale. Moreover, in contrast to widespread accounts of indigenous resistance to mining and dispossession (e.g. Kirsch 2014; Li 2015; Nilsen 2010), this is not a story about a tribal community's struggle against an industrial, dispossessing project. Rather, it is a story of the multifaceted interaction between them, in which the dynamics of mining are refracted through people's socioeconomic positionalities, material and status aspirations, and political ambitions, and ultimately result not in protest but acquiescence. In probing the process of internal stratification and production of compliance, the thesis contributes to two main bodies of work in anthropology and related disciplines: first, on labour, precarity, and inequality; and second, on the political responses to dispossession.

I. Introduction

The village

Forty-five miles from Ranchi, the state capital, and a just off National Highway 33, the village of Karampot lies in one of Jharkhand's coal mining areas,⁴ where fields and forest are punctuated by open pits and coal depot yards. With its 146 households (and population of 823), predominantly Santal, Karampot is located just over a mile away from Pandu Project, an opencast colliery under government ownership. Like other mines in the area, Pandu Project is managed by CCL – a regional subsidiary of the state-owned Coal India Limited (CIL), one of the largest coal-producing companies in the world. Only a few decades ago, before Pandu Project's opening in 1982, the immediate landscape around Karampot looked very different. Previously receding into a stretch of fields and *sal* woodland, the village's backdrop is now conspicuously dominated by Pandu Project's overburden dump – a long raised mountain-like formation consisting of the soil and rocks that were removed when stripping open the quarry. From this quarry, the project – which also includes two depot yards, a machinery workshop, and a block of offices – extracts 2.5 million tonnes of coal a year, supplied to different public sector industries as well as wholesaled to private dealers.

⁴ Other large coalfields are located in Bokaro, Dhanbad, and Giridih districts.



Figure 1: A view from Karampot of the overburden dump



Figure 2: Pandu Project's quarry

In addition to its location within Jharkhand's coal-bearing tracts, Karampot also forms part of a local *adivasi* – and mainly Santal – belt, which stretches along the

area's various collieries.⁵ Indeed, Jharkhand is known for both its mining operations⁶ and range of *adivasi* groups, which have over the years had an intertwined and tumultuous relationship: in this part of India, collieries (and other industrial projects) have since the colonial period encroached on land and forest used by *adivasi* communities, eroding traditional forms of livelihood based on these resources (Corbridge 1993; Gadgil & Guha 1993).

Indeed, as I described in the Prologue, coal is now the primary source of livelihood in Karampot – albeit in distinct ways. While the large majority (85 percent) of Karampot households engage in informal coal peddling and occasionally truck loading wage labour in the mine's depot yard, a minority of households (15 percent) include a member who is either a current or former permanent CCL employee. This, however, is not the only way in which the village is divided: while 79 percent of Karampot's total households are Santal – the local 'sons of the soil' – 21 percent are migrant, or 'outsider' households, who belong to low-caste, or *dalit*⁷, groups and other *adivasi* tribes. None of these non-Santal households, who are concentrated mainly in three clusters of houses in the village, have jobs in the colliery. Moreover, none of them have any land in the village: while Santals' agricultural holdings are modest, and typically range between 1-3 acres in size, non-Santals in Karampot are completely landless, and do not even own the land on which their own houses have been built.

In terms of infrastructure, Karampot is not dissimilar to other villages in the area. The houses fronting its dirt lanes are mostly mud-made, but also include some simple brick dwellings and, noticeably, a smaller number of considerably larger cement structures, occupied exclusively by households with CCL employment. There is no running water or public health facilities; there is, however, intermittent

⁵ While relatively central in terms of location in Jharkhand, along the national highway that cuts through the state, this is a comparatively little known *adivasi* area – geographically removed from the larger and better-known concentration of Santals in the Santal Pargana division, in Jharkhand's northeast.

⁶ Jharkhand alone accounts for 30 percent of India's mineral reserves, and is especially rich in coal and iron ore (George 2014; World Bank 2007).

⁷ Previously called 'Untouchables', *dalits* are nowadays also known as Scheduled Castes.

electricity, as well as a partly-functioning *anganwadi* (childcare centre) and nearby government school.

Education levels are generally low, but on a seemingly upward trend. Of those no longer in school, 63 percent only have lower primary education (classes 1-4); 17 percent have upper primary education (classes 5-8); 11 percent have passed the Matriculation Exams (equivalent to having finished high school); five percent have passed the Intermediate Exams (equivalent to having qualified for college); and two percent – exclusively from CCL-employed households – have obtained a bachelor's degree. Of those currently in school, a significantly higher portion are set to take their Matriculation and Intermediate Exams, and more are studying for their bachelor's degree in one of the colleges in towns in the area. Among many of these younger villagers, wishes and aspirations different from those of their parents are already brewing, with regard to work, consumption, and upward mobility. Their ability to pursue these will depend to a large extent on their households' position in the local political economy of mining, into which Karampot has increasingly become embedded.

Mining and dispossession

Dispossession and displacement are perhaps the most salient and disruptive social processes associated with extractive industrialisation globally. There has been a long history of scholarly concern with different forms of land enclosure, and the social and economic changes that it generates for the people who once lived off that land. In recent years, land commodification and 'grabbing' have attracted new interest, focusing on dispossession for capital accumulation under neoliberal regimes. Indeed, the tempo and scale of dispossession in the last two decades, and the proliferation of farmer protests against it (Akram-Lodhi 2007; Harvey 2004; Levien 2018), have once again made dispossession the focus of both academic and political attention – from Asia (Adnan 2013; Feldman & Geisler 2012; Hall 2011; Hall et al. 2011; Levien 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2018) to Latin America (Borras et al 2012) to Africa (Bush et al. 2011).⁸ In parallel, related debates about agrarian transitions and capitalist

⁸ For a global perspective, see Akram-Lodhi & Kay (2010a, 2010b); Borras et al. (2011, 2012); Borras & Franco (2012); and Lund & Lee (2011).

transformations are back on the anthropological radar, with different scholars investigating the profound changes in rural economies, livelihoods, and social relations that occur when land changes ownership and usage (e.g. Cross 2014; Gardner 2018; Li 2009, 2011, 2014; Münster & Strümpell 2014; Padel & Das 2010).

In the debates on land dispossession, India occupies a central position: the subcontinent is considered one of the global epicentres of dispossession and displacement, where land is the foremost site of contention and contestation (Le Mons Walker 2008: 589). Land alienation runs deep into the country's history. A salient feature of the colonial period, for example, had been the encroachment of agricultural and forest land by the British Raj for revenue extraction and the construction of plantations, railways, and collieries (Gadgil & Guha 1993; Gardner & Gerharz 2016a). The postcolonial state, on its part, displaced a staggering number of rural people – estimated between 25 and 60 million – for large-scale national infrastructure, industrial, and mining projects (Fernandes 2007, 2008; Fernandes & Paranjpye 1997; Fernandes & Thukral 1989; Le Mons Walker 2008: 580). Since India's economic liberalisation in the 1990s, the pace and magnitude of dispossession have only intensified, with land now being acquired not only for public but increasingly private capital projects (Levien 2013a, 2018: Chapter 2). Protests by farmers against land alienation, too, have become more numerous, garnering wide public attention not only in India but internationally (e.g. Woodman 2010, 2014).

In India and beyond, land acquisition for mining has often been carried out in areas inhabited by indigenous communities (Downing et al. 2002; ICMM 2015; Warden-Fernandez 2001). In the Indian context, land expropriation for extractive projects has disproportionately affected *adivasi* communities, which are among the most marginalised in the country (Shah & Lerche 2017).⁹ Since 1947, millions of *adivasis* have been evicted by the Indian state for mines and other national development projects (Fernandes 2008; George 2014; Le Mons Walker 2008: 580; Lerche 2010;

⁹ Alongside *dalits*, *adivasis* are placed at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy in India. They display high rates of poverty and underemployment, are overrepresented among casual work migrants and bonded labourers, and work almost exclusively in the informal economy, in the lowliest types of work (see for example Breman 1999; Breman & Guérin 2009; Drèze & Sen 2013; Lerche 2007, 2010; Lerche & Shah 2018; Sengupta et al. 2008: 52).

Levien 2018: Chapter 1), often without adequate compensation (Fernandes 2007; Jain & Bala 2006). Around Karampot as well, coal mining has brought with it alienation of *adivasi* land: the construction of Pandu Project had involved, first, the expropriation of common grazing and forest land surrounding the village;¹⁰ and later on, in 2010, the displacement of the entire neighbouring Santal hamlet of Dharutar, some of whose displaced inhabitants now reside in Karampot.

Much has been written about the ruinous effects of extractive industrialisation and dispossession on rural livelihoods – in particular *adivasi* (e.g. Bennett & McDowell 2012; Bhengara 1996; Fernandes 2007, 2008; Heuzé 1996; Padel & Das 2010). Nonetheless, there have been to my knowledge comparatively few in-depth studies of mining-affected *adivasi* villages that allow close ethnographic scrutiny of the more nuanced impact of mining on people's lives and livelihoods. Based on 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Karampot and the area, this thesis seeks to understand the varied ways in which different groups of villagers have been affected by, and navigate the reality of, mining and dispossession; and the ensuing wider consequences for the community.

In so doing, the thesis takes a broader view of dispossession, considering not only its impact on those who have been directly dispossessed of land (as in Dharutar) but also its broader, reverberating implications for neighbouring villages such as Karampot. Temporally too, alongside Nielsen (2018), I treat dispossession not as an 'event' – the particular moment of land expropriation (or its revocation through resistance) – but as a process, with longer-term outcomes that become embedded in people's everyday lives and social relations. Through investigating local livelihood strategies, aspirations and values, and the economic, social, and political formations that both mediate and are modified through the dynamics of mining operations, the thesis challenges existing theories of dispossession. It opens up alternative ways of thinking about the effects of dispossession; the ways in which rural people, especially indigenous, experience and respond to it, and the politics that emerge around it.

¹⁰ Land productivity, too, is likely to have suffered from the deleterious impact of mining on the local groundwater table (Mishra 2014).

The array of experiences of and responses to mining and dispossession that I encountered in Karampot reveals a much more complex and ambiguous picture than those more commonly painted in accounts of the encounter between industrialisation and agrarian communities. It is a picture neither of uniform development, modernisation, and proletarianisation, nor of invariable pauperisation and destruction of livelihoods. Rather, it reveals that villagers have been affected by mining and dispossession in highly unequal ways, which have placed them on highly uneven trajectories: precarious work vis-à-vis formal employment; modest accumulation vis-à-vis middle-class consumption; potential inclusion in the benefits of mining vis-à-vis a future of unmitigated displacement; political ascendancy vis-à-vis political disempowerment.

Mining industrialisation, in other words, has led to a markedly unequal path of socioeconomic change. It has created new kinds and scales of inequalities within the community – economic, class, gender, political – which this thesis explores. While the arrival of Pandu Project sparked in the community not only apprehension but also hopes for employment and development,¹¹ villagers' ability to realise these has been highly disparate, and resulted in newfound intra-community stratification. In contrast to caste-divided Hindu society, *adivasi* communities have commonly been viewed as considerably more homogenous and egalitarian (G. Shah 2004: 205; Sundar 2001; Xaxa 2011: 15).¹² Studies on inequality in the *adivasi* context, on their part, have focused primarily on the (re)production of disparities between *adivasis* and their non-tribal counterparts (e.g. Lerche & Shah 2018; Nathan & Xaxa 2012; Shah et al. 2017; Throat 2010). This thesis, on the other hand, seeks to cast light on the comparatively little explored process of *intra-adivasi* differentiation,¹³ in the context of mining industrialisation. It examines how emerging forms of accumulation and differentiation are linked to processes of individualisation and fragmentation, considers different moral perspectives on these processes, and explores some of their local effects.

¹¹ On the dreams unleashed by industrial projects, see Cross (2014) and Vijayabaskar (2010).

¹² For examples, see Bailey (1961) and Shah (2010, 2018a).

¹³ Exceptions include Higham & Shah (2013), Shah (1979), and Shah (2010).

The picture established in the following chapters is, moreover, not one of an agrarian uprising against industrialisation and dispossession. Resistance to dispossession, especially by indigenous communities, is a common trope in both scholarly and social activist representations (e.g. Kirsch 2014; Nilsen 2010; Roy 2011). This thesis, by contrast, illuminates more ambiguous local politics around dispossession – involving negotiation and alliances, co-option and brokerage – which act not to foster resistance but rather constrain it.

At the broadest level, the findings of this study contribute to understandings of the social effects of industrialisation and dispossession. This introductory chapter sets out this overall theoretical framework, while giving particular attention to two specific debates within it with which the thesis engages: first, on labour, precarity, and inequality; and second, on political action. The introduction then lays out the methodology employed to carry out the study, and types of data collected; and, lastly, provides an outline and chapter breakdown of the thesis. Although my ethnographic focus in this thesis is Jharkhand, India, I believe at least some of my conclusions will be applicable to other contexts of extractive industrialisation, dispossession, and indigenous communities.

Theoretical framing

Debates on land dispossession have typically tended to pivot around two oppositional poles.¹⁴ The first is embedded within modernisation theory and the 'agrarian transition' narrative (e.g. Banerjee et al. 2013; Chakravorty 2013; Chibber 2003; Kohli 2004), and is prevalent among liberal economists and development theorists as well as governments and industrialists (Ferguson & Li 2018; Li 2009, 2017).¹⁵ Dispossession, in this view, is part of the transition process into advanced capitalism – from field to factory, agriculture to industry, peasants to wage workers – which involves changes in land use and a decrease in the number of small farmers. Economic growth, here, is synonymous with development, and thus justifies the

¹⁴ See Cross (2014: Chapter 1) and Levien (2018: Chapter 1) for related overviews of the polarised debate around Special Economic Zones in India.

¹⁵ For an extended discussion of the 'agrarian question' in India, see Lerche et al. (2013).

expropriation of land from less efficient rural producers and their removal from agriculture.

This 'modernisation theory of dispossession' (Levien 2018: Chapter 1) has proved highly resilient, and often informed development policies and schemes (Li 2009, 2011). Different scholars, however – from James Scott (1998) to Tania Li (2009, 2011, 2014, 2017) – have shown that it rests on a problematic set of normative assumptions and predictions. Based largely on the European history of land enclosure and the rise of capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, the modernisation theory presupposes a linear, replicable, and foreseeable pathway of development that would ultimately benefit society as a whole. In reality, however, in many parts of the global South the agrarian transition has not taken place in the way assumed by orthodox development economists. Contemporary capitalism is generally so capital-intensive that it generates fewer jobs (Shah & Lerche 2017). It has, consequently, been unable to create sufficient living-wage employment for all those who can no longer rely on agriculture as a result of industrialisation and dispossession.¹⁶ Instead of a transition from farming to capitalist wage labour, there has often been a disjuncture between land enclosure and rural labour absorption (Bernstein 2004; Li 2009).

At the other pole on the dispossession debate, we find a contrasting narrative, proffered by scholars and activists informed by Marxist political economy. Taking inspiration from Marx (1977 [1867]), this narrative has its most prominent example in David Harvey's (2003, 2004, 2005) concept of 'accumulation by dispossession', which has been widely used by critical analysts of contemporary processes of land enclosure (e.g. Adnan 2013; Araghi 2009; Akram-Lodhi 2012; de Angelis 2001, 2004; McMichael 2012; Nilsen 2010; Patnaik 2008; Perrault 2013). In Harvey's approach, dispossession is not a necessary and ineluctable cost of progress. Rather, similarly to what is described by Marx's notion of 'primitive accumulation'¹⁷ (1977

¹⁶ On the ways in which contemporary capitalism and neoliberal globalisation have resulted in the bypassing of 'classic' agrarian transitions, see Bernstein (2016) and Lerche (2013).

¹⁷ Developed in relation to the English enclosures, this is the process by which common land was made into a commodity, and dispossessed peasants into wage labourers – which according to Marx was the basis for the creation of capitalist social relations in agriculture.

[1867]), dispossession is seen as plunder of agrarian communities for the benefit of capital. While Marx, who wrote about the English enclosures, analysed the dispossession of the English peasantry as a means for the initial emergence of capitalism, Harvey's theory asserts dispossession as an inherent, ongoing aspect of advanced, predatory capitalism for the ever-expanding interests of capital.¹⁸

Accumulation by dispossession, as Michael Levien (2011, 2015, 2018: Chapter 1) points out, usefully treats dispossession as a continuous process within capitalism, and relinquishes the idea of capitalist progress with land enclosure as its inevitable cost. This makes accumulation by dispossession a good point of departure for understanding processes of dispossession in South Asia and elsewhere, and "link[ing] ethnographic detail with wider national and transnational contexts" (Nielsen 2018: 7). Yet, while accumulation by dispossession is instructive to think with, both the concept and its extensive use, as Derek Hall (2011, 2012, 2013) has indicated, have been marred by problems. These stem largely from the high level of generalisation and abstraction of Harvey's theory, which extends to include a wide array of phenomena in different contexts – from land grabs to the privatisation of social benefits. This prevents Harvey, as Levien has noted, "from capturing the diverse and unequal consequences of dispossession for rural people" (2018: 15). Indeed, in reality, processes of dispossession can display considerable variation – for example, in the types of communities on which dispossession is enacted, and their particular conditions and social relations; or the actors that carry out dispossession, and the forms of compensation that they do or do not offer. All these can lead to different outcomes of dispossession and different local responses to it, not only between communities but also within them.

Too heavy a reliance on accumulation by dispossession as an analytical device, then, can lead to disengagement from ethnographic realities and observations. Analyses predicated on Harvey's model often "contain potentially problematic assumptions" that might sit uncomfortably with empirical findings, and run the risk of

¹⁸ Drawing for instance on Rosa Luxemburg (2003 [1913]), 'accumulation by dispossession' is according to Harvey capitalism's way of addressing its cyclical problem of over-accumulation and decreasing profitability, by exploiting new land and other resources and opening up new markets (2003, 2004, 2005).

mischaracterising the actual and distinct ways in which changes in rural communities unfold (Hall 2013: 1583; see also Borras & Franco 2012; Hall et al. 2015). Rather than a unified, straightforward process, dispossession takes place within, and is filtered through, nuanced "local realities of land use, differential forms of access and property rights ... complex interrelationships between groups of users, legality, the state, and customary forms of access ... [and] specific histories and sociopolitical relationships" (Gardner & Gerharz 2016a: 2-4, drawing on Hall 2011, 2012, 2013). Such complexities can be glossed over not only due to theoretical over-abstraction, but also the tendency of some critical scholars of land dispossession to romanticise peasants as living in harmonious and sustainable rural communities that are ruptured through dispossession (Levien 2018: Chapter 1). This tendency has been particularly strong in relation to *adivasi* and other indigenous communities,¹⁹ which have often been depicted as the main victims of – and opposers to – the workings of capital, development, and modernity (e.g. Gadgil & Guha 1993; Padel & Das 2010).

More recent work has thus sought to complicate the notion of dispossession as 'uniform predation' (Levien 2018: Chapter 1), à la Harvey, and instead investigate the diverse and differential effects of dispossession both on and within rural communities (e.g. Gardner & Gerharz 2016b; Levien 2018; Parry 2019; Shah et al. 2017). It is to this strand of scholarship that the current study contributes, by investigating ethnographically the variegated impact of industrialisation and dispossession in a particular site. While I engage conceptually with accumulation by dispossession and related theories to frame my ethnographic material, I use this material to question some of these models' underlying distinctions, and open up alternative ways of thinking. Through an ethnographic study of the encounter between mining operations and an *adivasi* village in Jharkhand, this thesis aims to offer a more nuanced account of dispossession and socioeconomic change. It shows that while industrialisation and dispossession do not necessarily lead to development across the community, they also do not automatically result in the decimation of an idyllic tribal rural society. Rather, the thesis illustrates how industrialisation and dispossession can give rise to distinct forms of labour, hierarchies, and political structures, which different community members experience in different ways.

¹⁹ On the romanticisation of indigeneity in anthropology, see Kuper (2003).

To better contextualise theoretically the findings and discussions in the following chapters, I now turn to expand on some of the main limitations of the accumulation by dispossession framework, and lay out associated debates about precarity and resistance. These form the background against which my ethnographic material will be analysed. I begin by discussing different types of dispossession, in relation to the one with which this thesis as a whole is concerned. I then discuss literature on labour and precarity, which are the focus of the thesis's first three ethnographic chapters (3-6). Finally, I discuss related literature on politics and protest, with which the thesis's later ethnographic chapters (7-8) are concerned.

Types of dispossession

Harvey's accumulation by dispossession and related work have focused on dispossession for capital accumulation under neoliberal regimes (e.g. Borras et al. 2011; Hall et al. 2011; Levien 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2018; Lund & Lee 2011). This means it largely disregards processes of dispossession during other, earlier stages of capitalism (Hall 2012, 2013; Levien 2018: Chapter 1), as well as forms of contemporary dispossession that are not necessarily distinctively 'neoliberal'. Indeed, dispossession can take different shapes and forms – by different actors, for different purposes, and with different mechanisms to appease or compensate the dispossessed – which can beget different outcomes.

Of particular use, in this context, is Levien's (2013a, 2015a, 2018) concept of 'regimes of dispossession', which aims to draw attention to the social and historical specificities, economic logic, and ideological justifications of particular forms of dispossession. Much recent work has focused on what Levien (ibid.) calls the 'neoliberal regime of dispossession', characterised by state-assisted dispossession for private capital, for projects that are mostly financial and non-labour-absorbing. In India, this regime culminated in the 2000s with the construction of Special Economic Zones: delineated enclaves with unique 'hospitable' economic regulations to attract foreign direct investment. Special Economic Zones and their effects – mostly in India but also elsewhere (e.g. Ong 2006) – have lately been the subject of a range of studies (e.g. Cross 2013, 2014, 2015; Jenkins et al. 2014a; Levien 2018; Sampat 2010, 2015). These have often highlighted the ways in which Special Economic Zones either exclude the local population or incorporate them into their

economic structures on adverse terms, and the inadequate material compensation (if any) that they provide to the dispossessed.

While such research throws important light on the workings and effects of neoliberal projects, too exclusive a focus on high-profile land grabbing by international corporations, as Feldman & Geisler (2012) note, runs the risk of overlooking still-ongoing, more localised and everyday processes of land expropriation. Indeed, while I will be building on some of the work on neoliberal dispossession, the context of this thesis is dispossession by a state-owned industry rather than a global private corporation. Coal mining in India is under the control of the state; while private mining companies are increasingly seeking access to coalfields in Jharkhand and other regions,²⁰ so far only limited permission for this has been granted (Lahiri-Dutt et al. 2012).²¹

This study, therefore, is about a form of land enclosure that ostensibly comes under an older regime of dispossession, which prevailed in India until economic liberalisation in the 1990s. In that 'developmentalist regime of dispossession' (Levien 2018: Chapter 2), the Indian state dispossessed farmers for public sector industrialisation, and at least aimed to provide secure industrial jobs to the dispossessed.²² While it is generally true that the days of massive dispossession for public sector industry and infrastructure under state-led developmentalism have passed, and that private projects like Special Economic Zones have emerged as a new and dominant cause of dispossession, the recent overwhelming focus on them²³

²⁰ On the political economy of private mining in Odisha, one of Jharkhand's bordering states, see Adduci (2012, 2017).

²¹ Despite some signs of liberalisation in India's coal sector, the market dominance of CIL – which currently supplies 80 percent of India's energy needs – is expected to remain firmly maintained (Rakshit 2018).

²² While the implementation of promises to deliver employment was often severely lacking (Fernandes 2004, 2007 2008), the development model itself was one of labour-intensive growth. It emphasised the creation of a public sector industrial proletariat, even at the cost of financial losses in state industries due to excess manpower (Parry 2003, 2013a).

²³ A notable exception is the work of Jonathan Parry (1999a, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2013a, 2013b, 2018), which has explored the long-term effects of industrialisation and dispossession by the state-owned Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh.

might create the impression that dispossession for public sector projects is a thing of the past. But in places like Karampot, Dharutar, and other villages in the area, it is this kind of dispossession that is still being enacted,²⁴ and carried into the contemporary, neoliberal phase of capitalism.

Dispossession for the public sector in India has several characteristics that distinguish it from dispossession for private capital. Of particular importance is the fact that CIL, like most other public sector undertakings, has a compensation policy in place that under certain conditions sets out the provision of regular employment to dispossessed villagers. This scheme has had a significant impact on the outcomes of dispossession in Dharutar – and, by extension, Karampot. The economic and political context in which such compensation schemes now operate, however, is very different than that of early postcolonial India. Under postcolonial nationalism, public sector compensation schemes for dispossession had been part of a wider development policy committed to employment generation in state industries (Bear 2015; Parry 2003, 2013a). Now, on the other hand, they operate within a different economic policy, which since liberalisation has sought to curtail the regular public sector workforce, and consequently constricted the ability of public sector enterprises such as CIL to offer compensatory jobs (CCL 2008: 1; Fernandes 2007).

Indeed, while the compensation model employed by CCL in Dharutar was rooted in post-independence developmentalism, it has been increasingly hollowed out by the dictates of liberalisation. This, as the thesis shows, has had implications for local dynamics of brokerage, patronage, and politics. Dispossession in my field site has thus also been affected by neoliberalism, but in more subtle ways, which illuminate a more hidden side of liberalisation in India.²⁵ Instead of concentrating, then, on such spectacular episodes of dispossession as by Special Economic Zones and other markedly neoliberal projects, the thesis draws attention to contemporary forms and consequences of state-led extraction and dispossession. While some of the outcomes

²⁴ While the acquisition of land by CCL, as I detail in later chapters, had been carried out in the 1960s, its actual expropriation took place in Dharutar in as recently as 2008-2010. More villages in the area are expected to be affected by Pandu Project's expansion in the next decade.

²⁵ On the more concealed effects of liberalisation in other public sector enterprises, see Laura Bear's (2011, 2013, 2015) work on the Kolkata Port Trust.

of mining in Dharutar and Karampot are indeed related to this particular type of dispossession, the thesis's findings about the broader socioeconomic and political processes that followed bear relevance to other contexts and types of dispossession as well.

Precarity and informal labour

Analyses of dispossession that rely on Harvey's accumulation by dispossession tend to implicitly assume that rural people want to continue working the land (Gardner & Gerharz 2016: 4-5). This assumption corresponds to the romanticised view of peasant communities, held by some scholars and social activists, as homogenous and sustainable (Levien 2018: Chapter 1), and of indigenous peoples in particular as having a strong attachment to land (Li 2014). The reality of agricultural work, however, is often to the contrary. In India and other parts of the world, farming no longer provides a viable basis for subsistence, which in turn compels people to diversify their livelihoods and re-evaluate agriculture vis-à-vis other kinds of labour (Gardner 2018; Hall 2011, 2012, 2013). As Shah & Lerche (2017) point out, full-time agrarian work has decreased rapidly across the global South. Yet instead of transitioning to regular employment, which is in dire supply, most people remain stuck "with at least one foot in agriculture and the other restricted to informal and insecure work ... outside of agriculture" (ibid.: 12; see also Bernstein 2010; Breman 1996, 2003, 2013; Kearney 1996).

This was certainly, as I show in the next chapter, the situation in Karampot already before the arrival of mining. Like in numerous un-irrigated villages across the subcontinent, Karampot residents had to supplement agriculture with casual wage labour in the informal economy. Under these conditions, an opportunity for the *right* kind of work in mining – that is, regular and secure – was for many villagers enough of an incentive to be willing to relinquish agriculture altogether. Such jobs, however, have been attained only by a minority of villagers in Karampot, through CCL's compensatory employment scheme. The majority of people in the village have been unable to obtain jobs in the colliery, and consigned to precarious informal work in the form of coal peddling and truck loading.

This situation is symptomatic of a much broader trend, extending well beyond India, that is linked to the general inability of modern-day, capital-intensive capitalism to create sufficient jobs (Ferguson 2013: 230; Gupta 2010: Epilogue; Kannan & Raveendran 2009; Li 2009: 73; Shah & Lerche 2017). Scholars such as Tania Li (2009) and Jan Breman (2013, 2016) have propounded that as less and less labour are required for the needs of capital, an increasing number of people have become superfluous to it, and made into 'surplus populations'. Li (2009) has discussed surplus populations particularly in relation to contexts of rural dispossession, where it is now often the land – and/or the resources under it – that is considered useful, while the labour of the people who inhabit it is not. Arguments about surplus populations thus capture an important dynamic of contemporary capitalism, whereby the labour of people affected by land expropriation is often "'surplus' to the requirements of capital accumulation" (ibid.: 67). Indeed, even in a village like Karampot, increasingly enveloped by mining operations, industrialisation has not generated a collective proletarian condition for *adivasis*.

But so-called surplus populations, this thesis shows, are only part of the picture. First, as has happened around Pandu Project, in some cases compensation schemes for the dispossessed do allow some people – in more direct or indirect ways – to gain jobs in the local project. Not everybody, then, necessarily becomes 'surplus'. The thesis also shows, however, how such a provision of jobs – which in Karampot, as I describe, has been mediated through local Santal political leaders (*netas*) – can act as a contradictory resource. The distribution of employment to *some* Santals has given rise to stark socioeconomic and class differentiation²⁶ within the community, and engendered new inequalities not only between but also within households and families. These inequalities have set people on disparate socioeconomic trajectories that can carry on into subsequent generations, and fractured social ties and solidarities. Rather than uniform pauperisation and 'surplusisation', it is this kind of internal stratification that in Karampot has been the main consequence of industrialisation and dispossession.

²⁶ My use of 'class' here and in subsequent chapters is in the Weberian (1968 [1922]) sense of lifestyle, consumption, and life chances.

Second, while as Shah & Lerche (2017) note the concept of surplus populations is useful in directing attention to the precarious labour situation of swathes of people in the global South, the condition of many rural poor is in fact not permanent unemployment. As I too have found with respect to Karampot's many coal peddlers, "people are working and they are working hard" (ibid.: 11). Coal peddlers, moreover – as I show in Chapter 3 – form part of an extensive informal coal supply chain that is crucial for an array of household needs and economic activities in the wider area. Karampot's rural poor, then, like many others, *are* engaged in work – not regular and formal, though, to which they do not have access, but precarious and informal, without any security or protection.

While scholarly work on mining has mostly focused on formal wage labourers (e.g. Ferry 2005; Shever 2012; Mitchell 2009, 2013), the thesis considers different forms of informal labour that emerge around it, and thus provides a more holistic account of life and work in the mining tracts. It reveals how formal work in Pandu Project is only the (privileged) tip of the iceberg, underneath which lies a range of forms of labour in the informal economy, with different levels of precarity and insecurity. Jonathan Parry (2013a, 2019) has argued that this general divide – between those with secure formal sector work (*naukri*), who make up only eight percent of India's workforce, and those engaged in precarious informal labour (*kam*), who make up the other 92 percent (Harriss-White 2003; Harriss-White & Gooptu 2001; Lerche & Shah 2018; Sridharan 2004) – is the most salient within India's labouring classes.

The thesis's findings support this assertion by showing how in Karampot, the formal/informal work distinction – between the minority of CCL employees and all the rest – has emerged as the main axis of differentiation in the village. But the findings also make contributions to our understanding of each of the two sides of this more general divide. Firstly, precarious informal labour. The non-proletarian condition of the masses of people who, under contemporary capitalism, engage in different insecure forms of work – whether informal wage labour or petty commodity production, whether combined with or without subsistence agriculture – has been theorised by Henry Bernstein (2006, 2008, 2010) as 'classes of labour'. The term encompasses all those who have to pursue their survival and reproduction through such precarious types of work, often combining and/or alternating between a few

(Bernstein 2008: 18). In the Indian context, it has been used by Jens Lerche (2010) to describe the droves of working poor who are engaged, in Parry's (2013a) terms, in *kam* rather than *naukri*, and seek their livelihoods in the informal economy. As a sociological category, classes of labour bears resemblance to Guy Standing's (2011, 2014) recent notion of the 'precariat'. Although focusing on the erosion of labour security in the West, the precariat, similarly to classes of labour, makes a more general claim about precarity as a global class, consisting of all those involved in various forms of unprotected, insecure work.

Classes of labour and the precariat provide a useful diagnostics of the precarious nature of work for the majority of people in the global South. As explanatory devices, however, the problem with these concepts is that they use the basic common denominator of informality to lump together various types of precarious work under a single category, and thereby collapse the differences between them. This leaves little analytical room to consider the varied meanings that different forms of precarious work have for people – from subsistence agriculture to informal wage labour to petty commodity production (or vulnerable 'self-employment'). This thesis, on the other hand, shows how within the broad categories of classes of labour and the precariat, there are distinct variants of precarious work that are evaluated and experienced in different ways by labourers. As Chapters 3-5 illustrate, these variants have different degrees of precarity and desirability, and different meanings for people with regard to regularity, autonomy, work rhythms and time, and gender dynamics.

Different kinds of *kam*, in other words, matter. Chapter 3, for example, shows how coal peddling as a form of self-employment offers villagers a degree of autonomy in their work and more generally with their time. This is an important consideration that, alongside other factors, makes coal peddling generally preferable for villagers over truck loading wage labour, which is not only irregularly available but also mediated through and carried out under loading supervisors. But on the other hand, as Chapter 4 discusses, truck loading offers things that coal peddling does not. In particular, it provides to the women who participate in it direct, independent wages, which contributes to their financial and social independence and drives them to participate in this otherwise largely undesirable form of work.

Furthering the discussion on different forms of *kam*, Chapter 5 of the thesis stresses the importance of land ownership and subsistence farming *alongside* informal non-agricultural work, and discusses different experiences of time and space in relation to both land and labour. The chapter shows how non-Santals' landlessness in Karampot compels them to migrate out of the village for months at a time to engage in a relatively more stable – yet still insecure and temporary – form of informal wage labour outside of it. Moving between Karampot and their labour migration sites, landlessness translates for non-Santals into an especially fragmented spatial and temporal reality. Moreover, it generates for non-Santals a particularly precarious future: unlike Karampot's landed Santals, who in the event of displacement by mining would be entitled to be compensated by CCL – potentially with a job – for the loss of land, landless non-Santals would be categorically excluded from any such compensation. Through comparing their circumstances to those of Santals, the thesis illustrates how precarity and inequality can be experienced not only in economic terms but also, relatedly, in terms of time and space (see also Bear 2015; Ferguson & Li 2018; Harms 2011, 2013). Precarities and inequalities in time, in particular, run like a thread through the thesis, in connection with people's different livelihood positions in the local political economy.

Through illuminating issues around stability and impermanence, independence, and time with respect to different forms of precarious work – including from a gendered perspective – the thesis brings to light a set of dimensions that are often neglected in debates on informal labour, especially when using blanket categories like classes of labour and the precariat. Such dimensions, as the thesis shows, can nevertheless play an important role in how people perceive and experience different forms of precarious work within these categories, and how they configure these within their own livelihood strategies.

The discussion on meanings of work continues into Chapter 6, which crosses to the other side of the formal/informal divide by considering the jobs and lives of CCL-employed Santals. While reaffirming Parry's (2013a) argument about the sharp distinction between permanent employees and precarious labourers in terms of income and lifestyle, the thesis also illuminates a less-often-discussed dimension of precarity in permanent employees' perception of their jobs and status. Precarity is

most often associated with informal labour, as opposed to formal employment. The latter – and particularly public sector employment (*sarkari naukri*) – has in the Indian context been depicted as a privileged, well-guarded citadel that is a haven of security and prosperity compared to any kind of work in the informal economy (Holmström 1976; Parry 2013a, 2019: Chapter 2). Chapter 6, however, shows that while at present CCL-employed Santals in Karampot indeed occupy a significantly advantaged position vis-à-vis their coal-peddling village counterparts, they also harbour a sense of precarity concerning their households' ability to sustain their income level and upwardly mobile lifestyle in subsequent generations. Employed Santals, in other words, have serious doubts about their children's ability to gain similar, formal employment in the future – whether because of the increased scarcity of public sector jobs and extensive competition, or because of the belief in the role of bribes and connections in the recruitment process.

These findings contribute to the discussion on the potential precarity of the reproduction of *naukri*, which has been pointed to by Parry (2012; see also Sanchez 2016). In his study of the public sector Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh, Parry (2012) proposed that economic liberalisation and the consequent downsizing of the regular public sector workforce have led to "a crisis in the reproduction of class status" (ibid.: 176). This crisis, in turn, has generated anxieties among employed households about being squeezed out of formal employment into the ranks of the informal economy.

My account of employed Santals in Karampot suggests that such anxieties might be exacerbated for particular groups of employees. Parry's work focuses on households where formal employment has been relatively long-established, since the 1960s.²⁷ My CCL-employed interlocutors, on the other hand, have only recently – and arbitrarily, through losing land – broken into the citadel of public sector employment. Unlike households with a longer history of *naukri*, who have thereby been able to accumulate financial, property, and social capital, Santal employees' households have

²⁷ As Parry describes, there was often a familial succession of plant jobs, for example through *anukampa* ('compassionate appointment'). As part of this unofficial plant policy, "it was customary to provide a surrogate post to a member of the household of a worker who died during his period of service, regardless of the place or cause of death" (Parry 2019: 175; see also Parry 2012: 164).

not had a multi-generational opportunity to acquire – and bequeath – such capital through successive jobs. This fact arguably makes their still-nascent upwardly mobile position and status more tenuous. It is, moreover, compounded by the belief – not ungrounded in reality, and despite affirmative action measures (Deshpande 2011; Thorat 2017; Thorat & Newman 2010) – in discrimination against *adivasis* in job recruitment vis-à-vis better-off, better-connected higher-caste people, who generally dominate formal sector employment. Newly-employed Santals thus arguably experience amplified uncertainties around the long-term reproduction of class status and upward mobility, and the long-run danger of slipping back into precarious *kam*. This, in turn, underscores for some of them the importance of land and cultivation as a fall-back safety net against impoverishment for the next generations. The experience of permanence generated by secure employment, then, might only be temporary, and can give rise to a different kind of precarity than that experienced by informal labourers.

Politics and resistance

In Harvey's (2003, 2004, 2005) accumulation by dispossession and other work that relies on it, a common trope is that processes of dispossession are likely to spark widespread resistance (Gardner & Gerharz 2016b). Farmers, in other words, are implicitly assumed or expected to oppose and stand up against the dispossession of their land. Resistance to dispossession and industrial projects more generally is presupposed in particular in contexts where indigenous communities are concerned. Tribal communities, it has been argued, are indeed likelier to resist dispossession and the workings of capital because of their strong reliance on, and cultural ties to, not only land but also forests and other natural resources as a way of life (Levien 2013b).²⁸

In India, *adivasis* have indeed played a central role in resistance to land alienation – whether for industry, infrastructure, or resource extraction, whether by the state or private capital. Such resistance has spanned from tribal insurgencies against the colonial state and Hindu landlords (Devalle 1992; Panchbhair 1982; Sinha 1990); to 'people's movements' against development-induced displacement in the 1970s and

²⁸ For examples, see Padel & Das (2010) and Vandana et al. (2011).

1980s (Levien 2018: Chapter 1; Nilsen 2010); to contemporary struggles against large-scale land transfers as a result of neoliberal development policies (Banerjee-Guha 2013: 167; see also Bedi 2013, 2015; Jenkins et al. 2014b; Kanchan 2015; Nielsen 2016, 2018; Sampat 2015). Of the latter, many of the more steadfast and internationally recognised campaigns have emerged in tribal areas (Bates & Shah 2017; Levien 2013b) – from the violent struggle against the construction of a chemical hub as part of a Special Economic Zone in Nandigram, West Bengal (Nielsen 2018) to that against a bauxite mine in Niyamgiri, Odisha (Damodaran & Padel 2018). *Adivasis*, as Bates & Shah (2017) note, have become the focus of attention with regard to political resistance, and are considered to be at the forefront of activism against land alienation through industrial, infrastructure, and other dispossessing projects.

But different scholars have made this picture more complex. Katy Gardner (2012, 2018; Gardner & Gerharz 2016b), Derek Hall (2011, 2012, 2013), and Jamie Cross (2014) have shown that responses to dispossession cannot simply be cast in terms of resistance but involve complex contestations, negotiations, and "varying forms of resistance and compliance, by different groups and individuals over time" (Gardner & Gerharz 2016a: 2).²⁹ Scholars like Baviskar (1995) and Li (2014), on their part, have contested the notion of a tribal propensity to oppose land enclosure based on some kind of primordial attachment to the soil. Li's (ibid.) latest monograph, for example, examines the emergence of land commodification – and, consequently, capitalist relations and socioeconomic differentiation – among an indigenous community in highland Indonesia. It shows how the process of land enclosure was initiated not by the state or a corporation but villagers themselves – as part of material wellbeing and status aspirations – and thereby seeks to challenge the prevalent view of tribal people as "securely attached to their land" (ibid.: 3).

Nonetheless, the trope of indigenous resistance to dispossession seems to retain considerable leverage, in both the scholarship and social activist representations (e.g. Gill et al. 2015; Padel & Das 2010; Roy 2011; *Survival International* 2016; Shiva et

²⁹ See also Levien (2013b, 2018), Vijayabaskar (2010), Welker (2009), and an edited volume by Nielsen & Oskarsson (2017) – particularly the chapters by Majumder & Nielsen (2017) and Oskarsson (2017).

al. 2011; Woodman 2010).³⁰ It is bolstered by common stereotypes of tribal peoples not only as ecologically noble but also primitive and wild, quick to take up arms and ill-inclined to partake in the game of politics (Bates & Shah 2017: 1; Shah 2010: Chapter 4). Indeed – and despite exceptions like Baviskar (1995) and Li (2014) – studies of dispossession in indigenous contexts tend to focus on overt and more or less unified protest aimed at halting industrial and other 'development' projects. This includes work by anthropologists like Stuart Kirsch (2014) and Alf Nilsen (2018) who, while attentive to the processual nature and more complex goals and limitations that anti-dispossession movements can have, concentrate on extensive and well-publicised indigenous protest movements mobilised by determined activists.³¹

Kirsch's (2014) monograph on the Ok Tedi gold and copper mine in Papua New Guinea follows an indigenous campaign against the mining company, led by charismatic tribal leaders who mobilise their community as part of a coalition with NGOs and environmentalists. His emphasis lies mostly on the importance of the exchange of information and mutual learning between activists, as a way to speed up the learning curve of indigenous groups and allow them to better fight against corporations. Similarly, Nilsen's (2010) study of an *adivasi* anti-dam struggle in India stresses the role and significance of skilled movement leaders – in this case, mostly middle-class and non-tribal from outside the community – for mobilisation.

Viewed together, the strength of Kirsch's and Nilsen's work lies in tracing the evolution and consolidation of protest movements over time, and showing how they serve as critical antidotes to corporations' and states' accumulation by dispossession strategies and trajectories. In the process, though, both their studies ultimately paint a picture of seemingly united tribal opposition led by indefatigable activists. The interaction between these activists – tribal and others – and local community

³⁰ Li herself has previously argued that "from the array of mechanisms through which capitalism is linked to indigeneity and dispossession, the one that stands out in the contemporary period is ... indigenous people up against wholesale displacement by dams, plantations, and other megaprojects" (2010: 395).

³¹ See also Li (2015).

members is depicted as relatively harmonious, based on solidarity and trust³² and engendering political empowerment among villagers. By contrast with such accounts, the thesis illuminates a more complex and opaque political reality in response to dispossession. It shows, in Chapters 7-8, how potential tribal mining activists can become brokers of benefits, such as jobs, between dispossessing projects and villagers; how such brokerage can lead to new intra-community divisions and forms of political clientelism; and how these shifts, in turn, can act to stifle rather than foster possibilities of resistance, and result in a politics of acquiescence.

More recently, Levien (2013b, 2018) has in the Indian context put forward a hypothesis that seeks to account for the emergence of anti-dispossession movements in *adivasi* contexts. Veering away from culturally essentialist notions of tribal attachment to land, Levien attempts to explain *adivasi* resistance through *adivasi* communities' relatively subdued levels of stratification and histories of political mobilisation. First, the argument goes, more muted pre-existing inequalities make village solidarity easier to maintain, and collective action against dispossession likelier to emerge.³³ Second, as Levien writes, if we were to accept Scott's (2009) influential framing of indigenous peoples as "state-repelling" or "anti-state" communities,³⁴ we might postulate that "long histories of state evasion and resistance have left *adivasis* with a higher than average unwillingness to compromise with dispossession" (2013b: 375, citing Scott 2009: 128; see also Parry & Strümpell 2008: 54). Drawing on authors who have stressed political histories as a resource for anti-dispossession mobilisation (Baviskar 1995; Guha 1988; Jenkins et al. 2014; Sundar 2007), Levien (2013b; 2018: Chapter 9) goes on to propose that resistance to land alienation is likelier to arise in contexts where histories of protest and peasant activism are strong.

Karampot and Dharutar present a particularly compelling case study for Levien's hypothesis, for it is precisely in such places that, according to it, opposition to dispossession 'should' have emerged. First, as I describe in Chapter 2, prior to the

³² For a counterexample in relation to environmental struggles, see Baviskar (1997).

³³ Relatedly, Shah (2018a) has recently argued that *adivasis*' wish to preserve their egalitarian values serves as a basis for their often violent reaction against the colonial penetration of their areas.

³⁴ See also Clastres's (1987 [1974]) earlier work on the indigenous peoples of Amazonia.

arrival of mining Santals in the area had reproduced themselves under relatively egalitarian conditions. Second, *adivasis* in Jharkhand – and Santals in particular, as I recount in the same chapter – have a long history of political agitation against land alienation, from the Santal rebellion of 1855 to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM; Jharkhand Liberation Front) movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Different villagers from Karampot and Dharutar, as I relate in Chapter 7, had actively participated in this movement, and 'popular memories' (Baviskar 1995; Guha 1988; Sundar 2007) of it are still very much present among local Santals.

These two factors – muted inequalities and a history of protest – should have according to Levien made resistance to Pandu Project a likely probability. But in reality, as Chapters 7 and 8 discuss, there has been no sustained opposition to the colliery – either during dispossession and displacement or following them. The thesis shows how the conjunction of two processes in particular has undercut prospects of resistance, effectively overriding those factors that Levien suggests should have facilitated it: on the one hand, internal differentiation and fragmentation as a result of dispossession and the terms of compensation; and on the other, the consolidation of political power by local *adivasi netas* who have struck collaborative relationships with the colliery.

This does not mean, however, that intra-community stratification and *netas'* conduct in relation to mining have gone morally uncontested. In the case of land enclosure studied by Li (2014), for instance, there was notably no moral objection or any evident protestation against the process of land commodification and resulting intensified inequalities. Indeed, land commodification was, initially, willingly embraced by villagers, who became co-opted into the capitalist relations that consequently emerged. In Karampot, this has not been the case. Internal differentiation, accumulation, and self-interested politics around mining and dispossession *have* – as Chapters 4, 6, and 7 show – spawned moral critique from villagers, which draws on more traditional *adivasi* egalitarian values. Collective action around these issues, however, has been hard to actualise – precisely because of the processes of internal differentiation and consolidation of political power by *netas*, which have had a deleterious effect on solidarities and the sense of political capability among ordinary villagers. Through its analysis of the factors that hinder

potential mobilisation, the thesis offers an alternative view of the kind of (indigenous) politics that can emerge around dispossession. It invites further ethnographic research on the configurations that foster either resistance or acquiescence, in different contexts of land enclosure and agrarian milieus.

Methodology

Research for this study was conducted over a period of 18 months, between October 2016 and March 2017. Setting out to Jharkhand with the intention of studying the impact of mining on *adivasi* livelihoods, I had been especially intrigued by the unmissable sight of coal peddlers – *adivasi* and others – pushing their coal-laden bicycles alongside highways and roads. Accordingly, my original research proposal had focused on this form of labour and the people engaged in it.

Once I got to Jharkhand, I was quickly put in touch with Bulu Imam and his son Justin – former environmental activists who had worked with mining-affected communities in the area. I rented a room in the family's compound in the town of Hazaribagh, in the northeastern part of Jharkhand, and spent the first couple of weeks scouting for a suitable field site with Justin, in his ragged yet indomitable Suzuki Maruti. We stumbled upon Karampot pretty much by accident: at the end of one of our scouting days, on the way back to Hazaribagh, we stopped for *chai* in one of the tea stalls by the highway. Chatting to the owner, we enquired about the source of the coal that was firing the small clay stove on which our tea was being prepared. The coal, the owner told us, was regularly sold to him by people from a Santal village across the road by the name of Karampot, not far from a CCL colliery known as Pandu Project.

The next day, we went to visit Karampot – where, luckily, Justin realised he happened to know one of the villagers through a previous work stint with an NGO. Karampot, in turned out, fit well within my criteria for field site selection: a mining-affected *adivasi* village next to a colliery, in which coal peddling is a dominant form of livelihood. I decided to try and base myself in Karampot, where Justin's friend agreed I stay with his family for the first few weeks. While somewhat baffled by my presence, most villagers were overall receptive to my attempts to engage in conversations.

Already from these initial chats and my wanderings around the village, it became evident that coal peddling, while central, was only part of the picture. It became clear to me that I would have to place coal peddling in Karampot in a much wider context – which would also include, for example, truck loading work, and the village's CCL-employed and non-Santal households – and examine more broadly the obviously distinct ways in which people have fared in relation to mining industrialisation. Consequently, my research progressively expanded in scope – for instance, to include the story of now-defunct, neighbouring village of Dharutar, which proved to be intertwined with that of Karampot.

As my initial, non-Santal host became increasingly protective and disapproving of my spending time – and especially drinking – with other villagers, it was time to find new accommodation. I spent the following months renting various rooms from coal-peddling families, both Santal and non-Santal, which allowed me to become more intimately familiar with particular households. I also spent a couple of months living in the house of Budhram Manjhi – a local *neta* affiliated with the JMM party – who ended up figuring prominently in my account. These were the summer months, and staying with Budhram – who is originally from Dharutar and now lives in Karampot – had the major appeal of access to the village's only electrical air cooler. Though I was at first wary of staying and potentially being associated with a powerful, better-off individual, my sojourn with Budhram proved immensely useful. Our long conversations gave me a deep insight into the processes of dispossession and brokerage of compensatory jobs in Dharutar, which I could compare with other villagers' accounts and views. Through Budhram, I also got to know Chitu Besra, a prominent Santal JMM politician in the area, with whom I could conduct several interviews.

Finally, I also got to spend a few weeks in an apartment in the CCL housing colony next to the mine, where other Santal CCL employees from Dharutar reside. All the while, the Imam family compound in Hazaribagh served as my secondary base. This was where I would type and go through my field notes, as well as deepen my understanding of the wider regional and historical context through conversations with Bulu, who is a fountain of knowledge on the district and Jharkhand more generally.

Most of my time, though, was spent living side by side with coal-peddling families. Following as closely as I could different villagers' daily activities and interactions, and listening to their stories and views – some similar, some opposing – different pieces of the puzzle slowly began to make sense together, and form connections and patterns. From my base in Karampot, I was also able to branch out to the colliery – with its workshop, coal storage depots, offices, and popular *chai* shop; the weekly market near the village; and, as I describe in Chapter 3, makeshift coal stalls by the highway run by informal petty coal brokers, to whom coal peddlers from Karampot often sell their coal. All these constitute important sites of work and leisure for my different interlocutors – from coal peddlers to CCL employees to local *netas*.

My first methodological step was to undertake a household survey covering all households in the village, recording data on household membership and the livelihoods and activities of each member. My principal modes of data collection, however, were participant observation, open-ended interviews, and informal conversations, written down in field notes in as much detail as I could. Given my interest in livelihoods and labour practices, I sought to observe and become involved in the kinds of work that my interlocutors carried out. I joined villagers as they went to the mine to collect coal, often in the dark in order to avoid the security guards; carried back the coal to coke it; packed it in bags and loaded it on bicycles; and pushed these to the highway to peddle the coal. I observed coal peddlers' interaction with the guards in the mine, and with the informal coal brokers and restaurant owners by the highway who buy the coal from them. In particular, I spent long hours in the village's 'coking grounds' – where coal peddlers coke the coal gleaned from the mine – observing and talking to different villagers at work. I accompanied the same villagers as they engaged, additionally, in truck loading wage labour in Pandu Project's depot, and offered my help to them – often to the amusement of the loading supervisors nearby.

I also spent time in different parts of the colliery, where Santals with CCL jobs are employed, observing their work routine and interactions with other employees. Given the political sensitivity of coal mining in *adivasi* areas, I had been somewhat worried about gaining access to CCL management itself. This, however, proved simpler than expected, as most officers appreciated my interest in the project and

more specifically their views. I was thus able to conduct semi-structured interviews with management staff, including the project manager, and sit in on meetings between management and local *netas*.

My interviews with CCL officials extended beyond Pandu Project, to the area office as well the CCL headquarters in Ranchi, which allowed me to capture company perspectives on different levels. CCL officials also shared with me internal project documents and maps, pertaining to the process of land acquisition and the inception and development of the project. This was supplemented by archival research at CIL's Central Mining Planning & Design Institute in Ranchi, carried out towards the end of fieldwork, which was useful for gaining a better understanding of the history of mining around Karampot and Dharutar.

Alongside my focus on livelihood practices, my daily fieldwork in the village included visiting the houses and courtyards of different families, often frequented by neighbours as well as wandering dogs, chickens, and goats. These visits, which included numerous conversations over tea, rice and lentils, and many glasses of homemade rice beer and *mahua* wine – distilled from the flower by the same name – constituted an important part of my fieldwork routine. They allowed me to speak to and get to know different households; collect life histories and migration stories; become aware of kinship connections; and observe and take part in people's domestic lives. I also attended social events such as annual religious festivals, weddings, and village meetings. My interactions with different villagers – engaged in different types of work, from different tribes and castes, and different generations – enabled me to collect varied perspectives on life in Karampot. Over time, diverse and seemingly contradictory individual stories, trajectories, and views started to illuminate structural and relational processes and dynamics.

Although I focused primarily on life in Karampot, my fieldwork also extended beyond the village and local mining project in order to get to know the wider area around my field site. This included, for example, visits to the local block office³⁵, where villagers interact with local state bureaucracy; and, mostly, to other mining-

³⁵ The most local unit of district administration.

affected villages and collieries in the area. Although my visits to these were brief, they allowed me to gain a comparative perspective on, and further contextualise, my findings in Karampot. I was thus able to better understand the ways in which the situation in Karampot represents patterns in the wider area, as well as those in which it is distinctive.

Throughout the period of fieldwork, I worked with a research assistant, Manish Ekka, who is from Hazaribagh but stayed with me in Karampot. Manish primarily assisted me with interpretation: while I had studied Hindi – the lingua franca of the region – there remained linguistic challenges and gaps, which Manish helped to fill. Moreover, the fact that Manish is an *adivasi* himself, from the Oraon tribe, was often helpful in striking up chats with villagers. Last but not least, Manish provided much-needed company in times of loneliness, boredom, or frustration, when things were not going according to plan.

The fact that both Manish and I are men restricted our access to women in the village, who were generally more reluctant to speak to us. Over time, however, we did develop friendships with a number of women who were more outgoing towards us. We were able to not only converse with them at length and in detail, but also accompany them when they went to gather coal for peddling or load trucks in the depot, which provided an important insight into female perspectives. On the whole, though, the majority of my interactions were with men, in whose lives I could participate to a greater extent. My fieldwork was thus more centred towards male perspectives, to which I overall had better access.

Thesis outline

Having in this introductory chapter laid the theoretical framework for the ethnography, Chapter 2 presents my field site, Karampot, in historical perspective. It situates it within the broader historical context of Chotanagpur, the plateau highland in which it is located; the Santal tribe in this region; and India's coal mining industry. In line with the main themes of the thesis, this historical overview focuses mainly on *adivasi* livelihoods and labour, land alienation, and politics and protest. It describes, first, how before the arrival of mining in the 1970s, Karampot had been a village in which households reproduced themselves on relatively egalitarian terms. Agriculture

had been important but also limited, forcing Santals to seek casual wage labour outside the village – first in places like construction sites and brick kilns, and later on in local collieries. Second, the chapter lays out the vigorous history of Santal peasant activism in Jharkhand – from the Santal rebellion in the colonial period to the JMM movement a few decades ago – and its relation to Karampot. The historical contextualisation it provides sets the background for better understanding some of the changes brought about by Pandu Project and people's responses to them, as well as why some of these can be considered particularly striking.

Chapters 3-6 examine the types of work that have emerged in Karampot as a result of mining industrialisation, and their meanings for villagers. Chapter 3 focuses on coal peddling, the most common form of livelihood in the village. It describes the work process and gendered division of labour, and considers the different facets of coal peddling as informal precarious work. By exploring the multifarious ways in which coal peddling is experienced by my interlocutors, the chapter challenges understandings of such work exclusively in terms of a last resort for survival. While coal peddling is not only precarious and backbreaking but also illegal, the chapter illuminates the unanticipated advantages villagers draw from it – notably, relative stability and a degree of autonomy in when and how much to work. These relative advantages make coal peddling, as a form of insecure petty commodity production, generally preferable for villagers over forms of informal wage labour. At the same time, however, I show how more nuanced perceptions of coal peddling depend on one's generation, gender, and position in the household; are relative to people's wishes for formal employment; and vary according to different temporal horizons. The benefits of coal peddling in the present coexist with longer-term insecurity stemming from the depletable nature of this resource and illegal nature of the work; and, moreover, pale in comparison to secure CCL employment, which is what most villagers want but only few can access.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion of precarious, mining-related forms of labour. It turns attention to the second most prevalent type of work in Karampot: informal wage labour in Pandu Project's depot yard, loading coal on trucks, which most villagers undertake occasionally alongside coal peddling as part of the livelihood strategies. Truck loading work is provided by CCL to 'project-affected persons' (CIL

2008) who have not lost own land to the mine and thus do not qualify for compensatory employment. The chapter discusses, in particular, the problems this work poses for villagers: irregular and scarce availability, and low wages that are sometimes pilfered by the loading supervisors. These problems are ascribed by villagers to corrupt conduct not only by the supervisors but also by local Santal *netas*, who in different ways mediate the provision of this work. The discussion sheds light on forms of brokerage and rent-seeking at different levels that have emerged around labour opportunities for mining-affected villagers. The chapter then asks why, despite the hurdles with truck loading work and with coal peddling as an alternative, people – and especially women – continue to engage in this work. I propose that the answer lies in the fact that unlike coal peddling, in which women gather the coal but it is the men who sell it and receive the payment, truck loading provides women with direct access to independent wages, which contributes to their economic and social independence. This highlights the importance of autonomy in relation to gender dynamics – in particular, how and to whom earnings are paid – in orienting people's livelihood decisions along a range of informal labour arrangements, from petty commodity production (e.g. coal peddling) to wage labour (e.g. truck loading).

Chapter 5 focuses on a different group of coal peddlers in Karampot: the village's non-native, non-Santal households, who belong to other tribal and low-caste groups. It traces their migration stories to Karampot and the reasons that led them to settle in the village, and examines their circumstances in Karampot vis-à-vis those of coal-peddling Santals. The chapter elucidates the ways in which non-Santals' lives are marked by even greater precarity, which is related to their landless status in the village. It thus addresses land ownership as an important axis of inequality in Karampot, and reflects on its significance in connection to both labour and dispossession. First, through fulfilling Santals' basic food needs, agricultural land makes it more possible for them to save – even if modestly – from peddling coal. Non-Santals, conversely, find it more difficult to earn from coal peddling beyond the subsistence level, and thus migrate temporarily to work outside of Karampot in order to augment their income.

Second, ownership of land means that in case of displacement by mining – which Karampot residents believe is ultimately inevitable – Santals could be eligible for

employment in the colliery as per CCL's compensation policy. Land, in such a context, assumes new prospective value as a commodity that could be 'exchanged' for employment in the future. Non-Santals' landlessness, by contrast, means that in the event of displacement they are unlikely to be able to benefit from any land-related compensation offered by the company. Anticipating their eventual expulsion from Karampot, non-Santals thus seek to secure land for themselves elsewhere to live on and cultivate, in order to ensure the reproduction of their households in the future. Compared to landed Santals, non-Santals' landlessness therefore translates not only into enhanced precarity in labour but also in space and time, and produces a fractured and uncertain spatiotemporal experience.

Chapter 6 addresses formal employment in the colliery, by turning our gaze to Karampot's minority of CCL-employed households. It describes how their employment has been attained, and the ways in which it has allowed them to pursue and emulate middle-class norms and ways of life: in lifestyle and consumption, children's education and life chances, and household gender relations. The chapter explores the resultant process of class differentiation in Karampot between employed and non-employed villagers, which has emerged not only at the level of the community but also within households. Alongside land ownership, this constitutes the second – and primary – axis of inequality in the village. At the same time, though, the chapter illuminates the sense of precarity experienced by employed Santals – despite their current privileged position – about their households' ability to reproduce their newfound status in the next generations. It thereby illustrates how class as a corollary of public sector employment can be perceived as both precarious and temporal, especially for those who have only recently entered this kind of employment. Finally, the chapter considers the moral critique that new socioeconomic and class disparities, and wealth display by CCL-employed Santals, have evoked from other villagers, and the ways in which these disparities impinge on community solidarity and values of egalitarianism.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the politics of dispossession and protest. Chapter 7 reconstructs the history of dispossession and displacement of Dharutar – from which most CCL-employed Santals in Karampot originally hail – to elucidate in more depth the ways by which these Santals have gained their jobs. In particular, the chapter

details the complex process by which some of Dharutar's inhabitants have attained compensatory employment following the village's displacement in 2010, and the crucial intermediary role played in this process by Budhram – the local, JMM-affiliated Santal *neta*. I consider Budhram's structurally and morally ambiguous position between villagers and Pandu Project, and the contradictory outcomes of his brokerage. On the one hand, Budhram's intermediation was successful in extracting compensatory jobs for a relatively large number of people – especially at a time in which public sector employment had been curtailed, and CCL's compensation scheme diluted. But on the other hand, Budhram's brokerage has cemented his own political power and given rise to a new form of political clientelism around access to colliery-related benefits. Budhram's perceived collaboration with CCL has rendered him corrupt in the eyes of villagers, and contributed to a sense of disillusionment about the immoral conduct of Santal *netas* like him. Budhram's story thus complicates common narratives of politics around mining and dispossession by illustrating the potentially fine line between political agitation and co-option, and more generally between activism and self-interested politics.

Chapter 8 brings to the fore the issue of resistance, or rather lack thereof, in relation to Pandu Project. Drawing on findings from previous chapters, it examines more directly the politics that have accompanied and followed mining and dispossession in Dharutar and Karampot, characterised not by opposition but acquiescence. While there is certainly a sense of discontent among many villagers – about the toll of mining on their living environment, scarce economic opportunities, and conduct of their *netas* – they have been generally unable to parlay it into protest. The chapter argues that this is mainly the result of two processes. First, intra-community differentiation, which has corroded political and labour solidarities. And second, the accumulation of political power locally by Budhram – as an outcome of his interrelationship with CCL – which has left villagers feeling politically disempowered. These two processes in conjunction have acted to constrict the possibility of potentially more inclusive and radical types of protest around Pandu Project, which could include those villagers left out of any compensatory colliery benefits.

Chapter 9 concludes by restating the thesis's main arguments, and drawing the theoretical relevance of the findings for other contexts.

II. Karampot

It was in 1970 that coal mining first arrived in the vicinity of Karampot – then a village of about 70 households, engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture and casual wage labour. Gradually expanding, mining increasingly enveloped Karampot's surroundings, and its effects on the village and its environs became more pronounced. As background to the chapters that follow, which explore the consequences of these effects for different villagers, the current chapter sketches the history of Karampot up until the period of fieldwork. In doing so, it seeks to place Karampot within two interconnected historical contexts, which provide the historical framing for the thesis's ethnographic material. The first of these is the history of Santals in Chotanagpur, the geographical region in which Jharkhand is located; the second is the history of India's coal mining industry, and its interaction with Santal and other *adivasi* communities. Two aspects of Karampot's history are emphasised in particular. First, before the arrival of mining Karampot was a village with relatively muted inequalities, where agriculture was a dominant but insufficient form of livelihood. Second, like other Santal villages in the region, Karampot has a history of involvement in political protest activities, which are embedded within a longer history of Santal peasant activism in Chotanagpur.



Figure 3: Jharkhand, India (source: www.indiastates.in/)

Karampot before mining

Karampot, according to village elders, was established in the late 19th century. It lay in Hazaribagh district,³⁶ then part of the Bengal Presidency Division of the British Raj, in the Chotanagpur region of eastern India. Once densely covered with jungles,

³⁶ In 2007, the village became part of the newly-carved Ramgarh district.

Chotanagpur had long been populated by various *adivasi* communities. Central among these were the Santals – one of India's largest tribes – who had migrated to Chotanagpur from different parts of India, and set to clear the forests for cultivation and settlement (Cotton et al. 1909b: 325; Dalton 1892: 206; Elwin 1943; Lister 1917; Sifton 1917). According to the local tale – and in line with the general pattern of how new *adivasi* villages were created (ibid.: 72) – Karampot was founded by a Santal by the name of Ratu Manjhi, who had travelled to Hazaribagh from a neighbouring district in search of new cultivable land. Having located a suitable tract of jungle for clearing and taken the necessary omens, he began reclaiming the land, and called his sisters and brothers-in-law to join him in the task. More kinsmen and -women soon followed, and in 1909 the new small village of Karampot was included in the first-ever settlement survey of the district, conducted by the colonial authorities.

Much of Hazaribagh district, in that period, was under the control of the Ramgarh *raja* – an aristocratic Hindu *zamindar* (landlord) who collected taxes from cultivators on behalf of the colonial state, as part of what is known as the *zamindari* system or Permanent Settlement. The *zamindari* system had been introduced in Chotanagpur by the British Raj in the 18th century for the purpose of tax and revenue collection, which was the colonial government's primary objective in the region (Devalle 1992; Schwerin 1976). The *zamindari* system imposed substantial economic pressures on *adivasi* farmers across Chotanagpur. Agriculture in the region was entirely monsoon-dependent and without irrigation, and mostly limited to the cultivation of a single rice crop and some vegetables and pulses. When the crop failed, *adivasis* would fall back on the gathering of forest products, which alongside farming were central to their subsistence (Corbridge 1993; Datta Majumdar 1956; Devalle 1992; Elwin 1943; Schwerin 1976; Sifton 1917: 5).³⁷

The *zamindari* system was essentially an exploitative landholding system, which ignored *adivasis'* customary land rights in Chotanagpur and subjected them to high rent charges by *zamindars* (Corbridge 1993; Devalle 1992; Schwerin 1976; Sharma 2005). This made it difficult for *adivasis* to make ends meet and sustain their

³⁷ Forests were also important for cultural and religious reasons: they are the residence of village spirits, who are propitiated in annual rituals (Roy 1912).

traditional land- and forest-based economy.³⁸ Many were obliged to borrow from moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest rates, and were driven into a cycle of debt (Culshaw & Archer 1945; Datta 1988 [1940]; Datta Maajumdar 1956; Schwerin 1976). The *zamindari* system, therefore, led to considerable pauperisation of Chotanagpur's *adivasi* peasantry (Sharma 2005). One outcome of this pauperisation was outmigration – notably to the tea garden of Assam (Badgaiyan 1994: 177; Weiner 1988 [1978]: 161) but also, as we shall see, to the coalfields of Bengal and Bihar, where new collieries were being opened (Heuzé 1996: 244; Prakash 2001).

After Independence in 1947, the new Indian government sought to eliminate the intermediary role of *zamindars* between the state and peasants, and abolish the *zamindari* system. Karampot and the Jharkhand region within Chotanagpur had by then become part of the state of Bihar, where this was achieved through the 1950 Bihar Land Reforms Act. The legislation made farmers into the owners of the land they had cultivated – known as *raity* (or tenancy) land – paying a yearly tax to the state. All non-tenancy land – known as *gair majurwa* (or deedless) land – was transferred to the control of the government (Patel 1954: 464-465).

In Karampot, while a small number of households belonging to the village's original lines of settlers had a somewhat larger amount of land, there were generally no salient landholding disparities, and most households worked modest agricultural plots that were no larger than three acres in size. Indeed, like in other predominantly *adivasi* villages, not subject to the stark caste hierarchies that characterise the Indian plains (Levien 2013b; Shah & Lerche 2017; Shah 2018a), Santals in Karampot reproduced themselves under generally more egalitarian conditions.³⁹

³⁸ *Adivasi* communities' access to forests, too, became restricted through a series of colonial conservation laws – notably the 1878 Indian Forest Act – which prohibited them from utilising forest resources (Corbridge 1993; George 2014).

³⁹ As Shah (2018a) importantly notes, this is not to argue that there was no hierarchy among Santals (or other *adivasi* communities, for the matter). Around Karampot, for example, as I describe in Chapter 7, a selected Santal family was put in charge of tax collection by the Ramgarh *rāja*, thereby becoming like a local *zamindari* family. Still, compared to rural caste society, *adivasi* communities have displayed "relatively egalitarian values" that have left them "comparably free from unequal social divisions" (ibid.: 227).

Santal egalitarian characteristics were displayed not only through relatively equal distribution of land and minimal economic differences between households, but also in several other domains. First, in Santal as well as other *adivasi* communities in Jharkhand (e.g. Shah 2010), there existed a mutual aid system of (non-monetised) labour exchange known as *madaiti*, in which households helped each other to sow and harvest fields, and build and maintain earthen houses. Second, traditional Santal authorities like the *manjhi haram* (village headman) were selected by villagers not according to the size of their land or their status, but according to their presumed ability to mediate in village disputes.⁴⁰ Third, like in other *adivasi* communities (Shah 2018a), Santal women enjoyed relative gender equality, and both sexes worked outside the household – not only in the fields but also in casual wage labour.

Indeed, agricultural plots were facing increasing demographic pressure, did not always produce sufficient grains for the whole year, and none – including the few larger ones that belonged to households from the village's original lineages – provided any marketable surplus. To generate income, villagers thus had to seek wage labour in the informal economy outside the village, both in its surroundings (for example in construction) and through seasonal labour migration (for example to work in brick kilns). When the mines arrived, Santals were therefore keen to take up the local work opportunities that these offered.

The advent of mining

From private mines to nationalisation

Mining entered the lives of Santals in Karampot in 1970, when a number of small private underground collieries – owned by higher-caste Hindus from neighbouring Bihar and West Bengal – were established in several nearby villages. In need of labour, these collieries drew Santals from Karampot and the area to work, at piece-rates, as coal cutters and carriers. In this, Karampot villagers joined a long history of Santal interaction with mining activities, which in other parts of Chotanagpur had commenced much earlier.

⁴⁰ I discuss the current state of the *madaiti* system in Karampot in Chapter 6, and that of traditional Santal authorities in Chapter 7.

The first recorded discovery of coal in Chotanagpur – and India altogether – dates back to 1774, when two British employees of the East India Company were granted a lease by the British government to start mining in the Raniganj coalfield, in today's West Bengal and about 125 miles east of Karampot (CEMPDIL 1984; George 2014; Lahiri-Dutt 2014a). The importance of coal and the power it could generate were recognised by the colonial regime from the very beginning. As Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (2014a) describes, coal was seen as a crucial engine for a modern industrial economy. Coal mining was the most prominent among the different industrial enterprises set up in India under colonial rule, commencing well before the first shipment of tea from Indian plantations arrived in Calcutta, in 1838; the first jute mill was opened, in 1873; and the first iron foundry was built, in 1874 (ibid.)

It wasn't until 1850, however, that the coal industry took off in earnest, owing to the opening of the East Indian Railway, which connected the Ranijang coalfields to industrial Calcutta (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a). This led to a substantial hike in both demand and production, and between 1890 and 1920 the number of coal companies in eastern India – predominantly British⁴¹ – mushroomed from six to 227 (ibid.; George 2014; Seth 1940). The expanding mining industry was, from the outset, geared primarily towards the demands of India's industrial and metropolitan centres. In Chotanagpur, it constituted an industrial enclave that did not contribute to the economic and social development of the immediate rural vicinity, where the conditions in agriculture had become increasingly difficult (Prakash 2001; Rothermund 1976a, 1976b, 1976c). The only link that the industry did develop with the surrounding countryside was the absorption of local unskilled labourers into low-paid casual piece-work. Recruited through contractors (De Haan 1995: 58-59; Simeon 1999; Simmons 1976b), colliery labourers in this period came mostly from villages and districts around the coalfields (Rothermund 1976a; Sifton 1917: 17; Simmons 1976a).

Faced with land scarcity and low agricultural productivity, Santals were among the first communities to be drawn into the new economic activity of mining, and quickly

⁴¹ There were a handful of Indian businessmen involved in coal mining operations; the most famous of these was Dwarakanath Tagore, who in 1834 established the mining company Carr, Tagore and Co. (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a).

became the most preponderant group among coal cutters and carriers (Deshpande 1946; Prakash 2001; Read 1931; Seth 1940; Simeon 1995, 1996). Mining managers considered them "stupid" but also "hardy" and "strongly built", and especially good pick-miners (ibid.: 97; Deshpande 1946; Seth 1940: 24). Most Santals were joined by their families in the coalfields, and descended together into the mines: the men did the cutting and the women worked as carriers and loaders, often with their children (Cotton et al. 1909a; Seth 1940; Simmons 1976b).

Like other workers, Santals would stay in the coalfields for a few weeks or months at a time. With no permanent employment on offer, and the work being not only strenuous but sometimes dangerous, they would return to their villages every so often, and certainly during the agricultural season to till the soil (Ghosh 1977; Kumaramangalam 1973; Labour Enquiry Commission 1896: 11; Read 1931: 107; Seth 1940: 24). This increasingly became a challenge for collieries in terms of establishing a stable workforce (Heuzé 1996: 245; Ghosh 1977). The growth of the industry, in parallel, meant that local labour supply no longer sufficed (Rothermund 1976a). Consequently, from around 1860 additional workers were recruited from other areas. Large numbers of Hindu labour migrants started flocking to Chotanagpur, and progressively took over the place of Santals and other local labourers in the mines. Some of these migrants gradually became engaged in more mechanical and supervisory work; Santals, by contrast, who were comparatively uneducated and unskilled, generally continued to occupy the lowest manual positions (ibid.; De Haan 1995: 58-59; Lahiri-Dutt 2003; Simeon 1996).

As Lahiri-Dutt (2014a) writes, the image of coal as a driver of industrial progress persisted in post-Independence India, and became firmly associated with the country's national project of modernisation.⁴² Coal was conferred an iconic status as the fuel for the massive steel and iron plants that Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, regarded as the temples of the new state (Parry 2003; Strümpell 2014), and became a key element in his vision of industrial development (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a; Read 1931: 105). Coal has indeed served as a crucial source of energy in postcolonial India, and is today responsible for two-thirds of the country's

⁴² Elana Shever (2012) has discussed the similar status of oil in Argentina.

electricity generation (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a). The industry's enclave pattern, too, has largely persisted: India's coal-bearing tracts have continued to operate as a resource hinterland that primarily serves the demands of the urban-industrial nexus in more developed parts of the country (ibid.; Devalle 1992).

Despite the importance of coal in postcolonial India, the mining industry was suffering from a number of serious problems – including unsound mining methods, deficient safety measures, mismanagement, and inadequate labour practices (Kumaramangalam 1973; Lahiri-Dutt 2014a). The many small private collieries, in particular, were ill-equipped and uneconomic, with adverse working conditions and violations of safety regulations (ibid.; Ghosh 1977). On these grounds, various commissions and committees⁴³ had since the 1920s attempted to set guidelines for the extraction of coal and working conditions in collieries in order to regulate the industry. All had stressed the need for state ownership of mines, but their recommendations had been either disregarded or shelved. In the 1970s, however, following pressure from both trade unions and the Communist Party, the idea to nationalise the industry gained sufficient momentum (CEMPDIL 1984; Kumaramangalam 1973; Lahiri-Dutt 2014a).

Coal mining was consequently brought under public ownership in 1973, with the legislation of the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act. CIL was established soon thereafter. The company currently controls seven coal-producing subsidiaries – including CCL in Jharkhand – and is considered among the most important public sector undertaking in India.⁴⁴ It is today the sixth-largest coal mining enterprise in the world (PWC 2017), with 352,000 employees and 471 mines in eight Indian states, which contribute 81 percent of India's total coal production (CIL 2014).⁴⁵

⁴³ The Coalfields Committee (1920), Coal Mining Committee (1936), and The Mahindra Committee (1946) – to name just a few.

⁴⁴ In 2011, CIL was awarded a Maharatna (Precious Gem) status – the highest category of public sector industries in the country.

⁴⁵ The remaining percentage comes from captive mining leaseholders, following a modification of the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act in 1993. Under it, authorised leaseholders can extract coal for a particular end-use in a number of specified industries (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a; *Mining Weekly* 2016).

With nationalisation, mine workers became public sector employees – with secure jobs, regular salaries, and social benefits and protection (George 2014). Several authors have pointed out that nationalisation only intensified the crowding out of *adivasi* workers from collieries by increasing numbers of migrant labourers, who were drawn to the new improved terms and conditions of mining work (Devalle 1992; Heuzé 1996: 245; Sengupta 1979: 34-35). In Karampot and the area, however, as I describe in Chapter 6, a portion of the Santals who had worked in the private collieries were indeed absorbed, in the 1970s, into the regular workforce of CCL – the local subsidiary of the new national coal company.

Mining in Karampot

In Karampot itself, a number of small private underground mines were established around 1975 by a Bengali Hindu businessman. While nationalisation had officially already taken place, the actual process of state takeover of the coal sector occurred not in one sweep but over a several years. During this period, some private collieries – like in Karampot – continued operating under the radar, usually through informal arrangements with local politicians and authorities. The remnants of these private mines are still visible around the village, in the form of empty mining pits or the occasional emanation of smoke from cracks in the ground – a reminder of the underground fires caused by unsafe mining methods.

After a couple of years of operation, and with the process of nationalisation moving ahead, Karampot's private mines eventually shut down. They did, however, leave an impact on the village in two important ways. First, the private mines attracted to Karampot large numbers of non-Santal labourers from neighbouring districts. Mostly *adivasi* Mundas and Oraons, and low-caste Nayaks, these labour migrants arrived in Karampot in search of work in mining, and many of them – as I detail in Chapter 5 – wound up staying in the village with their families. Both they and most Santals in the village soon became engaged in a new local economic activity that had sprung out of the private mines. Indeed, the second lasting effect of these mines in Karampot was to indirectly give rise to a new form of informal coal-based livelihood.

Despite such signs of liberalisation, private companies are expected to play only a limited role in the Indian coal sector in the foreseeable future (Lahiri-Dutt 2007; Rakshit 2018).

While private mining operations in Karampot had to cease, the disused underground pits remained largely accessible; taking advantage of this, villagers began descending into the abandoned mines and cut coal in order to sell it themselves in the immediate area, where coal was in high demand as cooking fuel. Peddling of coal – first from the old private mines and later on from Pandu Project, to which I turn next – would gradually become the most common way to make a living in Karampot, and is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Pandu Project

1982 saw another consequential moment in Karampot's interaction with mining, with the arrival of a new, state-owned opencast colliery in its direct proximity. The large colliery, christened Pandu Project after the name of a nearby village, was established just over a mile from Karampot, adjoining the neighbouring Santal hamlet of Dharutar.⁴⁶ To make way for the project – including potential future expansions – the state government had in 1964 acquired over 3,352 acres of land from seven villages: 805 acres of *raity* (tenancy) land; 1,134 acres of *gair majurwa* (deedless) land; and 1,413 acres of (government-owned) forest land. This included not only grazing and forest land surrounding Karampot, but also the entire territory of Dharutar.

Since the colonial period, coal mining in India has been supported by legal provisions that secure its primacy over all other land uses (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a). The 1894 Land Acquisition Act (LAA), which allows for the expropriation of land for any industrial or infrastructure project serving a 'public purpose', has provided mining companies with practically unlimited access to village tracts for coal extraction (Corbridge 1993). Coal mining is further buttressed by additional specific legislation, namely the 1957 Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act (CBAA). An offshoot of the LAA, the CBAA applies specifically to coal-bearing areas, and is intended to enable "the acquisition by the State of unworked land containing or likely to contain coal deposits" in order to "establish ... greater public control over the coal mining industry

⁴⁶ Pandu Project was constructed within what is known as the West Bokaro coalfield, first surveyed in 1867 by the Geological Survey of India and then again in 1963 by the Indian Bureau of Mines to confirm the potentiality of its coal resources (CMPDIL 1987; Xar et al. 1962).

and its development" (Government of India 1957: 2).⁴⁷ Together, the LAA and CBAA effectively give the state the power to seize any property if extractable coal is found underneath it (Lahiri-Dutt 2014a, 2017b). Indeed, since India's independence mining has been one of the main causes of land acquisition and dispossession – with Chotanagpur, abundant in this natural resource, being particularly affected (Ekka 2011; Fernandes 2007; George 2014).

It has been common practice for state governments to acquire more land than was necessary for forthcoming mining operations, and complete the acquisition much before actually taking possession of the land (George 2014). Accordingly, while the land for Pandu Project had been acquired in 1964, the construction of the colliery began only in 1982, and it was then that Dharutar households were required to relinquish their agricultural *raity* plots. As per CIL policy, each household who lost at least three acres of land received, as compensation, an employment position in the project. As I discuss in Chapter 7, this is the way that CIL, from its establishment and roughly up until the mid-1990s, sought to recompense villagers for dispossession (Fernandes 2007; Herbert & Lahiri-Dutt 2014) – in line with the Nehruvian vision of industrial employment generation in the public sector (Parry 2003, 2013a; Parry & Strümpell 2008; Sanchez & Strümpel 2014). Despite the dispossession of agricultural *raity* land, though, Dharutar's residential site – as well as patches of *gair majurwa* land – remained intact. Life in the village therefore continued but only until 2008, when a second phase of dispossession by the mine was set in motion, to which I return below.

Politics and resistance

The 1980s were also a time of political turmoil in the Jharkhand region, much of which had been swept up by a new political movement led by the JMM (Devalle 1992; Singh 1982). In Karampot and Dharutar, too, as I describe in Chapter 7, some villagers in this period became involved in the JMM's political activities, and memories of the movement are still prevalent. Led by a charismatic Santal activist by the name of Shibu Soren, the JMM had emerged in 1972 against a backdrop of

⁴⁷ The LAA was amended in 2013 to allow for "just and fair compensation" to families whose land has been requisitioned (Government of India 2013: 6). The CBAA, however, is exempt from the application of this new act (George 2014).

brewing *adivasi* agrarian unrest. In different parts of Jharkhand, alienation of tribal land by non-*adivasi* landlords and moneylenders had persisted, and *adivasi* livelihoods and identities were believed to be under threat (Corbridge 1993; Devalle 1992; Shah 2010). In response to this, the JMM launched an organised militant resistance movement, accompanied by a campaign for a separate, autonomous Jharkhand state (Panchbhai 1982; Prakash 2001).

In its activities, the JMM drew on and revived a history of *adivasi* resistance in Chotanagpur to incursions by both outsider Hindus and the administration, in which Santals had played a major role. Already in the 19th century, the introduction of the *zamindari* system had spurred a series of *adivasi* revolts, launched against rapacious Hindu landlords and moneylenders, and the colonial regime. Among these uprisings, the Santal rebellion of 1855 – known as the *Hul*, or liberation movement – had been one of the most momentous. Like other *adivasi* groups, Santals had become increasingly disgruntled by the high rents demanded by *zamindars*, accompanied by other exploitative practice such as imposing additional levies and labour dues, taking over the most productive land for their own cultivation, and ousting recalcitrant peasants from the village. Moneylenders, too, on which many Santals had become dependent for loans, had demanded inflated interest rates and, in case of inability to pay, bonded labour work from Santals and eventually their land (Devalle 1992; Schwerin 1976; Sinha 1990). The colonial authorities, on their part, had largely ignored *adivasis'* plights, and taken no significant steps to address them (Panchbhai 1982; Devalle 1992).

In response to this situation, two Santal brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu, in 1855 assembled 10,000 of their tribesmen and called for a revolt. When soon thereafter the British police tried to arrest the two brothers, violence erupted. Santals pillaged and set ablaze the houses of *zamindars* and moneylenders, and attacked and killed dozens of them as well as several British officers. The rebellion went on for a few months, compelling the colonial regime to enact martial law in November 1855. It was eventually quelled by the British army in a particularly severe manner, which involved the killing of thousands of Santals and burning down of whole Santal villages (Devalle 1992; Dhagamwar 2006; Sinha 1990).

The *Hul*, it has been argued, was grounded not only in ethnic but also class solidarity, as is evidenced by the inclusion in the movement of non-Santal communities: the *Hul* was fought not only against the erosion of traditional Santal economies and identities, but more generally against land dispossession and peasant exploitation (Devalle 1992; Panchbhai 1982; Sinha 1990). Despite its eventual suppression, the rebellion managed to unsettle the region and challenge the authority of the colonial government. Together with the Munda rebellion – a subsequent tribal protest movement led by Birsa Munda in 1899 – it forced the British authorities to acknowledge *adivasis'* predicament, and introduce measures to address these in order to prevent further insurgencies (Dhagamwar 2006).

In particular, in an attempt to curb the alienation of *adivasi* land, the British regime in 1908 passed the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA) (Rothermund. 1976d; Sifton 1917; Sinha 1990; Upadhy 2005).⁴⁸ The CNTA, which is still in force today, aimed to make tribal *raity* land inalienable by prohibiting its transfer from *adivasis* to non-*adivasis* (Upadhy 2005). While this was an important legal step against *adivasi* land alienation, scholars have pointed out that the actual effect of the CNTA was actually limited: much land had already been lost, and the underlying socioeconomic structure – namely, *adivasi* exploitation by *zamindars* and dependence on moneylenders – did not change significantly (Devalle 1992; Panchbhai 1982; Prakash 2001: 89; Sen 1982: Chapter 5). Furthermore, and more relevantly to the Karampot area, legislation to safeguard *adivasi* land did not protect it from requisition for collieries: the CNTA includes sections that retain the state's prerogative to acquire *adivasi* land for public purposes, including mining. Ultimately, it is the LAA and CBAA that take precedence over the protective CNTA (George 2014).

While the *Hul* did not bring about substantial relief for Santals, it did serve as an inspiration for future movements such as the JMM's, in which Santals were once again at the forefront (Devalle 1992; Sen 1997: Chapter 4). JMM-organised protest

⁴⁸ In addition, a number of areas with a large Santal population, in Chotanagpur's northeast, were made into a new administrative division called the Santal Parganas, and placed under a separate and arguably more tolerant administration (Dalton 1892; Dhagamwar 2006; Sinha 1990). In 1949, the Santal Parganas Tenancy Act (SPTA) was legislated, applying the same principles of the CNTA specifically to the Santal Parganas (Rao 2005).

activities comprised large rallies and blockades that in the 1980s brought the region to a standstill (Corbridge 2010). They also included forcible harvesting – seizing crops from former Santal plots over which moneylenders had taken possession – which often ended in violent clashes with both moneylenders and the police (Panchbhai 1982).

The JMM, moreover, was not only pro-*adivasi* but also specifically anti-mining: it was supported by and joined forces with A.K. Roy, a trade unionist and former member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), who was a prominent anti-mining activist. Roy had been engaged in a struggle against collieries in Hazaribagh and Dhanbad, the neighbouring district, around unjust labour practices and inadequate compensation for dispossessed farmers (Devalle 1992; Prakash 2001). His efforts to establish a broad movement that would include both colliery workers and peasants led him to strike an alliance with the JMM, which resulted in a unique class-based worker-peasant alliance (Devalle 1992; Panchbhai 1982; Prakash 2001). Both mining and displacement, then, were main sites of JMM activity, and its members have since been considered *adivasi* activists on both these fronts. This is the backdrop against which I will discuss current Santal JMM *netas* in the Karampot area, in Chapters 7 and 8.

The JMM's militant approach in the 1980s mobilised large numbers of people and earned widespread popular support (Devalle 1992). Later on, however, it transformed into a political party, and in the 1990s became involved in several parliamentary corruption scandals that severely sullied its reputation (Prakash 2001; Tillin 2013: Chapter 3). In the end, rather than the JMM it was the Hindu nationalist Bharatya Janata Party (BJP), which had gained ground in the region, that led the separation of Jharkhand from Bihar in 2000 (Prakash 2001; Shah 2010). In the Karampot area, nonetheless, the JMM is still the dominant party,⁴⁹ controlled primarily by local Santal *netas* that we will get to know in the subsequent ethnography.

⁴⁹ Unlike in more remote and forested parts of Jharkhand, where Naxalite factions have been known to be more active – and, in particular, rely on extortion of extractive projects (Shah 2018b) – in the more central area of the state in which my fieldwork took place their presence is virtually negligible.

Displacement

2008 marked the most recent – for the time being – phase of mining-induced dispossession in Karampot's vicinity. In that year, in order to excavate a new opencast pit, Pandu Project initiated the displacement of Dharutar, which would occur gradually over the next couple of years. By 2010, the village had been flattened to the ground and transformed into a large quarry. Of Dharutar's 118 households, 28 relocated to neighbouring Karampot, effectively mixing the population of the two Santal villages.

Dharutar's displacement was followed by another distribution of compensatory jobs. This time, however, the process was very different than in 1982. First, the land that was expropriated was not *raity* land – all of which had already been dispossessed in 1982 – but *gair majurwa* land. While this land had been used informally by Dharutar villagers for decades, it did not formally belong to them, and as such did not make them eligible for compensation from CCL. Second, policy changes in the public sector that had taken place since 1982 made it more difficult for CCL (and other public sector industries) to offer employment to the dispossessed. While Nehruvian planning had prioritised employment generation over profit in public sector industries, the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s introduced new financial efficiency demands that dictated significant downsizing of the permanent public sector workforce (Bear 2015; Dhananjayan & Shanti 2007; Parry 2013a). This resulted within CCL (and other CIL subsidiaries) in a notable decline in the number of available jobs, which in turn constricted the company's ability to offer employment posts as compensation for land loss (Bennett & McDowell 2012; Bhengara 1996; CCL 2008:1; Chakroborty & Narayan 2014; Fernandes 2007; Lahiri-Dutt 1999, 2014a).

Gaining compensatory jobs following Dharutar's displacement, therefore, presented a considerable challenge, and required close intervention and manoeuvring by local Santal *netas*. I recount, in the later chapters of the thesis, the intermediated process by which some Santal displacees eventually managed to attain CCL jobs, and the consequences this has had not only for them but in Karampot more broadly.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide the regional and historical context for the findings of the subsequent ethnographic chapters. Two aspects in particular should be borne in mind. First, before the advent of mining Karampot was a relatively egalitarian village, without pronounced inequalities in agrarian assets or overall socioeconomic conditions. Agriculture was a central, but not exclusive, form of livelihood, for the small size of plots and absolute dependence on rain compelled local Santals to seek informal wage labour work outside the village.

Second, both Karampot and Dharutar have a degree of experience with collective protest, through the involvement of villagers in the 1980s in the political resistance movement led by the JMM. This movement itself was embedded within a longer history of Santal peasant activism in the region, stretching back to colonial rule, in resisting dispossession and exploitation by both Hindu outsiders and the state. These two factors – Karampot's pre-existing agrarian milieu and political history – form the background for the local transformations generated through the encounter between Pandu Project and villagers. They also render more striking the processes of intra-community differentiation and political co-option and acquiescence that ensued, which are charted in the following ethnographic chapters.

III. Coal peddling

The alarm from my phone went off at 3.30 in the morning. Raising myself from the planks of the bare wooden bed, I peeked outside the small unfinished brick room, still lacking a door, and saw Maharam already sitting outside by the little coal-fired cookstove, warming himself against the November chill. A minute or two later his wife, Maiko, wrapped in shawls and carrying a wide empty metal bowl on her head, appeared at the entrance to the room, making sure I was awake and ready to go. Maharam picked up his flashlight and pickaxe, and we left the house's courtyard. The dark village lane took us to the end of the cluster of houses, about half a mile down the road. Leaving the village behind, we crossed a narrow stream and proceeded on a path that cut through rice and grazing fields and then entered a forest of *sal* trees. Some distance ahead of us, through the thick vegetation, I noticed the fitful gleams of other torches, carried by villagers who were heading to the same place we were. Yet farther ahead, and despite the early hour, the thrum of vehicles and machinery from the mine – our destination – could already be heard.

After a short while, we emerged out of the forest and into a clearing, dotted with dome-shaped piles of coal. A few were burning, glaring through the dark moonless surrounding, and we stopped next to one of them to take a break, joining a small group of villagers who had arrived before us. More kept trickling in, and there were soon about 20 of us, both men and women, sitting by the fire and chattering. As the first signs of dusk appeared, we got up and began heading towards the mine, now just 100 or so feet ahead. A descending dirt path at the end of the forest clearing, covered in coal dust, led us to one of the sidewalls of the opencast pit. Maharam and the other men, using their pickaxes, began chipping coal from the seam. Maiko and the other women collected the fallen pieces of coal from the ground into their metal bowls, and carried them on their heads to the top of the dirt path. Each woman dropped the lumps of coal into a small heap, returned to the mine to refill her bowl, and back again.

After about 45 minutes of work, a spotlight appeared on the other side of the pit, where one of the colliery's security check-posts was, accompanied by aggressive shouting in our direction. This apparently meant it was time to scoot. Quickly picking up what they could – the women filling up one last bowl, the men carrying larger coal

chunks in their hands – the group climbed back up and out of the mine. Next, Maiko, Maharam, and the others started moving the coal they had heaped at the top of the quarry to another, larger pile in the adjacent forest clearing – like the one by which we had earlier sat. Maintaining its dome-like shape, Maiko and Maharam carefully arranged the new pieces of coal onto the pile, which consisted of coal they had gleaned the previous mornings. With this, their morning task was done; it was time to go back to the village, cook breakfast, and rest. The day's work, however, was not yet completed. Maiko and Maharam would return to their pile in the afternoon to ignite it, in order to coke the coal and make it usable. Once it was ready, usually the next day, they would pack the coked coal into large woven plastic sacks, which Maharam would load on his bicycle. Pushing the bicycle, he would then take the coal to sell on the highway abutting the entrance to the village.

The sky had now been washed with dim morning light, and the space around us had become noticeably busier: men and women, old and young – including teenagers and a few children – were labouring around their coal piles and bicycles. We began the walk back to the village, following the same forest path we had followed in the dark a few hours earlier.



Figure 4: Maharam and Maiko arranging their coal pile

On the other side of the village, an hour or so later, the gathering of coal was still in full swing. Unlike where Maiko and Maharam live, here coal is gleaned not from the opencast pit but from one of the mine's coal storage depot yards,⁵⁰ to which people from this part of Karampot have better access. Taking advantage of the fact that the security guards had yet to arrive, a small squadron of women was striding along the dirt trails that meander between the depot's mounds of stored coal. Among them was Puja, one of the village women I would sometimes accompany to the depot, who was picking up pieces of coal into her bowl from the bottom of one of the mounds. The patch of land just nearby, where villagers' piles of coal waited to be coked, was also bustling with activity: coal was being carried and unloaded, coking piles arranged, coal packed into sacks, sacks loaded on bicycles. With all the people and hustle and bustle around, I was reminded how another coal peddler from the village had once remarked that going to collect coal in the depot is like "going to the bazaar". Labouring with coal in Karampot – gathering, coking, transporting, and selling – never seemed to stop.

*

Like the large majority of people in Karampot, Maharam and Maiko – who are Santals – and Puja – who is a Nayak, one of Jharkhand's lower castes – depend for a living primarily on peddling coal that they obtain illicitly from Pandu Project. Jobs in the project are scarce and require higher levels of skills and education than *adivasis* typically possess,⁵¹ and casual wage labour opportunities – both in the colliery and surrounding area – are limited. Under these circumstances, 85 percent of Karampot's households are regularly engaged in this informal and precarious form of petty commodity production.^{52,53} Coal peddling is carried out by both men and

⁵⁰ Pandu Project has two depot yards: the one to which Puja and other village women go to gather coal; and another one in which truck loading work takes place, as I describe in the next chapter.

⁵¹ Industrialisation and economic growth in India – as well as other parts of the global South (Ferguson 2013: 230; Li 2010: 73) – has not been accompanied by an increase in available jobs, especially for less-skilled labourers (Gupta 2010: Epilogue; Kannan & Raveendran 2009; Shah & Lerche 2017).

⁵² As I noted in the Introduction, in addition to peddling coal most villagers engage occasionally in casual wage labour in another of Pandu Project's depot yards, loading coal on trucks. I discuss this

women from a wide range of ages, from teenagers to people in their 50s. Many of those who do not peddle coal on a daily basis, too, do it occasionally whenever in need of cash. While agriculture still plays an important role in providing Santals' basic sustenance needs, it does not always provide sufficient grains for the whole year – and perhaps more importantly, does not generate any cash. In the absence of other work, peddling coal is what most Jorakaram villagers have come to depend on.⁵⁴

Gleaned out illegally from the interstices of mining operations, coal peddling is strenuous and backbreaking: a coal-filled metal bowl weighs roughly 66 pounds, while a loaded bicycle carries up to 330 pounds of this black substance. The image of women scavenging for coal, and of men pushing their cycles like "a line of ants struggling with food seemingly too big to be handled" (Lahiri-Dutt & Williams 2005: 8), readily conjures up a sense of finality. Indeed, those who have written about coal peddling have depicted it exclusively as a marginal subsistence activity, into which the poorest of the poor are forced in order to survive (Lahiri-Dutt & Williams 2005; Lahiri-Dutt et al. 2012; Sainath 1996: 145-147; Singh 2013).

A growing body of work in anthropology and related disciplines has been concerned with the related conditions of informality and precarity (e.g. Allison 2013; Denning 2010; Millar 2014; Munck 2013; Standing 2011, 2014) – precisely of the kind that coal peddling would appear to brutally epitomise. Much of this literature depicts these conditions as an unfortunate last resort. Yet such a conceptualisation of informal precarious work, Kathleen Millar (2014) has argued, fails to capture the variegated ways in which precarity is experienced by those engaged in it. In a similar

form of work in the next chapter. Other typical modest sources of income include, for example, selling home-brewed rice beer and *mahua* wine.

⁵³ I refer to coal peddling as petty commodity production since villagers do not only obtain the coal but also, through coking, produce the finished, sold 'product' (which is in fact coke rather than raw coal). On petty commodity production among India's labouring poor more generally, see Harriss-White (2010, 2012, 2014).

⁵⁴ While both Santals and non-Santals rely heavily on coal peddling, the discussion in this chapter is mostly in relation to the former. Unlike them, non-Santal coal peddlers are landless, and in addition to peddling coal engage in temporary labour migration outside the village, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

vein, in this chapter I show that while coal peddling is not, by any stretch, 'decent work' (ILO n.d.; Nizami & Prasad 2017) in the conventional sense of the term, it is perceived by villagers as a source not only of comparative livelihood stability but also, importantly, a relative degree of autonomy around labour.

At the same time, however, I wish to refrain from overstressing the 'liberatory' aspect of coal peddling and precarious work more generally. In her ethnographic account of *catadores* – a group of labouring poor who reclaim recyclables from a garbage dump on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro – Millar (2014) foregrounds the unexpected advantages of precarity, emphasising how this kind of work can be an "act of release" from waged capitalist structures (Millar 2014: 49). But such accounts, too, can overlook some of the diverse, contradictory meanings that precarious work can have for different people and in different contexts. As I show in this chapter, in Karampot the benefits of coal peddling are experienced and weighed by villagers in different ways based on their gender, generation, and position in the lifecycle; in relation to the present and the future; and vis-à-vis the possibility of formal sector employment. In particular, the advantages coal peddling offers are undermined by the cumulative toll that this physically taxing work takes on the body; by the eventual exhaustion of coal, which renders it unsustainable in the long term; and when compared to formal waged work – for example, in CCL – which is what villagers generally aspire to but most have been unable to access.

From private mines to Pandu Project

Coal peddling is a relatively new economic activity. It has its origins, as I noted in the previous chapter, in the private underground mines that had operated in Karampot for a limited period from about 1975. With nationalisation forging ahead, work in these private mines came to an end only a few years later; the underground pits, however, remained largely accessible, and villagers began descending into them to cut coal and sell it themselves. Babulal, one of the older coal peddlers in Karampot, was one of them. Having previously cut coal underground in private colliery in a neighbouring village, Babulal was already familiar with the work. He recalled how he would enter the dark, disused mines with a candle, pickaxe, and his bicycle, on which a jute sackcloth would be stretched to carry out the coal. After coking it, Babulal

would sell the coal to houses, tea shops, and restaurants in the immediate area – all of which use coal as a cooking fuel – as well as to informal petty coal brokers.

Obtaining coal underground was not only strenuous but also dangerous: there was the risk of underground fires and collapse, which according to local stories had caused a number of deaths in the private mines in nearby villages. The mines, Babulal described, were like long winding tunnels, and one had to go ever-deeper to reach the coal that was still left. The opening of Pandu Project, in this context, in 1982, presented Babulal and other villagers with an opportunity to attain coal for peddling relatively more easily. Compared to cutting coal in the depths of the underground pits, obtaining it from places like the depot yard (like Puja does) or even the seams of the opencast quarry (like Maharam and Maiko do) is less labourious, hazardous, and time-consuming.

Gleaning coal from Pandu Project is, however, illegal, which my interlocutors themselves well acknowledge.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, in Karampot and the area coal from CCL mines is gathered, coked, and sold daily and very much out in the open. Indeed, to my surprise, both CCL and the police seem, by and large, to turn a blind eye to this activity.⁵⁶ While the police are known to sometimes crack down on larger illegal mining operations (Lahiri-Dutt & Williams 2005),⁵⁷ coal peddling, which generally involves small-scale quantities of coal, is usually ignored by them. CCL, on its part, does deploy security guards to patrol the depot and other parts of the colliery in

⁵⁵ This is very different, for example, from Heuzé's description of the 'coal scavengers' in his field site in Dhanbad, who "regard the product to be a collective possession of natural origin and do not concern themselves with state laws" (1996: 229). Regarding coal peddling as illegal, on the other hand, as my interlocutors do, arguably reflects an internalisation of the long-established discourse in India of coal as a national resource. "Coal belongs to the government", coal peddlers told me, "so we have to take it without permission". But at the same time, coal peddlers do not perceive what they do as immoral: first, because peddling coal is done out of necessity and fulfils a basic subsistence need, and second, because 'stealing' from a large corporation like CCL is different than "stealing from someone's house".

⁵⁶ Dhagamwar et al. (2003: 66) have reported a similar situation around a state-owned colliery in Korba, Chhattisgarh.

⁵⁷ These include, for example, illegal artisanal village mines, which can be found in other parts of Jharkhand.

rotation, and these guards do normally stop the collection of coal by villagers whenever they encounter it. The moment the guards leave, however, coal gathering is resumed, without villagers ever getting into any serious trouble. As I described at the beginning of the chapter, for example, Maiko and Maharam did have to leave the quarry that early morning when spotted by the security guards; the next morning, though – and the ones thereafter – they returned, without any apparent consequences. This kind of dynamic is even more noticeable in the depot, where the interruption and resumption of coal collection take place in much shorter intervals. When women collected coal in the depot in the mornings, a guard would at a certain point usually show up and order them to leave. But after a short while, once the guard has left for another part of the colliery, the stream of women heading to the depot would resume as if nothing had happened.

There are several explanations for this overall tolerance by CCL of pilferage of coal by villagers. For example, as I expand on later on, the fact that coal from the depot is gathered by women effectively restricts the ability of the male guards to take any physical measures against them. But some of the guards I met – all non-*adivasi* – are in fact not unsympathetic towards villagers who have no choice but to glean coal to make a living. This approach extends to the CCL officers I spoke to, who also take a rather lenient approach towards coal peddlers. The common view among them is that villagers who live in CCL's mining areas pilfer coal not to "make a profit" but "to survive", and thus should not be treated harshly by the company. Such a stance is arguably related to CCL's ethos as a public sector enterprise rooted in the developmentalist Nehruvian period.

The company's approach, however, also stems from the wish to avoid agitation by villagers – especially in an area with a history of political resistance. Aware of this risk, a company officer told me, "CCL cannot afford to take any severe measures against poor people who collect coal". Not thwarting villagers' ability to peddle coal as a means of livelihood is thus also a way for CCL to assuage them, and deflect the danger of confrontation. In villagers' perception, nevertheless, the fear of a violent response to this illegal activity still lurks. This, as I show below, shapes the structuring of coal peddling work in different ways.

Villagers are, moreover, acutely aware of their reliance on Pandu Project for obtaining coal to peddle. While Maiko, Maharam, and others expressed different grievances about the mine – from the blasting that causes the walls of their mud houses to crack, to the coal dust that contaminates the air, to the enclosure of grazing and forest land surrounding the village – they feel highly dependent on the coal produced by the colliery. "If the mine closes", Maiko and Maharam told me, "we won't be able to survive".

The work process

The process of peddling coal consists of several stages. The first is getting hold of coal, which villagers do from either the opencast seams (like Maiko and Maharam) or the depot yard (like Puja) – depending on which part of the colliery they live closer to. In the first period of my fieldwork, villagers also gleaned coal from the overburden dump, sifting through the rocky waste material that was unloaded regularly by dumper trucks. After a few months, however, when coal extraction shifted to a different section of the quarry, the movement of these trucks stopped almost entirely. The dump consequently ceased to function as a coal collection site for villagers, leaving them with either the seams or depot yard.

The coal is carried in bowls, by women, and initially heaped at the edge of the quarry or depot. It is then taken by the women to form a larger, domed pile nearby, which is later ignited in order to coke the coal. This removes some of the coal's impurities, which prevents it from contaminating the food when used for cooking (Lahiri-Dutt & Williams 2005). There are two coking grounds in Karampot – one next to the quarry and another next to the depot – where each coking pile belongs to a particular household. Constructing such a pile requires about 50 bowls of coal, Puja told me, which can take up to a week to gather. The piles are set alight and left to burn for several hours, usually overnight, producing hefty clouds of smoke. Once the fire subsides, the piles are covered with coal dust – found abundantly on the soil around them – to reduce the entry of air. After a few more hours, the coal (or rather coke) is ready.



Figure 5: Women carrying coal from the depot yard



Figure 6: A woman covering her burning coking pile with coal dust

After cooling down, coal from the coking pile is packed into large woven plastic bags, normally used for cement. A coking pile contains enough coal to fill about 30 such bags, each with around 30kg of coal. Every five bags are loaded and attached, using ropes, to a bicycle. The bicycle is then pushed – by men and through the village's dirt lanes or forest paths – to the highway abutting Karampot's western edge. After

pushing the bicycle on the highway's shoulders for another mile or so, Karampot's coal peddlers reach their buyers.



Figure 7: Villagers loading their bicycle with coal



Figure 8: Villagers pushing their bicycles through the forest to the highway

Coal buyers are predominantly non-*adivasi*, and generally of two types: first, tea stalls and roadside restaurants owners, who use coal for cooking; and second, informal small-scale coal brokers, who buy coal from villagers and sell it, from makeshift coal stalls by the highway, to people driving by. Motorcycles, cars, trucks, and even public buses regularly stop next to these stalls to purchase coal – usually a few bags – which people either take to their homes, to cook with; or resell, at a higher price, to restaurants in one of the towns farther along the highway. Because of the concentration of mines in the area and large numbers of coal peddlers – from both Karampot and other villages – the stretch of highway around Karampot is replete with informal coal stalls, with one visible on either side of the road about every half mile.

Most coal peddlers I know in Karampot have one or a few buyers to whom they deliver coal regularly. Maharam, for instance, sells coal to both a tea shop and a coal stall on the other side of the highway from the village. Coal prices are more or less uniform: coal peddlers receive 45 rupees for each bag of coal – and, accordingly, 225 rupees⁵⁸ for a cycle load of five bags. Coal brokers sell each bag for about 65 rupees – usually between a few and several dozen a day. The people who buy the coal from them, I was told, can resell it for up to 150 rupees per bag in the bigger towns to which some of them take it.

Division of labour

Coal peddling is normally a family operation, carried out jointly by husbands and wives, mothers and sons, brothers and sisters. It has a clear gendered division of labour: it is the women who collect and carry the coal to the coking piles; both men and women who work on the coking piles and pack the coal; and men who push the coal on bicycles to sell.⁵⁹ The role of women in coal peddling is perhaps most striking

⁵⁸ Or \$4.5; at that time of fieldwork, the Indian rupee was worth approximately \$0.02.

⁵⁹ The fact that both men and women work is in itself significant. While among caste Hindus, the participation of women in labour is often restricted (Sorsa et al. 2015; Chen & Drèze 1992), *adivasi* women engage not only in coal peddling but also in agriculture (Mukherjea 1962: Chapter 4) and casual wage labour (Carrin-Bouez 1993). Coal peddling's gendered division of labour is in fact reminiscent of that practiced by Santals in Chotanagpur's early underground mines, where men would cut the coal and women would carry it out (Corbridge 1993; Devalle 1992; Simmons 1976).

in the depot – the coal-collection site where I spent the most time. Only women enter the depot to gather coal; men invariably do not, because of the chance of altercation with the security guards.

While women too have to leave the depot when the guards appear, my interlocutors explained, they are unlikely "to get any serious trouble from the guards, who know they can't use force against women" – presumably because of the risk of protest by villagers in case women are treated aggressively. Men, on the other hand, are disinclined to enter the depot, as they feel that this might elicit a more belligerent response from the guards. Indeed, *adivasis* are still often stereotyped as savage, ignorant, and potentially dangerous people, who can legitimately be treated worse – and more violently – than others (Shah & Lerche 2017; Pal 2019). Coal peddling's gendered division of labour is thus related to the illicit nature of this work and the threat of violence in response to it.

Households in Karampot have varied, and often flexible, labour arrangements for coal peddling, which depend mostly on their composition. 19-year-old Parmeshwar, for instance, is the only cycle pusher in his household. His father has long been infirm, and his two older brothers are married and run their own separate households. Besides himself, Parmeshwar's coal peddling 'team' consists of his younger sister, who gathers the coal from the depot; and a boy cousin who lives with the family and helps with the coking and loading. Of the earnings from peddling coal, Parmeshwar keeps a portion to himself; sometimes dishes out a small amount to his sister; and gives the bulk to his mother, "to take care of the household". Indeed, in coal-peddling households it is normally the women who keep the purse and manage the budget.

If there are more capable men in the house, the task of pushing the cycle can be divided between them. Naresh, for example, another young Santal, lives in a joint household with his older brother Jagdis, Jagdis's wife and their two baby children, another younger brother and sister, and their elderly widowed mother.⁶⁰ Naresh and

⁶⁰ While Santals, like most *adivasis*, usually live in separate rather than joint households (Elwin 1943), the presence of an aged and/or widowed mother can change the situation. I discuss household structures in more detail in Chapter 6, in relation to CCL-employed Santals.

his younger brother both push and sell the coal, alternately. Jagdis, the older brother, has been recovering from tuberculosis⁶¹ and taken a break from this work; his wife, nonetheless, is the one who gathers the coal from the depot, into a single coking pile that serves the entire household.

As can already be noticed, it is often the younger men in the household who push the cycle, their fathers or older brothers having become too old or frail to undertake this strenuous task. Gathering coal, on the other hand, is considered less physically intense, and is done also by older women. But often this task is taken on by much younger women and girls, either alongside their mother or instead of her altogether. At any rate, it is acknowledged by men and women alike that coal peddling simply cannot take place without the latter – not only because of their labour but since they are the only ones who can go into the depot to gather coal. "If women didn't bring the coal", Maharam and other coal peddlers told me, "we wouldn't have anything to sell".

The same could not be said with regard to men. Some of the village women I know have a husband or father who is infirm, absent, or otherwise unable to push a cycle, but nevertheless generate income from coal on their own. This they do by collecting, coking, and providing the coal to cycle pushers from the area, who come to load it on their bicycles directly from the women's coking pile, and split the money with them once the coal is sold. This is the case, for example, in the household of Siamlal. Now in his 50s, Siamlal had stopped pushing coal a couple of years ago after contracting malaria, and as I describe in Chapter 7 now dedicates his time to maintaining the small Hindu temple across the highway from the village. With no sons to push coal in his place, Siamlal's two daughters – in their early 20s and unmarried – have become the household's breadwinners, through striking an arrangement with two cycle pushers from a neighbouring village. Every day, the two coal pushers arrive in Karampot's coking ground with their bicycles, and load them with coal for peddling straight from the daughters' coking pile. The earnings are later divided between the

⁶¹ Coal dust, which covers the ground of a substantial area around the colliery, is known to cause a range of respiratory diseases (Laney & Weissman 2014).

two men and them.⁶² Puja, whose husband is away working in Rajasthan,⁶³ has the same arrangement with the same two coal pushers. She often brings to the coking ground her two toddlers, who crawl in the coal dust beside her while she arranges her coking pile.

The different sides of precarious work

Superfluous to the labour needs of the colliery that has increasingly encroached on their land, coal peddlers are seemingly a prime example of what Li (2009) and Breman (2016) have described as a surplus population. Yet contrary to claims about permanent pauperisation and unemployment that the idea of surplus populations can imply (Shah & Lerche 2017: 11), coal peddlers do not only work hard and earn but are part of an extensive informal coal supply chain. This chain is crucial for a range of household needs and economic activities in the wider area – including domestic cooking (and heating), food sales by restaurants and tea shops, the livelihoods of petty coal brokers, and the profits made by those who buy coal from them and resell it yet again.

Within the coal supply chain, however, it would appear that coal peddlers are at the very bottom. Coal brokers, for instance, who buy coal cheap from villagers and sell it dear, and spend most of their time in the shade of their make-do stalls by the highway, certainly seemed to me to have a much better deal compared to my hard-labouring coal-peddling interlocutors. The coal brokers I spoke to similarly thought that pushing coal is "hard work" while theirs is much easier – without having to collect, coke, and push the coal over and over. I was indeed curious as to why none of the coal peddlers I knew in Karampot ever tried to set up a coal stall by the highway themselves. Echoing a typical view of *adivasis*, coal brokers confidently explained to me, echoing a typical view of *adivasis*, that local Santals are "simple people" with a "jungle mentality", without the mind frame "to do business".

⁶² While the coal pushers (who are non-*adivasi*) do have wives who potentially could gather the coal for them, their village is on the other side of the highway and farther away from the depot yard, which makes this less convenient.

⁶³ I discuss labour migration from Karampot by the village's non-Santal population in Chapter 5.

My coal-peddling interlocutors, however, certainly have their reasons for not getting involved in what coal brokers do. One of these is the police, who might disregard coal peddlers but often demand bribery payments from roadside coal stalls to 'allow' their operation. Interacting with the police, coal peddlers told me, requires knowing "how to speak to negotiate with officers" – a skill they feel that they largely lack. Interaction with the police generally makes them anxious, and they prefer to avoid it if they can. Like is the case with men's reluctance to enter the depot, my interlocutors' fear of the police has to be understood in the context of the popular characterisation of *adivasis* as *jungli* (uncivilised) and potentially violent; their often more violent handling by the police (Shah & Lerche 2017; Pal 2019); and their historically more brutal treatment by the state (Shah 2010). The fact that virtually all highway coal brokers are non-*adivasi*, too, might deter Santals from entering this activity.

There is, however, another important reason that ultimately makes the work of roadside coal brokers less attractive for my *adivasi* coal-peddling interlocutors. Selling coal by the highway, they told me, requires spending the whole day (and sometimes night) at the coal stall waiting for buyers, including in scorching heat or pouring rain. It is "full-time work", as Maharam put it, in which "you're like an animal tied to a pole, with no time for anything else: farming and taking the animals to graze, doing house chores and taking care of the children, or free time". Coal brokers' work, in other words, means being restricted in both space and time, which for Maharam and other coal peddlers is generally unappealing. This drew my attention to some of the unexpected benefits that coal peddling – despite its onerous nature – offers to villagers, which cause them to actually prefer this form of labour over other types of informal work around them.

Anchor of stability

Coal peddling – in particular pushing the cycle – is unambiguously gruelling labour, and coal pushers often referred to the toll it takes on their body. Years of pushing coal can result not only in cumulative physical exhaustion but also various injuries and chronic pains, which is why older men eventually stop pushing coal and let their sons take over. There is also no doubt that coal peddling is highly precarious work – not only informal but also illegal – without any securities. Villagers' access to coal for

peddling, for example, is uncertain: coal is a "government thing" and belongs to the colliery, and to be able to obtain it villagers depend not only on CCL's clemency but also on production circumstances in the project, which can at times disrupt their work routine.

I have already mentioned, for example, how in the initial period of fieldwork coal was also being gathered from the colliery's overburden dump; but how, following changes in coal extraction operations, trucks then stopped unloading waste coal on the dump. In another instance, the dirt trail that Maiko and Maharam descend to reach the opencast seams had partly collapsed as a result of drilling and became inaccessible for several weeks. During this time, in order to obtain coal Maiko and Maharam had to either walk to the depot on the other side of the village; or climb onto and sift for coal on the southern edge of the overburden dump, closer to their side of the village, which was steep and dangerous. Indeed, "no guarantee" is a phrase that villagers frequently used in our conversations about coal peddling. "Sometimes you get enough coal for a few cycle loads, and can earn well", Maharam said, "but sometimes you can only get little or almost no coal at all ... So some days of good work and some days of sitting at home".

But at the same time, for most Karampot villagers coal peddling is the most stable, accessible, and profitable form of livelihood available to them. While scavenging coal is easily depicted as a marginal subsistence activity, coal peddling diverges from this image in a number of significant ways: it allows not only relative livelihood stability but also modest accumulation, and provides a relative degree of independence. Even before the advent of mining in Karampot, agriculture alone had not sufficed as a source of livelihood, forcing villagers to hunt and gather casual wages (Breman 1994) outside the village – for example on construction sites or through seasonal migration to brick kilns. Compared to that scenario, coal peddling is certainly perceived by local Santals as an improvement.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ While coal peddling is also generally an improvement upon the labour scenario in non-Santals' native villages, their ability to accumulate from this work is more limited compared to Santals, and drives them to engage additionally in temporary labour migration outside of Karampot. This situation is linked to non-Santals' lack of own land in Karampot, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

First, coal peddling is a more reliable source of income: while the quantities of coal that villagers are able to gather can fluctuate depending on colliery operations, they are normally able to collect *some*; indeed, coal cycles are pushed through the village every day, loaded from coking piles that were either prepared recently or in advance. Second, coal peddling provides work locally. Earlier, villagers had had to seek casual wage labour outside Karampot; now, they generally do not have to leave the village environs to be able to earn. The availability of coal to peddle – at first from the disused private mines, and now through Pandu Project – has made it possible for villagers to make a living locally, which distinguishes them from the swathes of 'footloose labour' in India (Breman 1996) who constantly shift between temporary work sites. Indeed, compared to the considerable trend of seasonal labour outmigration from Jharkhand to other parts of India – particularly by *adivasis* (Deshingkar 2008; Shah & Lerche 2017) – among Karampot's Santals such migration is generally not very common.⁶⁵

The availability of coal to peddle can even serve as a pull factor. Take, for example, Maiko and Maharam. While Santals are patrilocal, Karampot is in fact Maiko's family village rather than Maharam's. After getting married, the couple had as per custom settled in Maharam's village, in another part of Jharkhand, where he had tried making a living cutting and selling wood. But this "difficult work", Maharam recounted, had been insufficient to subsist on. After a couple of years he and Maiko thus relocated to Karampot, where – compared to Maharam's previous work – peddling coal proved to be not only "more profitable" but also "simple" and "easy".⁶⁶

These words used by Maharam to describe coal peddling again draw attention to the contradictory ways in which it is perceived and experienced. Indeed, while villagers often referred to the physical strenuousness and uncertainty involved in this work, they also regard it as overall less complicated, and more reliable, than informal wage labour – for example in construction sites or loading trucks in Pandu Project's other

⁶⁵ See footnotes 62 and 63.

⁶⁶ Another factor involved in the couple's decision to settle in Karampot was Maiko's elderly parents, who needed looking after. The possibility to earn a living through peddling coal, nonetheless, played an important role.

depot yard.⁶⁷ This makes coal peddling into a relative anchor of stability in my interlocutors' livelihood strategies, compared to the yet more precarious alternatives. This includes the highway coal stalls, too, where sales can wax and wane according to the number of vehicles stopping by and the amount of coal that they purchase. "In a coal stall", coal peddlers told me – and coal brokers confirmed – "you might be able to sell, or not; sometimes 50 bags of coal, sometimes just a few". Peddling coal, on the other hand, "you just deliver the coal to the stall and get paid" – which my interlocutors consider not only more straightforward but less unpredictable.

From subsistence to accumulation

Coal peddling is not only relatively predictable but, moreover, generates earnings that are by local standards certainly not meagre. The 225 rupees that coal pushers earn for one coal-laden cycle are no skimpy amount, especially as many of them often deliver more than one cycle load per day. By comparison, the standard daily wage labour rate, say in construction, is 300 rupees; whereas for loading a truck in the depot, which takes roughly four hours, labourers earn 160 rupees each.⁶⁸ Public work schemes, too, cannot hold a candle to coal peddling in terms of wages. "There is no demand for this kind of work in a place like Karampot", an officer from the local block office told me, "where people can make much more money selling coal than the daily wage in public works, which is 167 rupees".⁶⁹ Indeed, when towards the end of my fieldwork government-supplied concrete toilette cabins began being constructed next to Karampot's houses, the large majority of labourers were from outside the village; not many villagers were keen to do this work when they could peddle coal instead.

⁶⁷ I should note that compared to other villages where coal peddling is carried out, the work of coal pushers in Karampot is made somewhat less arduous by the local abundance of highway coal stalls that purchase coal from them. In other areas, this is not the case, and villagers have to push their coal-laden bicycle for several hours to sell their coal in Hazaribagh or Ranchi (where coal rates are nevertheless higher).

⁶⁸ Dhagamwar et al. have reported that in Korba too, coal peddling generates higher earnings than daily wage labour (2003: 66).

⁶⁹ 167 rupees was, at the time, the standard daily rate in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) – India's largest public works programme.

Contrary to images of precarious petty commodity production – especially scavenging-based – as merely a means of survival, coal peddling allows Santals not only to subsist but also to accumulate, however modestly, and make use of coal-peddling earnings saved over months and years. Naresh and Jagdis, for example, have purchased a small television for their home; Parmeshwar, a rudimentary smartphone; Maharam owns a second-hand motorcycle; while Babulal is constructing a simple *pukka* structure of brick⁷⁰ as an extension to his mud house.

Income from coal peddling is used for other kinds of investment, too. Maharam and Maiko, for instance, pay the monthly fee to send their two older children to the Holy Faith private school across the highway from Karampot, instead of the free – and reputedly inferior – government school in the village. Other coal-peddling interlocutors pay for after-school tuition classes for their boys and girls. Coal peddlers in Karampot invariably aspire for their children to eventually find other, less onerous work than theirs, and seek to spend what they can in better education for them to try and improve their chances of future employment.⁷¹ Finally, a few of my interlocutors have used coal-peddling earnings to invest in small economic ventures. Naresh and Jagdis, for instance, had recently bought a second-hand fridge, with the intention of selling chilled soft drinks in the village.

By employing this kind of longer-term saving and planning, *adivasi* coal peddlers challenge the image of informal precarious labourers as present-oriented, in a constant state of 'informal survivalism' (Davis 2006: 26). Furthermore, small-scale accumulation and the pursuit of particular aspirations through coal peddling – consumption, housing, and children's life chances – are at variance with certain

⁷⁰ Some villagers have also received funds for this purpose from the Indira Awaas Yojana, a government scheme for providing housing for the rural poor. But payment instalments through the scheme are often delayed or insufficient for all costs of construction, and villagers have to invest own money to either complete or expedite it.

⁷¹ While as I discuss in Chapter 6, attaining good jobs – especially public sector – is believed to also typically require connections and/or bribery payments, a certain level of education is considered to be a prerequisite.

certain education credentials but also connections and bribery. I discuss this point in Chapter 6 in relation to CCL-employed Santals.

Subaltern Studies-inspired arguments about a kind of *adivasi* culture that rejects material accumulation and commodities (e.g. Roy 2007; Carrin-Bouez 1993: 153; Shah 2018a: 229), and more concretely with other accounts of *adivasi* entry into new forms of work.

These accounts include, for example, Nurit Bird-David's (1983) classic analysis of the south Indian *adivasi* Naikens. Bird-David describes how, even after becoming engaged in wage labour work in the rubber plantation next to their village, the Naikens held onto their traditional economic organisation, which was not concerned with saving or the future more generally. The Naikens treated the plantation as a site for wage 'gathering' and, accordingly, preferred casual over permanent work: while the latter involved salary contributions to a provident fund in which they saw no value, the former provided them with weekly wages that they could spend immediately. Contrary to this prevalent notion of *adivasi* propensity "to live for the moment" (Shah 2018a: 229), among Karampot's Santals the transition into coal peddling as a main source of livelihood was accompanied by a transition from subsistence to (modest) accumulation.

While accumulation and consumption among coal-peddling Santals are an indication of increased income levels compared to those in pre-mining Karampot, they are in fact viewed dimly by some of my older interlocutors. Simalal, for instance, believes that many younger coal peddlers fritter away their earnings on unnecessary commodities, drinking, or card playing; and generally keep too much of their income "in their own pockets" instead of giving more of it to their wife or mother, for the household. "Nowadays", Siamlal said,

people can work relatively little and earn easily: more than 200 rupees in one bicycle trip to the highway! Compare this to a labourer who works for hours in the sun and gets 200 rupees for the whole day. This kind of hard work makes you understand the value of money. But when you earn more easily and quickly, you think about money the wrong way and spend it the wrong way.

There is, indeed, a sense among the older generation of Santals in Karampot that the possibility of increased earnings through coal peddling has led Santal youngsters astray, and contributed to a process of individualisation whereby people have become more exclusively concerned with their own work and money. This kind of moral critique – and laments about the decline in community solidarity – is nevertheless much more pronounced with regard to CCL-employed Santals, who earn a lucrative salary that enables consumption on a whole other scale. I return to this point in Chapter 6, when discussing Karampot's CCL-employed households.

Tempo and autonomy

Alongside relative stability and economic gains, coal peddling has a third, particular feature that distinguishes it from other kinds of informal work in the local context. Coal peddling, in short, allows a greater degree of freedom and flexibility in terms of when, how frequently, and how much to work. A day of wage labour, for instance in construction, typically involves work "from morning till evening"; coal peddling, on the other hand, enables villages to have greater control over their schedule, and allows time for non-work activities such as pottering about with friends, playing cards, fishing in the nearby pond, or hunting birds and foraging mushrooms in the forest.

Coal peddling has a distinctive tempo, in which 'work' and 'leisure' continuously interlace and alternate.⁷² Villagers often go to gather, coke, and push coal in the morning; go back home to attend to house chores and, in the agricultural season, their fields, or simply to rest or 'timepass' (Jeffrey 2010); and later head again to the depot or coking ground to collect and coke more coal. Bouts of work, too, are often interspersed with breaks. A nightly jaunt to the coal seams, as I described at the beginning of the chapter, usually involves a stop next to one of the flaming coking piles, where villagers chat and jest for a good while before continuing to the opencast pit.

⁷² Millar (2015) has called this kind of rhythm 'woven time', in which work and other domains of the everyday are interwoven (See also Harms 2011: Chapter 4).

Similarly, after filling up a few bowls of coal from the depot, women normally pause to sit together and chatter in the shade of one of the trees in the coking ground, before returning to the depot to collect more coal. Indeed, despite the hard work it would be misleading to describe the atmosphere in the coking ground as bleak. Labouring around coking piles and cycles is accompanied by chitchatting and joking between villagers: about the rice beer they intend to have in the evening; about bankrupting CCL by stealing all its coal; and about the children who assist their parents in the coking ground, the local "coal peddling school". Finally, after delivering the coal, cycle pushers sometimes sit around for a while with the coal brokers at their stalls, or in front of the small television at a popular nearby tea shop.

Coal peddling, moreover, allows villagers more control over how often and how much to work. The frequency with which cycle pushers go to sell coal can vary quite significantly: while some do this a daily basis, usually delivering one or two cycle loads a day, others push their cycle only a few times a week, based on their needs and objectives. Coal pushers can also reduce or increase the amount of work in different periods: the same person can peddle more coal in a particular week or month, and less in another, according to their circumstances in that particular time. When Shiv, for example, another young Santal coal peddler, wanted to spend some time with one of his cousin brothers in another village, he took a few days' break from cycle pushing; Babulal did the same for about a week to look after the construction of the new *pukka* section of his house. Alternatively, villagers can increase the frequency and quantity of work when in need of extra cash – say, to buy alcohol and chicken to celebrate a festival – or in order to save for a specific purpose. In the weeks before his wedding, for instance, Parmeshwar was delivering four cycle loads of coal every day, to make sure he would be able to cover all expenses of the celebration, including copious amounts of *mahua* wine and foodstuffs to cook for all the guests.

Finally, unlike wage labour, coal peddling is a form of self-employment, however vulnerable. It thus allows villagers to be their own bosses rather than subject to the dictates of contractors or employers, or monitoring by work supervisors. Differently from wage labour, coal peddling does not entail an explicitly enacted relationship of authority and subordination, and provides to villagers a sense of autonomy and

independence that was also an important element in traditional *adivasi* economy (Bird-David 1983: 67; Carrin-Bouez: 1993: 157).⁷³

In praise of precarious work?

By considering the place of coal peddling in villagers' livelihood strategies and aspirations, and illuminating the relative stability and autonomy it enables, I have so far sought to challenge survivalist frameworks for understanding informal precarious work, which treat such work categorically as a last resort. But at the same time, in what follows I suggest we should be wary of overstating the liberatory aspects of precarious work, as is Millar's (2014) tendency in her analysis of *catadores* in Brazil. Rather, my understanding of precarity is more aligned with Anna Tsing's (2015), whose account of informal mushroom pickers and sellers in the United States captures some of the ambivalence of this precarious form of self-employment. Indeed, while mushroom foragers draw a sense of freedom and excitement from their work – which, in the absence of employment opportunities, makes for "better than usual way" of getting by (ibid.: 4) – they also experience the challenges of lacking any modicum of security. Coal peddling too, as I now show, is perceived by villagers in an ambivalent, equivocal way. More specifically, the advantages of coal peddling that I have discussed are experienced differently by men and women, and people from different generations; evaluated differently with regard to the present and future; and pale into insignificance vis-à-vis secure, regular work.

First, coal peddling has a much greater physical cost for men, who bear the cumulative toll on the body of repeatedly pushing weighty coal-laden cycles. This is typically experienced by older men – many of whom, as I have mentioned, suffer from chronic pains that eventually force them to quit this activity. But younger men too, like Shiv, are certainly aware of the longer-term bodily impact of coal peddling. "You might be able to push the cycle now", Shiv told me, "but what about when you get older?". This, for example, is one of the reasons why coal peddlers wish for their children to find other, less manually-intensive work. Women, on their part, might not bear the lion's share of the physical burden but are arguably economically

⁷³ For a related discussion of the valued autonomy that self-employment can provide to low-caste labourers, see Levien (2018: Chapter 6).

disadvantaged through coal peddling's division of labour: while women carry out an indispensable part of the work process – namely, the gathering of coal – it is the men who sell the coal and receive the payment. While, as I have noted, in coal-peddling households it is normally the women who keep the purse, their control of the budget is undermined by the fact that they cannot always know exactly how much of the earnings are handed over to them by their husband or son, and how much of these they keep in their own pockets. As I discuss in the next chapter, this is one reason that impels women to engage, in addition to coal peddling, in truck loading work in the depot, which provides them with direct access to wages.

Second, coal peddling is regarded differently by different generations. Older interlocutors like Babulal think of coal peddling vis-à-vis their memories of livelihoods in Karampot before the arrival of mining, when they had had to eke out a living through whatever casual work they could find outside the village. Moreover, while at first villagers like him had to extract coal for peddling from the disused underground mines, now they can glean it – relatively more easily – from Pandu Project. For Babulal and others from his generation, despite its precarity coal peddling is at present a more accessible, regular, and locally available form of livelihood compared to an even more precarious, rememberable past.

Younger Santals, on the other hand, who had not lived through this past, often aspire for work that is more secure and profitable, and less physically demanding. Suraj, for example, one of Parmeshwar's friends, had recently come back from seven months in Bangalore, working on electricity poles under a contractor and earning a monthly wage. Having learnt the ropes, Suraj is now planning to seek more such work outside the village, perhaps through another contractor. While Suraj had previously spent a while peddling coal, he had found the work tedious and laborious; his efforts are focused on finding more technical work outside of Karampot, gain more experience, and try to make a career for himself as an electrician. Suraj's sojourn in Bangalore had not been the result of distress labour migration; like other villagers, he is quite capable of making a living for himself in Karampot, through coal peddling. Rather, Suraj's temporary migration had been motivated mainly by the wish to become engaged in another trade, which could perhaps offer him a better, more secure future. "After all", Suraj said, "coal will not be here forever".

Indeed, my interlocutors are well aware of the eventual end of coal – and consequently coal peddling. Coal is, indeed, an exhaustible resource, and every colliery has a limited lifespan. Pandu Project, for instance, is expected to have extracted all the coal within its boundaries within the next 25 years. Thus while coal might be the most stable source of income for villagers in the present as well as near future, in the longer run it is unlikely to persist as a sustainable form of work. This is compounded by the illegality of coal peddling, and more specifically the possibility of access to coal from colliery one day becoming restricted. These factors imbue coal peddling with intrinsic long-term uncertainty which, in the long term, may leave them or their children shorn of their main means of livelihood, without any viable alternatives.

For older coal peddlers, this reaffirms and even enhances the importance of agriculture as a prophylactic source of sustenance against absolute penury, after the end of coal. Younger Santals, on the other hand, are increasingly uninterested in engaging in agricultural labour, where the rewards are neither immediate nor predictable, and usually favour cash in hand over grains stored in the house (see also Parry 2019: Chapter 4). For some of them, as illustrated by Suraj, the long-term uncertainty of coal peddling is rather a reason to seek work outside the village that, unlike coal, does not have an inexorable expiry date.

For most villagers, though, the eventual end of coal carries ambivalent meanings. On an everyday level, the sense of decline is neither palpable nor pressing, which allows them to continue their coal peddling routine. Similarly to the case of oil in Oman as described by Mandana Limbert (2008, 2010), coal's end is something to bear in mind and a reason for worry, but it is "distant enough so as to not cause panic" (ibid.: 170). The end of coal *will* come, but not tomorrow or next week – a timeframe that allows to be mindful of it but perhaps "not worry so much as to hamper the pleasures of today" (Limbert 2008: 46).⁷⁴ But on another level, the awareness of coal's ultimate depletion might help explain why – differently from the Naikens, for example – coal peddlers in Karampot have turned to accumulation and saving, so as to utilise this

⁷⁴ The sense of gradual decline also comprises villagers' conviction that Karampot itself, like neighbouring Dharutar, will ultimately be overtaken and displaced by the expanding colliery. I discuss this belief and its implications in Chapter 5.

income opportunity before it recedes. The end of coal renders the relative contemporary stability of coal peddling only provisional, and produces a coexistence of short-term permanence with longer-term insecurity.⁷⁵

Even in the present, however, while coal peddling is deemed preferable to other types of precarious work, it is seen as vastly inferior to any form of secure employment. In particular, coal peddling's advantages fade into inconsequence when compared with secure CCL employment, which only a minority of Santals in Karampot have been able to attain. When it boils down to it, permanent work – especially public sector jobs, of the kind CCL provides – is what nearly all villagers want. Put differently, whereas informal wage labour – low-paying and without any prospects for upward mobility – is something to withdraw from through peddling coal, formal public sector employment alters the equation. While such work admittedly involves fixed, full-time hours and a clear organisational hierarchy, it is gainful and valuable enough for Santals to compromise on their predilection for autonomy and adjust their tempo of work.⁷⁶ Indeed, those Santal coal pushers from Dharutar who have managed, through compensation for land loss, to obtain a CCL job in the colliery have never looked back.

Access to such employment, however, is scarce – especially for unskilled *adivasis* and following the downsizing of permanent public sector labour after liberalisation (Bear 2013; Dhananjayan & Shanti 2007; Fernandes & Bharali 2014; Levien 2013b; Parry 2013a). The prevalent view in Karampot, accordingly, is that nowadays the only chance at gaining CCL employment is through losing land to the mine and being compensated with a job. Otherwise, the possibility for villagers to obtain CCL employment is slender; instead, they are relegated to the sphere of precarious informal labour, where coal peddling is – comparatively – their best option at present.

⁷⁵ On short-term permanence, see also Maxim Bolt's (2013) study of labour in South African border farms.

⁷⁶ In practice, as I describe in Chapter 6, a CCL job in the project is not always particularly demanding. Depending on one's position, the work schedule can be fairly flexible, and the work rhythm lax.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on coal peddling, the most ubiquitous form of livelihood that has stemmed from mining operations in and around Karampot. On the one hand, coal peddling – not only informal but also illegal – seems to be *the* exemplar of precarious, insecure work. But on the other hand, the chapter has shown how this form of labour is more multifaceted than what popular theorisations of informality and precarity might imply. Rather than simply a last resort for the poorest, coal peddling is experienced as a stable and profitable means of livelihood – compared to both pre-mining days and the scarce informal wage labour opportunities in the locality. Coal peddling not only provides subsistence but allows Santal villagers to save and invest in things like *pukka* housing or private schooling for their children. Moreover, it provides a relative degree of autonomy, whereby villagers are able to control their work schedule and intensity, and do not have to answer to capricious employers and supervisors. Coal peddling's flexible work rhythm, in particular, allows for different dimensions of everyday life – earning, farming, housework (including childcare), and leisure – to be woven and pursued together. It is not contradictory, then, to view coal peddling as precarious and marginalised while also understanding that most villagers in fact prefer it over other insecure forms of work around them.

But at the same time, I have suggested that the liberatory aspect of coal peddling – as a relinquishment of wage labour in favour of alternative arrangements – should not be overstated. Rather, the benefits of coal peddling are perceived and evaluated by villagers in different ways: based on their positionalities in terms of gender, generation, and in the lifecycle; in relation to shorter- and longer-term temporal scales; and vis-à-vis formal employment. In particular, while coal peddling offers relative stability in the present, it is embedded within a broader timeframe of impermanence and insecurity – both in the lifecycle, through its physical toll on the body; and in the farther away future, through the eventual depletion of coal or the restriction of villagers' illegal access to it. This poses a potentially substantial threat to households' social reproduction.

Moreover, all the benefits of coal peddling pale unambiguously when juxtaposed with secure employment in Pandu Project, which is what villagers generally desire.

Indeed, compared to the minority of Santals in the village who have such employment, coal peddlers feel markedly disadvantaged. Coal peddling, then, can be understood as a withdrawal only from the terms and conditions of *particular* types of wage labour, namely casual and informal; formal wage labour, by contrast – especially public sector employment – overwhelmingly trumps any advantages coal peddling might offer, and provides the kind of security that most of my interlocutors ultimately seek. As we will see in later chapters, villagers' ability to realise such security through *naukri* in Pandu Project has been largely unequal and arbitrary. The only feasible route to accessing it is through losing land to the project – and even then does not guarantee employment to all of the dispossessed.

IV. Truck loading

Having introduced in the previous chapter the primary means of making a living in Karampot, in this chapter I consider the second most widespread form of livelihood in the village: casual wage labour in Pandu Project's depot yard,⁷⁷ hand-loading trucks with coal for transportation. Truck loading wage labour is part of an effort by CCL to offer work opportunities to so-called project-affected persons (CIL 2008) who have not been directly dispossessed of land and thus are not eligible for compensatory employment. While for most households in Karampot coal peddling provides the bulk of income, truck loading serves for the same households as an additional, albeit highly irregular, source of income, which they utilise whenever this work is available. By turning attention to truck loading labour, the chapter expands the discussion about the meanings of different kinds of precarious work, and the considerations that lead villagers to engage in them as part of their livelihood strategies.

The fact that coal-peddling households also participate in truck loading work – thereby combining and alternating between petty commodity production and informal wage labour – invites a more flexible understanding of precarious labour. This means, along with Bernstein's (2006, 2008, 2010) classes of labour framework,⁷⁸ to think of precarious labour not through fixed and static notions of 'petty commodity producers' or 'wage labourers', but in terms of fluidity. Such an understanding of labour means paying attention to the range of small-scale and informal economic activities – in particular, combinations of self-employment, wage labour, and agriculture – through which people pursue their livelihoods.⁷⁹ At the same time, however, Bernstein's classes of labour – similarly to Standing's (2011, 2014) notion of the precariat – bunches together the various forms of precarious work under one umbrella concept, which can distract attention from the more nuanced differences *between* them, and their different meanings for labourers.

⁷⁷ See footnote 50.

⁷⁸ On the Indian context, see Lerche (2010, 2013).

⁷⁹ See also Shah & Harriss-White (2011).

The previous chapter already engaged with this issue when discussing (relative) autonomy in work and time as a desirable feature of coal peddling, which distinguishes it from other types of informal work. The current chapter continues this engagement by raising a complementary ethnographic question. As a form of informal wage labour, truck loading is fraught with challenges for villagers: not only is it irregular and in short supply but it is also not as profitable as coal peddling, and involves working under supervisors who from time to time siphon off labourers' wages. Indeed, as we will see, the provision of casual truck loading work by CCL has given rise to a chain of brokerage and rentiership, in which labourers are at the bottom. The chapter then asks why, with coal peddling as an alternative, villagers – and particularly women, who make up the majority of truck loaders⁸⁰ – still engage in this work. I propose that the answer, in this case, has to do with autonomy of a different kind. For women, truck loading – unlike coal peddling – offers access to independent wages. This allows women labourers increased financial control, and consequently status, in the household, which serves as a reason for them to continue participating in this otherwise unattractive form of work.

Wage labour for the mining-affected

Truck loading work takes place in what is known as Pandu Project's coal sale depot. In it, coal is stored that CCL does not provide directly to other public sector industries but wholesales to private coal dealers. The latter transport and sell it to private industries across India – from brick kilns in Uttar Pradesh in the north to cement factories in Tamil Nadu in the south.⁸¹ As part of this operation, dealers' lorries are loaded, before being dispatched, with the coal they have purchased from CCL. Truck loading wage labour, as the name implies, involves just that: the manual loading of coal from Pandu Project's depot yard onto dealers' lorries for transportation. The loading is carried out in more or less fixed groups of about 15

⁸⁰ In households with CCL employment, as I discuss in Chapter 6, women's participation in truck loading is significantly less common.

⁸¹ Coal dealers are invariably non-*adivasi*; they belong mostly to higher castes that have traditionally been engaged in business and trade, and typically come from wealthier backgrounds. Coal dealers acquire – from Pandu Project and other CCL collieries in the area – between a few hundred and 1,000 tonnes of coal every month. Monthly coal purchase sums can reach 30 lakh (or 3,000,000) rupees, and profits 10 *lakh* (or 1,000,000) rupees.

villagers – usually about 11-12 women and 3-4 men – aged roughly between 15 and 50. The men, using pickaxes, chop large chunks of coal from the depot's coal mounds into smaller pieces that can fit into metal bowls for carrying; the women fill the bowls, heave them onto their heads, and carry the coal into the lorries, climbing onto the rear open cargo area on an elongated wood plank.⁸²



Figure 9: A group of labourers loading a truck in the depot

The work takes place under (non-*adivasi*) loading supervisors, employed by the coal dealers and responsible to ensure that lorries are properly loaded and dispatched. The supervisors are also those who notify villagers about the work. Whenever Shiv, for example, got a call from one of them, usually in the morning, he would gather the other men in his loading group from the neighbouring houses. Savitha, who is part of the same group as he, would gather the women.

The group would soon make their way, on foot, from the village to the depot. They would walk through the coking ground and then join a wide dirt road, where heavy-

⁸² This division of labour is once again similar to the one that prevailed in Jharkhand's old underground mines, where women did all the carrying and loading (Corbridge 1993; Devalle 1992; Simmons 1976). This is also the reason, it was explained to me, for loading groups' lopsided gender ratio: more people are needed for carrying coal onto the truck than for chopping it.

duty vehicles would pass them and stir up whirlpools of black coal dust. After about ten minutes they would reach the coal sale depot, where the loading supervisor would point them to the relevant truck. After about four hours of continuous work, the loading would be completed. Shiv, Savitha, and the others would sit on the ground next to the truck to have their lunch, from tiffin boxes brought from home. Thereafter, they would pack their things and head back on foot to the village. For these 4-5 hours of work, Shiv and each other group member would normally receive 160 rupees, paid by the coal dealers and distributed by the loading supervisors. At times, though, as I explain below, this wage would be cut in half, leaving each labourer with a paltry 80 rupees for the hours of loading.

The provision of truck loading work to villagers from Karampot – as well as other villages around Pandu Project – is part of CCL's compensation policy for project-affected persons (CIL 2008). This policy makes a distinction between two types of such persons. The first includes villagers who have lost own land to mining, who are eligible under certain conditions to compensatory employment in the project. This is how Santals originally from Dharutar have obtained their CCL jobs, as I describe in detail in Chapter 7. The second type of project-affected persons refers to villagers who have been affected by mining operations less directly – that is, have not been dispossessed of own land but still affected by the adverse impact of mining on the surrounding environment. This can include, according to project documents, water, air, noise, and solid waste pollution, and land degradation. Karampot's native residents fall under this second group of project-affected persons.

Indeed, while in Karampot no agricultural land has so far been relinquished to CCL, my interlocutors often complained about the blasting from the colliery, which ripples through the village and fractures their mud houses; and the profuse amount of coal dust in the air, which is associated not only with deterioration of land and water resources (Kumar 2016) but also with different respiratory diseases (Laney & Weissman 2014; Lockwood et al. 2009; Rabindra 2015). To this type of affected villagers, CCL's compensation policy seeks to offer not compensatory employment, which is reserved for the dispossessed, but "opportunities for indirect employment arising out of mining activities", for example "coal loading at the coal depot" (CCL n.d.: n.p.).

While the provision of truck loading work, then, is foreseen in CCL's policy, its actual implementation depends on various factors and can vary significantly between projects. In several other CCL mines in the area, for instance, either the coal sale depot has been deemed uneconomical and shut down; or the loading of trucks has been fully mechanised, obviating the need for manual labourers (Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2014; *Times of India* 2016). In Pandu Project, I was told, the provision of truck loading had originated in negotiations between CCL and local Santal *netas* – in particular Budhram, whom I will focus on in Chapter 7. Originally from Dharutar and closely associated with Chitu Besra, a dominant JMM politician in the district, Budhram – together with other local *netas* – had negotiated with CCL the provision of truck loading wage labour, and consequently become involved in its operation.

Guidelines for truck loading wage labour in the coal sale depot were drawn up, to be overseen by a local 'coal sale committee'. This committee comprises, in descending hierarchical order, local *netas* such as Budhram; *mukhyas* (traditional headmen) of mining-affected villages around the colliery; and 'community representatives' from each of these villages. People in participating villages were divided into loading groups, each with a more or less fixed list of members.⁸³ Loading groups are called to work according to the changing numbers of lorries that are due to enter the depot for loading, and based on a specific quota system. Under this system, loading groups from different villages⁸⁴ are entitled to a different share of the available loading work, based on their proximity to the colliery. Villages located closer to the project are considered more affected by it, and are thus allotted a larger percentage of the lorries that need loading. Villages that are not in the project's most immediate vicinity – like Karampot – are considered less affected, and are allocated a smaller percentage.

Moreover, not all the coal that dealers buy from CCL is loaded manually. Coal that is of lower quality – for which dealers pay a lower rate – is loaded on lorries using heavy loading tractors known as payloaders. According to the truck loading work guidelines, for each lorry that is payloaded rather than hand-loaded, a small payment is to be set aside for all loading groups, so as to compensate them for the loss of

⁸³ In Karampot, loading groups include both Santals and non-Santals.

⁸⁴ There are over 200 loading groups in villages around Pandu Project, including 36 in Karampot alone.

manual work. This payment is to be distributed between all members every few months, through the coal sale committee. These different guidelines notwithstanding, however, in reality things have turned out to work quite differently. I now turn to my interlocutors' actual experience of truck loading wage labour.

The hitches of truck loading

Compared to coal peddling, there are several factors that make truck loading work less attractive to villagers. First, there is a general agreement among my interlocutors that, on the whole, coal peddling is the more profitable economic activity. As Shiv put it, "in truck loading you make 160 rupees and it takes at least half the day. But selling coal you can make more than 200 rupees just by going out with your bicycle for an hour in the morning".⁸⁵ Second, as discussed in the previous chapter, coal peddling allows a degree of autonomy for villagers, and does not require working under a supervisor. Third, and perhaps more fundamentally, coal for peddling is relatively available and accessible, while truck loading wage labour is irregular and unpredictable.

In some weeks, my interlocutors would be called to the depot for work several times; in others, not at all. Practically all of them spoke about the scarcity of truck loading, especially in the past few years. On average, during my stay in Karampot, most of my interlocutors were loading trucks only once or twice a month. During the monsoon season, for instance, lorries stopped arriving in the depot altogether, which meant that for about three months there was simply no truck loading work available.⁸⁶ While the situation in Pandu Project still appears to be better than in other collieries in the area, where manual coal loading has been discontinued (Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2014), the availability of the work is generally low and intermittent – a far cry from

⁸⁵ In his calculation, Shiv does not into account the time needed to gather and coke the coal, carried out by his wife. Indeed, because coal peddling consists of several stages (gathering, coking, and peddling) that can stretch over a number of days, and because it involves more than one person, it is difficult to accurately calculate its economic profitability vis-à-vis truck loading wage labour.

⁸⁶ The reason for this, I was explained by both coal dealers and CCL officers, is that brick kilns – a main consumer of coal from dealers – close down during the rainy season. In this period, coal sale in Pandu Project thus generally enters a hiatus.

CCL's proclamation that project-affected persons are "regularly engaged" in truck loading work "for a minimum of 20 days every month" (CCL n.d.: n.p.).

The reasons for the paucity of truck loading work depend on whom one asks. Loading supervisors, for instance, cited the quota system. As part of it, as I have mentioned, loading groups in villages like Karampot – not in the colliery's immediate vicinity and thus regarded less mining-affected than other villages – are allocated a smaller portion of the lorries for loading, which in turn results in less work. CCL officers, on their part, pointed out that truck loading work depends on coal production levels in the mine, which determine how much coal is available for sale and can fluctuate significantly in different periods.

Budhram and Chitu, similarly, insisted that coal extraction levels in the project are insufficient and that, consequently, not enough lorries can enter the depot for loading as to provide adequate work for all loading groups. Moreover, much of the coal that *is* extracted, they said, is of lower quality – of the kind that is allotted to payloading rather than manual loading. Then there are also the coal dealers, whose coal purchases from CCL can wax and wane based on demand by the factories and brick kilns to which they provide the coal. This demand itself can also fluctuate according to various industry and market conditions, which extend well beyond not only the locality but also Jharkhand. In short, then, the availability of truck loading work hinges on a host of factors and circumstances far beyond villagers' control.

Shiv and my other interlocutors, however, have quite different ideas about the reasons for the scarcity of truck loading work. This scarcity, they believe, is the result of corrupt practices by, on one level, local *netas* such as Budhram and Chitu; and, on another, loading supervisors. Manual loading, Shiv and others told me, has been increasingly replaced by payloading – which according to them is in *netas'* financial interests. As senior coal sale committee members, Budhram and Chitu receive a commission from every truck that is loaded in the depot, either manually or by payloading.⁸⁷ Compared to hand-loading, villagers explained, mechanised

⁸⁷ While exact figures are difficult to ascertain, one loading supervisor estimated that at least half of what coal dealers pay for the loading of each truck goes to the committee, where it is divided between its members as commission according to their rank. Community representatives, that is, receive only a

payloading allows loading more trucks, more quickly; and this, in turn, means higher commissions for the committee and *netas*. Siamlal, whom we met in the previous chapter, was especially forthright. "When the depot opened", he said,

the *netas* had promised people they would get work, and in the beginning this was true. But with time the *netas* started pushing for more payloading, to earn more themselves ... Before the mine, the *netas* hadn't had so much money, but now the mine is a source of income for them. It's because of them and their selfishness that there aren't many trucks now to hand-load. If *netas* really cared about the people here, they'd make sure there's enough work.

It is not the case, I should stress, that villagers like Siamlal are not aware of the fact that levels of production and demand for coal tend to fluctuate, and that this affects the availability of truck loading work. They also have no expectation, however, that such external structural forces – or people outside the community, for that matter – would work in their favour. Santal *netas*, on the other hand, *should* in the eyes of villagers work on behalf of the community, which is why villagers' critique is primarily directed at them. While extraneous circumstances that impact truck loading cannot be controlled, what rouses anger among my interlocutors is their belief that Santal *netas* themselves are directly contributing to the waning of truck loading work, by encouraging mechanisation for their own financial gain. While such claims are difficult to objectively either substantiate or disprove, they form part of a broader moral critique of Santal *netas*' conduct in relation to mining operations, which I explore in more detail in Chapter 7.

Villagers, at any rate, have further grievances in relation to truck loading. First, they claim that their loading groups have not been receiving the compensatory payments that, according to the truck loading guidelines, are supposed to be distributed between them for trucks that are payloaded. This money too, they are certain, ends up in Budhram and Chitu's pockets. Such avarice, for Siamlal, is an unavoidable consequence of the possibility, and temptation, of increased profits, stemming from

small portion of this commission, while senior members like Budhram and Chitu receive a more considerable share.

the arrival of Pandu Project and related economic opportunities. Like individualised consumption by young coal peddlers – and especially, as I discuss in Chapter 6, CCL-employed Santals – this is another enunciation of what older Santals in particular see as the deleterious impact of "coal money" on moralities. "When people see gold", Siamlal proclaimed, "their minds become poisoned and their behaviour changes".

Second, villagers believe that the coal sale committee – and the commissions it receives – involves a good deal of nepotism. In Karampot, community representatives for the committee have been selected by Budhram; they mostly include people who, as Shiv said, are "somehow close to Budhram", which is how they have earned these positions. Ramprashad, for example, who is a committee member, had used to assist Budhram with disseminating information in the village about JMM's political rallies in the area. While they enjoy commissions from the loading of trucks, community representatives like Ramprashad are in fact not required to do any actual work in the committee, apart from attending sporadic committee meetings. Overall, the de facto control of *netas* over the committee, and the profits they make through it,⁸⁸ is one way in which Siamlal and other villagers feel that *netas* like Budhram have effectively taken a stake in Pandu Project, and are collaborating with it instead of working for the benefit of the community. I explore Budhram's position vis-à-vis CCL, and its implications for local patronage and politics, in Chapters 7 and 8.

While, as I have noted, accusations of corruption by *netas* around truck loading are tricky to evaluate, the case with loading supervisors is much more clear-cut. Much of the loading work that villages do get takes place as part of a procedure known as *adkati* (or 'splitting'), specified in the truck loading guidelines. *Adkati* refers to a situation in which a loading group that has been booked for loading does not show up in the depot – for instance because some of its members are ill, away from the village, or otherwise unavailable for work. In such a case, the loading supervisor calls another, substitute loading group that can make it to the depot at a short notice. This substitute group, however, only receives 50 percent of the standard loading wage,

⁸⁸ Chitu, for instance, is known locally to be the 'boss' of the coal sale committee – which also contributes to his political power and status in the area. If any issues arise around the sale of coal, coal traders told me, they go not to CCL but to Chitu, who can interact with the company on their behalf.

with the other 50 percent going to the loading group that had been assigned the work initially.

But many instances of *adkati*, Shiv and other interlocutors pointed out, are actually bogus, and contrived by supervisors so that they can pay labourers only half the wage and pocket the other half (or 1,200 rupees) themselves. Indeed, a reputedly common scam is for supervisors to simply not inform the intended loading group about the work to begin with; call another group in its place, which is paid only half the wage; and keep the other half to themselves. The point, in short, is that with *adkati* loading supervisors have more room for manoeuvre, and can more easily "eat up", as villagers say, a portion of labourers' wages. While the scope of this allegedly common practice is difficult to gauge, we can at the very least be sure of its existence – as openly conceded to me by several young (non-*adivasi*) supervisors that I got to know in the depot. "Corruption is everywhere", they said with a twinge of amusement; "everybody does it, so we do it too".

The view that problems around truck loading work boil down to *netas* and supervisors playing the system is indeed widespread: while the former profit personally from payloading at the expense of hand-loading, the latter do so from *adkati* work. In different ways, both "are eating up money" that should in fact reach villagers. My interlocutors' moral critique of such corrupt practices – especially by their own *netas* – is embedded within a broader discourse about increasing individualisation and self-seeking, which I explore in more depth in Chapters 6 and 7. This critique is underpinned by ideas of a more egalitarian kind of redistribution, for the benefit of the community rather than particular individuals. In the context of truck loading, these ideas are counterposed with the perceived unfairness of this work, in which villagers feel exploited by both *netas* and loading supervisors as rentiers at different levels.

Truck loading and women labourers

For the different reasons outlined so far – and compared to peddling coal – truck loading is generally considered by villagers a less appealing form of work: not as profitable as coal peddling, less accessible and reliable, and more precarious and exploitative. While coal peddling is a more localised and independent operation,

truck loading is contingent on a wider set of fluctuating variables – from production levels to coal dealers – and mediated through *netas* and loading supervisors. Indeed, the various hassles involved in truck loading work have led a number of women I know in Karampot, such as Maiko, to give it up entirely. With limited returns, and the difficulties entailed, these women prefer to avoid truck loading altogether and only peddle coal with their husbands. But most villagers – and women in particular, who comprise the majority of truck loading labourers – still participate in this work whenever the opportunity presents itself. Why, then, despite all the challenges and with coal peddling as an alternative, do people keep engaging in truck loading as a supplementary form of work? I consider several possible explanations, ending with the one that I believe is the most pertinent.

First, while truck loading is less reliable than coal peddling, the latter's stability too is only relative, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Indeed, the ability to peddle coal depends on several factors outside of villagers' control that can at times limit their access to this resource. Coal peddling, as my interlocutors said, offers "no guarantee", and in this context truck loading is seen as a complementary source of income that should be utilised whenever possible. Truck loading, moreover, is not as physically arduous as pushing coal – which means that men who are temporarily unable to do the latter can still participate in the former. Jagdis, for instance, who had taken a break from pushing coal after becoming ill with tuberculosis, was still able to load trucks in the depot – and earn some cash – during his period of recovery. Young teenagers, too, who are not yet strong enough to push coal, take part in truck loading as a way to earn a casual wage – sometimes in loading groups that consist mostly of boys and girls.

Second, truck loading, which is done in a group, bears a social aspect that coal peddling sometimes lacks. While the gathering of coal for peddling is also often done in small groups, the coking and packing, which constitute a major part of the work, are carried out by just one or two persons from the household, and the pushing of coal is always undertaken by men on their own. This, as Shiv once remarked, can get rather dull. Loading a truck in a group, on the other hand, is like "working with friends", and can diversify an otherwise tedious and repetitive work routine. Indeed, during the truck loading work sessions in which I participated – offering my clumsy

assistance to labourers in the depot – women would often humorously rib one another to "hurry up the work", and me for my poor truck loading skills.

However, the most significant point, it seems to me – also in light of the preponderance of women among labourers – is the fact that truck loading allows women access to independent wages. These, in turn, allow women more financial and social autonomy. Anthropologists of gender and labour have pointed to the ways in which female participation in particular forms of work can be linked to wishes for autonomy (Mills 1995, 2007; Prentice 2015). In Karampot, I propose that such wishes are, at least in part, advanced through truck loading wages, which enable women labourers to reduce their dependence on their husbands and brothers, and reinforce their role in household decision-making.⁸⁹

In coal peddling, while women have an indispensable role in the work process, it is the men who do the selling and receive the payment for the coal they deliver. And while it is true, as I noted in the previous chapter, that men usually hand over to their wives (or mothers) the better part of the earnings, they also retain a portion of these for themselves. Siamlal, for instance, remarked to me more than once with disapproval how Shiv fritters away his coal peddling money on card games, while his house's kitchen is short of basic supplies such as mustard oil or sugar. Indeed, women cannot always know, or indeed have control over, exactly how much of coal peddling income reaches the household budget, and how much of it is kept by their husbands for individual spending.

Truck loading wages, on the other hand, are delivered to each labourer directly, which allows women to earn (and spend) independently. They can decide how much of this wage to allocate to household maintenance, or saving; and how much of it to use as pin money – for purchasing a few shampoo packets from the shop, or bangles from one of the hawkers that occasionally pass through the village. For younger,

⁸⁹ As I describe in Chapter 6, the situation is very different among women in households with CCL employment. In these households, women's financial dependence on their husbands – who receive their CCL salaries directly into their bank accounts – is significantly greater. While a minority of women in CCL-employed households still participate in truck loading as a means to alleviate this dependence, the majority of them do not engage in any work outside the household.

unmarried women, too, truck loading provides access to cash for such expenses – and in some cases, for school textbooks – which they would otherwise have to ask from male members of the household. Parmeshwar's younger sister, for example, who gathers the coal that he peddles, normally has to ask him for money whenever she wishes to buy something for herself. When she goes to load a truck, on the other hand, she earns money that she can use independently without having to rely on her brother.

In the Indian context, the fact that *adivasi* women engage in wage labour is in itself significant, and generally at variance with rural caste society. Unlike their caste counterparts, *adivasi* women have traditionally been involved in both agriculture and casual wage labour, and enjoy a relatively high social status (Carrin-Bouez 1993; Devalle 1992; George 2014; Higham & Shah 2013; Shah 2018a). In Karampot, participation in truck loading work contributes to women's ability to maintain this status. In the ways I have described, truck loading enables women more financial – and relatedly, social – autonomy, especially in the household. In our conversations, women like Puja and Savitha expressed a sense of accomplishment about going out to work and earning on their own "instead of sitting at home all day"; their cash wages were, ultimately, a source of satisfaction, and could be spent in whichever way they saw fit – whether on the household or children, or as pocket money for personal purchases.

Truck loading work, however, is unstable and irregular, and women's access to independent wages through it ultimately hinges on the myriad shifting factors that determine the availability of this work – from production rhythms in the mine to those of the industries that buy coal from the dealers. The fluctuations of truck loading in time therefore generate a waxing and waning of *adivasi* women's ability to assert and sustain their economic independence in the household. Women's direct access to wages, in other words, and consequently to certain forms of autonomy, remains precarious in time. The status of *netas* like Budhram, by contrast – who hold a formal, permanent position in the coal sale committee – has been enhanced through truck loading operations in much more fixed ways, as I discuss in Chapters 7 and 8.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with wage labour in Pandu Project's coal sale depot, in which most Karampot households engage occasionally in addition to peddling coal. The discussion of truck loading work has progressed in two stages. First, it described the various challenges this work presents to villagers, and considered the ways in which the provision of wage labour to the mining-affected has resulted in a chain of brokerage and rentiership by *netas* and loading supervisors. *Netas* like Budhram are now effectively in control of the local coal sale committee and receive commissions through it, while loading supervisors manipulate the quota system to intercept labourers' wages. The discussion of brokerage by Santal *netas* in relation to Pandu Project, and the critique it elicits from villagers, will be carried forward in Chapter 7 in connection with CCL's compensatory employment policy. Nonetheless, the current chapter's account of villagers' moral critique of *netas*, in the context of truck loading, already illuminates elements of a more egalitarian *adivasi* ethic (Bailey 1961; Shah 2018a). This critique is aimed primarily at *netas* from Santals' own community, whom villagers believe are acting for their personal gain instead of the collective benefit.

Second, furthering the discussion on the meanings of precarious work, the chapter has considered the reasons for people's participation in truck loading wage labour. If truck loading is scarce and irregular, does not pay very well, and means working under others, why do villagers – and particularly women – still engage in it? The answer, I have suggested, revolves among other things around the access to independent wages that truck loading – unlike coal peddling – enables women. Despite its adverse terms and conditions, truck loading is an economic activity that allows women more control over the purse and, consequently, a greater degree of autonomy. The paucity of truck loading work and siphoning of wages by loading supervisors are thus detrimental not only to villagers' livelihoods, but more specifically to women's economic and social independence.

While direct access to wages, I have proposed, is one reason that spurs women to engage in truck loading work, their participation in this irregular work can only take place in a context where it can be combined with coal peddling, as a steadier source of household income. As pointed out by Bernstein (2006, 2008, 2010), this shows

the need to think of people not through rigid categories of 'petty commodity production' or 'wage labour'. Rather, we should consider the distinct, interlacing forms of labour that make up individuals' and households' livelihood strategies – not only in different periods but also concurrently. We should also, however, pay attention to the varied considerations that inflect people's weighing of the benefits and drawbacks of different forms of precarious work. In this context, this chapter has sought to illustrate how factors like household and gender dynamics can influence livelihood decisions by classes of labour along a spectrum of informal labour practices.

Whereas other scholars have also examined issues of autonomy and gender in relation to labour (e.g. Mills 1997, 2007; Prentice 2015), I have here stressed the particular gender dynamics of how earnings are paid. I have suggested that direct payment of wages to individual women (as in truck loading) can have an impact on whether or not they take part in a particular form of labour – especially in situations where earnings are otherwise delivered to men, despite women's pivotal role in the work process (as in coal peddling). In Karampot, though, such direct payment of wages depends on production- and demand-related factors that fluctuate in time, rendering the independence that women draw from it temporally precarious.

V. Migration

Sukhram was removing the upper layer of coal dust from his coking pile, which had been burning overnight, and sweeping the coal from it into five large plastic bags. Once the bags were full, I helped him stitch the open ends with a needle and thread, to keep the coal from slipping out, and we sat down on the ground to rest before loading the bags onto Sukhram's bicycle. Staring at the slow stream of coal pushers passing in front of us on their way to the highway, I took advantage of our break to ask Sukhram more about how he and his family had ended up in Karampot. Unlike the majority of Karampot's inhabitants, Sukhram is neither Santal nor originally from the village. Rather, he is a Nayak, one of Jharkhand's low castes, and had arrived in Karampot as a child from his native village in Ranchi district⁹⁰.

Of Karampot's 146 households, 31 (or 21 percent) are non-Santal, and belong to either other low-caste, or *dalit*, groups such as Nayak, Bhuiya, and Chamar; or other *adivasi* tribes such as Karmali, Munda, Mahli, and Oraon. While the Santals constitute Karampot's native population – and can usually trace their lineages four generations back, to the time of the village's inception – Sukhram came to the village only in the 1970s. He had travelled to Karampot with his parents, who had left their home village to seek work as casual labourers in Karampot's quondam private mines. Sukhram's parents spent a few years cutting coal underground, before the private mines were shut as part of the industry's nationalisation. Eventually, they returned to their native village, to till the patch of land they still had there. Sukhram and his brother Birsa, however – who were, respectively, 17 and 20 years old at the time – decided to stay on in Karampot. There was no work in their home village, only subsistence agriculture on a shrinking family plot, which provided just enough rice grains (*dhan*) for the household but no cash crops. Karampot, on the other hand – in which Sukhram and Birsa had by now already spent a number of years – offered the possibility of coal for peddling, which overall seemed like a far better option.

Sukhram's story is characteristic of Karampot's non-Santal families, who are concentrated in three clusters of houses in the village. Virtually all of them had come to Karampot in the 1970s and 1980s as mining labour migrants, mostly from Ranchi

⁹⁰ A neighbouring district to Ramgarh, where Karampot is located.

district but also other parts of Jharkhand and even neighbouring states such as Chhattisgarh. This influx of tribal and low-caste labourers complicates a common narrative about the social effects of mining in India after nationalisation. This narrative, on the one hand, rightfully highlights the mining-induced displacement of *adivasi* and low-caste groups (Areeparampil 1996; Bennet & McDowell 2012; Mathur 2013). When it comes to migration *into* the coal tracts, however, the focus lies almost exclusively on the post-nationalisation inrush into mining areas of more dominant outsider groups: caste Hindus who wished to capture profits from the coal industry, especially once it began offering public sector jobs (Devalle 1992: Chapter 3; Sengupta 1979: 34-45; Simeon 1999: 71). Yet, as the history of Karampot shows, mining had not only displaced but also pulled in *adivasis* and *dalits* from outside the locality, who had sought wage labour opportunities in the collieries.

The current chapter, in this context, is concerned with the disparities that have emerged in Karampot between non-Santal migrants and local Santals. In different ways, non-Santals households in Karampot – who despite their decade-long presence in the village are still considered outsiders – find themselves in a considerably more precarious position than their Santal counterparts. Non-Santals' precarity, the chapter shows, stems in particular from their lack of own land in Karampot – agricultural or that even that on which their houses stand – and surfaces not only in economic terms but also space and time (see Bear 2011; Ferguson & Li 2018; Harms 2011, 2013). First, non-Santals' landlessness in Karampot means that, unlike Santals, they cannot rely on agriculture for food production; have to allocate earnings from coal peddling for basic subsistence; and thus, to boost their income and be able to save, are compelled to migrate for wage labour out of Karampot for months at a time. Landlessness, in other words, results for non-Santals not only in a circumscribed ability to save from local work but also, consequently, in temporary labour migration, which creates a fragmented temporal and spatial present.

Second, non-Santals' landlessness has significant ramifications for their future. In case of dispossession and/or displacement for mining – which villagers in Karampot believe is ultimately inexorable – it is ownership of land that would in the first instance determine who is entitled to, or excluded from, compensatory benefits for land loss such as employment. While landed Santals, at least in theory, would have a

chance at this kind of *naukri*, landless non-Santals would be excepted from any such recompense altogether. Their future in Karampot is thus rendered especially precarious, and this in turn spurs them to try and secure land for themselves elsewhere. By exploring these issues, the chapter explores the ways in which people's experiences of space and time – in this case, Santals vis-à-vis non-Santals – are linked to their socioeconomic positionalities and livelihood strategies in a particular political economy.



Figure 10: A Nayak villager in the coking ground

Coal migration

Somra, an older Munda and one of Sukhram's neighbours, could not remember how old he was when he had first arrived in Karampot. He did recall, however, leaving his native village, on the outskirts of Ranchi city, at a "young age", when his moustache had still been "very small". Somra could also recount how he had been brought to Karampot by a man who had shown up in his village "to collect people for work" – presumably one of the labour contractors who had been central to the labour-intensive private mining industry (De Haan 1995; Simeon 1999; Simmons 1976b).

Like most non-Santals who had come to Karampot, Somra had been prompted to leave his home village and seek work in the mines by two main factors. First, the

scanty size of his household's agricultural plot in the village, following the generational division of family land between the male siblings. And second, the paucity of wage labour opportunities, which had created financial difficulties for the household. For other non-Santals, too, scarcity of both land and work had been the most common cause of migration to Karampot's private collieries,⁹¹ where they earned piece rates according to the amount of coal they could cut.

The private mines in Karampot, on their part, were in need of workers from outside the immediate area, for as a source of labour the local Santal population did not suffice. Santals, firstly, had their own land to farm, which during sowing and harvest periods made them less available for mining work.⁹² Secondly, as I describe in the next chapter, a not insubstantial number of Santals who had worked in the area's private mines *prior* to nationalisation had obtained CCL jobs following it, as part of the absorption of private collieries' labour by the state. All non-Santals, on the other hand, arrived in Karampot *after* nationalisation, thereby missing the window of opportunity to become incorporated into public sector employment in mining. Some labour contractors, nonetheless, created the spurious impression for them that they too could eventually gain permanent, public sector mining jobs, as a way to keep them as labourers in the private collieries.

Sometimes, labour contractors would bring to the mines large groups of people from the same village, including whole families. Tundwah, for instance, a Munda who had arrived in Karampot as a teenager with his parents, had worked together with them in the colliery as part of a 'mining gang' (Simeon 1996; Simmons 1976b). In these, the men would cut the coal, and the women and children would carry it overground.⁹³

⁹¹ In some cases, this had been supplemented by other reasons to leave one's home, alluding to the range of factors – not only economic – that can drive people to migrate (see Shah 2006). Bichu, for example, another Munda, had left his house in Ranchi district for Karampot after a bitter dispute with one of his brothers, about Bichu's predilection for alcohol and card games.

⁹² The 'agricultural character' of miners, and consequent lack of commitment to colliery work, had been a concern for India's mining industry already in its incipient stages (Ghosh 1977; Read 1931: Chapter 5; Seth 1940).

⁹³ As noted in Chapter 2, this pattern of family labour had been customary in Chotanagpur's early mines (Cotton et al. 1909a; Corbridge 1993; Devalle 1992; Seth 1940; Simmons 1976b). The mining

When migrant labourers went to visit their home villages and shared stories about their work in the mines, on their return to Karampot they would often be joined by relatives and/or friends who were also seeking earning opportunities. Sukhram's parents, for example, had followed in the footsteps of his uncle, who had arrived in Karampot first and told them about mining work being available. Indeed, a good number of my non-Santal interlocutors do not only originate from the same villages, but belong to the same extended families.

Regardless of how they had made their way to Karampot, the influx of migrant *adivasis* and *dalits* into the village had been, as my older interlocutors described, notable in scale. Somra, for instance, recalled scores of *jhopri* (makeshift) shacks set up by migrant labourers, stretching across a large (and previously empty) area of the village. Gradually, some of the *jhopri* shacks were replaced with more durable mud structures, constructed – and today still inhabited – by those non-Santals who decided to stay on in Karampot. Non-Santals' houses were all built, illicitly, on vacant *gair majurwa* land that did not formally belong to any of the Santal households.⁹⁴ Indeed, having left their own family land behind, none of the non-Santals have any land of their own in Karampot – which, as I show below, has rendered their lives in Karampot particularly precarious.

Making a home

From the late 1970s, with nationalisation progressively expanding its reach, Karampot's private collieries were gradually forced to shut down. Many of their non-Santal labourers, however, were not in haste to return to their native villages, where there was no work waiting for them. Rather, having already spent several years in Karampot, they opted to stay put, and take advantage of a new livelihood opportunity with coal that soon presented itself. As I described in Chapter 3, the private mines' underground pits remained open, and villagers – both non-Santal and Santal – began descending into them to cut coal and peddle it in Karampot's vicinity. A few years later, once Pandu Project commenced operations, villagers started gathering

gangs had usually been supervised by the contractors themselves, who had not only recruited labour but also organised it on site (ibid.; De Haan 1995; Simeon 1999).

⁹⁴ Nevertheless, some non-Santals told me they had asked for permission from Santal elders to construct houses on this land, which was thought to be informally under Santal jurisdiction.

the coal from its depot yard, making coal peddling comparatively simpler to carry out and increasing its prevalence as a local means of livelihood.

Indeed, this relatively accessible, steady, and profitable work – compared to other types of informal labour – served as a significant incentive for non-Santals to stay in Karampot. Some of the older ones did, eventually, return to their native villages, where they still had a family plot they did not want to abandon.⁹⁵ Others, however, chose to stick around in Karampot. They had, by then, already spent a significant number of years in the village, built a house, and had children who had grown up peddling coal. A few of the older non-Santals, like Somra, were not even sure they still had a home to go back to – namely, that their old house in their native village was still intact after years of unoccupancy, or that they would be welcomed back after years of being away. Among the younger-generation non-Santals – who, like Sukhram, had come to Karampot as children – the motivation to settle in Karampot was even stronger. These were young people who had spent most of their lives in Karampot, and started their own families in the village; Karampot was, by now, more home to them than their native villages, which they had left at a young age. What is more, coal peddling provided a far better livelihood option than what they could expect in those villages, away from the coal tracts, where scarcity of both land and work opportunities portended a grim economic future. "Where you can make a living, you stay", Sukhram summarised the matter.

In addition to peddling coal, Sukhram and other non-Santals, like their Santal peers, go to load trucks in Pandu Project's coal sale depot whenever this work is available. In the rice harvesting season, they also sometimes work on Santals' fields, a job that Santal youngsters are ever less inclined to do themselves. This work is usually done in exchange for a share of the crops or, more rarely, for a daily wage, from CCL-employed Santals who can afford paying cash. In the absence of own land, in other words, Karampot's non-Santals have only their manual labour to rely on. This, as I discuss next, makes it more difficult for them to save and accumulate from their work.

⁹⁵ Some of these elders, however, ended up coming back to Karampot later on, to be cared for by their children who had settled there in the meantime.

The significance of land

On the surface, in terms of livelihoods the difference between Karampot's landed coal-peddling Santals and landless coal-peddling non-Santals might not seem all that critical. Land fragmentation over generations has resulted in marginal landholdings – typically under two acres – for nearly all Santal households. Combined with the lack of irrigation and absolute dependence on rainfall, this makes it impossible to engage in any agricultural activity but monoculture subsistence farming. Santals usually work on their fields only several weeks a year – during the sowing, transplanting, and harvesting season – and rely primarily on coal peddling for their income. Farming, in other words, appears to have only a limited contribution to their overall livelihoods – a view that is reinforced by local perceptions about ongoing agricultural decline. Not only have plots been decreasing in size but, according to my Santal interlocutors, the amounts of grain crops have also been diminishing, owing to both waning rains and pollution from the mine.⁹⁶ Younger Santals in particular are increasingly less keen to engage in agriculture, and prefer focusing their efforts on peddling coal and earning cash.

This notion of the declining importance of land as a means of livelihood is consonant with a broader narrative of agrarian crisis in India (Lerche 2011; Shah & Harriss-White 2011). As has been observed in different parts of the country (e.g. Axelby 2017; Thakur 2017), population growth and generational land division have resulted in reduced agricultural productivity levels, and the erosion of the role of land in rural household reproduction. In line with this, the distinction between households with and without land in Karampot is not, for example, as glaring as that between households with and without *naukri*, which I discuss in the next chapter. And yet, as I now turn to illustrate, land ownership in Karampot carries significance in several important, but perhaps more nuanced, ways – even in a context of agricultural decline and especially in one of dispossession.

First, Santals' land provides a link to the ancestors – those in the lineage who had cleared the forest and first settled in Karampot – and sense of belonging (see Sinha

⁹⁶ In this, villagers might not be wrong: mining is known to adversely affect groundwater table levels and, consequently, land productivity (Mishra 2014). According to Pandu Project documents, too, the colliery's expected environmental impact includes land degradation in the surrounding area.

1990). This land-based affinity marks Santals' undisputed autochthonous status in the village and, by contrast, non-Santals' outsider status. Indeed, while villagers from the two groups peddle coal alongside one other, and quite a few of them have friendly and even brotherly (*bhaichara*) relations, non-Santals are still referred to by Santals as "*baharia*" – outsiders. This distinction is connected with different forms of separation between Santals and non-Santals: intermarriages, for instance, are very rare,⁹⁷ and non-Santals generally do not attend any of the Santal festivals in the village. "As far as Santals are concerned", Sukhram once remarked, "we might as well have come here from Pakistan".

Non-Santals' landlessness and concomitant outsidership also produce different forms of exclusion. Towards the end of my fieldwork, for example, small concrete toilette cabins started popping up next to houses in the village, as part of a public rural sanitation scheme. Virtually all of them, however, were being built next to Santal houses. When I asked Sukhram about this, he did not seem surprised. "We are outsiders here", he said, "like second-class residents, so it's more difficult to get into government programmes ... Some Santals would tell the block development officer⁹⁸ that we are not from here, and we would be placed last on the list, if at all. Santals are jealous that some of us have managed to make a good living here, sometimes even more than them, so they do these things".

Sukhram had encountered similar frustrations when he had tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain a government Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration card, which provides access to subsidised food grains. When the block development officer had come to the village to compile a list of BLP beneficiaries, Sukhram told me, a few Santals had asked him not to include non-Santals' names. "Because we have no land here", Sukhram said, "they thought we shouldn't get such benefits ... For many of us, this is a problem: if you don't own land and the papers for it, where could you have a toilet built, or water tank, or anything else?". There is overall a strong sense among non-Santals that

⁹⁷ I know only of one case of such intermarriage, which did not go smoothly: the Santal's man family had been opposed to the relationship, and only reluctantly accepted it once the non-Santal woman became pregnant.

⁹⁸ The officer in charge of the implementation of development programmes by the block office, the most localised unit of district administration.

Karampot is, ultimately, Santal territory, in which their access to resources is more constricted – whether to state benefits or even, as I describe below, the forest around the village.

The second way in which land is significant is that, while agriculture in itself does not generate cash earnings, it does allow to more easily accumulate from *other* work, namely coal peddling. It was often pointed out by my interlocutors, both non-Santal and Santal, that having agriculture as a subsistence base is essential to being able to not only earn but also save from peddling coal. Indeed, cultivation provides for Santals most basic subsistence needs, which means that earnings from coal peddling can be utilised for other purposes – whether private school fees for their children or saving up to build a *pukka* brick house, as was discussed in Chapter 3. Babulal, for example, a Santal coal peddler we met in that chapter, had recently started constructing such a house. When I enquired how he had managed to save enough money for this, Babulal said: "we have land that grows *dhan* and some vegetables so I don't have to spend too much on food, and can use the money from coal for other things ... People who don't have land have to buy all the food for the house, and are left in the end with less money". Non-Santals, too, mentioned their lack of agricultural land in Karampot as the main reason why, compared to Santals, it is more difficult for them to save from coal peddling. This, in turn, is what drives many of them to temporarily labour-migrate out of Karampot, as I discuss in the next section.

If subsistence farming is still so important, I wondered, why did none of my non-Santal interlocutors try to reclaim and work patches of unused *gair majurwa* land in the village, as some Santals had done?^{99,100} Non-Santals, it turned out, are wary of engaging in any cultivation of *gair majurwa* land – fearing not only disapproval by Santals but also the local police, who might accuse them of illegal land

⁹⁹ Santals, of course, have their own *raity* land, but some households have extended their fields or vegetable gardens to include additional small patches of common *gair majurwa* land.

¹⁰⁰ Many non-Santals still have a plot of family land in their native village, tilled by other family members. While some of them occasionally go to visit – and, during the agricultural season, might even help with cultivation for a few days – they generally do not carry any *dhan* back with them to Karampot due to the distance.

encroachment. Non-Santals' access to the forest in Karampot is similarly restricted. Like their Santal counterparts, some of the non-Santal women prepare and sell *mahua* wine, made from distilled *mahua* flowers. But while Santal women normally pick these in the forest in Karampot, non-Santal women buy theirs from the market. As one older Munda woman explained, "the *mahua* trees here belong to Santals, who would tell us off if we plucked the flowers from them".

The third way in which land is perceived as valuable, especially by older Santals, is as a more fixed, long-term asset. The security provided by land as a form of property, for them, stands in contrast to the precarity and impermanence of coal peddling – stemming from its physical toll on the body, illegality,¹⁰¹ and finitude of coal as a resource. Land, in this context, is regarded as a prophylactic safety net: "you can't eat coal", as Siamlal put it, whereas "with land you can be sure you will at least have food to survive". This makes land, for Siamlal, more valuable than not only coal peddling but even a *naukri*, which too "is only for a limited amount of time", until retirement or redundancy, and in any case only for the course of one generation. Any kind of employment, in other words, as well as the cash it generates, is only transient; land, on the other hand, is more durable, and represents self-reliance. "Others might have money or jobs", Siamlal said, "but *adivasis* only have their land to count on".

This long-term dependability of land would seem to be undercut by the fact that land in the Karampot area is generally susceptible to requisition through mining. However, it is precisely in this context that, for younger-generation Santals, land has come to carry a different kind of significance. Coal, villagers are certain, still lies under Karampot's soil – evidenced for instance by the wafts of smoke that sometimes rise from cracks in the ground, as a result of underground coal-seam fires. Villagers therefore believe that Karampot too, like Dharutar, will sooner or later be submerged by CCL's expanding mining operations, either as part of Pandu Project or a new

¹⁰¹ The local view that coal belongs to the state might help explain why, whereas non-Santals' access to land and forest resources is restricted, they are still able to gather coal for peddling alongside Santals. While land and forests are considered the collective customary property of the Santal community, coal is regarded as a subsoil resource that belongs to the government.

colliery.¹⁰² In relation to this belief, land has become imbued with novel, prospective value: in case of dispossession and/or displacement, losing land would entitle its owner to compensation from CCL – potentially a coveted public sector job (*sarkari naukri*). As I discuss in more detail in the next two chapters, losing land for mining is perceived by my interlocutors as practically the only way to gain such employment – aspired for especially by younger Santals, as a means not only to economic security but the pursuit of middle-class aspirations. For them, while agriculture is increasingly unattractive, land is now charged with new, future-oriented worth as a resource that can – if and when expropriated by the state – allow them to gain permanent compensatory employment.

Take, for example, Janki, who belongs to Karampot's earliest lineages and whose landholdings in the village are the largest. Currently, my interlocutors pointed out, Janki's land does not translate into affluence; it is not sizable enough to produce any agricultural surplus, and consequently does not generate any cash. But when mining operations reach the village, they said, Janki is likely to become the wealthiest – through the multiple jobs his dispossessed land will engender for the household. Contrary to the common trope of enduring tribal attachment to land as a way of life (Li 2014; Shah 2010: Chapters 1 and 4),¹⁰³ the situation in Karampot reveals how expectations of land requisition, in conjunction with compensatory employment schemes,¹⁰⁴ can contribute to a shift in tribal people's relations with land as a resource, and more specifically give rise to new, commodified perceptions of it. Indeed, for younger-generation Santals in particular, land has come to be valued less as a tangible agrarian asset, and more as a potential means to gain future employment through prospective dispossession.

Anticipating their eventual displacement, as was the fate of Dharutar, villagers in Karampot live in a state similar to what Erik Harms has described as 'eviction time':

¹⁰² As far as I could understand from Pandu Project's officers, there are currently no concrete plans to expand the colliery's operations onto Karampot's tracts. The point, however, is that this is what villagers believe will ultimately happen, which affects their perception of their land.

¹⁰³ For examples, see Ghosh (2006), Heuzé (1996: 47), and Singh (1966).

¹⁰⁴ As I expand on in Chapter 7, the fact that CCL's compensation policy offers, at least on paper, permanent jobs is significant.

"the complex assortment of temporalities" that can arise in a situation of looming displacement (2013: 346). Eviction time, in other words, refers to people's different attitudes to, and experiences of, the time leading up to displacement, which are conditioned by the forms of labour and livelihoods in which they are involved (Harms 2011, 2013). Indeed, the ways in which Santals and non-Santals perceive and engage with time, in the context of expected displacement, are different, and shaped by their distinct socioeconomic positionalities and livelihood strategies in the political economy of mining. For Santals, envisaged future dispossession evokes, simultaneously, both worries and aspirations:¹⁰⁵ on the one hand, apprehension about a scenario of denuded, barren village landscape, with mining pits and overburden dumps instead of farmland and houses; but on the other hand, hopes of public sector compensatory employment and associated livelihood security.

For non-Santals, however, the element of hope is mostly lacking, and the possibility of eviction is tied to a more impoverished and insecure future. Without any land to be recompensed for, for non-Santals displacement would mean unmitigated eviction, with no prospect of jobs or any other compensatory benefits to cushion the fall. Not only had non-Santals missed out on CCL jobs following nationalisation, having arrived in Karampot too late, but they also would not be able to gain such jobs through displacement. "In a few years", Somra told me, pointing at the cluster of non-Santal houses next to his, "mining will come here and all this will be gone ... We could try asking CCL to at least give us a place to stay, but we'll probably have to leave and go somewhere else". Well aware of their situation, for non-Santals the expansion of mining thus generates not hopes but an enhanced sense of precarity and finality. Their time in Karampot, non-Santals believe, is ultimately limited – which is also why, as I discuss later on, some of them have been attempting to secure a landed future for themselves elsewhere.

¹⁰⁵ See Gardner (2018) and Cross (2014) for similar observations in other contexts of land dispossession.

Work migration from Karampot

As I have described, coal peddling generally constitutes for non-Santals a better livelihood option than those available in their native villages. But at the same time, their lack of land in Karampot and, consequently, more limited ability to accumulate from peddling coal, have driven many of them to seek to increase their income through temporary labour migration outside the village. Such migration is a vast phenomenon in India, and has received considerable scholarly attention (e.g. Breman 1985; Breman et al. 2009; De Haan 1994; Carswell & De Neve 2013; Chari 2006; Picherit 2012, 2014; Rogaly 1999; Rogaly & Thieme 2012; Rogaly et al. 2004). *Adivasis* in particular, alongside *dalits*, make up a significant portion of migrant workers (Shah & Lerche 2017), and central-eastern states such as Jharkhand have served as a repository of migrant labour for different parts of the country (Breman 2007; Breman & Guérin 2009; Guérin 2009; Lerche 1999; Shah & Harriss-White 2011; Shah et al. 2017; Srivastava 2005).

The situation in Karampot represents an exception to this general trend. By contrast with findings from other Jharkhandi villages that reported a high migration prevalence – in some cases, in a third up to half of all households (e.g. Dayal & Karan 2003; Shah 2006) – migration among Karampot's Santal population is a much rarer phenomenon. Of all Santal households in the village, I know only of about a dozen in which members – always youngsters – have in recent years spent significant periods of time working outside the village. These low migration rates are attributed by my Santal interlocutors to the local availability of coal for peddling, which provides most villagers in Karampot with a comparatively steady and remunerative livelihood, and thus reduces the need to leave the village in search of work.

Some younger Santals, mostly in their teenage years, still leave Karampot for periods of a few months at a time to work in construction and other worksites in cities like Hyderabad and Bangalore. But, contrary to how labour migration has most often been understood (e.g. Breman 1985; Mosse et al. 2002; Shah et al. 1990), young Santals' is not driven by acute economic strain. Rather, these youngsters had become weary, or bored, of peddling coal, and are keen to explore new places, roam around,

and gather experiences outside the village.¹⁰⁶ "How many days can you spend loading coal on bicycles?", replied one of them when I asked why he had left Karampot for six months to work in a packaging factory in Delhi. Other reasons to labour-migrate, as I discussed in Chapter 3, include the eventual depletion of coal for peddling, locally, and the wish to become engaged in a different, potentially more sustainable form of work. Suraj, as we may recall from that chapter, had travelled to Hyderabad to work on electricity poles, which he hoped would allow him to gain experience in another vocation, and not be solely dependent on peddling coal.

Overall, though, labour migration by Santals in Karampot is relatively minor, in large part due to the accessibility of coal for peddling as a local form of livelihood. My interlocutors' earlier statements about the role of farming, however, seem to indicate that it is in fact the combination of coal peddling *and* agriculture that contribute to lower migration rates among Santals. It is this composition, as I have noted, that allows Santals to gain most of their sustenance from their land, and thereby direct a larger portion of coal peddling earnings to needs and aspirations beyond immediate subsistence.

Non-Santals, conversely, do not engage in any farming, and indeed migration rates among them are notably higher. It is non-Santals' landlessness, I propose – and, more specifically, consequent difficulties in accumulating from coal peddling – that prompt them to labour-migrate, to try to augment their income and be able to save.¹⁰⁷ This is not to deny the existence of other factors that can drive non-Santals to migrate. Some of them, similarly to younger Santals, are eager to discover new places and experiences outside the village as well as Jharkhand. But, for non-Santals such as Sukhram, the decision to labour-migrate is bound up with their more precarious livelihood circumstances in Karampot. While non-Santals' migration, too, is not impelled by dire economic pressure, it is spurred by their inability to accumulate locally, from coal peddling, which in turn stems from their landlessness.

¹⁰⁶ See also Shah (2006) on *adivasi* migration, and Mains (2007) on migration by young Ethiopian men.

¹⁰⁷ Harking back to Chapter 4, this further stresses the ways in which villagers move between a range of informal labour categories: non-Santals are not only local petty commodity producers (as coal peddlers) and wage labourers (as truck loaders), but also labour migrants.

Both Sukhram and his brother Birsa have, over the past years, spent extended periods – usually up to six months at a time – working in construction and road paving in a Border Security Force (BSF)¹⁰⁸ camp in Rajasthan. Sukhram and Birsa had first arrived in the camp through the former's brother-in-law, who had previously worked for a labour contractor from the area. The next time they went, they brought with them a few other non-Santals from Karampot, mostly from the houses neighbouring theirs. A considerable number of non-Santals from the village have since been introduced – through Sukhram, Birsa, and others – to this migratory wage labour, and spent time in the same BSF camp. It is usually men who migrate, though their wives sometimes join them to participate in the work. When Sukhram and Birsa go to Rajasthan, for example, the latter's wife travels with them, whereas Sukhram's wife stays in Karampot to take care of the children of both households. She receives money sent by Sukhram and Birsa for this purpose – and, in addition, manages to earn from selling coal in Karampot. Like other non-Santal women in the village whose husbands (or brothers) away for work, Sukhram's wife gathers, cokes, and sells coal directly to cycle pushers from a neighbouring village, who come to collect it from her coking pile.¹⁰⁹

Work in the BSF camp provides Sukhram and Birsa a period – albeit temporary – of relatively secure, waged work. While coal peddling in Karampot is relatively reliable – certainly more so than any form of work in Sukhram and Birsa's native village – it still provides, as villagers often said, "no guarantee". Coal, as I have noted, is considered a "*sarkari* [government] thing", and access to it is perceived as uncertain. "Sometimes you get more coal", Sukhram said, "and sometimes less ... Sometimes a few cycle loads, sometimes only one or none at all ... And, even if everything works well, you earn daily and spend daily, and it's difficult to save any money". Compared to this, in Rajasthan Sukhram can benefit from a period of temporarily secure – as well as less physically taxing – work, with a monthly salary that is higher than what he usually earns peddling coal. Indeed, virtually all my migrating non-Santal interlocutors referred to the fact that payment in the BSF camp is in the form of a

¹⁰⁸ India's border defence organisation.

¹⁰⁹ The same, as I described in Chapter 3, is done by Siamlal's daughters and other women who do not have a male member in the household capable of pushing coal.

monthly salary – which, even if non-permanent, is a source of not only greater stability but also accumulation. Without any land in Karampot to rely on, a monthly wage from migrant labour becomes, for non-Santals, all the more significant.

The ability to save from such a wage, in particular, is an important factor for non-Santal migrants. Take, for instance, Puja, Sukhram's cousin, whose husband Vishal was away in Rajasthan during the entirety of my fieldwork. Puja and Vishal had previously spent time peddling coal together in Karampot. But "because we can't do any farming here", she said, they had ended up spending a significant portion of their earnings on everyday sustenance. They had, consequently, found it difficult to put money aside – for example, to save for private school fees for their two toddlers, who in a few years will reach schooling age. "Only people who have their own land here", Puja explained, "manage to have the extra money for this kind of things ... People like us have to buy all the food from the market, so there is less money left". Vishal's work in Rajasthan, in this context – in addition to Puja's selling of coal while he is away, like Sukhram's wife – allows them to increase their income, and a moderate degree of accumulation.

Being able to save from migratory labour also has to do with the social environment in which this work takes place – away from various kin obligations and expectations around money in Karampot.¹¹⁰ "Here", Puja said, "Vishal and I have extended relatives who always ask for some cash here and there"; in Rajasthan, on the other hand, "there's no one to disturb you ... Everybody else around has also come there to work, and are trying to earn something themselves". Labourers in the BSF camp, Puja stressed, are all in the same boat, which contributes to a sense of solidarity. She herself had previously spent almost a year working with Vishal in Rajasthan, and described how, when their first daughter had been born during that period, "all the workers in the camp had chipped in and thrown a small party". Whereas in Karampot, Puja is an outsider vis-à-vis Santals, in the BSF camp all labourers are migrants, from other parts of India, and therefore outsiders themselves.

¹¹⁰ The way in which migration can be a means to gain independence from the social environment of the village has also been pointed out by Shah (2006).

Non-Santals' pattern of labour migration, nevertheless, comes with a flip side. On the one hand, as I have described, it allows them to supplement their earnings from coal peddling and improve their economic situation. But on the other hand, it means that their present, like their past, continues to be marked by migratory movement, and is fragmented both temporally and spatially. Compared to the native, landed Santals, non-Santals' movements out of and back to Karampot engenders precarity and instability in time and space, and reinforces their status as non-permanent outsiders. Non-Santals' future, in this regard, is also far from certain, with no access to compensatory benefits to offset the displacement that villagers believe is sooner or later coming. In light of this precarity, Sukhram and several other non-Santals are already seeking to establish a more secure future existence for themselves outside of Karampot, as I now turn to illustrate.

Planning for the future

From Rajasthan, non-Santal migrants normally send money to their wives and other household members in Karampot. Vishal, for instance, sends money not only to Puja but also his elderly father, "for food, clothes, and medicine". Puja and he, moreover, are trying to save as much as they can from Vishal's income in the BSF camp: to send their children, in a few years' time, to a local private school rather than Karampot's government one; to replace their mud house in Karampot with a *pukka* structure; and for Vishal to try and start a small business – perhaps a second-hand auto-rickshaw to ply as a shared taxi between the different weekly markets in the Karampot area.

Similar aspirations and spending patterns, as I described in Chapter 3, can be found among Santal coal peddlers – in their case from savings generated through coal peddling. There is, however, another, different way in which non-Santals are using their income from migratory labour, which is linked to their particular circumstances in Karampot. Non-Santals' landlessness, as I have discussed, translates into long-term insecurity in two main ways: it signifies the absence of, first, a subsistence safety net; and second, any entitlement for land-related compensation in case of displacement. Non-Santals' lives in Karampot are thus freighted with a sense of impermanence, and this has induced some of them to actively seek to attain land – and a more predictable future – outside the village.

Sukhram and Birsa, for example, have been planning to get hold of a plot of land in Koderma district, about 75 miles from Karampot, having heard from relatives that forest land there is being offered by the government to certain *dalit* and *adivasi* groups.¹¹¹ The two brothers had already paid 30,000 rupees, saved from their work in the BSF camp, to block officers in Koderma to instigate the long process of land titling. They have been setting more money aside for related expenses – including 'donation' (or bribery) payments for these officers for the production of necessary documents – and try to visit the block office and intended plot every few months. Several other non-Santals I know, like Tundwah, have been trying to acquire land in Koderma in the same manner.

If things go their way, which could take a number of years, Sukhram and Birsa plan to keep a base in Karampot, where they could continue peddling coal for as long as would be possible; and, in parallel, build a house and start tilling the soil in Koderma, on land that would be their own. Like their past and present, then, Sukhram and Birsa's future would again be marked by migration, as part of their efforts to secure land. Such efforts, nonetheless, are in Sukhram's opinion crucial, especially for non-Santals like himself. "If mining comes here," he said,

and CCL says we have to leave, we won't get any compensation, so what will we do and where will we go? ... In our native village, there isn't enough land for all of us [Sukhram, Birsa, and their families] to live on and eat from. And without land, how will our children have a place to build a house, and food to survive? Whatever happens, if you have your own land you can at least be sure you'll have a place to stay, and some rice to fill your stomach.

Sukhram and Birsa's endeavours around land, then, are based on an envisagement of personal land ownership as a source of longer-term security – of both subsistence (through cultivation), and residence (through authorised occupancy). They illustrate

¹¹¹ According to local *netas*, such redistribution of forest land has been taking place, in certain districts, as part of the 2006 Forest Rights Act, which concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other natural resources.

how non-Santals experience their time in Karampot – until the village's perceived anticipated displacement – differently from Santals. The latter can, during this prolonged 'waiting', accumulate from coal peddling, and draw a degree of comfort and even hope from the possibility of gaining compensatory employment for their future land loss. For non-Santals, on the other hand, temporal uncertainty in Karampot is more oppressive: they must labour-migrate to be able to save, and use the time until displacement to obtain land for themselves elsewhere, as a means to safeguard their more precarious future.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the livelihood conditions of Karampot's non-Santal households. It has examined the ways in which non-Santals' circumstances are especially precarious, arguing that this precarity is linked to non-Santals' lack of any own land in Karampot. The chapter has shown how – even in a context of marginal landholdings and waning agricultural productivity, and especially in one of dispossession – owning even a small amount of land can still be pivotal, in four main respects. First, land provides, especially for older Santals, a sense of rootedness and place that non-Santals in Karampot lack. The latter's landlessness is a signifier of their fixed status as outsiders, which in turn limits their access to common resources such as *gair majurwa* land and the forest, and local state benefits. Second, subsistence farming, even on a small scale, makes it more possible to save from other, paid work, in this case peddling coal. It reinforces Santals' ability to accumulate from this work – however modestly – beyond the subsistence level, and invest in such things as *pukka* housing or private schooling for their children.

Third, land provides a basic degree of food security – particularly important in a context in which coal peddling, as the main form of income, hinges on precarious access to a state-controlled, naturally-depleting resource. All this helps understand why, as Michael Levien has recently pointed out, "even small agrarian assets assume such importance for rural households in contemporary India", and why their ownership remains a sound livelihood component even while diversifying from agriculture (2018: 28). Fourth and finally, in the face of perceived eventual displacement, land has been infused with new value as a resource that, when requisitioned, could entitle its owner to a sought-after compensatory job. Land thus

serves not only as a layer of protection against absolute disenfranchisement, but also as the key to incorporation into the high-status realm of *sarkari naukri*.

Landless non-Santals do not have access to any of these benefits of land ownership, which has rendered their situation in Karampot distinctly precarious: they lack a food security safety net through farming; find it more difficult to accumulate from coal peddling; and, in case of eviction, would be a priori excluded from compensatory employment. This, in turn, has shaped their livelihood strategies, experiences, and possibilities in distinct ways vis-à-vis landed Santals. To increase their economic stability and income, and be able to save, non-Santals leave other household members behind and labour-migrate out of Karampot for extended periods. To try to secure their households' future, they seek to create a rural base for themselves outside Karampot. These recurrent migratory movements – current and future-planned – illuminate how non-Santals' precarity is not only economic but also spatiotemporal, and how inequalities between them and Santals are linked to disparities in time and space.

The story of Karampot's non-Santals provides a central illustration of the uneven outcomes of mining dynamics – from private collieries in the 1970s to public sector mining in the present and future – for different groups in the village. The discussion of mining-induced disparities will be taken forward in the next chapter, which compares CCL-employed households with all the rest in Karampot. Alongside the Santal/non-Santal divide, this is the second salient axis of differentiation that has emerged in Karampot in the wake of mining, which also cuts across the Santal population itself.

VI. Coal company employment

From the many mud houses populating Karampot, inhabited by coal-peddling villagers, a small number of structures incongruously stand out: large-gated cement dwellings, with bright exteriors, and a large motorbike, car, or even SUV parked in the courtyard. These invariably belong to Santals who, in contrast to coal peddlers, have a *naukri* in CCL: a secure, permanent job with a monthly salary. Of Karampot's 146 households, 15 percent – or 22 households, exclusively Santal – include a member that either works or used to work for CCL.¹¹² In terms of work security, terms and conditions, and pay, *naukri* stands in polar opposition to the precarious informal work in which most Karampot villagers are engaged,¹¹³ and renders those who have it a privileged minority.

The difference between informal work (also known as *kam*) and *naukri*, Jonathan Parry has argued (2013a, 2019), constitutes the most crucial divide within the labouring classes in India (Parry 2013a, 2019). While 92 percent of the Indian workforce are engaged in the former – whether in petty commodity production (like coal peddling), casual wage labour¹¹⁴ (like truck loading), or other forms of insecure work – only eight percent have formal sector jobs (Corbridge & Shah 2013; Harriss-White 2003, 2005; Harriss-White & Gooptu 2001; Sridharan 2004). Within this category of *naukri*, *sarkari naukri* – or public sector employment, like CCL provides – is widely considered the most superior (Parry 2013a, Parry 2019). In antithesis to informal work, which provides no security whatsoever, *sarkari naukri* comes with a salary that is paid regularly every month into employees' bank accounts, legally-sanctioned protection against unemployment, and thus a relatively predictable – and

¹¹² Nonetheless, as I show below, not all members of a CCL-employed household necessarily enjoy the benefits of this employment equally.

¹¹³ In villagers' perception, coal peddling – unlike *naukri* – does not even count as 'proper' work. To my initial queries about what they do for a living, most of my coal-peddling interlocutors replied simply with "nothing". Parry (2013a) similarly notes that, in Bhilai, those engaged in casual work are often referred to as unemployed.

¹¹⁴ This includes both work in the informal sector and informalised, casual work for formal sector companies.

better-off – future (ibid.; Parry 2013a, 2013b).¹¹⁵ Indeed, in Karampot, while the distinction between landed Santals and landless non-Santals, which I discussed in the previous chapter, is significant, it is ultimately that between those with *naukri* and all the rest that villagers regard as the most consequential.

In this chapter, I focus on the lives of Karampot's CCL-employed Santals, and the ways in which they are distinguished from those of all other villagers. At variance with the common view of *adivasi* communities as largely homogenous and unstratified (G. Shah 2004: 205; Sundar 2001; Xaxa 2011: 15), I consider the emergence of socioeconomic and class differentiation¹¹⁶ *within* Karampot. CCL employment has allowed the Santals who hold it considerable upward mobility, which has given rise to new intra-community disparities between employed and non-employed villagers – not only in terms of income but also spending patterns, children's life chances, and household and gender dynamics.

The findings support Parry's (2013a, 2019) argument about the chief significance of the *naukri/kam* divide within India's labouring classes. At the same time, I seek to chart a more nuanced account of how *naukri* and concomitant upward mobility are experienced, by drawing attention to the sense of precarity felt by employed Santals regarding their households' ability to reproduce their class status over time. Such precarity has been discussed by Parry (2012) in the context of liberalisation and the consequent downsizing of the regular public sector workforce (see also Sanchez 2016). Parry's work, however, focuses on households where *naukri* – and accumulation of financial and social capital through it – has been relatively long-established, over several generations.¹¹⁷ For newly-employed Santals, I propose, who have only recently entered public sector employment and not yet experienced such long-term accumulation, anxieties around the reproduction of class status are arguably amplified.

¹¹⁵ The gulf between formal and informal workers in India is illustrated not only by Parry's but also other ethnographies of labour such as by Heuzé (1996) and Sanchez (2016).

¹¹⁶ As previously noted, my use of 'class' is in the Weberian sense of lifestyle, consumption, and life chances (Weber 1968 [1922]).

¹¹⁷ See footnote 27.

Finally, I consider local moral critiques of new, *naukri*-enabled forms of affluence and consumption, and resultant intra-community stratification. These critiques, I suggest, are based on pre-existing – and increasingly eroding – egalitarian values, and illuminate the adverse impact of internal differentiation on community solidarity and reciprocity.

The origins of *naukri*

CCL employment in Karampot has two origins, in different periods. First, the jobs of 10 of the CCL-employed households¹¹⁸ in the village can be traced back to the time of the coal industry's nationalisation, in the 1970s. As I have described in previous chapters, prior to nationalisation a considerable number of local Santals had been working as casual wage labourers in the private mines in Karampot's surroundings. When the mines were brought under the control of the state, some of these Santal labourers were absorbed as formal employees into CCL – part of the new, state-owned coal corporation.¹¹⁹ The number of Santals in the Karampot area who gained jobs in this manner, according to my interlocutors, was not insignificant. Nevertheless, not all Santals who had worked in the private mines were able to make the transition into CCL employment. In Karampot, for example, several ones were unable to take up the mining jobs offered to them by CCL – either because they did not have the necessary identification documents, or because the jobs were seized by non-*adivasis* who paid off company officers.

Other local Santals, like Siamlal's deceased father, were simply not too interested in having a *naukri*, and therefore disinclined to enlist themselves into regular mining work. "This was almost two generations ago", Siamlal explained, "when there was more land for each household, and my father preferred to keep doing agriculture than work full-time". Like other Santals from that generation who were not keen on permanent employment, Siamlal's father did not see the long-term benefit of working for a government company. He assumed he would not be able to dedicate

¹¹⁸ By this I mean households with at least one employed member, either presently or formerly.

¹¹⁹ In Karampot, only one of the Santals who had gained their jobs this way is still working; four are retired, but receive a pension. In six households, the original employed member had passed away during their period of service, and their job – through a company policy known as *anukampa*, or compassionate appointment – was subsequently passed on to their son.

time to farming, or otherwise have any time off; was not drawn to the idea of working eight hours a day; and was generally not eager to tie himself to a regular, permanent job. He consequently did not take up the CCL post he was offered, and let a Hindu from the area 'buy' it from him for a few hundred rupees. Indeed, in Siamlal's father's generation, it was not uncommon for villagers to be reluctant to accept permanent employment.¹²⁰ They often saw no reason to work more than was needed to meet their household's immediate, limited consumption needs, and preferred to cultivate their land.

The second origin of CCL employment in Karampot, which applies to the remaining 12 employed households in the village, is compensation for land dispossession for mining. As I have previously noted, these households are in fact not originally from Karampot but from Dharutar, a neighbouring Santal village that has been displaced by Pandu Project. Agricultural *raity* land in Dharutar was first requisitioned by CCL in 1982; in line with the company's compensation policy at the time, households who lost three acres of land were given a *naukri* in the colliery.¹²¹ There were 49 households in Dharutar back then, of which 39 obtained a *naukri*. Households who were dispossessed of fewer than three acres were only entitled to a compensatory – and relatively low – monetary payment; whereas a few of those who did lose enough land to qualify for employment did not recognise the value of *naukri*, and chose to 'sell' their jobs to Hindus from the area.

While Dharutar's *raity* land was lost, the residential site – and areas of common *gair majurwa* land, some of which was also used for farming¹²² – remained intact. Life in the village therefore carried on, but only until 2008. In that year, it was announced

¹²⁰ For similar observations about earlier attitudes towards regular employment, see Bird-David (1983) on the *adivasi* Naikens in south India, and Parry (1999a) on Bhilai.

¹²¹ The acquisition of land for Pandu Project had taken place in 1964, under the CBAA, by the National Coal Development Corporation (NCDC) – a precursor of CIL. Compensation for dispossessed land, however, is normally not granted at the time of land's acquisition but when the land is actually taken for use – which is Dharutar was only in 1982.

¹²² It has been common for *adivasis* in Jharkhand to make informal use of *gair majurwa* land, either for housing or cultivation. In Dharutar, some of the families who had lost their *raity* land in 1982 – especially new households created thereafter – started cultivating patches of *gair majurwa* land instead.

that, as part of an expansion of Pandu Project, Dharutar's entire remaining territory would be required for the excavation of a new opencast pit. The displacement of the village – which had by now grown to 118 households – was subsequently initiated, and followed by a second round of compensatory job distribution by CCL. This one, however, was much trickier than the first. The land that was now lost was not *raity* land, which had already been dispossessed in 1982; rather, it was *gair majurwa* land, which had been used by villagers but without legal ownership, and thus did not render them eligible for compensation from CCL. This required intervention and manipulation by Budhram and other Santal *netas* – who, in a process I detail in the next chapter, eventually managed to extract from CCL more compensatory jobs for Santals from Dharutar.

By contrast with the 1970s and, to an extent, even the 1980s, public sector employment had by now become a highly sought-after commodity. With land fragmentation as a result of demographic pressure, and possible soil degradation through mining, agriculture had become increasingly perceived as difficult and unrewarding. Younger-generation Santals, moreover, had developed new desires not only for longer-term economic security but forms of accumulation and consumption. Building a cement house, buying a motorcycle and smartphone, sending one's children to a good private school – all these had become more common aspirations. Their realisation required a substantial, regular income that normally only a *naukri* – and especially *sarkari naukri* – can provide.

In total, 62 compensatory jobs were distributed, between 2012 and 2014, among the 69 households that had been added to Dharutar between the first phase of dispossession and the village's displacement. Some of the newly-minted Santal employees have settled in the CCL housing colony next to Pandu Project, while others have moved to Karampot, where they constructed large cement houses. Nonetheless, once again a number of Santal households were left excluded from the provision of jobs. As I describe in the next chapter, the process of gaining employment for dispossessed *gair majurwa* land involved significant expenses; about a dozen Santal households could not afford these, and were thus unable to gain

jobs.¹²³ In this chapter, nonetheless, my focus is on those who did attain CCL employment. Despite their displacement, these employed Santals are locally generally considered the only true benefitters from Pandu Project's arrival. I now turn to look at the distinct circumstances and lifestyles of this exclusive group.

Upward mobility and class differentiation

Jobs and salaries

Every morning, long after other villagers have reached the depot yard, on foot, to gather coal and build their coking piles, Rajkumar, a 32-year-old Santal, sets out on his motorcycle to Pandu Project, where he is employed in the machinery workshop. Originally from Dharutar and now living in Karampot, until only a few years ago Rajkumar had been peddling coal. In 2012, however, he gained a compensatory CCL job for dispossessed *gair majurwa* land in Dharutar. Like most Santals from Dharutar who attained CCL jobs after the village's displacement, Rajkumar works as a colliery workshop assistant – CCL's lowest, unskilled employment category, which is the standard starting point for those with a compensatory *naukri*. Higher employment categories involve more skilled work and increased pay, with employees normally moving up the scale based on experience and performance. Perhaps next year, Rajkumar hopes, he will be promoted to the next category, and work directly under one of the workshop foremen.

A number of Santals from Dharutar who got their jobs around 2012 have already gained such a promotion. A few of the more educated ones, who had completed secondary education, have even reached more advanced, non-manual positions. Rajkumar's friend Ramesh, for example, who had passed his Matriculation Exams, was posted in the Pandu Project office, where he works as a clerical assistant to the project's land surveyor. Higher-level posts in the project can also be found among the older-generation of Santal employees from Dharutar, who had gained their compensatory jobs in 1982: I know Santals who are workshop fitters, machine operators, and drivers, and one – Ramesh's father – who is a relatively senior office

¹²³ Because Dharutar's households are now scattered between Karampot and CCL's housing colony – and, moreover, because a few households obtained more than one job – I do not have exact quantitative data on the portion of households left without employment.

clerk. Supervisory and managerial positions in the project, on the other hand, are all occupied by higher-caste non-*adivasis* – often from outside the immediate area and even state – who generally have better qualifications and credentials than local Santals.

Santal employees, then, mostly inhabit the lower rungs of CCL's employment hierarchy – but, crucially, nevertheless enjoy the essential benefit of secure, permanent work, including prospects for promotion (at least up to a certain level).¹²⁴ This makes them strikingly more privileged than all other, coal-peddling villagers in Karampot, who depend on work that is not only informal but illicit. While coal peddlers live a precarious existence, Santal employees gain from relative permanence and predictability, enabled through the job security that comes with a *sarkari naukri*. Their wages, too, are generous, and vastly superior to the earnings generated by coal peddling. Santals like Rajkumar, in CCL's lowest employment category, earn a monthly base salary of just over 13,000 rupees – equivalent roughly to 40 days of pushing coal.¹²⁵ CCL wages, moreover, are accompanied not only by benefits such as free healthcare for the entire family and biennial holiday travel to an Indian destination of one's choice, but also a panoply of financial allowances that significantly augment one's actual income. These include, for example, 'conveyance allowance', 'children's education allowance', 'house rent allowance', 'breakdown allowance'¹²⁶, and extra pay for night and weekend shifts.

These various allowances more than double employed Santals' income, taking it to north of 30,000 rupees. After deducting pension, gratuity, and provident fund contributions, they are left with about 26,000 rupees – a figure that would pass the muster as income for middle-class professionals in an average Indian town (Parry 2019: Chapter 5). CCL salaries also permit Santal employees to invest in side

¹²⁴ This is at variance, for example, with findings about the jobs of *adivasis* who have entered state employment in the education sector, which were not only "relatively badly paid" but "insecure and dispensable" (Higham & Shah's 2013: 4).

¹²⁵ Assuming a delivery of, on average, 1.5 cycle loads a day. This refers only to days on which coal peddlers actually deliver coal, and does not include days on which they only gather and coke it. It also does not take into account the fact that coal peddling is carried out by several household members.

¹²⁶ For workers with duties for attending machine breakdowns at a short notice.

businesses, which further boost their income. Ramesh, for instance, has set up a small general store in the front room of his house, selling snacks, soap, and other basics, while another Santal employee I know has a rice hulling shop by the highway with a large electric husker.

Santal employees' high income, it should be added, is earned for work that is in fact not always very demanding – surely much less so than the backbreaking labour of peddling coal. On most days, for example, after signing in in the workshop in the morning, Rajkumar promptly heads to the nearby tea shop to have a cup of *chai* and chat with other colliery workers. Work in the workshop is mostly intermittent, based on machinery repair needs, and Rajkumar is not continuously needed on site. The same goes for Ramesh, who spends much of his workday hanging about the office, often chattering or joking with colleagues, and sometimes might even leave for a while to go run some personal errands. Indeed, similarly to what Parry (2013a, 2013b; Parry & Strümpell 2008: 54) has observed in the Bhilai Steel Plant, jobs in Pandu Project are not only lucrative but typically involve only loose timekeeping and a relaxed work rhythm, which includes extended intervals of free time.

Consumption and lifestyles

In the eyes of my coal-peddling interlocutors, those who have *sarkari naukri* are "forward" people – which is how, using the English word, they often refer to CCL-employed Santals. This 'forwardness' stands in contrast to non-employed villagers' 'backwardness', which is associated not only with precarious informal labour but more generally with *adivasi*ness.

Before charting the different elements of employed Santals' forwardness, though, I should first draw a distinction between the different generations of Santal employees. It is among the younger generations of employees – those who had gained jobs following the first phase of dispossession in 1982 and, especially, after displacement in 2010 – that upward mobility is most pronounced. It is also on them that this chapter mostly focuses. The more senior generation of CCL employees – who had gained their jobs following nationalisation, and are now mostly retired – are largely still content with older rural lifestyles, and do not engage in conspicuous consumption (see also Parry 2013b). Kamal, for example, who is one of them, still

lives in a mud house, and like other older Santal (ex-)employees generally displays much more moderate spending habits than those of younger Santal employees. This is linked, on the one hand, to more modest consumption aspirations among this older generation, and on the other hand to the fact that CCL wages in the past had not been as munificent as they are today.

Among the younger generations of Santal employees, by contrast, it is almost unthinkable to have the financial wherewithal but still reside in a mud dwelling. Indeed, the relatively garish cement houses that a good number of them have erected in Karampot are startlingly distinct from the earthen houses of their neighbours – in material, size, colour, and overall splendour. Other distinction markers and consumption patterns have also emerged, reflecting employed Santals' pursuit of middle-class aspirations. Their houses' courtyards usually double as a parking space for a heavy duty motorcycle and/or car, while their interiors might accommodate a not unsizeable flat screen television. The marriage celebrations they throw are lavish compared to the local *adivasi* standard of gathering and cooking with family and friends at home. The ones I got to attend included a decorated marquee, catering, and a small armada of hired jeeps transporting guests from other villages. In these wedding jamborees, young employed Santal men can be seen in (plastic) leather jackets, drinking bottled whiskey and rum rather than homebrewed rice beer and *mahua* wine. Indeed, at variance with earlier findings from other *adivasi* groups (Gell 1986), where openly displaying one's wealth was something not to aspire to but refrain from, Santal employees' more well-to-do status is overtly demonstrated through consumption, producing the kind of distinction that is central to class aspirations (Qayum & Ray 2011).



Figure 11: Ramesh's house in Karampot

This is not to say, however, that Santal employees do not use their salaries for other types of investments, too. First, a few employees I know have purchased land around Karampot – either to farm, usually using hired labour; or, in the future, build a house on or set up some sort of small business. Second, considerable sums are spent on children's education, which is another significant marker of difference between CCL-employed households and all the rest. While coal-peddling households, too, devote resources to their children's education, their means are much more limited, and the level of education is consequently lower. As I described in Chapter 3, for example, some coal-peddling households send their children to Holy Faith – the still-affordable private school on the other side of the highway, which might be superior to the local government school in Karampot but scarcely counts among the best in the district. Later on, coal-peddling youngsters might go to one of the many private colleges that have in recent years mushroomed in towns around Karampot,¹²⁷ which are often of sketchy quality and reputation. This second-rate education trajectory already effectively eliminates children from coal-peddling households from the future race for formal employment.

¹²⁷ This has largely been the result of the liberalisation of higher education by the central government in the mid-2000s.

Santal employees, on the other hand, can operate on a whole different scale: they send their children to relatively reputable – and considerably costlier – private schools and colleges in cities such as Hazaribagh, Ranchi, and Dhanbad, where students live in hostels or apartments that require an additional fee or rent payments. In these schools and colleges, Santal employees hope, their children could attain the kind of educational qualifications that would place them in a better position to attain a job, and reproduce their parents' pay grade and status.^{128,129} Moreover, in marked contrast to the children of coal peddlers, who often skip school to help their parents with the gathering, coking, and loading of coal on the bicycle, those of employed Santals are not required to engage in any extra-household labour, and in principle can dedicate their time and energy to their studies.

Both consumption and investment in education, as expressions of middle-class aspirations, are also part of what Higham & Shah (2013) have called a 'culture of emulation'.¹³⁰ Drawing on Bourdieu (1974, 1984), they describe how young *adivasis* with public sector jobs in the education sector have begun to emulate the values, norms, and ways of life of higher-caste and -class groups. In Karampot, Santal CCL employees have been exposed to such ways of life through their daily work in the

¹²⁸ Among coal-peddling Santals, by comparison, I know of only one child who is studying away in a college, through a special scholarship for *adivasi* students.

¹²⁹ Similarly to consumption, investment in higher-quality education is more typical of the younger generations of Santal employees. Among the children of older-generation employees, education levels are in fact not all that different from those of the children in coal-peddling households. There are arguably two reasons for this. The first is a lower awareness of education in the older generation; the second is the lower lucrativeness of CCL wages in the past, compared to today. Wages at that time, Kamal told me, had not always sufficed to cover the fees of a good private school or college, not to mention student accommodation in a hostel or apartment.

¹³⁰ Similarly to Higham & Shah (2013), I use 'emulation' rather than *sanskritisation* (Srinivas 1956), which is defined as the rejection of low-caste customs and rituals to achieve upward caste mobility. This is because CCL-employed Santals are not relinquishing their Santal identity – say, through shunning local Santal festivals. Rather, they seek to add to this identity practices associated with higher classes and castes (which in their eyes at least mostly overlap).

colliery, in which they interact – in the workshop, office, or tea shop – with non-*adivasi*, higher-caste CCL workers such as Mahtos and Rajputs.¹³¹

Employed Santals' culture of emulation, I would like to suggest, can have positive outcomes, for example with regard to education preferences. Take, for example, Puran, a Santal from Dharutar who had attained a CCL job in 1982. Talking about his children, Puran told me how before his employment, when he had been a "poor" and "simple" person, he "hadn't known anything about education". Working in Pandu Project, however, he got to know more "forward" non-*adivasi* colleagues who were sending their children to study in private colleges, "to give them a good education", and figured that this is something he could also do. Indeed, Puran later on sent his three children to attend a private college in Ranchi, where they are likely to gain qualifications that will improve their life chances and employability.

But at the same time, employed Santals' culture of emulation is creating new divisions and class hierarchies within the community: better-off Santals are increasingly moving towards becoming a local *adivasi* petty bourgeoisie, and distinguishing themselves from poorer community members who depend on precarious informal labour. Higher-class emulation has manifested locally across a range of practices – from preference of branded alcohol over homemade liquor, to travel by motorbike, to relatively extensive wedding celebrations. While signs of such tendencies are also present among younger coal peddlers, and reflect broader generational shifts, it is among Santal employees that they are most developed and conspicuous. On the one hand, then, new employment opportunities in Pandu Project have allowed some Santals to realise upward mobility aspirations and access new domains – for example, in education and lifestyle – that had hitherto been largely closed to them. But on the other hand, they have acted to foster and enhance inequalities within Santal community – as well as, as I show below, within Santal families.

¹³¹ On similar socialising between different castes in the Bhilai Steel Plant, see Parry (1999a, 2013a, 2013b) and Parry & Strümpell (2008: 54).

Gender dynamics

Upward mobility and the culture of emulation have also had implications for labour and gender relations in CCL-employed households. The distribution of compensatory employment positions, to begin with, is decidedly gender-skewed: 'project-affected families' are taken by CCL to be represented by the male 'head of household', and it is to them that the jobs are normally given (see also Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2014; Mehta 2009; Mehta & Srinivasan 2000; Thukral 1996).¹³² Second, in Santal employees' households gendered patterns of labour have emerged that are similar to those among caste Hindus, and distinct from those usually found in *adivasi* communities (Singh 1994). *Adivasi* women typically work outside the household; indeed, as I have described in earlier chapters, women in coal-peddling households have an indispensable role in this work, and additionally engage in truck loading in Pandu Project's coal sale depot yard. In CCL-employed households, on the other hand – similarly to caste society¹³³ – the participation of women in extra-household labour is markedly less common.

Rajkumar's wife, Sikanti, is a characteristic example. Previously, like most women in the village, Sikanti had undertaken truck loading work, in order to both supplement household income and earn some pocket money for herself. But since Rajkumar gained his CCL job, in 2012, Sikanti has stopped working and become a full-time housewife; if she needs any cash, she now asks it from Rajkumar. Following the improvement of their financial situation, through Rajkumar's *naukri*, and since they do not need the extra cash, Sikanti prefers to limit herself to less labourious housework than go load trucks in the depot.¹³⁴ Rajkumar, too, is not keen on his wife going out to work "in the sun and dust", and prefers her to stay at home.

¹³² I encountered in Pandu Project only two female employees, whose job is to prepare and serve tea in the office. Both had gained their CCL posts through *anukampa*, following the deaths of their employed husbands and since there had been no able-bodied men in the household to whom the jobs could be bequeathed.

¹³³ While women working outside the house is common among *dalit* communities and the elite, it is rare among all those in between (Singh 1994).

¹³⁴ I did get to know two older women in CCL-employed households – one with an employed husband, the other with an employed son – who continue to occasionally go load trucks to earn some own cash

Indeed, in CCL-employed households women's participation in manual labour is generally viewed more dimly, which reflects an adoption of new – and more caste-like – notions of gender (see also Higham & Shah 2013). The withdrawal of women like Sikanti from paid work can, of course, have both practical and personal reasons: higher household income through CCL salaries, for example, and personal work/leisure preferences. I propose, though, that such a withdrawal also represents a way in which labour and more intimate practices in the home become a sphere in which to advance aspirations of class mobility (see Qayum & Ray 2011: 247).

Research on the retreat of women in India from extra-household work has focused mostly on either higher-caste (e.g. Levien 2017) or *dalit* women (e.g. Kapadia 1995; Parry 2005, 2013b, 2019: Chapter 8; Still 2011, 2014). My findings from CCL-employed households Karampot indicate a similar pattern among *adivasis*, by showing how upward mobility – in this case, as a result of compensation for dispossession – can lead to women's disengagement from labour outside the house, and their increasing enclosure in the home. When enabled by economic circumstances, in other words, *adivasis* too can edge towards a similar gender ideology to that of higher-status caste Hindus.

Women's retreat from paid work in CCL-employed households has implications for the gendered power dynamics in them. CCL salaries are paid directly into the employed male's bank account, so that unlike in coal-peddling households, in which it is normally the women who keep the purse, in CCL-employed households it is the men who control finances and manage the budget. Women in these households consequently become increasingly dependent on the wages of their husbands, and largely swept aside in terms of household resource management.¹³⁵

Women's position in CCL-employed households therefore stands in salient contrast to their position in coal-peddling households. In the latter, women play a central role in income generation and household reproduction – widely acknowledged by their

and be less dependent on the employed men in the household. This, however, is the exception rather than the norm in CCL-employed households.

¹³⁵ A similar trend has been observed in other contexts of dispossession, for example by Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt (2014: 238), Levien (2017, 2018: Chapter 5), and Mehta (2009).

husbands – and mostly control the household purse strings. In addition to their involvement in coal peddling, women in these households also engage in truck loading work, in which they earn independent wages. This, as I suggested in Chapter 4, not only provides them with access to own cash but allows them greater influence over the household budget, and thereby serves to increase their financial and social independence. In CCL-employed households, conversely, women's disengagement from any form of paid work undercuts their sovereignty.

Unlike private dispossessing projects such as Special Economic Zones, which usually do not provide work opportunities for women (e.g. Levien 2017), Pandu Project *has* been providing, through truck loading, such opportunities – however casual and unskilled. These, however, are only taken up by women from coal-peddling households, and relinquished by those from CCL-employed, more middle-class-oriented households. Non-manual work for women, on the other hand – which CCL-employed households might be less reluctant to accept – is not on offer. The result is that women in CCL-employed households have become disengaged from the workforce altogether, and consequently less independent and more reliant on their husbands financially.

While *adivasi* women have historically been known to participate in manual labour outside the house and enjoy relative freedom and equality with men (Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2014: 238; Carrin-Bouez 1990; Devalle 1992; George 2014; Higham & Shah 2013; Prasad 2016; Shah 2018), new notions of femininity among CCL-employed Santals have led to increasing disapproval of such labour, and the effective relegation of women to the domestic sphere. Compared to previous generations in Karampot and other *adivasis* around them, then, in CCL-employed households Santal women have lost much of their autonomy, and new gender inequalities and dependencies have emerged.

Household structures and disparities

CCL employment and upward mobility can have contradictory consequences not only in terms of household gender dynamics but also household structure, which stem from the tension between kin obligations and emerging disparities within CCL-employed households. By and large, unlike caste society the *adivasi* convention is to

live not in joint households, with the extended family, but in separate households with one's nuclear family (Elwin 1943). In Karampot, this is indeed the more common variant among coal-peddling households, with newlywed couples usually relatively quick to move out from the patrilocal household, or at least make plans to do so.

Among CCL-employed households, however, the picture is somewhat different: though I lack comprehensive quantitative data, many of the CCL-employed households I know many are in fact joint, which in Karampot – and the *adivasi* context more generally – makes for an exception. On one level, this could be interpreted as another expression of upward mobility aspirations, joint households being more typical of higher castes.¹³⁶ But on another level, I suggest, such joint householding is also the outcome of a sense of moral responsibility by the employed household member – normally the father or elder brother – towards their non-employed immediate kin, namely children or siblings.

It is common for Santals with CCL employment in Karampot – either currently employed or retired but with a CCL pension – to support close family members in the (joint) household. A few retired employees I know effectively finance, through their pensions, their adult sons and their own nuclear families, who reside with them in the same household. This is the case, for instance, with Kamal, whose household includes, apart from his wife, his three sons and their own wives and children. The son I know better, Surendra, while away most of his time pottering around the village, or betting on cricket matches and cockfights in a small nearby town. Peddling coal, which his brothers sometimes do, is "hard work" he prefers to avoid, especially as he can rely on his father's pension for subsistence. Indeed, Kamal's CCL pension – 5,000 rupees a month – is used to purchase foodstuffs for the entire household, which covers all members' basic subsistence needs. Down the road from Kamal's house, in another CCL-employed joint household, the old retired Santal employee not only similarly finances household subsistence, but has also had a small grocery store, similar to Ramesh's, built in the courtyard for his son.

¹³⁶ Shah (1968) has long ago suggested that sanskritisation among *adivasis* tends to increase their proclivity towards joint householding.

Several CCL-employed Santals I know who gained their jobs in 2012, after Dharutar's displacement, also inhabit joint households. Apart from themselves, their wives, and children, these households comprise the employees' younger, non-employed siblings and their own nuclear families, who are usually engaged in coal peddling. In these households, too, it is the employed sibling who largely provides for all members. Indeed, exchanging land for *naukri* entails a shift from collective property (land) and labour (coal peddling) to an individual asset (a CCL job), as usually it is only one brother who can get a job from the loss of land that was shared. A transition to *naukri*, in other words, involves a shift from a situation in which different household members till the soil and peddle coal together, to employment by a single member who carries the responsibility for the household's reproduction (see also Dhagamwar et al 2003: 56).

This responsibility can also extend to different kinds of financial assistance by the employed member to his siblings. Rajkumar, for instance, who also lives in a joint household, had helped one of his brothers to fund his wedding celebration a couple of years ago, and pays the school fees to Holy Faith for the two children of the other. This kind of redistribution is perceived in terms of a moral obligation by the elder brother – who by this virtue had been the receiver of the compensatory job – to look after his close kin who have not been as lucky.¹³⁷ "Rajkumar is the senior who has the *naukri*", his mother summarised the matter, "and has to take care of the house and his brothers".

At the same time, however, when it comes to lifestyle Rajkumar and his own nuclear family have diverged considerably from his siblings and theirs, and disparities within the household cannot be missed. Rajkumar and his siblings, for example, live under literally very different roofs. Adjoining the same central courtyard, Rajkumar's siblings occupy a mud house, whereas Rajkumar, his wife, and baby inhabit a newly-built cement structure with a flat screen television and speaker system. In the morning, while Rajkumar's brothers make their way to the depot and coking ground, he drives his motorcycle to the Pandu Project workshop. In the evening, while his

¹³⁷ While a sense of moral responsibility towards one's kin is also present in coal-peddling families, my point is that such a sense can become amplified in a context of differentiation within the family, i.e. when there is one employed sibling who earns considerably more than the others.

brothers have a glass of rice beer at home, Rajkumar drinks 'foreign' *Royal Stag* whiskey or *Old Monk* rum in one of the highway restaurants around Karampot, often with friends from outside the village that he got to know through work. And, in a few years, Rajkumar's toddler will likely be sent to a better school – and then college – than the one attended by his siblings' children. Indeed, compensatory employment as a result of dispossession has become a source of disparity not only at the level of the community but also within families and households, in particular between siblings.

Notwithstanding the instances of intra-household redistribution I have described – from the employed brother to his non-employed siblings – even close kin cannot rely unconditionally on support from their employed relation. I know of several cases of "tension", as my interlocutors put it, within families around the extent and scope of kin obligations by the CCL-employed member. More specifically, the siblings of several CCL-employed Santals shared with me their disapprobation of their employed brother, for not having provided "enough help" to assist with a debt or health expenditure they had incurred. As I have pointed out, a CCL job – unlike land – is ultimately an individual entitlement, and CCL employees' salaries are intended to first and foremost serve them and their own nuclear families. Indeed, even Rajkumar's mother's words about his moral responsibility towards his siblings, cited above, were followed by a caveat. In the end, she pointed out, "one employed brother can't take care of his siblings forever".

Divergences within households with a CCL-employed member, then, certainly have the potential to give rise to feelings of rancour. Both Parry (2013b) and Dhagamwar et al. (2003: 128-131, 264) have found, in similar contexts, that over time relationships between the employed and non-employed sections of families become more acrimonious, and the limits of family obligation more constricted. The employed section, they describe, increasingly perceive their non-employed kin and their expectations of financial support as a burden, while these non-employed kin increasingly harbour envy and grudges. Ultimately, Parry concludes, the 'axiom of kinship amity' (Fortes 1969) – the ethics of altruism and generosity predicated by kinship – is "vulnerable to the corrosive effects of class differentiation" (2013b: 53).

While it remains to be seen whether or not the joint households of newly-employed Santals will stick together over time, my findings already indicate that one brother's upward mobility – and consequent intra-family stratification – can put a strain on kinship relations, and thereby on joint householding. So, while the differentiation induced by CCL employment can in the first instance – contrary to *adivasi* custom – act to keep families living together, it can also give rise to familial and intra-household friction that might eventually lead to joint households breaking up.

Class reproduction?

It should by now be clear that CCL-employed Santals occupy, in different ways, an elevated economic and class position vis-à-vis their coal-peddling counterparts. By contrast with the precarious lives of the latter, employed Santals' are marked by a relatively high degree of security and permanence, which allows different forms of accumulation. Is this permanence, however, sustainable over time? In other words, how likely is the status of local Santal employees to be reproduced and entrenched over the next generations, and their upward mobility trajectory sustained? A definitive answer would have to be based on longer-term data than I possess, and require revisiting currently-employed households in subsequent generations. What is clear, though, is that this question is a matter of concern for many of my CCL-employed Santal interlocutors. While their own future has been practically secured, through their *naukri*, they perceive that of their children as much more fragile, and are profoundly uncertain about the prospects of maintaining the family's newfound status in the longer term. Employed Santals' uncertainties around class status reproduction illustrate how *naukri*, too, can generate a sense of precarity – albeit of a different (and admittedly more privileged) order than that experienced by informal workers.

The offspring of the most senior generation of Santal employees, for instance – those who had gained jobs following nationalisation – have evidently not reproduced their fathers' employment status. Most of them peddle coal for a living; some, like Kamal's son Surendra, rely mostly on their fathers' pensions. This downward mobility is usually ascribed by retired Santal employees to their children's low education levels. Awareness of education, in retired Santals' generation, had been much lower; CCL

wages, too, had been less gainful, and not always sufficient to meet the costs of expensive private schooling.

Among the children of Santals who had gained compensatory employment in 1982, on the other hand, the situation is already quite different. One of Puran's sons, for example, who attends a private college in Ranchi, is currently doing a traineeship in the local block office as an administrative assistant. The daughter of another employed Santal from the 1982 cohort has completed a BA in accounting and has a job interview lined up in a local bank; the son of yet another has gained a diploma in electronic engineering in Hazaribagh, and is now preparing to take the exams for entry into the Indian Administrative Service. Clearly, in terms of education and life chances the children of this group of Santal employees have fared much better, and a good number of them are en route to reproducing (or even upgrading) the employment status of their fathers.

Finally, the employment trajectories of the children of the most recent Santal employees – those who had gained jobs in 2012 – have not yet been established, for most of them are either still in school or even younger. These children's life chances, however, would seem to be more similar to those of the children of the 1982 employee cohort: they attend good private schools in nearby towns, and their parents have every intention to further invest in their education. In our conversations, however, employed Santals from the 2012 cohort often conveyed doubts about the ability of their children to replicate their own employment status and lifestyle. The security provided by their own *naukri*, they feel, is by no means automatically extendable to their progenies, whose employment futures are far from guaranteed. Santal employees' own relative economic and class stability, in other words, jostles with a sense of longer-term uncertainty about household class reproduction.

This uncertainty is rooted in a number of reasons. First, there is the simple fact that *naukri*, as opposed to land, is noninheritable.¹³⁸ Not only is a compensatory job

¹³⁸ Parry (2019: Chapter 5) has reported that in Bhilai, for example, *anukampa* was often used to ensure de facto familial succession of steel plant jobs. Similar succession of jobs in the Tata Steel Plant in Jamshedpur has been described by Sanchez (2016). In Pandu Project – as far as I know and at least with regard to Santal employees – this has not been the case.

normally offered only to one brother,¹³⁹ then, but it is also nontransferable to the next generation. Second, while Santal employees hope that investing in good education for their children will improve their chances of employment, they are acutely aware that reputable qualifications alone do not guarantee access to *sarkari naukri*. As I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, economic liberalisation in India has introduced new market efficiency demands into the public sector, which in turn have led to a cutback in state employment and drying up of new recruitment (Dhananjayan & Shanti 2007; Parry 2013a). With fewer available jobs, qualification requirements for selection have been raised, and competition for positions has become exponentially fiercer (Fernandes 2007; Heuzé 1996: 229, 345; Lahiri-Dutt 1999, 2014a; Parry 2013a, 2018: Chapter 5). The citadel of state-sponsored employment (Holmström 1976; Parry 2013a, 2019: Chapter 2), in other words, has become ever more difficult to penetrate.

Even the fact that, as a form of legally-sanctioned affirmative action, a proportion of state employment posts are reserved for *adivasis* and *dalits* (Galanter 1984: 86-89) does not provide my interlocutors with much comfort. In certain sectors and contexts, this policy has indeed allowed *adivasis* and *dalits* to access jobs that otherwise may well have been cornered by higher castes (Higham & Shah 2013; Parry 1999b). Among my interlocutors, however, there is a strong belief that within the reservation system it is usually better-connected, higher-class *adivasis* who secure the lion's share of reserved jobs. Compared to such *adivasis* – represented for example by more dominant individuals such as Budhram, on whom the next chapter focuses – most local Santals do not feel they have the necessary social capital to successfully compete for jobs.

Such a belief may not be unfounded. Gérard Heuzé (1996: 247), for example, has reported that in Bharat Coking Coal (BCCL), another CIL subsidiary, it was common for reserved posts to reach higher-class, better-networked *adivasis*. Moreover, pressure exerted by higher-caste persons sometimes led BCCL to declare that no

¹³⁹ CCL's compensation policy currently warrants the provision of a compensatory job for every two acres of dispossessed land (instead of three acres, previously). Local Santal landholdings, however, very seldom comprise more than four acres of land, so that households are rarely eligible for more than one job.

suitable *adivasi* had been found to fill a post, and subsequently hire a higher-caste applicant who had connections with company officers and/or the wherewithal to 'buy' the job. According to a senior engineer in Pandu Project, the same often applies to CCL. It is not uncommon for management, he told me, to claim that no satisfactory *adivasi* candidate could be found for a particular vacancy, and instead award it to a more influential, higher-caste Hindu.

If this is any indication, the jobs of all Santal employees I know in the project have been doled out as compensation for land loss; none have been gained through the job reservation quota for *adivasis*. In accordance with this observation, the same senior engineer estimated that of all *adivasi* workers in the larger CCL 'area division' to which Pandu Project belongs, about 85 percent have acquired their jobs under the company's compensation policy, while only 15 percent have applied and been selected independently. Unlike this top-tier minority, my Santal interlocutors do not see themselves as capable of prevailing through the recruitment process. Rather, the prevalent perception is that for them, the most (and perhaps only) feasible way to enter public sector employment is through being dispossessed of land. Otherwise, as Puran summarised, competition is high and vacancies are few, and usually go to those with both money and connections.

This view is also tethered to a widespread belief that CCL recruitment depends to a large extent on nepotism and bribery (see also Parry 2013b, 2019: Chapter 5). Good educational certificates, in other words, which employed Santals encourage their children to attain, might be a prerequisite for *sarkari naukri* but will not necessarily suffice, for ultimately selection for CCL posts hinges on social networks and palm greasing. Indeed, notions about corrupt practices by CCL are locally ubiquitous. In the tea shop near the Pandu Project office, a common pastime activity among CCL employees – both Santal and non-*adivasi* – consists of coming up with meanings for the company's three-lettered initialism. Favourites include Chor Chuhar Limited (Thieves and Scoundrels Limited) and Chup Chap Luto (Just Steal Quietly), both in reference to a notorious scandal that in 2012 exposed high-level corruption in CIL and India's Ministry of Coal.^{140,141}

¹⁴⁰ Coalgate, as it was dubbed, revolved around corruption in the allocation of coalfield blocks to both public sector and private mining companies. It reached India's Supreme Court, and resulted in the

Regardless of any actual evidence of shadowy recruitment practices by CCL, the prominent discourse of corruption around the company only reinforces the local view that merit alone might not cut the mustard; navigating through CCL's opaque selection procedures requires a good deal of financial and social capital, which my interlocutors consider themselves to be lacking.

This, on one level, is an extension of these interlocutors' general self-perception as 'backward' when compared to higher-caste and -class Hindus. But on another level, it is linked to the fact that younger Santal employees in Karampot are novice entrants to the domain of state employment. Unlike Parry's (2019) informants in Bhilai, for instance, these Santals' households have only recently gained access to public sector employment, and not yet had the chance to accumulate from *naukri* over several generations.¹⁴² This is illustrated, for example, through employed Santals' side businesses, discussed earlier. While certainly exceptional in Karampot's local labour landscape, Santal employees' businesses are nevertheless distinctly more modest than those operated by some of Parry's informants, which include a computer training centre, small factory, catering business, and property dealing. These not only provide Parry's informants with an additional income that is sometimes as high as their actual Steel Plant salaries, but also arguably allow them to form social networks beyond the immediate locality.

Karampot's younger employed Santals, on the other hand, have yet to firmly establish their class status in such ways. They believe accordingly that, for them, it is arbitrary dispossession that is still the soundest pathway to CCL employment. Compounding this notion is the sense among employed Santals that their jobs have been attained as if by chance, through the expropriation of land that belonged to them and also happened to be within CCL's acquisition area. This underlines for them the role of fortuity, rather than own merit or craft, in achieving their current status. It serves as a steady reminder that their jobs have been handed out by CCL

rescindment of 214 of the 218 allocated coal blocks. Jharkhand's former Chief Minister, Madhu Koda, was one of those indicted (*Deccan Herald* 2012; Dutte 2012; Prasad & Srivastava 2014).

¹⁴¹ On reduced public trust in extractive 'development' projects as a result of corruption, see Oskarsson (2013).

¹⁴² See footnote 138.

rather than earned, and thus in a sense belong to the company more than they do to them.¹⁴³

The general feeling of uncertainty around *naukri* reproduction explains why some of my employed interlocutors – especially older but not only – still consider land to ultimately be the most valuable and viable asset, as a subsistence safety net for the next generations. Differently from Special Economic Zones, for example, which typically offer villagers insecure, low-paying work and thus an inadequate exit route from agriculture (Levien 2018: Chapter 6), Pandu Project *has* provided to many dispossessed Santals remunerative, secure employment. Yet even in such a situation, the perceived long-term precarity of *naukri* can lead villagers – both employed and non-employed – to regard land as essentially the most prudent bet in terms of livelihood strategy. For some, moreover, land carries not only material but also moral value; as I discuss next, land is seen by older Santals in particular as representative of a distinct way of life, increasingly eroded through the transition from agriculture to compensatory public sector employment.

Solidarity breakdown

Having so far focused primarily on the perspectives of Santal CCL employees themselves, I now turn to look at the ways in which their upward mobility and pursuit of middle-class aspirations are viewed by non-employed, coal-peddling villagers. Employed Santals' investments in new land and their children's education are mostly regarded by other villagers as worthy endeavours. Younger employees' consumption patterns, on the other hand, attract more contrasting views, which similarly diverge along generational lines. Younger coal peddlers tend to identify with the middle-class and consumption aspirations of their employed counterparts. For Shiv, for instance, throwing an elaborate wedding party or buying a shiny new

¹⁴³ This is noticeable, for example, in the way that employed Santals in the CCL housing colony regard their accommodation. Colony apartments are generally considered inferior to village houses. While some Santals in the colony are simply not too fond of residing in concrete quarters, a key issue is often the feeling of insecurity and impermanence that is attached to living in a colony flat. Colony apartments, interlocutors underlined, are the property of CCL; the company can "make us leave if they want to", they told me, and "will probably kick us out once we retire".

motorcycle are legitimate ways to spend one's money, and indeed things that he himself would have liked to be able to afford.

Older non-employed villagers, on the other hand, are usually much more critical of such spending practices. They view the display of newly-acquired wealth by employed Santals – and, more broadly, intra-village differentiation – as detrimental to the community, with a particularly ruinous effect on unity (*ekta*) and solidarity. Siamlal, for example, wistfully described how, before the days of *sarkari naukri*, marriages in the village had been celebrated as modest, down-home affairs, with home-cooked food and unostentatious gifts. The comparatively swanky wedding celebrations thrown by CCL-employed Santals are, in his eyes, profligate and gratuitous, intended mainly to impress and flaunt these Santals' new status as "big people" in the village. Such material display of prosperity, for Siamlal, is not only wasteful – a wedding party "only lasts for one day", the cars Santal employees buy "eventually break down and gather dust in the courtyard" – but also divisive. Display of wealth easily generates resentment among the worse off, who have been left behind in terms of upward mobility and lifestyle. Compared to employed Santals, non-employed villagers experience a sense of inferiority – for instance, for not being able to offer their own wedding guests what their well-do-to neighbours can¹⁴⁴ – and consequently can feel compelled to spend beyond their means in order to 'catch up'.

Echoing the views of other non-employed Santals from his generation, Siamlal laments what he sees as a transition away from an agrarian community in which every villager had "one plate, one *lota* [water vessel] and one glass at home". For these elders, living off the land and forest, with everybody in the village roughly on the same footing, had promoted values of solidarity, reciprocity, and mutual aid. Now, by contrast, Karampot has become a place where some villagers throw opulent wedding parties and drive around in motorcycles and SUVs. Instead of using their money to "help other villagers" or "develop the community", employed Santals fritter it away on consumption to satisfy their own creature comforts and status desires.

¹⁴⁴ Like with cases of tension within CCL-employed households, I do not mean to suggest that instances of envy had previously been absent in Karampot. I believe, however, that enhanced differentiation and the emergence of middle-class consumption patterns among employed Santals are likely to have made such instances more common and pronounced.

Other older Santals, too, often employ memories of the past to comment on growing local inequalities and a shifting moral order. The disparities of the present, and resulting fissures in the social fabric, are counterposed with a forgone, "simpler" time that had been more egalitarian and harmonious. While Karampot's pre-mining days, as I described in Chapter 2, had indeed been characterised by lower levels of differentiation, we should be conscious that such a contradistinction arguably involves a degree of romanticisation of the past, as people selectively evoke memories and elements from the 'old order' that juxtapose with disagreeable features of current reality.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the comparisons my older interlocutors draw between the present and their versions of the past reveal their idealised models of how the community *should* be. They feel that the social relations and moralities to which they attach value have been fraying, and relate this to the uneven inflow of wealth – that is, only to *some* households – through CCL salaries, which has established local inequalities within Santals on a scale like never before.

As an alternative, older Santals imagine a different kind of *adivasi* society, one based on a more moral political economy that does not stimulate self-interest and division. Siamlal, in this context, stresses the importance not of jobs but of land – not only for its material benefit as an inheritable asset or a long-term safety net, but because of the way of life and social relations it represents (see also Coulthard 2014: 60). Writing about Special Economic Zones, Jamie Cross has suggested that commitments to farmed land in contexts of dispossession are "not just commitments to custom or history" but to ideas about particular futures and personhoods (2014: 57). Indeed, for Siamlal, an ideal future is not one of industrial employment but of agriculture – not only as a form of livelihood or because of 'attachment' to land, but as emblematic of a moral order that stands in contrast to the corruptive indivisualisation and differentiation that have been unfolding in the community.

One fragment of the bygone, more egalitarian world to which my older interlocutors refer, I would like to suggest, can be found in the Santal religious festivals held annually in the village. While, in their daily lives, these interlocutors mostly have no

¹⁴⁵ As I noted in Chapter 2, elements of stratification in pre-mining Karampot had not been entirely absent. Levels of differentiation, however, had generally been much less glaring than at present.

choice but to adapt to the unequal political economy around them, it is in ritual festivals that they can participate in the enactment of more egalitarian *adivasi* values. Indeed, instead of self-seeking and accumulation, community rituals foreground values of solidarity, resource sharing, and egalitarianism. Taking place in the *sarna*, the sacred grove at the edge of the village, Santal festivals revolve around the land and forest, and are meant to pay respect to all that they provide, from agricultural produce to *mahua* flowers. The ritual part of these festivals, officiated by the *naike* (village priest), involves the sacrifice of chickens to propitiate the village's spirits, in hopes for a good harvest and harmony in the community. Thereafter, all participants – coal peddlers and CCL employees alike – cook, eat, and drink together for hours in the *sarna*, in a setting in which status distinctions seem to largely dissipate.

The spirit of egalitarianism is also reflected in the myths associated with the festivals. The traditional tale behind the Santal *karam* festival, for example, as told to me by a village elder, concerns two Santal brothers – Karma and Dharma – who lived in two neighbouring houses and cultivated adjacent patches of land. Whereas Dharma's plot required hard work and produced little, that of Karma had become very fertile and began producing abundant crops. Buoyed by his unanticipated success, Karma developed a condescending attitude towards his brother: after preparing his lunch, for instance, he would empty the remains of rice and water from the pot outside his house's window and onto Dharma's land. Soon thereafter, however, Karma's luck changed for the worse: his plot turned barren and unproductive, while Dharma's suddenly began to thrive. Karma's haughtiness, clearly, had reversed his fortune; the only way to rectify this, a wise old villager told him, was to leave the village and embark on a spiritual journey. In the beginning, Karma's bad luck seemed to follow him: the fruit he picked on the way was acrid, and the pond water he drank foul. After weeks of walking, an angelic young boy finally appeared before Karma; he instructed him to travel back home, plant a *karam* tree in the village, and worship it. Karma set out to return to the village, and the effect was immediate: already on the way back, the fruit he plucked was salubrious, and the water he fetched sweet. As soon as he arrived in the village and planted the *karam* tree, his land regained its vitality.

As a parable about the deleterious consequences of disparity and vanity, the *karam* tale resonates with how many older coal-peddling Santals feel about employed villagers' display of status through consumption. The tale is, moreover, particularly explicit about the dangers of divergences within families and between siblings, which in Karampot have arisen as a result of dispossession and compensatory employment. Rituals such as *karam*, I propose, allow Santals not only to remember but also imagine an alternative, more egalitarian form of sociality,¹⁴⁶ and serve as a moral resource for an ethical critique of processes of uneven accumulation and differentiation, and their corrosive impact on community solidarity.

Cracks in solidarity have manifested in a number of areas. One of these, which I examine in Chapter 8, is collective action, or rather its lack. Another, which I explore next, is *madaiti* – the *adivasi* custom of voluntary labour exchange between households – whose decline in Karampot provides one concrete example of the effects of internal differentiation.

The decline of madaiti

A form of reciprocal, non-monetary labour exchange, *madaiti* is typically practiced in *adivasi* communities in tasks such as sowing and harvesting of crops, and construction and maintenance of mud houses, and is considered a pillar of *adivasi* economics and society (e.g. Padel 2016; Shah 2010: Chapter 2, 2018: 136). In Karampot, while *madaiti* still takes place, it has been losing prominence in favour of other, monetary types of labour relations. In agriculture, for instance, *madaiti* is now in fact the least common labour practice.¹⁴⁷ In-kind payment with rice crop is the most prevalent, followed by payment in cash – a relatively new phenomenon in the village.

A few decades ago, my older interlocutress recounted, *madaiti* in agriculture had been the norm. At the end of the workday, the owner of the field that had been jointly sown or harvested would serve *mahua* wine or rice beer, and sometimes a meal, to all labourers, who would drink and dine together. Now, however, much more of this

¹⁴⁶ On rituals as a 'could be' universe, see Seligman et al. (2008).

¹⁴⁷ Based on household survey data and interviews.

work is done for a wage, and *madaiti* has become less widespread. In work on mud houses, too – for example, repairing or sealing the tiled roofs, especially before the rainy season – the use of *madaiti* has been waning while paid labour has become more common. Several interlocutors recalled that only a few years ago, this kind of work had taken place in their house through labour exchange. More recently, though, they had to pay to have their house's roof sealed – either to people from the village or to hired labour from outside of it. As Babulal, one of the older coal peddlers, said:

It's nowadays difficult to find even one person who's willing to help with something like this. Nobody wants to work for free. Even to help you push the coal on your bicycle up the slopes in the village, friends and relatives will ask for a portion of the earnings.

The decrease in *madaiti* and spread of cash payments seem to be an almost inescapable corollary of uneven upward mobility and economic differentiation. It is mostly CCL-employed Santals who have started offering cash payments to non-employed Santals for different kinds of work – not only agricultural, in employed Santals' vegetable gardens or small land plots,¹⁴⁸ but also occasionally repair and renovation work in their cement houses. With their jobs and salaries, Santal CCL employees can certainly afford to pay a modest wage for such labour, and usually find this more convenient than having to reciprocate manually in their own free time for assistance from other villagers. Once it became clear to non-employed villagers that they can in fact get paid for this kind of work, they themselves have become generally more reluctant to do it without pay.

Not less importantly, economic differentiation has chipped away at the material basis for reciprocity, which is arguably essential for mutual aid practices. Coal peddlers and employed Santals now display radically different types of housing, financial capabilities, and needs. While the former inhabit mud structures with leaking clay tile roofs that require regular refitting, the latter occupy sturdy cement structures;

¹⁴⁸ Some CCL-employed Santals still have a small amount of 'leftover' family land in the vicinity; others, as I have mentioned above, have purchased new plots. Busy with their own CCL jobs, Santal employees usually do very little, if any, cultivation themselves, and instead hire agricultural labourers from either Karampot or outside of it.

while the former have limited financial resources, which can encourage engagement in labour exchange, the latter have the financial capacity to pay, which can contribute to a preference to hire labour. Such differentiation has pulled the rug from under the material foundation for reciprocity and mutuality, which many of my interlocutors feel had been crucial not only for household reproduction but more generally for social cohesion. As Kamal, the retired CCL employee, put it: "With *madaiti*, people had relationships (*sambandh*), a sense of togetherness (*ek sath*). Now, nobody here will work without getting paid. After the work, instead of eating and drinking together, people just take the money and go".

Conclusion

This chapter has explored different facets and effects of the upward mobility enabled by CCL jobs, both in employed Santals' lives and the community more broadly. It has shown how the attainment of *sarkari naukri* has resulted among employed Santals – more specifically, from the younger generations – in enhanced consumption patterns, improved education opportunities and life chances for children, and changes in gender and household relations. Pursuing middle-class aspirations and emulating higher-caste and -class ways of life, younger Santal employees have increasingly become a local petty bourgeoisie. By contrast with the more common image of tribal societies as a bastion of egalitarianism, Karampot has seen the emergence of salient socioeconomic and class differentiation between this minority of Santals and all the rest, both in the community and within families. Indeed, while compared to the caste-divided plains, economic differences between households in *adivasi* communities have been argued to only be "minimal and temporary" (Shah 2018a: 229), permanent CCL wages in Karampot have made such differences considerably more entrenched. They have, moreover, been accompanied by emergent forms of consumption and wealth display that are similarly at variance with those usually ascribed to *adivasis* (e.g. Gell 1986; Shah 2018a).

At the same time, the chapter has also illuminated the ways in which CCL-employed Santals experience a sense of precarity in relation to the sustainability in the long run of their newly-attained status. Intensified competition for public sector jobs, a discourse of corruption around recruitment procedures, and the lack of long-established accumulation of financial and social capital through *naukri* – all these

cast uncertainty on the future of employed Santals' households. The permanence produced by secure employment, then, can be experienced as only temporary; it reveals potential cracks in the so-called citadel of state-sponsored employment (Holmström 1976; Parry 2013a, 2019: Chapter 2), and can engender a different sense of precarity than that experienced by informal labourers.

Finally, the chapter has considered an alternative, critical view – held mostly by older Santals – on the effects of CCL employment. This perspective stresses the pernicious impact that new and overt forms of inequality have on community solidarity – exemplified for instance by the decline of the reciprocal labour exchange system of *madaiti* in favour of commodified intra-village labour relations. Such shifts in moralities are contrasted with a partly-idealised image of a more egalitarian *adivasi* past, enacted temporarily in religious festivals, on which older Santals draw to articulate their critique of the current political economy and conduct of CCL-employed community members. A similar critique, as we saw in Chapter 4, is directed at Santal *netas*, whose role in this political economy I discuss in the next chapter.

VII. Dispossession and compensation

Having discussed in the previous chapter the *naukri/kam* divide in Karampot, in this chapter I take a step back to look more closely at the process by which displaced Santals from Dharutar have gained their compensatory jobs. As I described in the previous chapter, there had been two phases of land expropriation in Dharutar, each followed by a round of compensatory job distribution: first, in 1982, for dispossessed *raity* land; and second, in 2012-2014, for dispossessed *gair majurwa* land. It is on this more recent provision of jobs, with which I am most familiar, that I concentrate in what follows. Taking place after the village's displacement, it allowed most – but as we will see, not all – displaced households to obtain CCL employment, through the mediation of local Santal *netas*.

Indeed, this chapter is concerned in particular with the ways in which the process of compensatory job distribution was tangled up with brokerage and local politics, and its consequences in terms of local patronage dynamics. More concretely, I focus on the involvement in this process of Budhram Manjhi – the *neta* introduced in Chapter 4 – as an intermediary between villagers and CCL. Through his story, I explore the ambiguous role that *adivasi netas* can play in the arrival of large industrial projects – particularly in the doling out of compensatory benefits for dispossession – and the resultant emergence of new, or reinforced, local patterns of clientelism and inequality. Moreover, I illuminate Budhram's fundamental ambiguity as, on the one hand, a seeming tribal activist, and on the other hand, a self-interested politician. This duality disturbs straightforward understandings of political activism – especially indigenous – in relation to dispossession, and blurs the boundary between activism and co-option.

From protest to negotiation

In late 2007, printed notifications bearing CCL's logo were stuck onto the front doors of Dharutar's houses, informing residents about the village's forthcoming displacement to make room for a new opencast pit. For most people, this came as a surprise: they had no idea exactly how large the area was that had been acquired for mining,¹⁴⁹ or indeed that Pandu Project was expanding towards their village and now

¹⁴⁹ The land for Pandu Project, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, had been acquired in as early as 1964.

about to swallow it whole.¹⁵⁰ At first, the impending displacement generated opposition. Its main organiser was Budhram, then a village-level political worker for the dominant JMM party, and a close friend of Chita Besra – a rising JMM politician from a nearby village who lent his hand to the protest.

Recalling this time, interlocutors from Dharutar described public meetings in the village and demonstrations in front of the project office. Hundreds of people, from both Dharutar and surrounding villages, participated – carrying tribal bows and arrows, playing drums, and sitting down on the road in demand to shut down the colliery.¹⁵¹ Budhram and Chitu, however, soon realised that thwarting the expansion of the mine by way of protest was unlikely to succeed – not the least because CCL had acquired the land decades ago, and already compensated villagers for dispossessed *raity* plots in 1982. Instead of fighting off the inevitable, they thought, it would be better to negotiate with CCL, in an attempt to deliver more jobs for the community.

CCL, on its part, was also more inclined to negotiate with Budhram and Chitu – whom it assumed represented the community – than face intractable agitation by villagers. As has been documented in different contexts globally (Dhagamwar 2003: 236; Gardner 2018; Gardner et al. 2012; Kirsch 2014; Welker 2014; Zalik 2004), fostering working and even placatory relationships with community leaders has become a common strategy for corporations. A response to mounting political and civil society critiques about the adverse social impacts of their projects, such 'community engagement' has become a way for corporations to minimise local opposition and gain a "social license to operate" (Gardner et al. 2012: 169). As one CCL officer explained, senior project management are not from the area, or often even Jharkhand; to avoid local tensions and enable the colliery to run smoothly, "they have no choice but to reach out to local *netas*". Avoiding any disruption to coal production is, indeed, CCL's utmost priority: the company has long been a loss-

¹⁵⁰ Villagers are often unaware of the process of land acquisition, especially of *gair majurwa* land (see also Dhagamwar et al 2003: 44-45).

¹⁵¹ Similar protests against land dispossession by industrial projects have been documented across South Asia, illustrating the kinds of local responses that such projects often face (e.g. Gardner et al. 2012; Gardner 2018; Nuremowla 2016; Levien 2011).

making subsidiary (*Economic and Political Weekly* 2001), and even with operations in full swing Pandu Project has been struggling to meet its targets.

The risk of opposition, from CCL's perspective, was arguably heightened by the history of *adivasi* protest in Jharkhand. As I described in Chapter 2, *adivasi* communities in the region have a rich history of resistance to external incursions, which has purportedly predisposed them to take a harder stance against dispossession (Parry & Strümpell 2008: 54; see also Levien 2013b). In the case of Pandu Project, this history was concretised by the presence of Budhram and Chitu, who are both members of the JMM. As was also discussed in Chapter 2, the party is known as a spearhead of *adivasi* activism in Jharkhand. In the 1970s and 1980s, it had led a combative campaign against the wrenching of *adivasi* land by both outsiders and the state, joining forces with a trade unionist struggle against coal companies (Devalle 1992; Prakash 2001).

Wishing to avoid confrontation, then, Pandu Project's management opened its doors to Budhram and Chitu. The latter shifted their efforts to the ensuing negotiations, and Dharutar's nascent protest movement soon fizzled out.¹⁵² The political struggle transformed accordingly: it was no longer about the actual loss of land – which, Budhram and Chitu believed, was already a *fait accompli*; rather, it now concentrated on compensatory jobs – in other words, inclusion in the world of secure industrial employment (see also Gardner 2018). The effort to extract compensatory jobs was, in fact, not discordant with many villagers' own aspirations. As I discussed in the previous two chapters, for younger Santals in particular the expansion of the colliery represented not a destruction of a valorised rural way of life, but an opportunity to exit the precarious conjunction of small-scale agriculture and precarious work, and instead realise hopes of economic security and mobility through the possibility of a prized job.

Indeed, as other scholars have shown, the advent of industrial projects can beget not only opposition but also hopes, which often revolve around employment (Cross 2014;

¹⁵² As Parry (2019: Chapter 4) has suggested in relation to Bhilai, the fact that Dharutar's land was expropriated in stages – not in one sweep of displacement but piece by piece, over a couple of years – might have also made collective mobilisation more difficult.

Dhagamwar et al. 2003: 78; Vijayabaskar 2010).¹⁵³ This was certainly the case in Dharutar, and for good reason: unlike Special Economic Zones and other private land-acquiring projects, CCL's compensation for land loss comes in the form of secure, sought-after *sarkari naukri*.

Since the first round of dispossession in Dharutar, in 1982, the number of households in the village had increased considerably, from 49 to 118. Santals from the newly created households, belonging mostly to the younger generation, were now also eager to gain CCL employment. As *sarkari naukri*, a CCL job is especially covetable – and losing land is seen as the only way to obtain it. In our conversations, my interlocutors often drew a contrast between the present and the period of nationalisation, in the 1970s. As I described in the previous chapter, the state had in that period integrated private colliery workers into the newly-formed national coal company, thereby providing a rare occasion to make the transition from informal mining labour to public sector employment. This one-off window of opportunity for upward mobility, however, had long closed. Now, by contrast, the only imaginable path to CCL employment, for my interlocutors, is through compensation for dispossessed land. Obtaining such employment through the standard application route simply does not seem to most local Santals like an option: public sector jobs require educational credentials and skills that *adivasis* largely lack,¹⁵⁴ and moreover are widely believed to depend on money and social networks (see also Jeffery et al. 2008a: 208; Parry 2013b).

Indeed, as has also been observed elsewhere (Gardner 2018; Levien 2018), when considering land dispossession we cannot simply assume that people naturally prefer to work the land. Arun, a 32 year old Santal from Dharutar, certainly does not. “Farming is difficult”, he said. “There's no irrigation here, the land is neither abundant nor especially fertile, and growing crops next to the mine is more difficult

¹⁵³ Relatedly, Gisa Weszkalyns (2008, 2016) has pointed out that alongside fears of environmental degradation, extraction of natural resources can also trigger affects of hope and potential.

¹⁵⁴ As Levien has noted, there is nowadays an “even greater mismatch between the skills and education of *adivasis* and the type of employment that extractive-industrial projects typically make available” (2013b: 374; see also Fernandes & Bharali 2014).

because of all of the pollution".¹⁵⁵ While some of the older Santals, like Siamlal, still valorise land as both an asset and way of life, many of the younger ones, like Arun, are keen to exit the labourious and at times unrewarding activity of farming in favour of a more secure livelihood. "It's much better to have a permanent job and salary", Arun declared unequivocally. "*Naukri* is what everybody wants." Such views reveal how ideas around labour are tied up with processes of dispossession, and how such processes are not always simply imposed top-down by corporations but can overlap with people's own aspirations for a better future (Cross 2014; Li 2010, 2011).

There were, however, two substantial hindrances that stood in the way of younger Santals' hopes of compensatory employment. First, compensation by CCL is normally only granted for the dispossession of *raity* land – in other words, tenancy land for which the dispossessed person has a title deed. Deedless *gair majurwa* land, by contrast – which *adivasis* often use informally, for either cultivation or housing – is not recognised by CCL for compensation purposes. As it happened, all the *raity* land in Dharutar had already been dispossessed and compensated for by CCL in 1982; it was for this land that some of the older Santals in the village had obtained their jobs back then. The land that was now about to be expropriated, on the other hand, was all *gair majurwa*. While many Santals in Dharutar had been using such land – especially since the dispossession of the village's *raity* plots – it did not formally belong to them, and thus did not make them eligible for compensatory employment.^{156,157}

The second hindrance had to do with broader changes in the coal industry that had taken place since 1982. Roughly up until the mid-1990s, it had been customary for

¹⁵⁵ As previously mentioned, mining activities are indeed associated with degradation of agricultural land (Kumar 2016; Mishra 2014).

¹⁵⁶ There are, in fact, two types of *gair majurwa* land: *gair majurwa khas*, which is usually tilled by an individual household; and *gair majurwa aam*, which is common village land that includes grazing fields, ponds, etc. The land that CCL sought to expropriate in 2008 was of the former kind. *Gair majurwa aam*, which is protected by legal measures, has not been requisitioned by CCL in either Dharutar or Karampot. (Protected forest land surrounding the two villages, however, *has* been utilised by CCL, for which the company had to provide a special justification to the relevant authorities.)

¹⁵⁷ See Nuremowla (2016) for a related discussion on the importance of land documents for gaining compensation for dispossessed land.

CCL to compensate for loss of land through employment (Fernandes 2007; Herbert & Lahiri-Dutt 2014). The first round of job distribution in Dharutar, in 1982, had fallen under this earlier period. The policy of providing *naukri* had arguably stemmed from the ethos of CIL – CCL's parent company – as a state-owned enterprise, rooted in the Nehruvian vision of industrial public sector work as a beacon of progress for the nation (Parry 2003, 2013a; Sanchez & Strümpell 2014). Indeed, in the Nehruvian era loss of land to state-owned industries had been legitimised through an ideology of national development and labour absorption. While state industries in that period had displaced hundreds of villages, they had also sought to integrate the rural dispossessed into the formal industrial workforce (Parry & Strümpell 2008; Sanchez & Strümpell 2014).¹⁵⁸

A formal Resettlement & Rehabilitation (R&R) policy, setting out the jobs-for-land scheme, was introduced by CIL in 1994 – prompted among others by the World Bank, which was co-financing projects in India's coal sector (Fernandes & Paranjpye 1997).¹⁵⁹ While revised several times since (Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2011; Fernandes 2005) – the threshold for compensatory employment, for example, has been lowered from three acres of dispossessed land to two – this policy is still in place, and meant to govern CIL's handling of so-called project-affected persons (CIL 2008). The policy's implementation, however, has since roughly the mid-1990s become progressively diluted, as a consequence of a reduction in the number of available company jobs. Increased mechanisation and opencast mining methods, and downsizing and casualisation of the workforce, have resulted in a salient decline in

¹⁵⁸ As Levien (2018: Chapter 7) points out, dispossession in the Nehruvian period had been only *relatively* more labour-absorbing. Compensation efforts by public sector projects had often been sluggish and inadequate (Parry & Strümpell 2014), and led to the impoverishment of many of the the dispossessed (Fernandes 2008).

¹⁵⁹ While the idea of compensatory employment had arguably been inherited from the Nehruvian state, it also chimed well with the proliferating concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has in recent years become an important means for corporations to demonstrate “ethically sound practice” (Gardner et al. 2012: 169; for ethnographic studies of CSR, see Blowfield & Frynas 2005; Burton 2002; Frynas 2005; Kapelus 2002; Rajak 2011; Welker 2009, 2012). While CSR programmes, however, typically provide only limited benefits to the dispossessed – for instance, casual work opportunities in and around the project (e.g. Gardner 2018; Gardner et al. 2012) – CIL's Nehruvian-inspired policy aims to provide high-status permanent jobs.

employment positions – especially for less-skilled labourers such as *adivasis* (Bennett & McDowell 2012; Bhengara 1996; Chakroborty & Narayan 2014; Fernandes 2007; Heuzé 1996: 229, 2009; Lahiri-Dutt 1999, 2014a).

This downward employment trend needs to be situated within the wider context of India's economic liberalisation in the early 1990s. While prior to liberalisation, many of India's public sector enterprises – including CIL – had played an important role in boosting both output and employment, they had done so with excess manpower and at the cost of efficiency and profit (Dhananjayan & Shanti 2007). Government policy, nonetheless, had treated such deficit as a "political relationship manifest in financial form" – in other words, a 'national debt', tolerated for the purpose of a "long-term investment in the future prosperity of the nation" (Bear 2013: 379). Indeed, Nehruvian planning priorities in the public sector had focused not on profit maximisation but employment generation, and state industries had accordingly been allowed to run at a loss (Bear 2013; Parry 2003, 2013a; *Economic and Political Weekly* 2001). With liberalisation, however, economic efficiency and market imperatives were conferred new urgency (Parry 2013a; Fernandes 2007). Debts were reconceived as financial transactions – economic rather than political relationships – which led the central government to impose stricter fiscal cost-benefit control over public sector undertakings (ibid.; Bear 2011, 2015; Heuzé 1996: 229). The coal industry, in particular, was subject to additional pressures to reduce its debt to the World Bank, which in 1996 had provided CIL with a generous loan package (Heuzé 1996: 229; Herbert & Lahiri-Dutt 2014).

New financial discipline in the public sector dictated, among other things, significant downsizing of the regular workforce in state-owned enterprises (Dhananjayan & Shanti 2007).¹⁶⁰ This, in turn, has stifled the ability of public sector undertakings such as CIL to offer jobs as recompense for land loss – as the company itself has conceded:

¹⁶⁰ This has been documented not only in CIL but also other public sector bodies: see Bear (2013, 2015) on the Kolkata Port Authority; Parry (2013a) on the Bhilai Steel Plant; and Strümpell (2014) on the Rourkela Steel Plant.

In the past, subsidiaries found it relatively easy to acquire land, if they were able to offer jobs. Partly because of this practice, subsidiaries have built up their labour force beyond their needs. This has contributed to the heavy losses many mines incur and eroded the competitiveness of the coal industry. The subsidiaries may still need to hire people in selected locations and continue to give preference to those whose livelihood will be affected by coal mining operations. However, increasingly subsidiaries will need to develop other ways and means to compensate landowners and others adversely affected by their projects (CIL 2008: 1).¹⁶¹

While India's earlier, 'developmentalist regime of dispossession' (Levien 2018), then, had been characterised by relatively high levels of labour absorption, the state's ability to incorporate the dispossessed into regular employment has been substantially curtailed following liberalisation. Indeed, different studies have shown that CIL's compensation policy has in recent years been poorly implemented, with the company unable to dispense jobs to dispossessed villagers who in principle should have qualified for employment (Ahmad & Lahiri-Dutt 2014; McDowell & Bennet 2012; Jain & Bala 2006).¹⁶² One of the more well-known cases comes from CCL's Parej East Project, just under 10 miles from Karampot. Herbert & Lahiri-Dutt (2004, 2014) have described how in that project, a major reduction in the permanent workforce meant that, by the late 1990s, the offer of a *naukri* for dispossessed villagers had effectively ceased to be an option. Nevertheless, CCL continued to use the prospect of employment as a bargaining chip to persuade villagers to relinquish their land, promising them jobs that were not available and creating false expectations and hopes (ibid.).

Despite these challenges around access to compensatory jobs, Budhram was determined. The only way for Dharutar villagers, he figured – including his own

¹⁶¹ In an effort to reduce the number of compensatory jobs afforded, CIL has also given subsidiaries discretion to tweak the conditions of compensation, and offer increased monetary compensation for dispossessed land in lieu of employment (*Business Standard* 2013; *Hindu Business Line* 2013).

¹⁶² Other adverse outcomes of inadequate R&R efforts – for example with regard to resettlement of displacees – have also been amply documented (Cernea 2003, 2007; Fernandes 2004; Fernandes & Paranjpye 1997; Fernandes & Thukral 1989; Singh 2008).

household – to have a chance at CCL employment at this point was to first of all have the *gair majurwa* land they had been using registered as their own. The key, he realised, lay in a particular clause in CCL's R&R policy document. Pertaining to “tribals cultivating land under traditional rights” – namely, *gair majurwa* land – the clause makes a provision for authentication of ownership of such land as a means to claim compensation for its requisition (CIL 2008: 5). Authenticating land, however – and then claiming employment – is a complex, lengthy process, which requires interacting with both government and CCL officers. As such, it was a terrain primed for brokerage, which Budhram decided to take upon himself. He consequently set out to act as an intermediary between villagers and these officers, in an endeavour to secure jobs for the community. This endeavour, moreover, also fed into Budhram's own political ambitions: here was an opportunity to prove his own value and power, and make the transition from a political worker into becoming a proper *neta*, in both the community and the party.

Emergence of a broker

Prior to Pandu Project's expansion, Budhram had been in Dharutar what is known in the literature as a local-level mediator or broker (Bailey 1969; Bierschenk et al. 2002; Gupta 1995, 2005; Shah 2009), dealing with local state bureaucracy on behalf of villagers. This activity, in a sense, can be traced back to Budhram's family, which has a history of engagement in different types of local brokerage. Budhram's grandfather, for instance, had been a local tax collector for the Ramgarh *raja* – the *zamindar* who had controlled large tracts of land in the district, including both Dharutar and Karampot.¹⁶³ A generation later, Budhram's father had also worked as a collector, this time for a Hindu moneylender who had operated in the area during the time of the private collieries.

¹⁶³ As Alpa Shah (2004) explains, while *rajas* in Chotanagpur often granted villages to high-caste Hindus in order to attract them to the region, in some cases villages remained under the *raja's* control. In these villages, a selected dominant tribal family would be put in charge of collecting taxes, thereby becoming akin to a local *zamindari* family (see also Sifton 1917: 72). In Dharutar, this family was Budhram's, which belonged to one of the village's earliest lineages and owned a relatively large amount of land.

More concretely, though, Budhram's career as a local broker dates back to the early 1980s when, as a teenager, he was first exposed to the JMM. As I noted in Chapter 2, the JMM movement had emerged in 1972 under the leadership of a Santal activist by the name of Shibu Soren, against a backdrop of agrarian unrest around the alienation of tribal land (Devalle 1992; Prakash 2001). By the 1980s, it had spread to different parts of Jharkhand – including the Karampot area – and launched an organised campaign against the oppression of *adivasis* by Hindu outsiders. Together with Chitu, his childhood friend and coeval from the next door hamlet, Budhram began attending JMM demonstrations and rallies, which proved more interesting to explore than the humdrum world of school and the village.

Reflecting back on the political situation in the area in those days, both Budhram and Chitu – in the vein of JMM's rhetoric – spoke ardently about *adivasi* exploitation by rapacious Hindus, particularly from neighbouring Bihar.¹⁶⁴ These "Biharis", they told me, were swindling *adivasis* of their plots of land, using their connections to get hold of posts in local block offices and police stations, and, to boot, in the habit of harassing *adivasi* village women. The inflow of Biharis only intensified after the coal industry's nationalisation, as word spread that public sector jobs had become available in the new, state-owned collieries. Using deceitful means such as forged documents, Biharis seized jobs that were meant for *adivasi* labourers from the private mines.¹⁶⁵ They insinuated themselves into supervisory and managerial positions in state-owned collieries and related trade unions, pilfered coal to sell on the side, and siphoned off the wages of *adivasis* who did manage to get jobs in these collieries. "Biharis took not only *adivasis'* money", Chitu said, "but their self-dignity".

In 1983, after a local Santal JMM activist had been found murdered, a large protest event was organised in the district, in which Shibu Soren was rumoured to make an

¹⁶⁴ At the time, before Jharkhand's autonomy, Jharkhand had been part of the state of Bihar. Nevertheless, it had been seen by local *adivasis* as a distinct entity within Bihar, in contrast to the Hindu-dominated rest of the state.

¹⁶⁵ See Heuzé (1996: 245), Sengupta (1979: 34-35), and Simeon (1999: 71) on the crowding out of *adivasi* (and *dalit*) workers from employment in the mines following nationalisation. At the same time, as we have seen, in the Karampot area some Santals did manage to obtain CCL employment in that period.

appearance. Budhram and Chitu walked on foot the six miles from Dharutar to the site of the demonstration, and got to hear Soren speak for the first time. In his fervent speech, Budhram recalled, Soren declared war on Biharis: "They can't be allowed to take away our land and coal", he said on stage, "and must be hunted down like rats". Galvanised by the JMM's charismatic leader and the riled-up crowd, Budhram and Chitu decided to join the struggle. At the age of 14, Budhram effectively left school to be able to dedicate more time to the movement's protest activities.

Part of the appeal of becoming engaged in these was the opportunity to discover a world far beyond the village. When Budhram was 16, for example, he got to travel to Calcutta with a group of young activists to attend a JMM political rally. Going out of Jharkhand and to a large metropolis for the first time entailed a range of novel, adventurous experiences – taking a long-distance train, for instance, or the chance to ride an elevator, in Calcutta. While the lives of most Santals around him, Budhram once told me, seldom extend beyond Hazaribagh or Ranchi, his own early experience outside these geographical confines have taught him how to "deal with different types of situations, people, and problems ... Otherwise, if you spend your entire life like a frog inside a well, how can you even know there's a whole world outside?".

Later on, Budhram and Chitu took part in setting up local JMM protest groups and organising demonstrations in the district. These sometimes involved physical confrontations with both Biharis and the police, which Budhram clearly took pleasure in narrating, in embellished detail, as Bollywood-style action spectacles, including fistfights with policemen and motorcycle chases. Arguably exaggerated if not partly apocryphal, these stories of clashes with the law prop up Budhram's self-promoted reputation as an intrepid activist, one who does not shy away from confrontation with higher-caste people and state authorities. As we shall see, this is now also the way in which Budhram seeks to portray himself locally in relation to CCL.

Chitu, in the meantime, had worked his way up the political ranks. He had been elected as *panchayat* (village council) secretary for JMM; a few years later, the party's block-level secretary; and finally, in 2003, JMM's central general secretary.

Budhram, soon thereafter, became a political worker for Chitu, and began assisting him with campaigns and other political activities. Deployed on various tasks in local government offices, Budhram got to circulate among other, more experienced political workers who were familiarised with state bureaucracy and officials, understood how the system works, and had the know-how of navigating it. Spending time with these men, and with his own resourcefulness, Budhram gradually acquired the skills of gaining access to and interacting with government officers; made valuable contacts and friends; and extended his networks well beyond the village. "Other local Santals might be more educated than me", Budhram told me, "but *this* kind of knowledge" – namely, the savviness and experience required for dealing with the local state – "they certainly don't have". This was not about formal education but social capital – in particular, connections outside the village – crucial to becoming a successful broker (see also Levien 2015b).

Using his connections, Budhram started acting as a broker between villagers and local state bureaucracy, assisting the former with obtaining caste certificates or gaining access to state welfare schemes. Indeed, Budhram's ability to operate in the domains of both the village and the state – and, as my interlocutors put it, "get things done" – was seen as a locally rare, highly-regarded commodity. "Being able to talk to villagers *and* officers", as Arun stated, "is something that only one in ten people can do". Most of my interlocutors agreed that practically any interaction with state authorities – or CCL, for that matter – can easily entail a rigmarole of running around between offices and producing a litany of documents, with no guarantee of the outcome. I heard stories, for example, about villagers who had spent months – and in one case, years – unsuccessfully trying to obtain particular land documents and claim compensation from CCL. To yield effective results, it is widely believed, such efforts require the assistance of a broker or patron who knows how to deal with, and has some leverage over, state and CCL officials. This was, precisely, what Budhram had to offer: not only did he have connections in local government offices, but he was also associated with Chitu, the JMM, and the party's prominent history of resistance, which arguably provided him with a relative degree of clout in dealings with CCL. "If you don't know how to speak to these officials," Arun said, "getting a CCL job for land can be very difficult ... Village *adivasis* like us don't know the right

people and can't even always speak proper Hindi. This is why we need help with these things from a *guru*, like Budhram".

This view was perpetuated by both Budhram and Chitu themselves. They stressed to me on various occasions the critical importance of inside connections in ever-corrupt government offices, and the inability of most rural *adivasis* to deal with state and CCL officials on their own. Because of this, Budhram and Chitu said, *adivasi* villagers have no choice but to use the services of various *dalals* (middlemen) – normally non-*adivasi* and dishonest – who take advantage of them. By contrast with such predatory, petty *dalals*, Budhram and Chitu spoke of themselves as benevolent patrons, who are tribal themselves and thus working *for adivasis*.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, Budhram portrayed his mediation efforts to deliver CCL jobs to villagers as a charitable service to the community – citing as an inspiration a film in which Amitabh Bachchan, the Bollywood star, plays a doctor who sets up a clinic in a remote, destitute village.

Brokering company employment

The first step, Budhram recounted, was to pay a visit to the CCL headquarters in Ranchi. Wheedling the officers with "gifts and sweets", he managed to obtain a copy of a map detailing the exact area of land that had been acquired by CCL. "I took this copy to the land revenue officer in the block office," Budhram recalled, "and we located on the map all the *gair majurwa* patches that people in the village were using ... The idea was to make the necessary papers for all that land and register it, so that people could get compensation for it".

There remained, however, a financial issue. Titling land entails the production of a multitude of official documents and signatures which, as Budhram explained, requires greasing the palms of different government officers. Land authentication thus came with an informal fee, which Budhram intended to collect from villagers: around 50,000 rupees – roughly equivalent to 150 days of coal peddling – for the titling of a plot that would make a household eligible for a compensatory job. Some

¹⁶⁶ See Pitcherit (2018) on how, similarly, *dalit* labour contractors stress their shared identity with *dalit* labourers to depict themselves as honest brokers.

Dharutar villagers had a father or uncle who were already CCL employees – from the distribution of jobs in 1982 – and could help them with this substantial sum. Others used savings from years of coal peddling and wage labour, and if necessary borrowed additional funds from relatives.

Within a couple of years, and numerous visits to the local block and district offices, Budhram succeeded in registering the land of those villagers who had provided him with the necessary payment. Next, he set out to present the land papers to CCL and, using the threat of further protest, press management to find posts in the project for all newly-minted Santal land owners. In total, 62 jobs were provided to Santals from Dharutar between 2012 and 2014, including to Budhram and each of his two sons. Most of these, as I described in the last chapter, were as assistants in the colliery's machinery workshop. As I have also previously noted, while some of the new Santal employees have taken up residence in the CCL housing colony beside the project, others – including Budhram himself – have relocated to Karampot. In our conversations, virtually all of them acknowledged that without Budhram their employment would not have been possible.



Figure 12: Pandu Project offices

Not all Santals from Dharutar, however, were able to gain employment in the project following displacement. Of the 69 households that had been added to Dharutar between 1982 and 2008, about a dozen were left without jobs: they had not provided Budhram with the money to title their land, and were consequently left out of employment negotiations. Most of these jobless households now reside in a small cluster of crumbling mud houses next to the opencast quarry, which is Dharutar's only remaining remnant. Like Karampot's non-employed Santals, they peddle coal for a living; but unlike the former, they have been stripped of their patches of land, which renders their situation – similarly to Karampot's landless non-Santals – especially precarious. When I asked Budhram about this group of jobless villagers, he was quick to attribute their plight to their lack of trust in him as a mediator. These villagers themselves, however, insist that they simply did not have the means to pay for the registration of land. Unlike some others in Dharutar, they did not have relatives with existing CCL jobs to ask for financial help, and did not manage to come up with the money in time. As I expand on later on, these jobless, landless Santals are in fact very much disgruntled with Budhram, whom they feel has deprived them of the jobs they deserved.

And yet, given the paucity of public sector employment in India (Corbridge & Shah 2013; Harriss-White & Gooptu 2001; Shah & Lerche 2017) and developments within CIL in particular, the relatively large number of jobs that were meted out to displaced Santals from Dharutar is striking. Compared to cases such as in Parej East, for instance, the scenario in Dharutar appears on the whole like a relative success. Based on available studies and my own enquires in other projects in the area, the implementation of CIL's compensation policy seems to vary quite considerably between sites. While its distinct localised outcomes arguably depend on a wider range of factors than can be covered here, I suggest that crucial among these is the form and degree of political pressure and brokerage applied by local leaders. As a higher-level employee in Pandu Project told me, "company officials do not give away jobs voluntarily. Unless you know exactly what affected villagers are entitled to, and have the skills to demand jobs, officers will try to sell you various other types of compensation". Indeed, as part of efforts to curb compensatory employment provision, CIL subsidiaries now have the discretion, for example, to offer increased monetary compensation for dispossessed land in lieu of employment (*Business*

Standard 2013; *Hindu Business Line* 2013). In Dharutar, I propose, Budhram's maneuvering of the compensation scheme and state bureaucracy, together with the spectre of JMM resistance, played a key role in extracting jobs from the project, and thus more favourable outcomes from a scenario of displacement.

I also argue, however, that Budhram's brokerage of CCL jobs has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it secured the livelihoods of a significant portion of displaced Santals. But on the other hand, it has been accompanied by two countervailing processes. The first, discussed in the last chapter, is the emergence of new, enhanced forms of intra-community differentiation between employed and non-employed Santals. The second, to which I turn now, is the consolidation of Budhram's political power, and the emergence of a more centralised, hierarchical local structure of political patronage.

New patronage dynamics

One consequence of Budhram's brokerage of CCL employment has been the reinforcement and entrenchment of his local patronage position. Already prior to Pandu Project's expansion, as I described, Budhram had acted as a broker between villagers and state bureaucracy. Now, however, he has established himself locally as the interface between villagers and CCL – the national coal corporation and purveyor of *sarkari naukri*.¹⁶⁷ While Budhram's brokerage of CCL resources has built on, and is in many ways an extension of, his previous brokerage activities, it nevertheless operates on a different scale. Helping villagers with sundry bureaucratic errands and local welfare schemes is one thing; delivering public sector jobs – the most sought-after form of employment – quite another. This scaling up, I suggest, has considerably boosted Budhram's influence and power.

¹⁶⁷ Emphasising Budhram's position of influence in Karampot, at the village level, does not mean to argue that his power is independent of, and does not rely on, broader JMM political networks. Indeed, in the Karampot area, Budhram is part of a network of JMM *netas* and political workers – with Chitu at the top – many of whom are involved in different ways in interactions with CCL, and provide support to the activities of particular *netas* in particular villages. In Karampot, too, Budhram enjoys the support of a small group of Santal-employed cronies, who often assist him with his political activities.

A new scenario of patronage has evolved around the ability to negotiate compensatory benefits with CCL – and, more generally, any form of interaction with the project.¹⁶⁸ As we recall from Chapter 4, for example, the negotiations between Budhram and CCL also resulted in the establishment of the coal sale committee, which oversees truck loading in the depot and in which Budhram was given a senior role. Indeed, rather than relying only on informal networks, Budhram's relationship with CCL now allows him to operate, at least partly, within official company mechanisms, which has made his position of authority more formalised and fixed. Budhram's brokerage between villagers and CCL is thus not only a continuation of his earlier brokerage activities, but arguably also a deviation from them: compared to his informal brokerage of local state resources, Budhram's engagement with CCL seems to have lodged him in a position that is more formalised and permanent.

This has placed Budhram in a veritably influential position not only vis-à-vis those who already have jobs – who now, for example, seek Budhram's assistance in gaining work promotions – but also others in Karampot, who have not yet lost any land of their own but view Budhram as the conduit to employment *in case* of dispossession. As discussed in Chapter 5, villagers tend to believe that Karampot too, like Dharutar, will eventually be submerged by the expanding colliery, and many now think about their land in terms of what it could yield when expropriated. This makes it sensible for them to keep favour with Budhram, in order to maintain chances of potential future compensatory employment. As part of this new form of clientelism, for example, some Santal coal peddlers I know make themselves available for Budhram for various tasks and odd jobs. These range from working in Budhram's vegetable patch to attending public meetings and demonstrations he organises – often, as these Santals told me, without even knowing what they are actually about. Pre-existing forms of patronage have thus not only been maintained, but modified and enhanced.

Like for most other Santals for whom he had brokered jobs, Budhram's own CCL employment – and additionally, in his case, commissions from the coal sale committee – have also allowed for considerable upward mobility. He now lives in a

¹⁶⁸ In her study of dispossession by a gas plant in Bangladesh, Gardner (2018) has observed the emergence of similar patronage dynamics.

spacious cement house in Karampot, owns not only a motorcycle but also both a car and SUV, and his daughter attends a private college in Ranchi. Budhram's upward mobility aspirations, however, extend well beyond those of other CCL-employed Santals: while the material benefits and status that came with his own *sarkari naukri* were certainly important, the brokerage of such jobs was, for Budhram, part of a broader project of self-fashioning as a patron and *neta*. There is no one else around, Budhram often told me, who has done "*this* kind of work for the community" – a notion that is central to his self-legitimacy.

Becoming a *neta*, moreover, was also about becoming a particular type of person, distinguished from 'ordinary' Santals. While, as I showed in the last chapter, emulation of higher-caste and -class ways of life are also present among other employed Santals, in Budhram's case it is particularly striking. Whereas all other Karampot villagers, for example, still go to the forest to perform their ablutions, Budhram's house is the only one that has not only its own Western-style toilet but also a shower. Unlike all my other interlocutors, Budhram also does not frequent the weekly market on the opposite side of the highway; surely he cannot, as he told me, be seen there "buying vegetables like all everybody else". Moreover, in distinctly non-*adivasi* fashion, Budhram occasionally hires a Brahmin priest to perform a private *puja* (religious ritual) in his home – normally the preserve of upper-caste Hindus. Such practices are a way for Budhram to mark his locally elevated position, and assert himself as a kind of dominant, 'forward' Santal who has broken beyond the perceived confines of *adivasiness*.

Traditional authorities

Budhram's increased dominance as a *neta* has taken place alongside an apparent decline in that of traditional Santal authorities in Karampot. As I alluded to in Chapter 2, Santal society has traditionally included several community leadership roles (Archer 1984 [1946]; Bodding 2001 [1946]; Mukherjea 1962: Chapter 6; Mahapatra 1986). These comprise, first and foremost, the *manjhi haram*, or village headman – a position that in Karampot is occupied by an older Santal by the name of Ganaram. Normally selected by villagers, the *manjhi haram*'s responsibilities include overseeing marriage rituals and Santal festivals, presiding over disputes, and deciding on matters of moral transgression. When a few years ago, for example, a

young Santal had brought a girl from another village to live with him in Karampot without both their parents' permission, it was Ganaram who decided on the appropriate reparation: the youngster would throw a small gathering in the village, offering rice beer, *mahua* wine, and chicken to all those wishing to attend. Other traditional authority roles include the *naike*, or village priest, who officiates Santal ritual festivals; and the *jogwa*, or 'messenger', responsible for informing villagers about festivals and community meetings.

In Karampot, these village authorities have generally retained their significance in the spheres of ritual and morality. The ways in which they operate, however, often appeared to be rather loose. I got to attend, for example, a number of Santal festivals and weddings in which Ganaram was not even present. When I enquired about this, older interlocutors pointed out that the position of the *manjhi haram* is not as active or central as it had used to be, say 30 or 40 years ago. In fact, serving in this role seems to have become somewhat of a burden. In one of the village meetings I observed, intended to set a date for an upcoming Santal festival, Ganaram expressed his wish to give up his position. Being the *manjhi haram*, he told me later, is time-consuming; one is expected "to participate in and lead and every wedding ceremony and village function", without any tangible rewards. Ruso, the village's *jogwa*, harbours similar feelings, and is likewise not keen to remain in this role for much longer. For younger Santals, too, these village positions are generally not something to aspire for; their desires revolve primarily around employment and, in the meanwhile, they prefer focusing their time and efforts on earning money through peddling coal.

Although, admittedly, more research in this area would be needed, these ethnographic snippets seem to me to suggest a degree of decline in the status of traditional Santal authorities¹⁶⁹ – especially when compared to the growing centrality of Santal *netas* such as Budhram, who represent a different kind of authority. Whereas the authority of the *manjhi haram* concerns matters of custom and morality, and is based on his ability to mediate in intra-village disputes, that of

¹⁶⁹ This decline arguably has a longer history – going back to the Permanent Settlement and rise of *zamindars* – in which the ascent of Santal *netas* represents only one, more recent component.

Budhram stems from the possibility of access to new forms of livelihoods, and is derived from his sociopolitical connections and networks outside the village.

Indeed, as my interlocutors explained, interactions with state and CCL officials are the distinct domain of *netas* like Budhram who – contrary to the traditional leaders – are "doing politics". In Karampot, this has become largely synonymous with brokering access to colliery-related benefits, ever more crucial to villagers' livelihoods both present and future. In this new political economy, Santal *netas* have come to fulfil a different, and progressively salient, role than that of older forms of Santal leadership, and gain an increasing degree of authority. But 'doing politics', as we will see, comes with a host of moral ambiguities, which colour villagers' perception of Budhram – and *netas* more broadly – in particular ways.

***Adivasi* activist or unprincipled politician**

The entry of brokerage into new spheres of activity, and the emergence of new or reinforced patterns patronage and inequality, have also been documented in other contexts of industrialisation and/or dispossession (Gardner 2018; Gardner et al. 2012; James 2011; Levien 2011, 2012). What is particularly striking in the case of Budhram, however, is his image not only as a patron and *neta* but also a political activist, and the stark contrast between this image and the way in which Budhram is viewed locally.

Budhram's key role in delivering compensatory jobs has cemented his status not only in the community but also in the JMM, as a capable political worker, and proved a pivotal step in his political ascendancy. Since his brokerage efforts in Dharutar, Budhram has not only become a JMM committee member but also, perhaps more importantly, elected secretary of the party's regional labour union for mine workers, the Jharkhand Colliery Labour Union (JCMU). Budhram was thus able to parlay his engagement with CCL and its compensation scheme into own political advancement in the party, thereby gaining political mileage out of dispossession. While, on paper, Budhram has a job in Pandu Project's machinery workshop, in reality he seldom goes in (yet still collects his monthly paycheque). Instead, most of his time is spent meeting with CCL officers regarding various employee issues, and engaging in

political activities. "There are other people to do the work in the workshop", Budhram once told me; he, as a *neta*, has "more important things to do".

In our conversations, Budhram often referred to his leverage over CCL, and his ability to negotiate with company officials not only on equal footing but from a position of power. Recalling meetings with the Pandu Project manager, for example, Budhram described how he had made it clear that he is not one to simply brush off. "I've seen officers like you come and go", Budhram recounted telling the manager. "The JMM could shut down all the mines around here if it decided to, and have you transferred away to Ranchi". Similarly to Budhram's stories of his earlier scuffles with the police, such accounts, however embroidered, serve to reinforce his image as a man who stands up to officials and superiors (see also Piliavsky & Sbriccoli 2016). Budhram's style of leadership, in Kenneth Bo Nielsen's terms (2018: Chapter 6), is distinctively 'activist', predicated on being seen and heard as both fearless and constantly engaged.

With the support he has from employees and villagers, Budhram told me, he could easily bring local collieries to a shutdown. While I was sceptical about the veracity of such a sweeping statement, Budhram does appear to now have considerable bargaining power vis-à-vis CCL, which was also confirmed to me by both senior CCL employees and activists from other local labour unions. With the initial protest movement against the project, Budhram had already demonstrated to CCL his ability to mobilise villagers and generate opposition. His formal position as the JMM labour union secretary has now only augmented his political power. In theory, as company officers too agreed, Budhram and the JMM do have the means to disrupt local coal production to a considerable degree. "It's only the *netas* that management is afraid of and listens to", a higher-level CCL employee said. When, by comparison, he himself once sought a meeting with the project manager on behalf of a lower-level employee, the manager had been quick to shrug him off.

The power of the JCMU locally was affirmed to me in particular by Shankar Lal, a former union activist who had for years led the state chapter of the prominent Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUCH). Because they are not national, Shankar explained, regional unions such as the JCMU cannot represent workers at that level.

But in the mining areas, where a considerable portion of colliery employees (at non-management level) come from surrounding villages, unions like the JCMU – often affiliated with powerful regional parties – have become the most widely supported and dominant. In Pandu Project, for example, of all unions present the JCMU has the largest number of members. This significant support base, Shankar asserted, means that strikes organised by the JCMU would be substantial, which is why CCL has no choice but to at least consider if not accede to their demands. The threat of strike is, indeed, one often used by Budhram as a bargaining chip with CCL. In practice, though, strikes virtually never materialise, for reasons that I discuss in the next chapter.

Finally, in addition to his position in the JCMU, Budhram now also serves as an active member of the Ryat Visthapit Morcha, or Farmers' Anti-Displacement Front. Founded in 2011, the Morcha is a JMM-affiliated that campaigns, mostly through elaborate rallies, against land requisition for mining and for increased compensation for the mining-affected. I had the chance to attend the Morcha's annual rally with Budhram, for whom a front-row sit had been reserved by the stage. This was a large public event, intended to showcase the Morcha's capacities. It attracted a crowd of a few thousand, including from Karampot, who enjoyed a lively procession, free lunch, and a traditional *adivasi* dance and music show – an illustration of how indigeneity is mobilised to perform protest (see Escobar 2001: 184). Speeches were delivered by several Jharkhandi *netas*, stressing the urgency of struggles against displacement and lambasting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allowing the continued alienation of *adivasi* land for mining. Pamphlets handed out throughout the event listed the Morcha's main demands: stopping all forcible land acquisition; supplying jobs to all dispossessed persons irrespective of the amount of land lost; and providing them in addition with alternative cultivable land.



Figure 13: The Ryat Visthapit Morcha's annual rally

With his mediation of compensatory employment in Dharutar, and involvement in the Morcha, Budhram can easily appear not only as a broker or even *neta* but indeed an *adivasi* mining activist, of the kind often featured in narratives of tribal resistance. In Karampot, however, as I show next, many villagers think of Budhram very differently – not as an activist but a perfidious broker-politician, who has used the relationship he forged with CCL mainly for his own benefit.

Corruption and netagiri

Those Santals from Dharutar who have been left without CCL jobs, mentioned earlier, have quite a different version of events to share of the village's displacement than the one told by Budhram. One of them is Jagdis, from one of the coal-peddling households we met in Chapter 3. The reason people like him did not gain employment, Jagdis claims, is because they are not close with Budhram: jobs had been arranged first and foremost for Budhram's various kinsmen in Dharutar, and then for others who had the means to pay for land registration – even if they were not from the village. In this, Jagdis is not entirely wrong: Budhram does admit, when directly asked, that since there had been more *gair majurwa* land to register than villagers could pay for, in a number of cases he accepted money from people from outside Dharutar, who thereby effectively bought CCL jobs for themselves through

him. Indeed, I know personally of at least one Santal in Karampot who is neither originally from Dharutar nor had any land there, but who managed to attain a CCL job in this way.¹⁷⁰

There is, at any rate, a strong sense among jobless displaced Santals that Budhram assisted primarily those in his inner social circle. Those outside it, they say, were not always told about the meetings in which Budhram informed villagers about land registration; learned about the cost of land registration only at the very last minute; and consequently were not able to arrange the money for this in time. These jobless villagers point out that the lion's share of jobs has reached people within Budhram's extended kinship network, while Budhram's own household has the largest number of jobs of all. The same applies, according to them, to community representative positions in the coal sale committee, which Budhram distributed based on personal relationships – for example to villagers who had previously assisted him locally with his political work for JMM.

Claims about corruption in the distribution of CCL jobs are difficult to either verify or refute. Nevertheless, as Parry (2000) has usefully pointed out, regardless of their objective veracity such claims reveal an idealised view, for my interlocutors, of how things *ought* to be. In this case, rumours of corruption reflect a view about the informal, intransparent, and inequitable nature of the kind of brokerage and patronage politics enacted by Budhram – and, it is believed, *netas* more generally (see also Gardner et al. 2012). Villagers, in this view, should be compensated for detriments to their livelihoods with secure employment that is distributed equitably and transparently, not doled out informally via the kin and social networks of local leaders.

Indeed, belief in the immoral conduct of *netas* extends well beyond the group of jobless displaced Santals from Dharutar, and is prevalent among Karampot's Santal coal peddlers. While they still retain their small agricultural plots, these villagers too, as we have seen, have grievances about the colliery's toll on their living environment:

¹⁷⁰ This Santal's father had gained a CCL job following nationalisation, and was able to use his pension to help financially with the titling of land through Budhram.

the pollution that contaminates the air and soil, the blasting that cracks their mud houses' walls, and the expropriation of grazing and forest land surrounding the village. For all this, as they repeatedly told me, they have received nothing in return. Because they haven't been *directly* dispossessed they are not eligible for employment, and otherwise have been offered no economic opportunities through the colliery, nor any local services or benefits such as paved village roads, a better school, or a local hospital.¹⁷¹ Instead, as I described in Chapter 4, coal peddlers only have access to casual truck loading wage labour in the mine's depot yard, which is what CCL provides to non-dispossessed project-affected persons.

Talking about their predicament, coal peddlers like Shiv and Puja point a finger at Budhram. Since the expansion of the mine, they feel, instead of working on behalf of poor villagers Budhram has been concerned mostly with his own political advancement. "Even at the time of the protest in Dharutar", Shiv said, "Budhram and Chitu were just using the demonstrations to show their power. They shouted slogans into the microphone but in the end went into the project office, closed the door, and made all kinds of deals ... *Netas* care not about people like us but their own position". Thus while, as I described above, villagers might respect Budhram because of his ability to "get things done" – in other words, based on an 'ethics of efficacy' (Piliavsky & Sbriccoli 2016) – their evaluation of him is simultaneously oriented by an ethics of virtue, in which the morality of actions makes a difference.

Villagers do not think *netas* are have always been dishonest. Most of my coal-peddling interlocutors, for example, readily credit Budhram and Chitu with having negotiated the provision of truck loading wage labour in the first place. But the same interlocutors blame Budhram and Chitu for the increasing decline in the availability of this work. As I described in Chapter 4, coal-peddling villagers commonly believe that this decline is the result of *netas* gradually pushing for more payloading, which boosts their commissions through the coal sale committee. While "in the beginning", coal peddlers told me, Budhram and Chitu had indeed been "helping people", later on they became "selfish", increasingly concerned with "stuffing their own pockets". This transformation is attributed by my interlocutors to the corruptive nature of

¹⁷¹ CCL employees – and they only – are entitled to free healthcare in CCL hospitals and clinics.

politics itself. They feel that as long as individuals like Budhram operate at the level of the community, they tend to work on its behalf. But when such individuals become 'politicians' – climbing up the political ladder and pulled into the whirlpool of party politics – they become progressively self-serving and engaged in *netagiri* (self-interested politics).

Budhram, as we have seen, tends to speak of his actions as a beneficent service to the community. While various *non-adivasi* fixers, he often said, only try to cheat Santal villagers, Santal *netas* like himself are committed to supporting their tribesmen. In this, Budhram evokes the notion of *seva*, or disinterested service. For many villagers, however, Budhram's *netagiri* conduct is very far removed from the ethic of *seva*, which refers to service *without* expectation of reward. Similarly to what Adrian Mayer (1981) has observed in central India, my interlocutors believe that *seva* is impossible to achieve in political life. While *netas* like Budhram and Chitu may have started off as 'community workers', as they enter the political system – intrinsically dirty and unsavoury (see Ruud 2001; Goldman 2001) – they become invariably corrupt. Instead of working for villagers, once *netas* gain status and influence they divert their attention to securing support, money, and resources to be able to maintain their position – even at villagers' expense. In Karampot, this local perception of *netas* has translated into widespread disillusionment and cynicism about politics.

The neta and the ascetic

Indeed, the rise of *netas* like Budhram, and the immorality associated with them, has not gone morally uncontested. This is best illustrated by the case of Siamlal, who has already figured often in my account. Like Budhram, Siamlal had been, in his younger days, actively involved in the JMM protest movement. Having joined, in the early 1980s, a local JMM activist group, Siamlal had not only been engaged in efforts to recruit members in local villages but also taken part in some of the movement's more militant protest activities. Yet unlike Budhram, Siamlal has ultimately chosen to veer away from what he saw as the immoral world of politics. Increasingly frustrated with the path taken by the JMM and its *netas* – from Budhram to higher-level leaders – Siamlal has turned to a life of religious piety, and spends most of his time in the small Hindu temple across the highway from Karampot.

Siamlal's relationship with Hinduism began almost incidentally. In the early 1990s, he spent a few months working on a brick kiln construction site, not far from the temple. During their breaks, he and the other labourers would go to the temple's small, shaded front porch to rest and pass the time. Siamlal found himself increasingly interested in the Hindu *pujas* officiated by the local priest; he eventually asked the priest to teach him the different mantras and prayers, and started regarding him as a "personal *guru*". This progressive adoption of Hinduism¹⁷² coincided with growing frustration with the trajectory of the JMM. Instead of "helping villagers", Siamlal told me, Budhram and other JMM *netas* prefer to use their connections with CCL to their own advantage. This kind of material and political self-seeking is, for Siamlal, only a symptom of a much larger problem. Corrupt regional and national JMM leaders, too, have generally failed to fulfil the promise of improving *adivasis'* situation, which had been at the centre of their political campaign prior to Jharkhand's independence.

Such a view fits within a wider climate of mistrust around JMM politicians that has developed since the 1990s (Tillin 2013: Chapter 3; Prakash 2001). In that decade, the party had become involved in a number of high-profile bribery scandals – including, notoriously, the selling of votes by JMM members of Parliament, in what had been considered a milestone of institutionalised corruption (Nariman 2005). From that period on, Louise Tillin (2013: Chapter 3) notes, a widespread narrative of corruption has emerged around the party, and a common conviction that JMM leaders are ever more preoccupied with personal gain and political power.

While the JMM, Siamlal believes, had begun as a grassroots activist movement, as it gained influence it has become tainted, and morphed into a clique of self-interested politicians.^{173,174} Disaffected with this reality, Siamlal withdrew all engagement with

¹⁷² More specifically, Siamlal's engagement was with 'popular Hinduism' (Fuller 1992) – distinct from the more Brahminical version of Hinduism in which Budhram dabbles, associated with higher castes and part of Budhram's upward mobility efforts.

¹⁷³ Ruud (2001) has written about a similar local perception of the dominant Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) in neighbouring West Bengal.

¹⁷⁴ I do not intend here to depict an erstwhile JMM 'golden age', but rather present some of the popular memories of politics and resistance against which the conduct of contemporary JMM *netas* is evaluated.

the party a few years after Jharkhand's independence. "People had been promised work and development", he said, "but none of this happened, because party leaders only care about themselves ... If they are behaving like this, eating up *crores* [tens of millions] of rupees of public money, what can you expect from local *netas* like Budhram?". The sense of disaffection was exacerbated by the fact that this was not just any party; it was, rather, one led mostly by Santals who, for Siamlal and many others, have become largely detached from the concerns of their poorer village counterparts.

Siamlal's retreat from politics was paralleled by a deepening engagement with Hinduism, and an embrace of a more devotional, ascetic lifestyle. He gave up drinking and eating meat, and began spending more and more time in the temple. When, a few years ago, the elderly priest decided to retire, Siamlal took on the mantle. He now dedicates most of his day to maintaining the modest shrine and porch, carrying out the regular *pujas*, and performing *pujas* upon request for occasional visitors, who usually leave him a small donation.¹⁷⁵ Siamlal's personal aspirations, too, have come to reflect his enhanced piety: he shared with me his dream to go on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya, a holy city in Uttar Pradesh, to visit a renowned Hindu *guru*; and send his young son, upon completing primary school in Karampot, to an *ashram* in Haridwar, another sacred city in north India.

In Siamlal's Hinduised worldview, the pervasive corruption of politics befits the present, Degenerate Era of *kaliyug* (see also Piliavsky 2014) – the age of downfall, according to Sanskrit scriptures, in which moral virtue is at its lowest. In such a time, Siamlal said, it is no wonder that those in power have become cunning and greedy, only worried about how to "fill their own stomachs". "*Adivasis* are still being exploited", Siamlal proclaimed – not only by CCL, which is wrenching their land and tarnishing their environment, but now also by *netas* such as Budhram who, instead of mobilising villagers like the JMM used to, are preoccupied mostly with their own status, at the detriment of ordinary *adivasis*.

¹⁷⁵ As I described in Chapter 3, most of Siamlal's household's income is generated by his 18- and 20-year old daughters, who collect, coke, and sell coal to cycle pushers from outside Karampot who come to collect it from their coking pile.

Juxtaposed with Budhram's life course, Simalal's asceticism represents an alternative moral world, and serves as a powerful ethical commentary on the political economy of self-interest and differentiation that has been enfolding the community. While Simalal's views echo those of many others in Karampot – especially from the older generation – his decision to effectively renounce this political economy is nevertheless unusual. While many villagers are critical of Budhram in private, they feel they have no choice but to rely on him for their interaction – present or future – with both CCL and the state, which can prove pivotal for their livelihoods and aspirations.

***Netas* and CCL: story of a partnership?**

Budhram vehemently rebuffs any accusations of favouritism in the distribution of compensatory jobs. The simple fact, he reiterated, is that registering land costs money: villagers obtained employment not because they were his kinfolk or friends, but because they were able to pay – and, not less importantly, had the confidence in him to deliver the jobs. Those left without employment, on the other hand, have only themselves to blame, yet choose to grumble and cast aspersions instead. Budhram likewise rejects any allegations with regard to truck loading work. The irregularity of the work, he insisted, has nothing to do with the *netas* but is the result of fluctuations in coal production, beyond their control. Not only that, but contrary to villagers' views about his corrupt conduct, Budhram openly takes pride in *not* having been bought off by CCL. "More than once", he told me, "High CCL officials said they would give me a few *lakh* [hundred thousand] rupees to stop my political work, but I refused. No one in my *khandan* [lineage] has ever taken a bribe, and neither have I".

For many villagers, however, even if not through outright bribery Budhram has still, when it comes down to it, been effectively co-opted by CCL, by striking a relationship with the company from which both he and CCL – not the community – have been the main beneficiaries. Contrary to common accounts of *adivasi* resistance to mining and dispossession, mobilised by unyielding tribal leaders and activists (e.g. Padel & Das 2010: Chapter 20; Shiva et al. 2011; *Survival International* 2016), the relationship fostered between Budhram and Pandu Project has been, almost from the outset, marked not so much by enmity as reciprocity.

CCL management, as I have noted, had to build constructive working relations with local leaders to gain some level of cooperation and repress opposition to the colliery. This was done through providing Budhram – as the local JMM party worker and Chitu's associate – with access to meetings with project officials; entering negotiations with him about compensatory employment and truck loading work; and granting him an official position in the project-related coal sale committee. From Budhram's side, engaging with CCL was an opportunity to advance his own political ambitions and status aspirations. It has enabled him to not only boost his own material circumstances but also, perhaps more importantly, consolidate patronage and political power by asserting himself as the local point of access to the project. In the eyes of many villagers – and despite the jobs delivered to some Santals – this reciprocal relationship between Budhram and CCL amounts to an unscrupulous alliance, which has above all served both the company and Budhram himself.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the role of Budhram, the local JMM Santal *neta*, in mediating the provision of compensatory employment for dispossession, and his ambiguous position between villagers and CCL. It has shown how an ostensible tribal mining activist has turned into a broker of compensatory jobs, and illuminated some of the contradictory outcomes of this brokerage. While mediation of different state resources has a long history in India (e.g. Bailey 1969; Gupta 1998, 2005; Lewis & Mosse 2006; Neocleous 1996; Shah 2004), I have here focused on the more specific ways in which Budhram's brokerage has arisen out of CCL's compensation scheme for dispossession, within a context of a liberalised public sector in which secure jobs have become a rare commodity.

Authors such as James Ferguson (2013, 2015) and Tania Li (2009) have argued that, in an era of employment shortage and surplus labour, politics has become concentrated less on work and more on distribution. Others have, in the context of anti-mining struggles, pointed to a shift in focus from labour to environmentalism and indigenous rights (Melucci 1980; Touraine 1985). In Dharutar, however, brokerage and politics around mining have been very much about jobs as a scarce resource. This politics, on the one hand, was successful in delivering a relatively large number of public sector jobs, at a time in which access to this kind of employment

had become considerably more restricted. In this, Budhram did provide significant patronage and benefits – at least to some villagers – which makes it difficult to straightforwardly categorise him as either a rent-seeking broker or bought-off community leader.

But on the other hand, Budhram's brokerage has resulted in new – or at least modified and enhanced – dynamics of patronage, around access to compensatory benefits from CCL. Moreover, Budhram's working relationship with CCL, and his entry into the political system as a *neta*, have in the eyes of local Santals rendered him corrupt, and eroded his commitment to the community. Indeed, while on one level Budhram may appear as a JMM tribal activist, on another he has brokered and cooperated with CCL, thereby blurring the boundary between anti-mining activism and co-option.

Yet more broadly, Budhram's case obfuscates the line between *adivasi* activism and *netagiri*. In her ethnography of tribal politics in Jharkhand, Alpa Shah (2014) makes the point that tribal activism is often led by middle-class *adivasi* activists whose concerns are far removed from, and even contradictory to, those of their poorer counterparts. While Budhram, it seems, would fit well within this argument, his case also potentially expands it by illustrating how *adivasi* activism can easily transform into, or become inseparable from, *netagiri*. We should, I suggest, keep this fine line in mind when considering what on the surface might appear like *adivasi* activism, as well as pay attention to the political implications of such 'activism' for ordinary villagers. Indeed, in the next chapter I propose that the accumulation of political power by an activist-*neta* such as Budhram can, in fact, have a restraining effect on possibilities of grassroots protest and collective action in relation to dispossessing projects.

VIII. Politics

In this final chapter, I consider the implications of intra-community differentiation and the brokerage of compensatory jobs for the local political landscape, particularly in relation to possibilities of protest. Different aspects of the political reality around Pandu Project have been touched upon in preceding chapters; I now seek to pull these together to draw out more directly the sociopolitical relations that have emerged in Karampot following the project's expansion in 2008-2010, and their consequences for everyday politics. In scholarly and activist literature, indigenous peoples' responses to mining and dispossession have been commonly cast in terms of opposition, resistance, and even rebellion (e.g. Kirsch 2014; Li 2015; Padel & Das 2010; Shiva et al. 2011). The current chapter, by contrast, shows how the social and political outcomes of land expropriation and compensation, intermediated by local leaders, can mute rather than facilitate a politics of resistance. More specifically, taking a temporal, processual view of politics around dispossession (see also Nielsen 2016, 2018) – that is, not only at the actual moment of dispossession but also in its aftermath – the chapter illuminates how processes of stratification and co-option in the wake of dispossession can reshape local politics in ways that stifle broader, more inclusive forms of collective action.

Much of the critical scholarship on dispossession tends to either assume, or focus on, resistance to it by rural peoples (e.g. de Angelis 2004, 2007; Motta & Nilsen 2011). While authors like Katy Gardner (2012, 2018; Gardner & Gerharz 2016b), Derek Hall (2011, 2012, 2013), and Jamie Cross (2014) have contested the prevailing framing of responses to dispossessing projects in terms of resistance, the trope of *indigenous* resistance to dispossession seems to retain considerable purchase, in both academic and activist accounts (e.g. Gill et al. 2015; Padel & Das 2010; Roy 2011;¹⁷⁶ *Survival International* 2016; Shiva et al. 2011; Woodman 2010). Tribal communities, it has been argued, are likelier to respond to land alienation and commodification with fierce resistance because of their particular ecocultural identity and lifeworld, which correspond to greater dependence not only on private fields but also forests, commons, and other natural resources (Levien 2013b).

¹⁷⁶ For a critique, see Shah (2012).

While this trope, too, has been subject to critique (Baviskar 1995; Li 2010, 2014; Levien 2013b, 2018),¹⁷⁷ discourses of indigenous resistance remain dominant, often buttressed by the idea of tribal peoples as quick to take up arms and ill-inclined to negotiate and 'do politics' (Bates & Shah 2017: 1; Shah 2010: Chapter 4). In line with this, both scholarly and activist representations of encounters between indigenous communities and dispossessing projects, in India and elsewhere, have largely concentrated on various forms of overt and militant opposition (e.g. Li 2015; Nielsen 2018; Nilsen 2010, 2018: Chapter 5).

These include, for example, Kirsch's (2014) and Nilsen's (2010) respective monographs on mining in Papua New Guinea and dispossession by a dam project in India, which focus on large-scale indigenous resistance campaigns mounted by communities and activists. On the one hand, both authors are well cognizant of the complex negotiations and concessions that such protest movements involve, and their often mixed outcomes. But on the other, both their studies ultimately paint a picture of more or less united opposition and, moreover, a relatively harmonious interaction between dominant (and often middle-class) activists and local tribals, based on solidarity and spawning political empowerment in the community. By contrast with such accounts, the current chapter highlights how politics around dispossession can take a very different form, in which possibilities of resistance are curbed rather than fostered. Moreover, while Kirsch's (2014) work in particular describes – similarly to the case of Budhram – the emergence of a new class of local leaders in response to mining, he remains silent about any implications this might have had for everyday politics *within* the community. This chapter's findings, in this context, illustrate how the rise of political leaders and potential activists such as Budhram can give rise to local tensions, and lead to feelings of political *disempowerment* among ordinary villagers.

Finally, steering away from explanations of tribal resistance that revolve around attachment to land, Michael Levien (2013b, 2018: Chapter 9) has recently taken a different approach to account for the seeming prevalence in India of *adivasi*

¹⁷⁷ For a more general critique of the romanticised notion of indigenous communities as ecologically noble, see Greenough (2001), Kuper (1998), Prasad (2003), and Shah (2010).

resistance to dispossession. Levien's hypothesis emphasises *adivasi* communities' relative egalitarianism and histories of peasant activism as factors facilitative of a harder stance against dispossession. Lower levels of internal differentiation, he suggests, make solidarity easier to uphold and collective action likelier to arise; while long histories of struggles against outside incursions – or, more specifically, 'popular memories' (Baviskar 1995; Guha 1988; Sundar 2007) of these – contribute to a heightened reluctance to negotiate and compromise.

Based on such a hypothesis, Dharutar and Karampot should have been places where protest against mining and dispossession could be expected. First, as I recounted in Chapter 2, like in other *adivasi* villages and compared to rural Hindu society (Levien 2013; Shah & Lerche 2017), local Santals had earlier reproduced themselves under generally egalitarian conditions. Second, as I have also previously described, Santals in Jharkhand have an ample history of political agitation, and have played a key role in *adivasi* struggles against land alienation, whether in the Santal *Hul* in the colonial period or the JMM movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Popular memories of the latter in particular are widespread among local Santals – some of whom, like Budhram and Siamlal, had themselves taken part in the JMM's combative political campaign.

Pandu Project, nonetheless, has faced no 'land war' (NDTV 2011; Levien 2012, 2015a, 2018; Steur 2015) by unwilling Santal peasants. Apart from transient resistance efforts against Dharutar's displacement in 2008 which, as I described in Chapter 7, had quickly given way to negotiation, there has been no significant protest vis-à-vis the colliery. One reason for this, as discussed in that chapter, is that rather than being 'state-repellent' (Scott 2009) many Santals desire public sector employment, and see dispossession as an opportunity to gain it. Land expropriation is thus not necessarily something to fight against, but rather 'use' to try and gain secure employment and concomitant upward mobility. This, however, does not seem enough to explain the absence of protest in other domains, too. Indeed, the general lack of resistance around Pandu Project includes not only protest directly against dispossession but also, for example, over the scarcity of truck loading work for non-employed villagers, despite the discontent about this among coal peddlers.

In what follows, I focus on two main factors that I suggest have been contributive to this politics of non-protest. First, intra-Santal socioeconomic and class differentiation – as an outcome of CCL employment – which has divided political interests among villagers and chipped away at solidarities. And second, the effective monopolisation of political action locally by Budhram – as an outcome of his interrelation with CCL – which has generated among villagers a sense of their own incapacity to protest.

Differentiation and political solidarity

Jagdis, one of the Dharutar Santals who has been left without compensatory employment, remembered taking part in demonstrations in front of the Pandu Project office prior to the village's displacement. Even once Budhram and Fagu had started negotiating with CCL, behind closed doors, Jagdis had continued trying to persuade other villagers to keep protesting, to make sure that "everybody in the village can get a job". But over the next few months, Jagdis described, Budhram began the process of arranging employment for the villagers who could pay to register *gair majurwa* land, and these villagers, who were now hoping to be offered jobs, lost interest in the already-faltering demonstrations. Obtaining public sector employment – and a more secure, middle-class-like lifestyle – had become their main priority, and they saw no reason to potentially jeopardise the brokerage of their jobs by continuing to protest. The seeds were sown for a divergence of interests – and consequently, fragmentation of solidarity – between (to-be) Santal CCL employees and all other villagers, from both Dharutar and Karampot.

This fragmentation would later rear its head in relation to truck loading wage labour – the casual work that CCL aims to provide to project-affected persons who do not qualify for compensatory employment. As I described in previous chapters, not only do coal-peddling villagers in Karampot feel that they have not recompensed in any meaningful way for the toll the colliery has taken on their living environment, but they are also, more specifically, disgruntled about the poor availability of truck loading work. Grievances about truck loading wage labour in CCL's depots are not unique to Karampot; in other places in the region, such discontent has been reported to lead to acts of protest. During the period of fieldwork, for example, a large demonstration took place in front of the CCL general manager's office in Hazaribagh,

in which hundreds of villagers, together with local activists, protested the planned shift from manual to mechanical loading in the colliery next to their village (*Times of India* 2016). In Karampot, there has been nothing of this sort, and politics in relation to Pandu Project has continued to be characterised by relative quiescence. While people did tell me about a few modest attempts to organise collectively – going in a group, for instance, to try to speak to either Budhram, Chitu, or the Pandu Project manager – these did not bear any fruit, and further efforts have largely been given up on.

When I asked Babulal, Siamlal, and others why villagers do not start an *andolan* (protest movement), their reply was that there is not enough *ekta* (unity) in the community. "Some people now have CCL jobs", Babulal said, "so problems with truck loading work don't bother them". This statement crystallises the corrosive effect of internal community differentiation on political labour solidarity. New inequalities between employed and non-employed Santals – generated through dispossession, compensation, and Budhram's intermediation – have undermined the commonality of interests and, consequently, the ground for collective action.¹⁷⁸

Solidarity in the village has been dissolving, Siamlal and Babulal felt – not only with regard to *madaiti*, as I described in the last chapter, but also politically, making it more difficult to "bring people together to start an *andolan*". This is compounded by the notion, shared by most of my older interlocutors, that young coal peddlers too have become more self-interested. Led astray by the cash earnings they are now able to draw from coal peddling, young Santals, as Babulal said, are "running after money and only looking out for themselves [*apna apna dekhta hai*]". Accordingly, they mostly display apathy towards participating, not to mention initiating, any village protest activities. Among this younger generation, ideals of individual accumulation of wealth have been taking firmer hold, undermining the possibility of a counter-politics based on ideas of egalitarianism (see also Shah 2018a).

¹⁷⁸ Parry (2013b, 2018: Chapter 2) has observed a similar corrosion of political solidarity in Bhilai, as a result of class differentiation between those with *naukri* and those engaged in casual work in the steel plant.

To return to the effects of class differentiation, however, CCL-employed Santals are generally not inclined to join any potential protest efforts by their fellow non-employed villagers – in relation to either 'missing' compensatory jobs or truck loading wage labour. On one level, as I have argued, this is attributable to the ways in which the status and interests of Santal employees have diverged from those of non-employed villagers. But on another level, employed Santals' political quiescence is also, to an extent, a corollary of their position as public sector employees. Industrial *sarkari naukri*, as Parry notes, "comes at a political price" (2013a: 48): whereas lax attendance and relaxed work rhythm are generally tolerated, being seen as a potential political agitator or striker is not, and can potentially cost suspect employees their jobs (see also Parry 2009: 190, 2019: Chapter 4). Unscheduled shutdowns or any other significant production disruptions beget heavy losses; it is CCL's main priority to avert any such risk, and find ways of removing or neutralising any ostensibly 'dangerous elements'. Employed Santals, on their part, have no wish or reason to jeopardise their job and economic security through taking part in political agitation – certainly not because of the predicaments of coal-peddling villagers. CCL-employed Santals now have other concerns than coal peddlers'; while they might sympathise with coal peddlers' plights, they are unlikely to partake in any agitation against the project that might put their own jobs at risk.¹⁷⁹

Structurally, too, through their compensatory jobs CCL-employed Santals have been incorporated into the very corporation that many other villagers regard as deleterious for the community and its environment. By dint of their work for CCL, Santal employees have virtually become part of the machinery that not only has dispossessed and displaced their own households, but is already in the process of orchestrating the future displacement of further local communities – Santal and other – as part of the implementation of Pandu Project's expansion plans. Ramesh, for example, who as described in Chapter 6 works as an assistant to the project's land surveyor, is usually tasked with fetching for the surveyor the large area maps on which, using pencils and rulers, the forthcoming displacement of another nearby Santal hamlet is charted out.

¹⁷⁹ Dhagamwar (2003: 230) and Dhagamwar et al. (2013: 59) have observed a similar situation around a public sector mining site in Korba, Chhattisgarh.



Figure 14: Pandu Project employees preparing maps for the land surveyor

In different ways, then, new inequalities, class differentiation, and structural disparities between CCL-employed and coal peddling Santals – not only in the community but also, as was shown in Chapter 6, within families and households – have created divisions in livelihood politics and interests, and eroded the kinds of solidarities needed for collective action. Similar fragmentation of political solidarity as a result of internal differentiation has been observed in other post-dispossession contexts (Levien 2011, 2012, 2018: Chapter 8; Parry 2013b, 2019: Chapter 2). What is more striking in Karampot is, first, how this differentiation has developed in a context that had used to be relatively egalitarian, and overridden the solidarities that according to authors like Levien (2018: Chapter 9) could have been anticipated to emerge in such contexts in relation to dispossession.

Second, in Karampot internal differentiation – and the consequent erosion of solidarities – has also been, indirectly, the outcome of Budhram's brokerage of jobs. Indeed, while *adivasi netas* like him are often expected – both in narratives of tribal resistance and by villagers themselves – to mobilise a 'people's movement', here Budhram has served as the very driver of the process of class differentiation, and the resultant dent on political solidarity. This, however, is only part of the story. As I show in the next section, Budhram's enhanced *netahood* position – following his

brokerage of jobs and engagement with CCL – allowed him to capture local political power to an extent that has left ordinary villagers feeling politically demoralised.

***Netas* and the monopolisation of politics**

Apart from a general lack of *ekta*, coal peddlers explicitly referred to Budhram as a reason for the difficulties to mobilise protest, highlighting his rubbing of shoulders with CCL officers. Indeed, as I discussed in the previous chapter, the relationship between Budhram and CCL has been from an early stage characterised more by reciprocity than antagonism, and is perceived by many villagers as fundamentally morally problematic. My own proposition is that this interrelation gave rise to a local political structure that has effectively acted to suppress any further protest by, or for, those who have been left excluded from any project benefits.

It is Budhram who, as JCMU union secretary and a rising JMM *neta*, arguably has the most bargaining power locally vis-à-vis CCL, predicated chiefly on the threat of strikes (by Santal employees) and/or protest (by Santal villagers). But at the same time, Budhram's current position is to a large extent founded upon his very relationship with and access to CCL; any too extreme form of agitation by him against the company might imperil it. In other words, while on the one hand Budhram largely keeps delivering patronage to employed Santals – assisting them, for instance, to gain work promotions or avoid transfers to other projects – leading any actual protest against CCL on behalf of non-employed villagers might have a destabilising effect on his relationship with the company, and thus by extension on his political power.

Consider, for example, the possibility of strikes in the project, which in theory could be a powerful tool to press demands for more truck loading work or other benefits for non-employed villagers. As I witnessed on various occasions, the threat of strike is one that Budhram often employs in meetings with Pandu Project officials. Beyond this, however, strikes never seem to actually materialise. Indeed, CCL officers confirmed to me that since the project's expansion – and the short-lived opposition movement in 2008 – there has been no attempt at any form of industrial action in the

colliery.¹⁸⁰ To these officers, this was hardly a surprise. “*Netas* like Budhram”, they said, “wouldn’t go so far as to disturb coal production in the project in any serious way. After all, Budhram himself is a CCL employee and member of the coal sale committee, so any major disruption to work would hurt his pocket!”.

I suspect, however, that there is a deeper underpinning to this dynamic. On the one hand, Budhram’s political power, and the history of JMM resistance, means that his threats of strike carry real potential weight. But on the other hand, much of Budhram’s current position of influence has been derived precisely from his engagement with CCL. This structural feature, I suggest, demarcates the form and scope of protest that Budhram is ultimately disposed to carry out against the project. Having gained their political clout largely through their connections to CCL, *netas* like him are arguably not inclined to risk these by over-agitating against the company. While the *threat* of strike and/or protest is an important instrument for Budhram – to keep CCL alert of the trouble he *could* cause, and maintain his image of as an activist – full-blown strikes and protests are ultimately not in his political interest.

As I have described, Budhram insists that the amount of truck loading work hinges on production levels in the quarry and other factors beyond his control. But coal-peddling Santals are not convinced. From their point of view, as a *neta* Budhram has not done enough to address their situation, having become too closely entangled with CCL and too swept up in party politics and its exigencies.¹⁸¹ “For people like us who don’t have jobs”, Babulal said, Budhram doesn’t organise any kind of *andolan* ... If you go to him to complain about truck loading, he’ll tell you to come back tomorrow

¹⁸⁰ Seldom, the officers said, there might occur what they called a “small *bandh* [shutdown]”, in which work in a particular section of the colliery would stop for an hour or two, in a manner that did not affect overall operations in any significant way. This can take place, they explained, “when there’s something the *netas* want to discuss. They would talk to the Project Manager, who would assure to look into it, and work would quickly resume, without any damage done”. During my 18-month fieldwork, however, even such small-scale *bandhs* were not instigated, nor did they seem necessary; Bodhan could quite easily arrange to meet with the project manager without them.

¹⁸¹ Compare Budhram, for example, with Shankar Guha Niyogi, the erstwhile leader of the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) in neighbouring Chhattisgarh state, who in the 1980s invested great efforts in opposing the mechanisation of local iron ore mines and anticipated loss of work for labourers (Parry 2009).

or the day after". Babulal and others dismiss Budhram's political activism – for instance, in the Farmers' Anti-Displacement Front – as a "show", and do not believe he would dare take any drastic action vis-à-vis CCL. At the same time, however, coal peddlers – both older, like Babulal, and younger, like Shiv and his wife Savitha – do not believe they have the capacity to initiate any kind of protest outside of Budhram's purview. Coal-peddling interlocutors referred to themselves, in this context, as "simple" and "small", without the power to start any kind of *andolan* on their own. Such sentiments, I suggest, have to be understood in relation to Budhram's cemented local political grip in the wake of dispossession, which has left poor Santals feeling increasingly politically disempowered.

A couple of years ago, for example, Savitha and a group of women from the village plucked up the courage and made their way to the Pandu Project office, with the intention of voicing their concerns about the scarcity of truck loading work. There, they encountered Budhram, who had just come out of a meeting with the project manager. Budhram, Puja recounted, told her and the other women off for trying to approach CCL officers directly and intervene in matters they "don't understand", and ordered them to go back to the village. Instances such as this are taken by my interlocutors to indicate that any political action they might initiate would only be subsumed by the *netas*, according to their own political interests. Santal villagers, it seems, have become not only increasingly dependent on *netas* like Budhram but increasingly entrapped by them; any attempt of grassroots political activity outside their thrall is essentially perceived as futile.

Given the rich past and historical accounts of vigorous bottom-up Santal activism (e.g. Devalle 1992; Prakash 2001; Singh 1982), this prevalent sense of popular political incapacity was striking. On one level, it is embedded within Santal villagers' broader disillusionment with the JMM and its corrupt politics, which I discussed in the last chapter. Indeed, for most villagers it is self-evident that *netas* – if not Budhram, then others – will ultimately be revealed as self-seeking and corrupt, and they consequently conclude that things cannot change (see also Parry 2009). But on another level, I argue, feelings of political incapacity are also the result of the effective monopolisation of localised political power by Budhram, as part of a new class of *adivasi netas* with new forms of political authority. The accumulation of particular

forms of political power enabled through the arrival of the colliery – for instance, his official roles in the coal sale committee and JCMU – has allowed Budhram to establish more or less exclusive political dominance locally, partly in reality and perhaps more so in villagers' perception. Indeed, for many of them it is difficult to even imagine possibilities of collective action independent of *netas* like him.

In their discussion of what they call a 'politics of resignation', Benson & Kirsch (2010) describe a similar feeling of political paralysis that, in their analysis, stems from the devious tactics employed by mining and other corporations to rebuff critique and carry on their operations. In Karampot, however, people's sense of political resignation is experienced most directly in relation not to CCL but Santal *netas* and their politics around mining.¹⁸² Rather than an agent of grassroots politics, locally Budhram has come to be perceived as a strain on it, and an impediment to political action by and for poorer, non-employed Santals.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the factors that have curbed prospects of protest in relation to Pandu Project. In doing so – contrary to the common focus on forms of tribal resistance – it has explored the structural and social causes of *non*-protest, or acquiescence. These factors, I have sought to stress, have emerged precisely in a context in which opposition to mining and dispossession could have been considered likelier to arise – whether because of, first, an *adivasi* ecological way of life that "leads to ways of valuing land and place that are more resistant to commodification and alienation" (Levien 2013b: 374); second, because of relatively low levels of pre-existing inequalities; (Levien 2013b, 2018: Chapter 9); or third, because of a strong regional history of political agitation (ibid.; Parry & Strümpell 2008: 54).

Building on the material presented in the two previous chapters, the current chapter has suggested that two developments in particular have acted to circumscribe a potential local Santal counter-politics. First, the intra-community differentiation

¹⁸² This sense of incapacity, in the case of Karampot, might also be related to fear of intimidation and violence by state authorities – which, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, *adivasis* have disproportionately experienced in their interaction with the state.

generated by the provision of compensatory jobs to some Santals has attenuated the kinds of solidarities required for effective collective action. Divergences in lifestyles, status, and interests between employed and non-employed Santals, in tandem with new, more individualistic ideals of accumulation, have had a corrosive effect on the sense of unity in the community, and consequently on possibilities of mobilisation.

The second development in this context has to do with Santal *netas'* position in the relatively recent local political economy of state-controlled mining. While Budhram's interrelation with CCL, I have proposed, means that he himself is disinclined to agitate too strongly against it, his consolidation of political power as a result of this interrelation has allowed him to effectively monopolise local politics around mining, leaving villagers in a state of perceived political impotence. Indeed, most of my interlocutors find it hard to even imagine possibilities of collective action outside the thrall of Budhram or Chitu, let alone in spite of them. *Adivasi* politics, which in the past had emerged from the bottom up in such militant forms of protest as, in the 1970s, forcible harvesting of alienated Santal land (Devalle 1992; Prakash 2001; Singh 1982), has been effectively captured by *adivasi netas* who cast themselves as activists but locally are viewed as an exemplar of *netagiri*. People like Budhram, who had grown out of the relatively radical social movement of the JMM, have become part of a system of political brokerage and gatekeeping, in which ordinary villagers experience increasing political marginalisation. Rather than an agent of grassroots mobilisation, Budhram has come to be seen as a strain on it – and a hindrance to potentially broader types of protest that could include villagers left out of any compensatory colliery benefits.

IX. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the variegated impact of coal mining on lives and livelihoods in a rural *adivasi* village in Jharkhand, and the ways in which its inhabitants experience and navigate the political economy of industrialisation and dispossession. While so doing, the thesis has sought to take a broader, more holistic view of the effects of these processes: not only on those who have been directly dispossessed of land, but also in neighbouring villages like Karampot; not only directly following the arrival or expansion of Pandu Project, but over a longer period of time. The thesis has traced, in particular, the outcomes of mining and dispossession in relation to work and labour, aspirations and values, and local politics, and the ways in which they have seeped into people's everyday lives and social relations.

Following a theoretical introduction (Chapter 1) and historical contextualisation (Chapter 2), the thesis's ethnographic chapters have been concerned with different facets of the dynamics between the mining industry – from earlier private mines to, more dominantly, Pandu Project – and villagers, and focused on its outcomes for particular groups of people. These include Maharam, Shiv, and Karampot's other coal pushers (Chapter 3); Savitha, Puja, and the other women who gather coal for peddling and, in addition, go load trucks in the depot (Chapter 4); Sukhram, Birsa, and other landless non-Santals, who combine coal peddling with seasonal labour migration, and seek to obtain land outside the village (Chapter 5); Rajkumar, Ramesh, and other Santal CCL employees, the emerging local petty bourgeoisie (Chapter 6); Budhram, the broker of compensatory CCL jobs and newly-made *neta*, and Siamlal, the Hinduised ascetic and political renouncer (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 has been more broadly concerned with the political consequences that have followed from the encounter between Pandu Project and the community. Taken together, the chapters lay out the different positions that villagers have come to inhabit in the new political economy in which they have found themselves, and their different experiences of it. These experiences, as the ethnography shows, are grounded in villagers' engagement with particular forms of labour, opportunities, and precarities that have emerged in this context of public sector mining and land expropriation.

The different facets of life and work in the coal tracts are also, as the chapters have illustrated, sites where notions of autonomy, rhythms of work, gender, politics, and

moralties are brought together as people attempt to generate their and their households' everyday lives, in the present and future. These sites, moreover, reveal internal divergences, divisions, and strains, which in one way or another are related to the onset of mining operations in the area: between locals and non-Santal outsiders, employed and non-employed households, ordinary villagers and *netas*, older and younger generations.

Such lines of tension are, of course, not solely the result of mining and dispossession, and are embedded in continuous socioeconomic changes that have been taking place in rural Jharkhand. Younger *adivasis*, for instance – often comparatively more educated than their parents, and increasingly attracted to non-agricultural ways of life – have been adopting new ambitions for particular lifestyles, whether articulated through *pukka* housing, travel by motorbike, or larger, more expensive weddings. Mining industrialisation in itself did not determine these ongoing changes. It did, however, set the most immediate conditions in which villagers try to pursue – or, in cases like Siamlal's, repudiate – new material and social aspirations, but in which their ability to do so is highly unequal, as a result of the uneven distribution of the costs and benefits of the mining operations around them.

Labour and the production of inequality

The ethnography's different characters illustrate the distinct outcomes that mining and dispossession have had for different people in the locality. Indeed, the reality it reveals is far removed from, on the one hand, the picture of uniform development and proletarianisation proposed by the classic agrarian transition model (e.g. Banerjee et al. 2013; Chakravorty 2013; Chibber 2003; Kohli 2004); and, on the other hand, that of uniform plunder and impoverishment put forward by the accumulation by dispossession model (Harvey 2003, 2004, 2005). Instead, the thesis has shown how mining and dispossession have, above all, established the ground on which profound intra-community disparities would emerge; new structures of brokerage and patronage would develop; and processes of social fragmentation would unfold.

At variance with the agrarian transition narrative, most mining-affected villagers have not found their way into proletarianised wage labour in mining or related

industries, and not benefitted from the 'development' brought about by Pandu Project. But nor, contrary to many critical academic and activist accounts, has mining industrialisation ravaged some sort of pre-existing rural utopia and left the community entirely shorn of livelihoods. Rather than simply stripping villagers of all means of subsistence and turning them into an unemployed surplus population (Breman 2016; Li 2009; Sanyal 2013), mining industrialisation has given rise to particular forms of informal labour in which the majority of them engage.

Indeed, whereas analyses of mining labour have focused mostly on formal mining employment (e.g. Ferry 2005; Shever 2012; Mitchell 2009, 2013), the ethnography has cast light on different informal types of work that can emerge in connection with mining. Through its discussion of coal peddling and truck loading, the thesis has shown how such precarious forms of labour – lumped together under concepts such as classes of labour (Bernstein 2006, 2008, 2010) and the precariat (Standing 2011, 2014) – involve different degrees of precarity and have different meanings for villagers, in terms of independence, stability in time, and gender dynamics. I have also shown, through the discussion of Karampot's non-Santals, how within classes of labour – and, paradoxically, in a context of dispossession – the ownership of even a small amount of land can be significant, with regard to both the ability to accumulate from non-agricultural work and mitigate the effects of potential displacement.

Of all villagers, only those who have lost own land to the colliery – and had the means to make use of Budhram's brokerage – have been able to gain secure employment in the colliery and cross to the other side of the *naukri/kam* divide (Parry 2013a, 2019). This minority of Santals have shot to the top of the local labour pyramid; compared to them, virtually all other villagers feel disadvantaged and cast aside. Indeed, whereas in absolute terms coal-peddling villagers have experienced a degree of mobility – expressed, for example, through moderate accumulation, basic *pukka* accommodation, and better schooling for their children – relative to newly-employed Santals their marginalisation has become more accentuated. While compensatory public sector jobs, then, have allowed those Santals who received them to break into new socioeconomic and class strata, they have generated and intensified inequalities within Santal society, as well as in employed Santals' own households.

Pronounced inequality in labour and livelihoods has been accompanied by the emergence or enhancement of other, related dimensions of inequality, which the different chapters have sought to chart. These include disparities in lifestyle, status, and life chances, between employed and non-employed villagers (Chapters 3 and 6); gender relations, in CCL-employed households (Chapter 6); political and patronage, between new *adivasi* brokers-*netas* and ordinary villagers (Chapter 4 and Chapter 7); and spatial and temporal precarities, between landed Santals and landless non-Santals (Chapter 5).

Precarities and inequalities in time, in particular, have run through the thesis, reflecting not only more fluctuating or permanent sources of livelihood and accumulation but also different capacities to plan for the future. Chapter 3 showed how while, in the present, coal peddling is a relatively reliable form of work that allows villagers more autonomy, it is embedded within longer-term impermanence, which stems not only from this work's toll on the body but the depletable nature of coal as a resource. Chapter 4 described how truck loading wage labour is casual and irregular, but creates a window of opportunity for women to enhance their independence through direct access to wages. Chapter 5 illustrated the importance of land as a source of basic longer-term security – and, consequently, non-Santals' especially precarious position in Karampot. Chapter 6 discussed, on the one hand, CCL employment as a source of relative security and permanence; and on the other hand, employed Santals' experience of this permanence as temporary, based on the precarity of *naukri* and status reproduction in the next generations. Finally, Chapters 7 and 8 analysed Budhram's interrelations with CCL as a source of a more permanent form of power for him as a *neta*, and the impact of this on local sociopolitical relations.

Emerging disparities and divisions, I have argued, have been undermining elements of *adivasi* society that revolve around values of egalitarianism, reciprocity, and solidarity, displayed for instance in ritual festivals and the (declining) practice of *madaiti*. These values are valorised in particular by the older generation, who lament their erosion through processes of stratification and individualisation. These processes, for older Santals, are associated mostly with the political economy of mining, which has set the conditions for an unequal attainment by villagers of coal-

related accumulation and upward mobility opportunities. In this sense, at least part of the discontent about mining does not reflect resistance to industrialisation or even dispossession per se, but rather to the inequalities and shifts in moralities that have emerged in their wake. Indeed, by contrast with the often simplistic narrative of uniform destruction of livelihoods, the thesis has sought to highlight the ways in which mining and dispossession have, more directly or indirectly, contributed to the differentiation and fragmentation of a historically marginalised, relatively egalitarian community.

The politics of dispossession

Alongside labour and inequality, a second focus of the thesis has been the political consequences of mining and dispossession. The ethnographic findings have challenged prevalent understandings of responses to these processes by rural communities, particularly in relation to notions of resistance. Indeed, as Levien has noted, Harvey's accumulation by dispossession "always implicitly pits capital on one side versus peasants and workers on the other" (2011: 480). The idiom of resistance to dispossession has been especially prominent with regard to indigenous populations, often considered to be at the uncompromising forefront of mobilisation against land expropriation. This thesis, by contrast, has considered how mining and dispossession can result in processes of nuanced co-option and shifts in political power that are inimical to the emergence of collective opposition.

Through the case of Budhram, the thesis has illuminated how local leaders and potential activists can become brokers of project-related benefits between mining/dispossessing projects and villagers; and how such brokerage can lead to new forms of clientelism and consolidation of political power by these leaders. I have suggested that this, in turn, can reshape the everyday political landscape in ways that – together with the corrosive effects of differentiation on labour solidarities – curtail possibilities of protest by and for more impecunious villagers. Rather than 'people versus mines', this has been a story of internal hierarchisation and monopolisation of power by local leaders, who muddy the line between anti-dispossession protest and collaboration with dispossessing projects; and, more broadly, between activism and self-interested politics.

This calls attention to the multi-layered and often contradictory meanings and outcomes of 'struggles' over dispossession (see also Nielsen 2016). On the one hand, the political pressure and brokerage applied by Budhram was successful in extracting secure employment from CCL for a relatively large number of displaced Santals, which has allowed them to achieve significant upward mobility. The mediated provision of jobs, however, has also given rise to other, countervailing processes, experienced by both Dharutar's jobless displacees and Karampot's coal peddlers. First, compensatory employment has to new divisions in livelihoods and lifestyle that have not only enhanced poorer Santals' sense of marginalisation, but also chiselled away at the kind of solidarities that would be necessary for collective action (see also Levien 2018: Chapter 8).

Second, Budhram's relationship with CCL and entry into party politics have, in villagers' perception, marked his transition into *netagiri* – and, accordingly, engagement in morally corrupt conduct. Indeed, while on the face of it Budhram may appear like an *adivasi* tribal rights activist, villagers stress rather his de facto cooperation with CCL. Third, Budhram's interrelation with CCL, and his position as the conduit to accessing compensatory project benefits, have contributed to the solidification of his local political hold, and driven poorer villagers into a state of heightened political cynicism and resignation.

At the same time, though, my argument has not been one of seemingly sweeping co-option into the capitalist logic of dispossession, as recently described by Tania Li (2014). In her study of land enclosure in an indigenous community in Indonesia, Li describes how the process of land commodification was generally embraced by villagers, and how the consequent emergence of capitalist dynamics and inequalities did not, for the most part, spawn any kind of local moral debate. In Karampot, by contrast, processes of accumulation, exclusion, and differentiation *have* been the subject of moral critique, centred around values of egalitarianism, reciprocity, and mutual aid as opposed to self-interest and -seeking.

People like Siamlal and Babulal, as I have pointed out, draw on moralities enacted in religious festivals and remembered from a more egalitarian (if partly idealised) past to critically reflect on the present political and moral economy – particularly in

relation to the conduct of *netas* and display of wealth by CCL-employed Santals. It is from such spaces of ethical critique that a more radical politics could perhaps develop. But the local divisions and centralised political structure that have emerged since dispossession – and their adverse effect, respectively, on solidarities and villagers' sense of political capability – make it difficult to parlay this critique into political action. The last two chapters of the thesis underscored this apparent paradox, which is rooted not in the absence of critical thinking about the effects of mining and dispossession, but the inability to actualise and mobilise around it.

A focus on the politics of acquiescence not only provides an analytical corrective to the common trope of tribal resistance – with its often narrow emphasis on images and expressions of protest – but also provides a critical alternative to classic analyses of mining and political mobilisation. In her ethnography of tin mining in Bolivia, June Nash (1979) has shown how rituals, for indigenous miners, serve as an abundant resource for asserting their self-identity and solidarity, and consequently for carrying out struggles against their exploitation. In Karampot too, I have suggested, Santal festivals, alongside instances of *madaiti*, provide a space in which more egalitarian ideas about production, consumption, and sociality are invoked. But the kinds of moralities represented by these practices remain largely transient and bracketed off from routine everyday life, where egalitarian values are being increasingly disintegrated. Outside the societal pockets in which such values are still being displayed, Santal villagers' capacity to harness them into protest is undercut by intra-community socioeconomic and class differentiation, and the capturing of political power by their *netas*.

This monopolisation of political action by *netas* like Budhram, and stifling of more popular protest, also allow to consider more critically the postulated link between mining and political activism. Timothy Mitchell (2009, 2013), for example, has tied the rise of democratic politics in the 20th century to the age of carbon energy, arguing that the particular extraction and distribution methods of coal enabled the conversion of political consciousness into effective political action.¹⁸³ While Mitchell

¹⁸³ Mitchell suggests, for example, that mining strikes could be effective "because of the flows of carbon" that connected underground pits to "every factory, office, home or means of transportation that depended on steam or electric power" (2009: 404).

foregrounds the material conditions that enable protest in contexts of mining, I have rather tried to chart how the social formations that can emerge in such contexts can preclude the translation of critical moral perspectives into political action. Nevertheless, I would like to raise the possibility that in Karampot, this situation is not necessarily permanent. Budhram's balancing of self-interest and patronage, co-option and legitimacy, can be tricky to maintain, and issues like the scarcity of truck loading work can eventually pose a problem for him. It remains to be seen whether moral commentaries like Siamlal's can become powerful enough as to generate a challenge to Budhram, and a potential shift in the balance of power.

Implications

The ethnographic setting for this thesis has a number of specific features – most notably perhaps the possibility, under certain conditions, to obtain compensatory employment for land loss. Nevertheless, the thesis's findings have relevance beyond the Karampot case, to other contexts of industrialisation, dispossession, and indigeneity in India and beyond. First, rather than categorical predation and marginalisation of rural communities, extractive industrialisation and dispossession can give rise to different forms of labour along a spectrum of precarity and relative stability, which can carry diverse, unexpected meanings and even advantages for villagers. While mining and land expropriation do not necessarily result in overall pauperisation, though, they can – in combination with compensation schemes for dispossession – have a strong differentiating impact *within* rural communities as well as families, and engender internal socioeconomic and class inequalities.

Second, while anti-mining and -dispossession activists, especially indigenous ones, are often portrayed as virtuous agents of resistance, the boundary between activism and co-option can be porous. This requires a more nuanced understanding of the actual politics that emerge around mining and dispossession, and the ways in which apparent acts of activism can be interlaced with more self-interested political ambitions and objectives. Local leaders and/or activists can occupy highly ambiguous positions between villagers and dispossessing projects, and themselves serve as a catalyst for the creation of new intra-community disparities. Third, interrelations between such projects and leaders can allow the latter to gain particular, more fixed forms of political power, which can alter local sociopolitical

relations in ways that deter, rather than promote, more inclusive forms of protest, and result in a politics not of resistance but acquiescence.

Based on these findings, the thesis opens up the scope for further comparative ethnographic research. First, on the particular forms of labour, inequalities, and precarities that are generated in different contexts of industrialisation and dispossession – private or public sector-led, for different types of industries and projects, with different compensation policies and mechanisms. Second, on the responses to land enclosure and emerging inequalities – for example, the existence (or not) of any critical discourses and moral objections, and the relation between these and potential forms of collective action. Third, on the kinds of brokerage and patronage dynamics that arise as a consequence of dispossession, and the distinct ways in which brokers-leaders balance self-seeking and profiteering with patronage and legitimacy. And fourth, on the factors and configurations that either enable or hinder protest or compliance, in relation to different types of dispossession and in different agrarian milieus.

Bibliography

- Adnan, Shapan. 2013. 'Land Grabs and Primitive Accumulation in Deltaic Bangladesh: Interactions between Neoliberal Globalization, State Interventions, Power Relations and Peasant Resistance'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 87-128.
- Adduci, Matilde. 2012. 'Neoliberalism and Class Reproduction in India: The Political Economy of Privatisation in the Mineral Sector in the Indian State of Orissa'. *Forum for Social Economics* 41(1) 68-96.
- Adduci, Matilde. 2017. 'Neo-Liberalism, Mining and Labour in the Indian State of Odisha: Outlining a Political Economy Analysis'. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(4): 596-614.
- Ahmad, Nesar and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2011. 'Considering gender in social impact assessment'. In Vanclay, Frank and Ana Maria Esteves (eds.). *New Directions in Social Impact Assessment. Conceptual and Methodological Advances*: 117-137. Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- Ahmad, Nesar and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2014. 'Gender in Coal Mining Induced Displacement and Rehabilitation in Jharkhand'. In Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 229-254. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon. 2007. 'Land, Markets and Neoliberal Enclosure: An Agrarian Political Economy Perspective'. *Third World Quarterly* 28(8): 1437-1456.
- Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon. 2012. 'Contextualising land grabbing: contemporary land deals, the global subsistence crisis and the world food system'. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 33(2): 119-142.
- Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Cristobal Kay. 2010a. 'Surveying the Agrarian Question (Part 1): Unearthing Foundations, Exploring Diversity'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37(1): 177-202.
- Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Cristobal Kay. 2010b. 'Surveying the Agrarian Question (Part 2): Current Debates and Beyond'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37(1): 155-284.
- Allison, Anne. 2013. *Precarious Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Araghi, Farshad. 2009. 'Accumulation by displacement: global enclosures, food crisis, and the ecological contradictions of capitalism'. *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* XXXII(1): 113-146.
- Areeparampil, Mathew. 1996. 'Displacement Due to Mining in Jharkhand'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(24): 1524-1528.
- Archer, W.G. 1984 [1946]. *Tribal Law and Justice: A Report on the Santal*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.

- Axelby, Richard. 2017. 'Chamba Valley, Himalaya, Himachal Pradesh'. In: Shah, Alpa, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Raj Jayaseelan, and Thakur Vikramaditya. 2017. *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in 21st Century India*: 143-202. London: Pluto Press.
- Badgaiyan, S.D. 1994. 'Tribal worker in the industry.' In Thakur, Devandra and D.N. Thakur (eds.). *Tribal Labour and Employment*: 175-89. New Delhi: Deep and Deep.
- Bailey, Frederick Marshman. 1969. *Stratagems and Spoils: a Social Anthropology of Politics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Banerjee-Guha, Swapna. 2013. 'Accumulation and Dispossession: Contradictions of Growth and Development in Contemporary India'. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36(2): 165-179.
- Banerjee, Abhijit Vinayak, Pranab Bardhan, Kaushik Basu, Mrinal Datta Chaudhury, Maitreesh Ghatak, Ashok Sanjay Guha, Mukul Majumdar, Dilip Mookherjee, and Debraj Ray. 2007. 'Beyond Nandigram: Industrialisation in West Bengal'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(17): 1487-1489.
- Bates, Crispin and Alpa Shah. 2017. 'Savage Attack: Adivasis and Insurgency in India'. In Bates, Crispin and Alpa Shah (eds.). *Savage Attack: Tribal Insurgency in India*: 1-34. London: Routledge.
- Baviskar, Amita. 1995. *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Baviskar, Amita. 1997. 'Tribal politics and discourses of environmentalism'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 31(2): 195-224.
- Bear, Laura. 2011. 'Making a river of gold: speculative state planning, informality, and neoliberal governance on the Hooghly'. *Focaal* 61: 46-60.
- Bear, Laura. 2013. 'The antinomies of audit: opacity, instability and charisma in the economic governance of a Hooghly shipyard'. *Economy and Society* 42(3): 375-397.
- Bear, Laura. 2014. 'Capital and time: uncertainty and qualitative measures of inequality'. *The British Journal of Sociology* 65(4): 639-649.
- Bear, Laura. 2015. *Navigating Austerity: Currents of Debt along a South Asian River*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bedi, Heather. 2013. 'Special Economic Zones: national land challenges, localized protest'. *Contemporary South Asia* 21(1): 38-51.
- Bedi, Heather. 2015. 'Judicial Justice for Special Economic Zone Land Resistance'. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45(4): 596-617.
- Bhengara, Ratnakar. 1996. 'Coal mining displacement'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(2):647-649.

- Bennett, Olivia and Christopher McDowell. 2012. *Displaced. The Human Cost of Development and Resettlement*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Benson, Peter and Stuart Kirsch. 2010. 'Capitalism and the Politics of Resignation'. *Current Anthropology* 51(4): 459-486.
- Bernstein, Henry. 2004. 'Changing before our very eyes': Agrarian questions and the politics of land in capitalism today'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4(1-2): 190-225.
- Bernstein, Henry. 2006. 'Is There an Agrarian Question in the 21st Century?'. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 27(4): 449-460.
- Bernstein, Henry, 2008. 'Agrarian Change in a Globalising World: (Final) Farewells to the Peasantry?' Paper presented at the Journal of Agrarian Change Workshop, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, 1-2 May.
- Bernstein, Henry. 2010. *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- Bernstein, Henry. 2016. 'Revisiting Agrarian Transition: Reflections on Long Histories and Current Realities.' In Mohanty, B.B. (ed.). *Critical Perspectives on Agrarian Transitions. India in the Global Debate*: 67-91. London: Routledge.
- Béteille, André. 2007. 'The Middle Class'. In Sarkar, R. and R. Mukerjee (eds.). *Freedom: Sixty Years After Indian Independence*: 25-51. Kolkata: Art and Heritage Foundation.
- Bierschenk, T., J.P. Chaveauand and Olivier de Sardan. 2002. *Local development brokers in Africa: the rise of a new social category*. Mainz, Germany: Johannes Gutenberg University.
- Bird-David, Nurit. 1983. 'Wage-gathering: Socio-economic change and the case of the Naiken of South India. In Robb, Peter. (ed.) *Rural and South India: Linkages, Changes and Development*: 57-86. London, Curzon.
- Blowfield, Michael and Jedrzej George Frynas. 2005. 'Setting new agendas: critical perspectives on CSR in the developing world'. *International Affairs* 81(3): 499-513.
- Bodding, P.O. 2001 [1942]. *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals*. New Delhi: Gyan Books.
- Bolt, Maxim. 2013. 'Producing permanence: employment, domesticity and the flexible future on a South African border farm'. *Economy and Society* 42(3): 197-225
- Borras, Saturnino M. Jr. and Jennifer C. Franco. 2012. 'Global Land Grabbing and Trajectories of Agrarian Change: A Preliminary Analysis'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 12(1): 34-59.
- Borras, Saturnino M. Jr., Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones, Ben White, and Wendy Wolford. 2011. 'Towards a Better Understanding of Global Land Grabbing: An Editorial Introduction'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(2): 209-16.

- Borras, Saturnino M. Jr., Cristóbal Kay, Sergio Gómez, and John Wilkinson (eds.). 2012. *Land Grabbing in Latin America. Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 33(4), special issue.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1974. 'The School as a Conservative Force? Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities'. In Eggleston, John (ed.). *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education*: 32-46. London: Methuen.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Breman, Jan. 1985. *Of peasants, migrants and paupers: Rural labour circulation and capitalist production in west India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 1994. *Wage Hunters and Gatherers: Search for Work in the Urban and Rural Economy of South Gujarat*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 1996. *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 1999. 'The Study of Industrial Labour in Post-Colonial India – The Formal Sector: An Introductory Review'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 33(1-2): 1-41.
- Breman, Jan. 2003. *The Labouring Poor in India: Patterns of Exploitation, Subordination, and Exclusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 2007. *The Poverty Regime in Village India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 2013. *At Work in the Informal Economy of India: A Perspective from the Bottom Up*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan. 2016. *On Pauperism in Past and Present*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan and Isabelle Guérin. 2009. 'On bondage: old and new'. In Breman, Jan, Isabelle Guérin and Aseem Prakesh (eds.). *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*: i-xii. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, Jan, Isabelle Guérin, and Aseem Prakash (eds.). 2009. *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Burton, Bob. 2002. 'When corporations want to cuddle'. In: Evans, Geoffrey Russel, James Goodman and Nina Lansbury (eds.). *Moving Mountains: Communities Confront Mining and Globalisation*: 109-125. London: Zed Press.
- Bush, Ray, Janet Bujra and Gary Littlejohn (eds.). 2011. *Land: A New Wave of Accumulation by Dispossession in Africa?. Review of African Political Economy* 23(128), special issue.

Business Standard. 2013. 'CIL adopts flexible R&R policy to boost coal production'. 24 January. www.business-standard.com/article/companies/cil-adopts-flexible-r-r-policy-to-boost-coal-production-112060300048_1.html (accessed 15 May 2019).

Clastres, Pierre. 1987 (1974). *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology*. New York: Zone Books.

Cernea, Michael M. 2003. 'For a New Economics of Resettlement: A Sociological Critique of the Compensation Principle'. *International Social Science Journal* 175: 37-43.

Cernea, Michael M. 2007. 'Financing for Development: Benefit Sharing Mechanisms in Population Resettlement'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(12): 1004-1033.

Carrin-Bouez, Marine. 1990. *Inner Frontiers: Santal Responses to Acculturation*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, Department of Social Science and Development.

Carrin-Bouez, Marine. 1993. 'From Forest to Factory: The Santal Conception of Labour'. In Robb, Peter (ed.). *Dalit Movements and the Meanings of Labour in India*: 150-158. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CCL (Central Coalfields Limited). n.d. 'Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & CCL'. www.centralcoalfields.in/sutbs/corpte_social.php (accessed 28 April 2019).

CEMPDIL (Central Mining Planning & Design Institute Limited). 1984. *Coal Mining in India (History and Perspectives)*. Ranchi: CEMPDIL.

CIL (Coal India Limited). 2008. 'Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy of Coal India Limited'. www.centralcoalfields.in/indsk/pdf/employ_land/land_rules/r&r_policy%202008.pdf (accessed 15 January 2018).

CIL. 2014. www.coalindia.in/career/Documents/Career/Detailed_Advertisement_MT2014_03032014%20.pdf (accessed 3 December 2018).

Chandra, Kanchan. 2015. 'The New Indian State: The Relocation of Patronage in the Post-Liberalisation Economy'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 50(41): 46-58.

Chari, Sharad. 2006. 'Social labour and the geography of work in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu'. In Raju, Saraswati, Satish Kumar and Stuart Corbridge (eds.). *Colonial and Post-colonial Geographies in India*: 141-161. New Delhi: Sage.

Chakravorty, Sanjoy. 2013. *The Price of Land: Acquisition, Conflict, Consequence*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Chakroborty, Utpal Kumar and Binod Narayan. 2014. 'Socio-economic issues and dilemmas of mining-induced displacement: a case of the coal mining industry'. *Journal of Economic & Social Development* 10(2): 131-142.

Chen, Marty and Jean Drèze. 1992. 'Widows and Health in Rural North India'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(43-44): 24-31.

Chibber, Vivek. 2003. *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Choudhury, P.C. 1957. *Bihar District Gazetteers: Hazaribagh*. Bihar: The Superintendent Secretariat Press.

Corbridge, Stuart. 1993. 'Ousting Singbonga: the Struggle for India's Jharkhand'. In Robb, Peter (ed.). *Dalit Movements and the Meanings of Labour in India*: 121-150. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corbridge, Stuart. 2002. 'The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Names and Numbers'. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 40(3): 55-71.

Corbridge, Stuart and Alpa Shah. 2013. 'Introduction: the underbelly of the Indian boom'. *Economy and Society* 42(3): 335-347.

Cotton, James Sutherland, Sir Richards Burn, and Sir William Stevenson Meyer. 1909a. *Imperial Gazetteer of India. Provincial Series. Bengal. Vol. I*. Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing.

Cotton, James Sutherland, Sir Richards Burn, and Sir William Stevenson Meyer. 1909b. *Imperial Gazetteer of India. Provincial Series. Bengal. Vol. II*. Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing.

Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cross, Jamie. 2013. 'Neoliberalism as unexceptional: Economic zones and the everyday precariousness of working life in South India'. *Critique of Anthropology* 30(4): 355-373.

Cross, Jamie. 2014. *Dream Zones: Anticipating Capitalism and Development in India*. London: Pluto Press.

Cross, Jamie. 2015. 'The Economy of Anticipation: Hope, Infrastructure, and Economic Zones in South India'. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 35(3): 424-437.

Culshaw, W.J. and W.G. Archer. 1945. *Man in India* 25(4): 223-239.

Dalton, Edward Tuite. 1892. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing.

Damodaran, Vinita and Felix Padel. 2018. 'Investment-Induced Displacement in Central India: A Study in Extractive Capitalism'. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38(2): 396-411.

Da Silva, Solano Jose Savio. 2014. 'Goa: The Dynamics of Reversal'. In Jenkins, Rob, Lorraine Kennedy and Partha Mukhopadhyay (eds.). *Power, Policy and Protest: The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones*: 108-136. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Datta, Kalikinkar. 1988 [1940]. *The Santal Insurrection of 1855-1857*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

Datta Majumdar, Nabendu. *The Santal: A Study in Cultural Change*. 1956. New Delhi: Manager of Publications.

Davis, Mike. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso.

Dayal, Harishwar and Anup K. Karan. 2003. *Labour Migration From Jharkhand*. New Delhi: Institute for Human Development.

De Angelis, Massimo. 2001. 'Marx and Primitive Accumulation: The Continuous Character of Capital's Enclosures'. *The Commoner* 2: 1-22.

De Angelis, Massimo. 2004. 'Separating the doing and the deed: Capital and the continuous character of enclosures'. *Historical Materialism* 12(2):57-87

Deccan Herald. 2012. 'Coalgate report rocks Parliament'. 22 March. www.deccanherald.com/content/236474/coalgate-report-rocks-parliament.html (accessed 25 May 2018).

De Haan, Arjan. 1994. *Unsettled settlers: Migrant workers and industrial capitalism in Calcutta*. Hilversum: Verloren.

De Haan, Arjan. 1995. 'Migration in eastern India: A segmented labour market'. *Indian Economic Social History Review* 32(1): 51-93.

Denning, Michael. 2010. 'Wageless Life'. *New Left Review* 66: 79-97.

De Schutter, Olivier. 'How Not to Think of Land- Grabbing: Three Critiques of Large-Scale Investments in Farmland'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(2): 249-79.

Deshingkar, Priya and Daniel Start. 2003. 'Seasonal Migration for Livelihoods in India: Coping, Accumulation and Exclusion'. ODI (Overseas Development Institute) Working Paper 220. www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/74.pdf (accessed 23 September 2018).

Deshpande, Ashwini. 2011. *The Grammar of Caste: Economic Discrimination in Contemporary India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Deshpande, S.R. 1946. *Report of an enquiry into conditions of labour in the coal mining industry in India*. New Delhi: Government of India Press.

Devalle, Susana. 1992. *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

- Dhagamwar, Vasudha. 2006. *Role and Image of Law in India: The Tribal Experience*. London: Sage Publications.
- Dhagamwar, Vasudha, Subrata De and Nikhil Verma. 2003. *Industrial Development and Displacement. The People of Korba*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Dhananjayan, R.S. and R. Shanti. 2007. 'Impact of Privatisation on Public Sector Enterprises and Employment in India'. In Jalal, R.S. and Nandan Singh Bisht (eds.). *Emerging Dimensions of Global Trade: Discussions on Trade Related Policies*: 275-284. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- Downing, Theodore E. Jerry Moles, Ian McIntosh, and Carmen Garcia-Downing. 2002. 'Indigenous Peoples and Mining Encounters: Strategies and Tactics'. MMSD (Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development) Working Paper 57. pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G00548.pdf (accessed 19 July 2019).
- Drèze, Jean and Amartya Sen. 2013. *An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Dutte, Sanjay. 2012. 'CAG: Government lost Rs 10.7 lakh crore by not auctioning coal blocks'. *The Times of India*, 22 March. timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/CAG-Govt-lost-Rs-10-7-lakh-crore-by-not-auctioning-coal-blocks/articleshow/12360183.cms (accessed 18 May 2018).
- Ekka, Alex. 2011. *A Status of Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples. Land, Series 4: Jharkhand*. New Delhi: Aakar Books.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1943. *The Aborigines*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Economic and Political Weekly*. 2001. 'Coal: Deep in Trouble'. Editorial. 36(49): 4512.
- Feldman, Shelley and Charles Geisler. 2012. 'Land Expropriation and Displacement in Bangladesh'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(3-4): 971-493.
- Ferguson, James. 2013. 'Declarations of dependence: labour, personhood, and welfare in southern Africa'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19(2): 223-241.
- Ferguson, James. 2015. *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ferguson, James and Tania Li. 2018. 'Beyond the "Proper Job": Political-economic Analysis after the Century of Labouring Man'. Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), Working Paper 51. www.africaportal.org/documents/18136/WP_51_Beyond_the_proper_job_12_Apr_2012_FINAL.pdf (accessed 11 June 2019).
- Fernandes, Walter. 2004. 'Rehabilitation for the displaced'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 39(12): 1191-93.

- Fernandes, Walter. 2005. 'Rehabilitation as a Right: Where is the Policy?'. *Social Action* 55(2): 123-137.
- Fernandes, Walter. 2007. 'Mines, Mining and Displacement in India'. In Singh, Gurdeep, David Laurence and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (eds.). *Managing the Social and Environmental Consequences of Coal Mining in India*: 333-344. Dhanbad: The Indian School of Mines University.
- Fernandes, Walter. 2008. 'Sixty Years of Development-induced Displacement in India'. In Mathur, Hari Mohan (ed.). *India Social Development Report 2008: Development and Displacement*: 89-102. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Fernandes, Walter and Gita Bharali. 2014. In Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 183-196. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Fernandes, Walter and Enakshi Ganguly Thukral (eds.). 1989. *Development, displacement, and rehabilitation: Issues for a national debate*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.
- Fernandes, Walter and Vijay Paranjpye (eds.). 1997. *Rehabilitation policy and law in India: A right to livelihood*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.
- Ferry, Elizabeth. 2005. *Not Ours Alone: Patrimony, Value, and Collectivity in Contemporary Mexico*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fortes, Meyer. 1969. *Kinship and the Social Order*. London: Routledge.
- Frynas, Jędrzej George. 2005. 'The False Developmental Promise of Corporate Social Responsibility: Evidence from Multinational Oil Companies'. *International Affairs* 81(3): 581-598.
- Fuller, C.J. 1992. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gadgil, Madhav and Ramachandra Guha. 1993. *The Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Galanter, Marc. 1984. *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gardner, Katy. 2012. *Discordant Development: Global Capital and the Struggle for Connection in Bangladesh*. London: Pluto Press.
- Gardner, Katy. 2018. 'We Demand Work! 'Dispossession', patronage and village labour in Bibiyana, Bangladesh'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45 (7): 1484-1500.
- Gardner, Katy and Eva Gerharz. 2016a. 'Land, 'Development' and 'Security' in Bangladesh and India: An Introduction'. *Samaj: South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 13: 1-19.

Gardner, Katy and Eva Gerharz (eds.). 2016b. *Land, Development and Security in South Asia. Samaj: South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 13, special issue.

Gardner, Katy, Zahir Ahmed, Fatema Bashir and Masud Rana. 2012. 'Elusive Partnerships: Gas extraction and CSR in Bangladesh'. *Resources Policy* 37: 168-174.

Gell, Alfred. 1986. 'Newcomers to the world of goods: consumption among the Muria Gonds'. In Appadurai, Arjun (ed.). *The Social Life of Things*: 110-138. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

George, Ajitha S. 2014. *Mining Jharkhand, An Adivasi Homeland. A Status of Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples Mining Series 2: Jharkhand*. New Delhi: Aakar Books.

Ghosh, A.B. 1977. *Coal Industry in India: An Historical and Analytical Account. Part I (Pre-Independence Period)*. Calcutta: Coal India Ltd.

Ghosh, Kaushik. 2006. 'Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenoussness, Locality and the Transnational Sphere in Jharkhand, India'. *Cultural Anthropology* 21 (4): 501-34.

Gill, Kaveri, Rajesh Bhattacharya, and Snehashish Bhattacharya. 2015. *The Political Economy of Capitalism, 'Development' and Resistance: The State of Adivasis in India*. New Delhi: Oxfam India. www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/WP-Political-economy-of-capitalism-development-and-resistance-state-adivasis-012015_n-EN.pdf (accessed 30 December 2018).

Goldman, Marcio. 2001. 'An Ethnographic Theory of Democracy: Politics from the Viewpoint of Ilheus's Black Movement (Bahia, Brazil)'. *Ethnos* 66(2): 157-180.

Government of India. 1957. The Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act, 1957. lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1957/A1957-20.pdf (accessed 20 September 2017).

Government of India. 2001. 'Jharhkahnd, Data Highlights: The Scheduled Tribes, Census of India 2001'. censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/dh_st_jharkhand.pdf (accessed 15 July 2019).

Government of India. 2013. Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act. www.legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2013-30.pdf (accessed 22 August 2018).

Greenough, Paul. 2001. 'Naturae Ferae: Wild Animals in South Asia and the Standard Environmental Narrative'. In Scott, James (ed.) *Agrarian Studies: Synthetic Work at the Cutting Edge*: 141-185. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Guérin, Isabelle. 2009. 'Corridors of migration and chains of dependence: brick kiln moulders in Tamil Nadu'. In Breman, Jan, Isabelle Guérin and Aseem Prakesh (eds.). *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*: 170-197. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Guha, Ramachandra. 1988. 'Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 23(49): 2578-2581.
- Guha, Ramachandra. 2007. *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. London: Macmillan.
- Guha, Ranajit. 1983. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, Akhil. 1995. 'Blurred boundaries: the discourse of corruption, the culture of politics and the imagined state'. *American Ethnologist* 22(2): 375-402.
- Gupta, Akhil. 1998. *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Gupta, Akhil. 2005. 'Narratives of corruption: anthropological and fictional accounts of the Indian State'. *Ethnography* 6(1): 5-34.
- Gupta, Akhil. 2012. *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hall, Derek. 2011. 'Land Grabs, Land Control, and Southeast Asian Crop Booms'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(4): 811-831.
- Hall, Derek. 2012. 'Rethinking Primitive Accumulation: Theoretical Tensions and Rural Southeast Asian Complexities'. *Antipode* 44(4): 1188-1208.
- Hall, Derek. 2013. 'Primitive Accumulation, Accumulation by Dispossession and the Global Land Grab'. *Third World Quarterly*. 34(9): 1582-604.
- Hall, Derek, Philip Hirsch and, Tania Li. 2011. *Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Hall, Ruth, Marc Edelman, Saturnino M. Borras Jr., Ian Scoones, Ben White, and Wendy Wolford. 2015. 'Resistance, acquiescence or incorporation? An introduction to land grabbing and political reactions 'from below''. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42(3-4): 467-488.
- Hardiman, David. 1987. *The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Harms, Erik. 2011. *Saigon's Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Harms, Erik. 2013. 'Eviction Time in the New Saigon: Temporalities of Displacement in the Rubble of Development'. *Cultural Anthropology* 28(2): 344-368.
- Harriss-White, Barbara. 2003. *India Working: Essays on Society and Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Harriss-White, Barbara. 2005. 'India's Socially Regulated Economy'. Oxford Department of International Development Working Paper 133. www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.odid.ox.ac.uk/files/www3_docs/qehwps133.pdf (accessed 18 December 2018).
- Harriss-White, Barbara. 2010. 'Globalization, the financial crisis and petty production in India's socially regulated informal economy'. *Global Labour Journal* 1(1): 152-77.
- Harriss-White, Barbara. 2012. 'Capitalism and the Common Man: Peasants and Petty Production in Africa and South Asia'. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 1(2): 109-160.
- Harriss-White, Barbara. 2014. 'Labour and Petty Production'. *Development and Change* 45(5): 981-1000.
- Harriss-White, Barbara and Nandini Gooptu. 2001. 'Mapping India's World of Unorganised Labour'. *Socialist Register* 37: 89-118.
- Hart, Gillian. 2002. *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harvey, David. 2003. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, David. 2004. 'The "New" Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession'. *Socialist Register* 40: 63-87.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Herbert, Tony and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2004. 'Coal Sector Loans and Displacement of Indigenous Populations: Lessons from Jharkhand'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 39(23): 2403-2409.
- Herbert, Tony and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2014. 'World Bank, Coal and Indigenous People. Lessons from Parej East, Jharkhand'. In Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 145-164. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Heuzé, Gérard. 1996. *Workers of Another World: Miners, the Countryside and Coalfields in Dhanbad*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Heuzé, Djallal. 2009. 'Bondage in India: Representing the Past of the Present? The Case of the Dhanbad Coal Belt during the 1980s'. In Breman, Jan, Isabelle Guérin and Aseem Prakesh (eds.). *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*: 147-169. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Higham, Rob and Alpa Shah. 2013. 'Conservative force or contradictory resource? Education and affirmative action in Jharkhand, India'. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 43(6): 718-739.

Holmström, Mark. 1976. *South Indian Factory Workers: Their life and their world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hindu Business Line. 2012. 'Coal India adopts flexible R&R policy'. 12 March. [www.thehindubusinessline.com /companies/coal-india-adopts-flexible-ramp-policy/article20441253.ece1](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/coal-india-adopts-flexible-ramp-policy/article20441253.ece1) (accessed 15 May 2019).

ICCM (International Council on Mining and Metals). 2015. *Good Practice Guide: Indigenous Peoples and Mining*. www.icmm.com/website/publications/pdfs/social-and-economic-development/9520.pdf (accessed 19 July 2019).

ILO (International Labour Organisation). n.d. 'Decent work'. www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 30 August 2018).

Jain, Shobhita and Madhu Bala. 2006. *The Economics and Politics of Resettlement in India*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.

James, Deborah. 2011. 'The return of the broker: consensus, hierarchy and choice in South African land reform'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17(2): 318-338.

Jeffery, Craig. 2010. *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

Jenkins, Rob, Lorraine Kennedy, and Partha Mukhopadhyay (eds.). 2014a. *Power, Policy and Protest: The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Rob, Lorraine Kennedy and Partha Mukhopadhyay. 2014b. 'Power, Protest, and India's Special Economic Zones'. In Jenkins, Rob, Lorraine Kennedy, and Partha Mukhopadhyay. *Power, Policy and Protest: The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2015. 'The New Indian State'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 50(41): 47

Kannan, K.P. and G. Raveendran. 2009. 'Growth Sans Employment: A Quarter Century of Jobless Growth in India's Organised Manufacturing'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 44(10): 80-91.

Kapadia, Karin. 1995. *Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste, and Class in Rural South India*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Kapelus, Paul. 2002. 'Mining, CSR and "the community": the case of Rio Tinto, Richards Bay Minerals and the Mbonambi'. *Journal of Business Ethics* 39: 275-296.

Kearney, Michael. 1996. *Reconceptualizing the Peasantry: Anthropology in Global Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press

Kirsch, Stuart. 2007. 'Indigenous movements and the risks of counter globalization: Tracking the campaign against Papua New Guinea's Ok Tedi mine. *American Ethnologist* 34(2): 303-321.

Kirsch, Stuart. 2014. *Mining Capitalism: The Relationship between Corporations and Their Critics*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Kohli, Atul. 2004. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kumar, Uday. 2016. 'Environmental Cost of Improper Opencast Mining: An Environmental Agenda for Jharkhand'. Conference paper. Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Jharkhand: Challenges and Opportunities, 29-31 July, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India.

Kumaramangalam, Mohan S. 1973. *Coal Industry in India: Nationalisation and Tasks Ahead*. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co.

Kuper, Adam. 1988. *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion*. London: Routledge.

Kuper, Adam. 2003. 'The Return of the Native'. *Current Anthropology* 44(3): 389-402.

Labour Enquiry Commission. 1896. *Report of the Labour Enquiry Commission*. 1896. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 1999. 'State, Market and the Crisis in Raniganj Coal Belt'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 34(41): 2952-2956.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2003. 'Informal coal mining in Eastern India: Evidence from the Raniganj Coalbelt'. *Natural Resources Forum* 27: 68-77.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2007. 'Coal Mining Industry at a Crossroads: Coal Policy in Liberalising India'. In Singh, Gurdeep, David Laurence and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (eds.). *Managing the Social and Environmental Consequences of Coal Mining in India*: 27-40. Dhanbad: Indian School of Mines University.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2014a. 'Introduction to Coal in India: Energising the Nation'. In Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 1-38. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2014b. 'Between Legitimacy and Illegality: Informal Coal Mining at the Limits of Justice'. Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 39-62. Farnham (Surrey): Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2017a. 'Coal for national development in India: Transforming landscapes and social relations in the quest for energy security'. In Nielsen, Kenneth

Bo and Patrik Oskarsson (eds.). *Industrialising Rural India: Land, Policy and Resistance*: 85-106. London: Routledge.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2017b. 'Resources and the Politics of Sovereignty: The Moral and Immoral Economies of Coal Mining in India'. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. [dx.doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2017.1370211](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2017.1370211) (accessed 2 November 2017).

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala and David Williams. 2005. 'The coal cycle: small scale illegal coal supply in eastern India'. *Journal of Resource, Environment and Development* 2(2): 93-105.

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala, David Williams, and Justin Imam. 2012. *Revisiting coal cycles in eastern India: Report of 2012 Survey*. home.netspeed.com.au/kuntala.david/coalcycles/Coal_Cycles.pdf (accessed 23 April 2018).

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala, Radhika Krishnan, and Nesar Ahmad. 2012. 'Land Acquisition and Dispossession: Private Coal Companies in Jharkhand'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 47(6): 39-45 .

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala, Radhika Krishnan, and Nesar Ahmad. 2014. "'Captive' Coal Mining in Jharkhand: Taking Land from Indigenous Communities". In Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 165-182. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Laney, Scott A. and David N. Weissman. 2014. 'Respiratory Diseases Caused by Coal Mine Dust'. *Journal of Occupational Environmental Medicine* 56(10): 18-22.

Le Mons Walker, Kathy. 2008. 'Neoliberalism on the Ground in Rural India: Predatory Growth, Agrarian Crisis, Internal Colonization, and the Intensification of Class Struggle'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 35(4): 557-620.

Lerche, Jens. 1999. 'Politics of the Poor: Agricultural Labourers and Political Transformations in Uttar Pradesh. In Byres, T.J., Karin Kapadia and Jens Lerche (eds.). *Rural Labour Relations in India*: 182-241. London: Frank Cass.

Lerche, Jens. 2007. 'A Global Alliance against Forced Labour? Unfree Labour, Neo-Liberal Globalization and the International Labour Organization'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 7(4): 425-452.

Lerche, Jens. 2010. 'From "Rural Labour" to "Classes of Labour": Class Fragmentation, Caste and Class Struggle at the Bottom of the Indian Labour Hierarchy'. In Harriss-White, Barbara and Judith Heyer (eds.). *The Comparative Political Economy of Development. Africa and South Asia*: 66-87. London: Routledge.

Lerche, Jens. 2011. 'Agrarian Crisis and Agrarian Questions in India'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(1): 104-118.

- Lerche, Jens. 2013. 'The Agrarian Question in Neoliberal India: Agrarian Transition Bypassed?'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 13(3): 382-404.
- Lerche, Jens and Alpa Shah. 2018. 'Conjugated oppression within contemporary capitalism: class, caste, tribe and agrarian change in India'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(5-6): 927-949.
- Lerche, Jens, Alpa Shah, and Barbara Harriss-White. 2013. 'Introduction: Agrarian Questions and Left Politics in India'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 13(3): 337-350.
- Levien, Michael. 2011. 'Special Economic Zones and Accumulation by Dispossession in India'. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4): 454-483.
- Levien, Michael. 2012. 'The Land Question: Special Economic Zones and the Political Economy of Dispossession in India'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39 (3-4): 933-969.
- Levien, Michael. 2013a. 'Regimes of Dispossession: From Steel Towns to Special Economic Zones'. *Development and Change* 44(2): 381-407.
- Levien, Michael. 2013b. 'The Politics of Dispossession: Theorizing India's "Land Wars"'. *Politics & Society* 41(3): 351-394.
- Levien, Michael. 2015a. 'From Primitive Accumulation to Regimes of Dispossession. Six Theses on India's Land Question'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 50(22): 146-157.
- Levien, Michael. 2015b. 'Social Capital as Obstacle to Development: Brokering Land, Norms, and Trust in Rural India'. *World Development* 74: 77-92.
- Levien, Michael. 2017. 'Gender and land dispossession: a comparative analysis'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(6): 1111-1134.
- Levien, Michael. 2018. *Dispossession Without Development. Land Grabs in Neoliberal India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Li, Fabiana. 2015. *Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Li, Tania. 2009. 'To Make Live of Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Populations'. *Antipode* 41(S1): 66-93.
- Li, Tania. 2010. 'Indigeneity, Capitalism, and the Management of Dispossession'. *Current Anthropology* 51(3): 385-414.
- Li, Tania. 2011. 'Centering labor in the land grab debate'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(2): 281-298.
- Li, Tania. 2014. *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Li, Tania. 2017. 'After Development: Surplus Population and the Politics of Entitlement'. *Development and Change* 48(6): 1247-1261.
- Limbert, Mandana E. 2008. 'Depleted Futures: Anticipating the end of oil in Oman'. In Ferry, Elizabeth Emma and Mandana E. Limbert (eds.). *Timely assets: the politics of resources and their temporalities*: 25-50. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Limbert, Mandana E. 2010. *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lister, E. 1917. *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers: Hazaribagh*. Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa.
- Lockwood, Alan H., Kristen Welker-Hood, Molly Rauch, and Barbara Gotlieb. 2009. *Coal Assault on Human Health*. A Report from Physicians for Social Responsibility. www.psr.org/coalreport (accessed 3 September 2017).
- Lund, Christian and Nancy Lee Peluso (eds.). 2011. Special Issue on New Frontiers of Land Control. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(4).
- Luxemburg, Rosa. 2003 (1913). *The Accumulation of Capital*. London: Routledge.
- Mahapatra, Sitakant. 1986. *Modernization and Ritual: Identity and Social Change in Santal Society*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.
- Mains, Daniel. 2007. 'Neoliberal times: Progress, boredom, and shame among young men in urban Ethiopia'. *American Ethnologist* 34(4): 659-673.
- Majumder, Sarasij and Kenneth Bo Nielsen. 2017. 'Should the son of a farmer always remain a farmer? The ambivalence of industrialisation and resistance in West Bengal. In Nielsen, Kenneth Bo and Patrik Oskarsson (eds.). *Industrialising Rural India: Land, Policy and Resistance*: 63-82. London: Routledge.
- Man. E.G. 1867. *Sonthalia and the Sonthals*. Calcutta: G. Wyman & Co.
- Marx, Karl. 1977 (1867). *Capital, Vol. I*. New York: Vintage.
- Mathur, Hari Mohan. 2013. *Displacement and Resettlement in India: The Human Cost of Development*. London: Routledge.
- Mayer, Adrian. 1981. 'Public Service and Individual Merit in a Town of Central India'. In Mayer, Adrian (ed.). *Culture and Morality: Essays in honour of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf*: 153-173. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, Chris and Olivia Bennet. 2012. *Displaced: The Human Cost of Development and Resettlement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McMichael, Philip. 2012. "The Land Grab and Corporate Food Regime Restructuring." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(3-4): 681-701.

- Mehta, Lyla. 2009. 'The double bind: A gender analysis of forced displacement and resettlement'. In Mehta, Lyla (ed.). *Displaced by development: Confronting marginalisation and gender injustice*: 3-33. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mehta, Lyla and Bina Srinivasan. 2000. *Balancing pains and gains: A perspective chapter on gender and large dams. World Commission on Dams Thematic Review*. Cape Town: World Commission on Dams Secretariat.
- Melucci, Alberto. 1980. 'The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach.' *Social Science Information* 19(2): 199-226.
- Millar, Kathleen. 2014. 'The Precarious Present: Wageless Labor and Disrupted Life in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil'. *Cultural Anthropology* 29(1): 32-53.
- Millar, Kathleen. 2015. 'The tempo of wageless work: E. P. Thompson's time-sense at the edges of Rio De Janeiro'. *Focaal* 73:28-40.
- Mills, Mary Beth. 1997. 'Contesting the margins of modernity: women, migration, and consumption in Thailand'. *American Ethnologist* 24(1): 37-61.
- Mills, Mary Beth. 2005. 'From Nimble Fingers to Raised Fists: Women and Labor Activism in Globalizing Thailand'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31(1): 117-144.
- Mining Weekly*. 2016. 'India to change rules governing captive coal mines'. 30 September. www.miningweekly.com/article/india-to-change-rules-governing-captive-coal-mines-2016-09-30 (accessed 3 October 2017).
- Mishra, Prajna Paramita. 2014. 'Water Worries in a Coal Mining Community: Understanding the Problem from the Community Perspective'. Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala (ed.). *Coal Nation: Histories, Ecologies and Politics of Coal in India*: 219-228. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. 'Carbon democracy'. *Economy and Society* 38: 399-432.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 2013. *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. London: Verso.
- Mosse, David, Sanjeev Gupta, Mona Mehta, Vidya Shah, and Julia Rees. 2002. 'Brokered livelihoods: Debt, labour migration and development in tribal western India'. *Journal of Development Studies* 38(5): 59-88
- Mukherjea, Charulal. 1962. *The Santals*. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co.
- Munck, Ronaldo. 2013. 'The Precariat: a view from the South'. *Third World Quarterly* 34(5): 747-762.
- Münster, Daniel and Christian Strümpell. 2014. 'The anthropology of neoliberal India: An introduction'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 48(1): 1-16.

- Nariman, Fali Sam. 2005. 'Jharkhand Mukti Morcha bribery scandal: In 1993, corruption got institutionalised in India'. *India Today*, December 26. www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20051226-jharkhand-mukti-morcha-bribery-scandal-in-1993-corruption-got-institutionalised-in-india-786386-2005-12-26 (accessed 30 August 2019).
- Nash, June. 1979. *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nathan, Dev and Virginius Xaxa. 2012. *Social Exclusion and Adverse Inclusion: Development and Deprivation of Adivasis in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- NDTV (New Delhi Television). 2011. 'Land wars: Are they India's biggest crisis?'. 22 June. www.ndtv.com/video/shows/ndtv-special-ndtv-24x7/land-wars-are-they-india-s-biggest-crisis-203270 (accessed 22 May 2019).
- Neocleous, Mark. 1996. *Administering Civil Society: Towards a Theory of State Power*. London: Macmillan.
- Nizami, Nausheen and Narayan Prasad. 2017. *Decent Work: Concept, Theory and Measurement*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Nielsen, Kenneth Bo. 2016. 'The everyday politics of India's "land wars" in rural eastern India'. *Focaal* 75: 105-118.
- Nielsen, Kenneth Bo. 2018. *Land Dispossession and Everyday Politics in Rural Eastern India*. London: Anthem Press.
- Nielsen, Kenneth Bo and Patrik Oskarsson (eds.). 2017. *Industrialising Rural India: Land, Policy and Resistance*. London: Routledge.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald. 2010. *Dispossession and Resistance in India: The River and the Rage*. London: Routledge.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald. 2018. *Adivasis and the State: Subalternity and Citizenship in India's Bhil Heartland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nuremowla, Sadid. 2016. 'Land, Place and Resistance to Displacement in Phulbari'. *Samaj: South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 13: 1-17.
- Ong, Aihwa. 2006. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Oskarsson, Patrik. 2013. 'Dispossession by Confusion from Mineral-Rich Lands in Central India'. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36(2): 199-212.
- Oskarsson, Patrik. 2017. 'The nature of bauxite mining and Adivasi livelihoods in the industrialisation of Eastern India'. In Nielsen, Kenneth Bo and Patrik Oskarsson (eds.). *Industrialising Rural India: Land, Policy and Resistance*: 85-106. London: Routledge.

Padel, Felix. 2016. 'Strengthening *Adivasis*' democratic rights over natural resources: Gram Sabhas and community management of resources in Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand'. In Mugdal, Vipul (ed.). *Climbing India From Below. Activism and democratic transformation*: 87-102. New Delhi: Routledge.

Padel, Felix and Samarendra Das. 2010. *Out of This Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Pal, C.G. 2019. 'Atrocities against *adivasis*: the implicit dimension of social exclusion'. In Rao, V. Srinivasa (ed.). *Adivasi Rights and Exclusion in India*: New York: 217-241. London: Routledge.

Panchbhai, S.C. 1982. 'The Jharkhand Movement Among the Santals'. In Singh, Kumar Suresh (ed.). *Tribal Movements in India, Vol. 2*: 31-52. New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

Parry, Jonathan. 1999a. 'Lords of labour: Working and shirking in Bhilai'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 33(1&2): 107-140.

Parry, Jonathan. 1999b. 'Two cheers for reservation: the satnamis and the steel plant'. In Parry, Jonathan and Ramachandra Guha. *Institutions and Inequalities: Essays in Honour of André Béteille*: 128-169. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Parry, Jonathan. 2000. "'The crisis of corruption" and the "idea of India": a worm's eye view'. In Pardo, Italo, (ed.). *The Morals of Legitimacy: Between Agency and System*: 27-56. Oxford: Berghahn Books, Oxford.

Parry, Jonathan. 2003. 'Nehru's dream and the village "waiting room": Long-distance labour migrants to a central Indian steel town'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 37 (1-2): 217-249.

Parry, Jonathan. 2005. 'Changing childhoods in industrial Chhattisgarh'. In Chopra, Radhika and Patricia Jeffery (eds.). *Educational Regimes in Contemporary India*: 276-98. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Parry, Jonathan. 2009. 'Sociological Marxism in Central India: Polanyi, Gramsci and the Case of the Unions'. In Hann, Chris and Keith Hart (eds.). *Market and Society: The Great Transformation Today*: 175-202. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parry, Jonathan. 2012. 'Suicide in a central Indian steel town'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 46(1,2): 145-80.

Parry, Jonathan. 2013a. 'Company and contract labour in a central Indian steel plant'. *Economy and Society* 42(3): 348-374.

Parry, Jonathan. 2013b. 'The "Embourgeoisement" of a "Proletarian Vanguard"?'. In Jodhka, Surinder S. (ed.). *Interrogating India's Modernity: Democracy, Identity and Citizenship*: 40-78. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Parry, Jonathan. 2019. *Classes of Labour*. New Delhi: Social Science Press.

- Parry, Jonathan and Christian Strümpell. 2008. 'On the Desecration of Nehru's "Temples": Bhilai and Rourkela Compared'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 43(19): 47-57.
- Patel, D.G. 1954. *The Indian Land Problem and Legislation*. Bombay. N. M. Tripathi.
- Patnaik, Prabhat. 2008. 'The accumulation process in the period of globalisation'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 43 (26-27): 108-113.
- Perelman, Michael. 2000. *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Perrault, Tom. 2013. 'Dispossession by accumulation? Mining, water and the nature of enclosure on the Bolivian Altiplano'. *Antipode* 45(5): 1050-1069.
- Picherit, David. 2012. 'Migrant Labourers' Struggles Between Village and Urban Migration Sites: Labour Standards, Rural Development and Politics in South India'. *Global Labour Journal* 3(1): 143-162.
- Picherit, David. 2014. 'Neither a dog nor a beggar: seasonal labour migration, development, and poverty in Andhra Pradesh'. In Gooptu, Nandini and Jonathan Parry (eds.). *Persistence of Poverty in India*: 261-290. New Delhi: Social Sciences Press.
- Picherit, David. 2018. 'Labour migration brokerage and Dalit politics in Andhra Pradesh: a Dalit fabric of labour circulation'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1528101 (accessed 13 February 2019).
- Piliavsky, Anastasia. 2014. 'India's demotic democracy and its "depravities" in the ethnographic longue durée'. In Piliavsky, Anastasia (ed.). *Patronage as Politics in South Asia*: 154-175. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Piliavsky, Anastasia and Tommaso Sbriccoli. 2016. 'The ethics of efficacy in North India's *goonda raj* (rule of toughs)'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22(2): 373-391.
- Prakash, Amit. 2001. *Jharkhand. Politics of Development and Identity*. New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited.
- Prasad, Archana. 2003. *Against Ecological Romanticism: Verrier Elwin and the Making of an Anti-modern Tribal Identity*. New Delhi: Three Essays Collective.
- Prasad, Archana. 2016. 'Adivasi Women, Agrarian Change and Forms of Labour in Neo-liberal India'. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 5(1): 20-49.
- Prasad, Rachita and Shuchi Srivastava. 2014. *The Economic Times*, 25 September. economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/coalgate-verdict-worst-fears-of-power-companies-come-true/articleshow/43375725.cms (accessed 30 May 2018).

- Prentice, Rebecca. 2015. *Thieving a Chance: Factory Work, Illicit Labor, and Neoliberal Subjectivities in Trinidad*. Boulder: University of Colorado Press.
- PWC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers). 2017. *Stop. Think... Act. Mine 2017*. www.pwc.com/gx/en/mining/assets/mine-2017-pwc.pdf (accessed 3 October 2017).
- Qayum, Seemin and Raka Ray. 2011. 'The Middle Classes at Home'. In Baviskar, Amita and Raka Ray (eds.). *Elite and Everyman: The Cultural Politics of the India Middle Classes*: 246-270. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Rabindra, Garada. 2015. 'Coal Mining Environment and Health Problems: A Case of MCL affected Households at Talcher, Odisha (India)'. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20(5): 89-98.
- Rajak, Dinah. 2011. *In Good Company: An Anatomy of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Rakshit, Avishek. 2018. 'Despite liberalisation, power demand to sustain Coal India's dominance'. *Business Standard*, 21 February. www.business-standard.com/article/companies/despite-liberalisation-power-demand-to-sustain-coal-india-s-dominance-118022100717_1.html (accessed 20 December 2018).
- Rao, Nitya. 2005. 'Displacement from Land: Case of Santhal Parganas'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(41): 4439-4442.
- Ray Chaudhury, Rakhi. 1996. *Gender and Labour in India: The Kamins of Eastern Coalmines, 1900-1940*. Calcutta: Minerva.
- Read, Margaret. 1931. *The Indian Peasant Uprooted. A Study of the Human Machine*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Rogaly, Ben. 1999. 'Dangerous liaisons? Seasonal migration and agrarian change in West Bengal'. In Rogaly, Ben, Barbara Harriss-White and Sugata Bose (eds.). *Sonar Bangla? Agricultural Growth and Agrarian Change in West Bengal and Bangladesh*: 357-380. New Delhi: Sage.
- Rogaly, Ben and Susan Thieme. 2012. 'Experiencing space-time: the stretched lifeworlds of migrant workers in India'. *Environment and Planning* 44(9): 2086-2100.
- Rogaly, Ben, Daniel Coppard, Kumar Rana, Abdur Rafique, Amrita Sengupta, and Jhuma Biswas. 2004. 'Seasonal migration, employer-worker interactions, and shifting ethnic identities in contemporary West Bengal'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 11: 281-310.
- Rothermund, Dietmar. 1976a. 'Introduction'. In Rothermund, Dietmar and D.C. Wadha (eds.). *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants*: xv-xxi. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Rothermund, Dietmar. 1976b. 'The Coalfield – An Enclave in a Backward Region'. In Rothermund, Dietmar and D.C. Wadha (eds.). *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants*: 1-20. New Delhi: Manohar.

- Rothermund, Dietmar. 1976c. 'Conclusions'. In Rothermund, Dietmar and D.C. Wadha (eds.). *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants*: 225-227. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Rothermund, Dietmar. 1976d. 'Tenancy Legislation for Chota Nagpur: The Emphasis on Executive Protection'. In Rothermund, Dietmar and D.C. Wadha (eds.). *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants*: 69-83. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Roy, Arundhati. 2011. *Broken Republic: Three Essays by Arundhati Roy*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Roy, Dayabati. 2007. 'Politics at the Margin: A Tale of Two Villages'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(32): 3323-3329.
- Roy, Sarat Chandra. 1912. *The Mundas and Their Country*. Ranchi: Catholic Press.
- Ruud, Aril Engelsen. 2001. 'Talking Dirty about Politics: A View from a Bengali Village'. In: Fuller, C.J. and Veronique Benei (eds.). *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*: 115-136. London: C. Hurst.
- Saintah, Palagummi. 1996. *Everybody Loves a Good Drought*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Sampat, Preeti. 2010. 'Special Economic Zones in India: Reconfiguring Displacement in a Neoliberal Order?'. *City and Society* 22(2): 166-182.
- Sampat, Preeti. 2015. 'The "Goan Impasse": Land Rights and Resistance to SEZs in Goa, India'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42(3-4): 765-790.
- Sanchez, Andrew. 2016. *Criminal Capital: Violence, Corruption and Class in Industrial India*. London: Routledge.
- Sanchez, Andrew and Christian Strümpel. 2014. 'Sons of Soil, Sons of Steel: Autochthony, Descent and the Class Concept in Industrial India'. *Modern Asian Studies* 48(5): 1276-1301.
- Sanyal, Kalyan. 2013. *Rethinking Capitalist Development: Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and Post-Colonial Capitalism*. London: Routledge.
- Scoones, Ian, Ruth Hall, Saturnino M. Borras Jr., Ben White and Wendy Wolford. 2011. Forum on Global Land Grabbing. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(2): 209-216.
- Scott, James. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seligman, Adam B., Robert P. Weller, Michael J. Puett and Bennet Simon. 2008. *Ritual and Its Consequences. An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Sen, Ruhit K. 2010. 'Vedanta Hymn: The Scion's Political Gambit'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 45(44-45): 13-15.
- Sen, Suchibrata. 1982. *The Santals of Jungle Mahals: An Agrarian History 1793-1861*. Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan.
- Sen, Suchibrata. 1997. *The Santals: Crises of Identity and Integration*. Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan.
- Senguta, Arjun, K.P. Kannan, and G. Raveendran. 2008. 'India's Common People: Who Are They, How Many Are They and How Do They Live?'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 43(11): 49-63.
- Sengupta, Nirmal. 1979. *Destitutes and Development: A Study of the Bauri Community in the Bokaro Region*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.
- Seth, M.A. 1940. *Labour in the Indian Coal Industry*. Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co.
- Shah, Alpa. 2004. *Understanding the State: An Anthropological Study of Rural Jharkhand, India*. PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Shah, Alpa. 2006. 'The labour of love: Seasonal migration from Jharkhand to the brick kilns of other states in India'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 40(1): 91-118.
- Shah, Alpa. 2009. 'Morality, Corruption and the State: Insights from Jharkhand, Eastern India'. *Journal of Development Studies* 45(3): 295-313.
- Shah, Alpa. 2010. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shah, Alpa. 2012. 'Eco-incarceration: "walking with the comrades"'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 47(21): 32-34.
- Shah, Alpa. 2018a. 'Tribe, Egalitarian Values, Autonomy and the State'. In Srivastava, Sanjay, Yasmeen Arif and Janaki Abraham (eds.). *Critical Themes in Indian Sociology*: 225-239. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Shah, Alpa. 2018b. *Nightmarch*. London: C. Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.
- Shah, A.M. 1968. 'Changes in the Indian Family: An Examination of Some Assumptions'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 3(1/2): 127-134.
- Shah, Ghanshyam. 1979. 'Tribal Identity and Class Differentiations: A Case Study of the Chaudhri Tribe'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 14(7/8): 459-464.
- Shah, Ghanshyam. 2004. *Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature*. London: Sage Publications.

Shah, Alpa and Barbara Harriss-White. 2011. 'Resurrecting Scholarship on Agrarian Transformations'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(39): 13-18.

Shah, Alpa and Jens Lerche. 2017. 'Tribe, Caste and Class – New Mechanisms of Exploitation and Oppression'. In Shah, Alpa, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Raj Jayaseelan, and Thakur Vikramaditya. *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in Twenty-First Century India*: 1-32. London: Pluto Press.

Shah, Alpa, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Raj Jayaseelan, and Thakur Vikramaditya. 2017. *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in 21st Century India*. London: Pluto Press.

Shah, G., P. Bose, G. Hargopal and K. Kannan. 1990. *Migrant labour in India*. Gujarat: Centre for Social Studies.

Sharma, Alakh N. 2005. 'Agrarian Relations and Socio-Economic Change in Bihar'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(10): 960-972.

Shever, Elana. 2012. *Resources for Reform: Oil and Neoliberalism in Argentina*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Shiva, Vandana, Shreya Jani, and Sulakshana M. Fontana. 2011. *The Great Indian Land Grab*. New Delhi: Navdanya.

Sifton, J.D. 1917. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Hazaribagh 1908-1915*. Bihar and Orissa: Department of Land Records and Surveys.

Simeon, Dilip. 1995. *The Politics of Labour Under Late Colonialism. Workers, Unions and the State in Chota Nagpur 1928-1939*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Simeon, Dilip. 1996. 'Coal and Colonialism: Production Relations in an Indian Coalfield, c. 1895-1947'. *International Review of Social History* 41: 83-108

Simeon, Dilip. 1999. 'Work and resistance in the Jharia coalfield'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 33(1-2): 43-75.

Simmons, C.P. 1976a. 'Indigenous Enterprise in the Indian Coal Mining Industry c.1835-1939'. *Indian Economic Social History Review* 13: 189-217.

Simmons, C.P. 1976b. 'Recruiting and Organizing an Industrial Labour Force in Colonial India: The Case of the Coal Mining Industry, c. 1880-1939'. *Economic Social History Review* 13: 455-485.

Singh, Kumar Suresh. 1966. *The Dust Storm and the Hanging Mist*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay.

Singh, Kumar Suresh 1982. 'Tribal Autonomy Movements in Chotanagpur'. In Singh, Kumar Suresh (ed.). *Tribal Movements in India, Vol. 2*: 1-30. New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

- Singh, Kumar Suresh. 1994. *The Scheduled Tribes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press in Collaboration with the Anthropological Survey of India.
- Singh, Shekhar. 2008. 'Towards a just resettlement and rehabilitation policy for India'. In Mathur, Hari Mohan (ed.). *India social development report 2008: Development and displacement*: 39-49. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sinha, S.P. 1990. *Santal Hul (Insurrection of Santhal), 1855-56. Exploits of Sidhu, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairab*. Ranchi: The Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute.
- Singh, Nigel. 2013. 'India's coal cycle wallahs: "People have no alternative but to steal from mines"'. *Guardian*, September 6. www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/06/india-coal-cycle-wallahs (accessed 12 November 2018).
- Sivaramakrishnan, Kalyanakrishnan. 1999. *Modern Forests: Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Sridharan, E. 2004. 'The growth and sectoral composition of India's middle classes: Their impact on the politics of economic liberalization'. *India Review* 3(4): 405-428.
- Srinivas, M.N. 1956. 'A Note on Sanskritisation and Westernisation'. *Far Eastern Quarterly* 15(4): 481-96.
- Srivastava, Ravi. 2005. 'India: internal migration and its links with poverty and development'. In International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (ed.). *Migration, Development and Poverty Reduction in Asia*: 111-126. Geneva: IOM.
- Standing, Guy. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Standing, Guy. 2014. 'Understanding the Precariat through Labour and Work'. *Development and Change* 45(5): 963-980.
- Steur, Luisa. 2015. 'Theorizing Thervoy: Subaltern Studies and Dalit Praxis in India's Land Wars'. In Nilsen, Alf Gunvald and Srila Roy (eds.). *New Subaltern Politics: Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*: 171-201. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Still, Clarinda. 2011. 'Spoiled Brides and the Fear of Education: Honour and Social Mobility among Dalits in South India'. *Modern Asian Studies* 45(5): 1119-1146.
- Still, Clarinda. 2014. *Dalit Women: Honour and Patriarchy in South India*. London: Routledge.
- Strümpell, Christian. 2014. 'The Politics of Dispossession in an Odishan Still Town'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 48(1): 45-72.

- Sundar, Nandini. 2001. 'Debating Dussehra and Reinterpreting Rebellion in Bastar District, Central India'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7(1): 19-35.
- Sundar, Nandini. 2007. *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar, 1954-2006*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Survival International*. 2016. 'India: Tribe set to resume David & Goliath battle with mining corporation'. www.survivalinternational.org/news/11156 (accessed 18 May 2018).
- Thukral, Enakshi Ganguly. 1996. 'Development, displacement and rehabilitation: Locating gender'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(24): 1500-1503.
- Thakur, Vikramaditya. 2017. 'Narmada Valley and Adjoining Planes, Maharashtra'. In: Shah, Alpa, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Raj Jayaseelan, and Thakur Vikramaditya. 2017. *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in 21st Century India*: 176-202. London: Pluto Press.
- Throat, Amit. 2010. 'Ethnicity, Caste and Religion: Implications for Poverty Outcomes'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 45(51): 47-53.
- Throat, Sukhdeo. 2017. 'Caste and Labour Market Discrimination: Discussion on Forms and Remedies'. In Kannan, K.P., Rajendra P. Mamgain, and Preet Rustagi (eds.). *Labour and Development: Essays in Honour of Professor T.S. Papola*: 67-80. New Delhi: Academic Foundation.
- Thorat, Sukhdeo and Katherine S. Newman (eds.). 2010. *Blocked by Caste: Economic Discrimination in Modern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Tillin, Louise. 2013. *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Times of India*. 2016. 'Protest in front of CCL Hazaribagh unit'. 26 June. timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/Protest-in-front-of-CCL-Hazaribagh-unit/articleshow/52922990.cms (accessed 16 January 2019).
- Touraine, Alain. 1985. 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements'. *Social Research* 52: 747-87.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World. On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Upadhyaya, Carol. 2005. 'Community Land Rights in Jharkhand'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 41(41): 4435-4438.
- Vijayabaskar, Ma. 2010. 'Saving Agricultural Labour from Agriculture: SEZs and Politics of Silence in Tamil Nadu'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 45(6): 36-43.
- Wachman, Richard. 2010. 'Indian miner Vedanta faces Avatar-style protest at its London AGM'. *The Guardian*, 25 July. www.theguardian.com/business/2010/jul/25/vedanta-faces-avatar-protest-agm (accessed 14 August 2018).

- Warden-Fernandez, Janeth. 2001. 'Indigenous Communities and Mineral Development'. MMSD (Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development) Working Paper 57. pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G00550.pdf (accessed 19 July 2019).
- Weber, Max. 1968 (1922). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Vol. 2. New York: Bedminster Press.
- Weiner, Myron. 1988 (1978). *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Welker, Marina. 2009. "'Corporate Security Begins in the Community': Mining, the Corporate Social Responsibility Industry, and Environmental Advocacy in Indonesia'. *Cultural Anthropology* 24(1):142-179.
- Welker, Marina. 2012. 'The Green Revolution's Ghost: Unruly Subjects of Participatory Development in Rural Indonesia'. *American Ethnologist* 39(2): 389-406.
- Welker, Marina. 2014. *Enacting the Corporation: An American Mining Firm in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weszkalyns, Gisa. 2008. 'Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe'. *Review of African Political Economy* 35(117): 473-482.
- Weszkalyns, Gisa. 2016. 'A doubtful hope: resource affect in a future oil economy'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22(1): 127-146.
- Woodman, Jo. 2010. 'India: tribal mining protests continue'. *The Guardian*, 24 February. www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/24/india-vedantaresources (accessed 18 May 2018).
- Woodman, Jo. 2014. 'India's rejection of Vedanta's bauxite mine is a victory for tribal rights'. *The Guardian*, 14 January. www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/jan/14/india-rejection-vedanta-mine-victory-tribal-rights (accessed 18 May 2018).
- World Bank. 2007. *Jharkhand. Addressing the Challenges of Inclusive Development*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Xar, P., A.K. Banerjee and K.N. Mukherjee. 1962. 'Interim Report on West Bokaro Coalfield, Bihar'.
- Xaxa, Virginius. 2011. 'The Status of Tribal Children in India: A historical perspective'. Institute for Human Development (IHD), IHD-UNICEF Working Paper Series, Working Paper 7. www.ihdindia.org/IHD-Unicefwp-PDF/IHD-UNICEF%20WP%207%20virginius_xaxa.pdf (accessed 7 July 2019).
- Zalik, Anna. 2004. 'The Niger delta: "petro violence" and "partnership development"'. *Review of African Political Economy* 31:101: 401-424.

Zamchia, Phillian. 2019. 'Mining, Capital and Dispossession in Limpopo, South Africa'. Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape, Working Paper 56. www.africaportal.org/documents/18839/Working_paper_56_-_Phillan_Zamchiya.pdf (accessed 12 July 2019).