

India at war with itself

The Naxalite movement in India: the biggest internal security threat or a call for an alternative development paradigm?



Lisa de Haan, 3629236

Utrecht University

August 12th 2011

A thesis submitted to the Board of Examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master in Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. G. Frerks

Date of submission: August 12th 2011

Programme trajectory followed: Research and thesis writing only (30 ECTS)

Word count: 23.307

Acknowledgements

Firstly I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Georg Frerks, for providing me with such personal and regular feedback, during the fieldwork as well as during the writing process. Without his enthusiasm and ability to provide me with essential contacts I wouldn't have been able to come as close to this subject as I have been. Secondly, I want to thank professor Anuradha Chenoy, for her unlimited efforts to create a setting in which this research has been made possible, in Delhi as well as in Orissa. Thirdly, I want to thank Jur the Haan, my father, for helping me to organize my thoughts en for his presence in India, when India became too hard on me.

Contents

1. Introduction: The Naxalite movement in India: the 'biggest internal security threat'
 - 1.1 Problem statement
2. Research problem and introduction to the research design
 - 2.1 Notes on the fieldwork locations and reflection on the research
 - 2.2 Research method and justification of the selected respondents
 - 2.3 Outline of the thesis and research questions
 - 2.3 Limitations with regards to generalizations
3. Naxalism and mobilization in a historical perspective: Naxalbari and beyond
 - 3.1 Revolutionary theories of violence: Maoism and its origins
 - 3.2 Left wing extremism in India: not a new phenomenon
 - 3.3 Phases of Naxalism: organization, fragmentation and reconsolidation
 - 3.4 Non violent mobilization and social movements in India
 - 3.5 Perspectives on the present movement
4. Structural violence and its relation to the Naxalite conflict
 - 4.1 Poverty: appearances and causality
 - 4.2 Relative deprivations and the centre – periphery relation
 - 4.3 Governance, corruption and implementation
 - 4.4 Government repression
 - 4.5 Government repression
5. Theoretical approaches to conflict: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes
 - 5.1 Social movements and political opportunities
 - 5.2 Mobilizing structures and violence
 - 5.3 Framing processes and collective action
 - 5.4 Securitization theory applied to the Naxalite movement
6. The Naxalite movement in discourses
 - 6.1 Discourse analysis and its theoretical implications
 - 6.2 Dominant discourses on the Naxalite conflict: polarization and incompatible views
 - 6.3 Position of tribal people in the general discourse
 - 6.4 Development: a contested concept
 - 6.5 Local manifestations of the Naxalite conflict
 - 6.5.1 Democracy at its worst: from a shooting incident to tribal welfare

6.5.2 Naxalites making demands

7. Conclusions

7.1 Personal considerations

1. The Naxalite movement in India: the 'biggest internal security threat'

Low intensity conflict between several left wing armed organizations and the Indian state forces has been going on for more than four decades, in different Indian states with various intensity. Although there are many groups who base their existence and ideology on Marxist principles, 'Naxalites' has become the generic name for Maoist revolutionaries in India. The term 'Naxalite' derives from a small village, Naxalbari, where an armed peasant uprising in 1967 marked the beginning of the Maoist movement in India. Since India's independence in 1947, the state has faced many insurgencies, including those in Kashmir and the Northeast states Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram. Moreover, scholars and security analysts tend to emphasize on the conflict in Kashmir, as it seems more "appealing" to many. The conflict in Kashmir has caused tensions since the Partition in 1947, when Kashmir became part of India while having a Muslim majority. Both India and Pakistan are nuclear weapon states and the issue of Kashmir has only worsened the relation between the archenemies.

Whereas the mentioned conflicts are based on self-determination aspirations, the Naxalite movement calls for a total transformation of the political system. They reject parliamentary democracy and attempt to overthrow the state, as to create a new social order ending the exploitation of marginalized and vulnerable communities. While terrorism and more specifically radical Islamic terrorism dominated the security assessments in India, the Naxalites expanded their presence to a widespread territory and build up their military capacities. Ever since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh labelled the Naxalites as "the single biggest security challenge ever faced by the country" in a speech addressed at the Chief Ministers of the state in 2006, the Maoist movement has come to the fore in debates on internal security and related issues of development. The statement of Manmohan Singh had major impact, as before it was merely considered a development issue. Although assessments differ on the nature, scope, causes and intentions of the Naxalites, the number of violent incidents and casualties steadily increased over the last decade. At the meeting of the Central Coordination Committee of Naxalite-affected states in 2003, the then Home Secretary disclosed that a total of 55 districts in 9 states were affected by Naxalite activity and violence of a total 602 districts in the country. In 2004 a press statement on a meeting of the Chief Ministers of Naxalite-affected States, indicated that this number had gone up to as many as 156 districts in 13 States. By 2009, the present Home Minister Chidambaram claimed that 223 districts across 20 states were the affected by Maoist activities.

Although people tend to focus on the violence aspect, the Naxalite movement is also engaged in other activities. For example, people have declared that they facilitated local governance structures as well as administering justice in case of local disputes, by installing so-called "people's courts". The present "success" of the movement is partly due to the realignment of two prominent Maoist factions in 2004. After decades of fragmentation and splits over ideological differences, the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre of India formed the Communist Party of India (Maoists), henceforth the CPI-Maoist. From its originating onwards, the CPI- (Maoist) has been involved in numerous incidents in which they mainly opposed the police. Initially, the Naxalites were viewed as an insignificant movement that had lost its appeal. This view had been altered in recent years as more violent attacks occurred, not only in the remote forested areas but also increasingly closer to urban areas. A decisive incident took place in April

2010, when 76 central reserve police forces were ambushed and killed by Naxalites in Dantewada district, state of Chhattisgarh. The movement has also established so-called “liberated zones”, in accordance with the Maoist ideology, in distant and remote forested areas. They are mainly active in what is usually called the ‘Red corridor’, running from Bihar in the North, through Jharkhand, West-Bengal, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, to Andhra Pradesh in the South of India.



Official estimates indicate that the conflict has claimed the lives of more than ten thousand civilians and security forces personnel combined since 2005. In 2009 the government of Manmohan Singh banned the Maoist Party and all its associated organizations under the Unlawful Activities Act. The ban was imposed relatively late because left wing parties in the government obstructed it. After the 2009 elections, Prime Minister Singh formed a government without these parties. With this ban, all organizations affiliated with the CPI- (Maoist), became labelled as ‘terrorist’ organizations. The fact that there are also organizations based on the Maoist ideology that have not resorted to violence, does not signify that the Naxalites do not view armed challenge as the only serious alternative to the state. Deriving from their written statements and their Constitution it is safe to state that they view violence as a legitimate means to obtain state power and establish a people’s democracy. For example Article 4 of the CPI-Maoist Constitution reads: “the immediate aim of the party is to accomplish the New Democratic Revolution in India by overthrowing imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism only through the Protracted People’s War and establishing the people’s democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat”. Although this points to the justification of violent means to achieve this end, most other public announcements have far more focused on socio – economic issues created by the ills of the system. In an written article the

former spokesman of the CPI- (Maoist) states: "The contemporary Indian economy is unduly influenced by the activities of carpetbaggers, a ruthless mafia, rapacious mining interests and giant speculators, all linked to the politics of criminality. The semi-colonial, semi-feudal order reproduces social polarization – a growing rich and a vast number of hangers-on, and an increasing mass of the impoverished" (Azad 2006: 4381). Within the large territory the "Red Corridor" covers, there are differences in the intensity of the presence of the movement and the numbers of incidents in which they are involved, therefore government institutions and reports often make a distinction between "highly affected", "moderately affected" and "marginally affected" districts. According to the Indian government, there are no armed conflicts. Instead, they label it "disturbed areas", "infected areas", "insurgency infested", or more plainly put, "law and order problems". Clearly, the state is unwilling to define the Naxalite conflict officially as an "armed conflict". Not only because it would mean that certain international humanitarian laws must be adhered, but also because it could lead the impression that India is not in control over its internal affairs.

1.1 Problem statement

The above facts indicate that Naxalism and its links with development issues are of great relevance in contemporary India. It is interesting to review this revolt in the broader themes of modernization, industrialization and development. Over time, many industrializing and developing countries have faced popular uprisings and rebellions that challenged the state ideology or its paradigm of development. What makes India and the Naxalite conflict a particular interesting case study is firstly that the conflict takes place in what is often called 'the biggest democracy in the world'. Even though Indian democracy is often criticized, one cannot dismiss the fact that there are regular, more or less fair elections, freedom of press and extensive possibilities to organize, unlike most countries in the region. Secondly, India is regarded as a 'strong' state, with extensive experience with internal insurgency movements. Thirdly, it is no exaggeration to state that India is a highly diverse and its cultural, religious and linguistic diversities have been source to many instances of civil strife and manifestations of violence. Lastly, the level of economic inequality is unparalleled. The diversity and inequality has never led to a serious challenge to the state as a whole or to its democratic character. The fact that the strong Indian state has not managed to root out the Naxalites in over four decades and the seeming correlation with issues of development and governance make this a particular interesting case study. The general interpretation that has come to the fore in recent years is that the Naxalites have become the biggest adversaries of the idea of a "New India", paralleled and aided by a collapse or absence of lower-level governance in vast areas of the country.

2. Research problem and introduction to the research design

The topic of this thesis is the Naxalite movement in India. As elaborated on in the introduction, the movement has gained influence in vast areas of the country and numbers of incidents and casualties have gone up steadily. As research on terrorism and violence in India mostly concentrates on Islamic terrorism or communal violence, the Naxalite movement is often overlooked, especially in security assessments outside India. Over time, scholars have mainly focused on the history of the Naxalite movement and on the numerous events that involved violence, without compromising the broader context or implications of the conflict. As a result literature is statistical and superficial and what is lacking is a profound account on people's motivations to join the movement and participate in its violent practices. A Jha rightly notes, 'there are hardly any reliable empirical studies to measure the level of support or to weigh the reasons for the common people to join the movement' (Jha 2008: 74).

In the India, the gravity of the situation is recognized but there is neither agreement on the causes of the expansion nor on the preferred policies to counter it. The preliminary literature research led to the conclusion that the explanations on the causes of this conflict are far from unequivocal. Broadly speaking, from the literature review derived three main perspectives on the Naxalite issue can be distinguished. In short, the first is the security or 'law and order' perspective, which equates Naxalites with terrorists. This perspective is dominant within the police and the government institutions. The second perspective is often referred to as the 'root causes' perspective, which views poverty and the lack of primary services as main cause of the movement's existence and its increasing support base. The third and this is the perspective the Naxalite movement holds, views the movement as a result of structural violence. These described perspectives are not set in stone and between politicians, police officials, academics and activists, there is neither agreement on the nature and scope of the problem, or on what the proposed solution should look like. Furthermore, politics in India is prone to inciting ad hoc statements as to win popular support. For political parties the violent campaign launched by the Naxalites is also a political opportunity in the turbulent political structure, as a 'hardliner' position on topics of security and insurgency is often rewarded in election time. As the Naxalite issue can be regarded as entirely politicized it is not unexpected that assessments the nature and scope of the problem differ, depending on who makes them and if there is any political gain or loss involved.

The study of conflicts ultimately aims to provide explanations on why conflicts occur, and to recognize conditions that can lead to conflict. Different theoretical approaches have been developed to identify causes for conflict, in which different aspects are emphasised. For example, some have pointed to the importance of identity in conflict, others have stressed the opportunities for private gain in a conflict setting. Theoretical concepts help us to put conflicts in a broader perspective, they can be viewed as "tools" to analyse and give meaning to the phenomena that are the object of study. Before fieldwork was conducted, a research proposal was designed to give direction and meaning to the fieldwork. The focus of this proposal was whether the broader explanations on the causes of the conflict mentioned above would correspond with how people on a local level, where the Naxalites are of significant presence perceived the conflict.

2.1 Notes on the fieldwork locations and reflection on the research

In order to gain understanding in the causes of this conflict and the way people perceive it, I decided to conduct fieldwork in Delhi as well as in one of the states where the Naxalites have gained influence over the last years, the state of Orissa. The choice of Delhi as a research location due to the fact that it is the government capital and respondents as academics, security analysts and government officials are easy accessible. In Delhi, the main focus of data collection was information on the general discourses on the Naxalite conflict. The state of Orissa was selected for fieldwork for various reasons: firstly it is one of the poorest regions with a large tribal population. Secondly it is one of the regions where the presence of natural resources has led to the construction of numerous Memorandums of Understanding, contracts between the government and large industrial companies over land and the extraction of the natural resources. As a result many villagers have been displaced without receiving any compensation. The building of large dams and other kinds of water reservoirs is also a common practice in Orissa, resulting in droughts elsewhere. Thirdly, in Orissa Naxalite activity is a relatively new phenomenon. Unlike the states of Andhra Pradesh and West-Bengal, often viewed as the cradle of Naxalism, Orissa does not have a history of left wing extremism. The emerging of the Naxalite movement in Orissa paralleled the increasing industrialization, which makes this state an interesting case study.



In Orissa interviews were conducted firstly in the capital Bhubaneswar, secondly in the University City Sambalpur, and lastly in the 'affected' districts Koraput and Malkangiri in the south of the state. In Orissa, the respondents were generally human rights activists, local police officers, NGO workers and local government representatives. In Orissa, I became acquainted with what I now call the "real India". Whereas Delhi has certain grandeur, the colonial history still clearly visible in the architecture and the construction of the city, the "real India" is far from Delhi, not only in distance but also in the mindsets of the people. Women cutting stones with their hands and carrying immense loads of them uphill in extreme heat; cardboard houses which would not survive the slightest breeze. In Delhi, more fortunate people are able to live their daily lives without having to deal with the less fortunate, in Orissa there is no way living

around the poor conditions as it seems to be everywhere, except for the view fortunate like high police officers. Although I have not felt endangered at all, I became to understand why people were surprised to see a young, female researcher going to this state, especially the districts in the South, as it is not very common even for Indian researchers to visit those kind of remote districts. In terms of research, it became increasingly difficult firstly because people often do not speak English or Hindi and secondly because people are more reluctant to talk about the subject. In Koraput district, I visited three tribal villages where an interpreter was required. As said before it is not very common for foreigners to visit villages in that region and all the three times many people joined the conversation, making it more like a group discussion. The last research technique applied for this thesis is the use of focus groups. Two focus groups are held, the first in Sambalpur where I met with approximately twelve journalists who shared their visions and information with me. Secondly in Koraput, the Swaminathan foundation provided me with assistance and an interpreter to talk with a group of twenty tribal young boys, who received education on agriculture by this foundation. Although this was a great opportunity to collect exclusive data, most of the boys were very shy and the information extracted was not that valuable in terms of their opinion and experiences in living in a Naxalite affected area. Still, they told me about their lives, their struggles and how they hoped to help provide food for their families after their education. I came to know that the Naxalites in general is a topic people eschew to talk about. Anxiety that whatever is said will be known by the police or by the Naxalites leads to a complete silence on the side of local people that just happen to live in those areas. Even local administrators, fearing to lose the favour of higher officials, would deny that Naxalites ever come to their districts, which is striking as those districts are regarded as Naxalite strongholds. Although this impeded answering questions related to local perceptions, I still acquired unique insight in the lives of the rural poor and how they perceive issues of development and corruption. The fieldwork in Orissa has enabled me not only to describe the broader discourses on the issue, but also to relate this to a local context. As stated, it quickly became clear that local perceptions on the impact of the movement were hard to examine. Although this experience can also be regarded as valuable data, it was unexpected and therefore the research design had to be modified. During the fieldwork I became increasingly fascinated by the way people talked, and thereby interpreted, the conflict.

An important aspect of doing research is positioning oneself in relation to the phenomenon that is the subject of research. For example, research for a policy advice is completely different from fact-finding research, and the researcher should be aware of the purpose of the research conducted as to define the right position or angle through which a phenomenon is analyzed. The main position I defined for myself was the position of observer. As the subject is highly politicized, being a neutral 'outsider' is of great value. Arising from this, the focus of this thesis is not which party is "right" or "wrong" but merely to identify the contributing factors to this conflict from a neutral perspective, and to assess whether the existing theories on conflict adequately enable us to understand conflicts like these. The aim of this thesis is then to give a profound overview of the causes of this conflict and to assess whether existing theories designed to understand conflict, are sufficiently applicable to this case study.

2.2 Research method and justification of the selected respondents

Deriving from the above, this research is based on qualitative methods and data with interviewing as main research activity. In total, over forty interviews are conducted with actors from various backgrounds and a different relation to the conflict. As stated before, several significant actors within the conflict were distinguished to study their position and arguments. Evidently, the Naxalite movement itself is the most important actor of analysis, as they started a mobilizing campaign against the state. Regrettably in terms of research options, the closed, guerrilla-like nature of the movement makes it almost impossible to gather original data from individuals inside it. Although this is a serious constraint and therefore should not be taken lightly, it should not lead to refraining from researching this movement and its impact, or other less approachable movements for that matter. Information on motivations to join the movement and individual intentions while being part of the movement will necessarily be based on secondary sources. . Three remarks must be made here concerned the use of police officers as a primary source of information. First, the distinction between retired and not-retired police officers is significant as retired police officers can speak more freely about issues in which the government is involved. Retired police officers could therefore be more critical of the government and its policies to contain the Naxalite issue. Secondly it occurred that getting in contact with police high-ranking police officers was easier than expected, in fact, police officers are disproportionally represented in this research because of their accessibility. Roughly one third of all the interviews are conducted with police officers. Lastly, a remark on the recruiting system of the Indian Police Service must be made. Every year thousands of students and professionals take part in a nationally organized exam to become an Indian police officer or to work for other government bodies, and only the top ten percent gets selected. What is relevant about this system is that the police officers interviewed have been educated at the best universities of India. As a result they are very well spoken and know very well how to expound their arguments. They are perfectly aware of prejudices against the police and actively try to refute those prejudices in their favour. In spite of this, the police forces play an important part in countering the movement and are often heavily criticized for their crudeness and abusive behaviour, especially towards the tribal population. Therefore, special attention must be given to this group of respondents in order to prevent the occurrence of any prejudices or biases.

Lastly, in India it became clear that the terms “Naxalite” and “Maoist” are used interchangeably. For example articles and newspapers often refer to the “Maoists” while academics on the other hand, tend to use the term ‘Naxalites’ or ‘Naxalite movement’, especially in their written accounts. For the sake of clarity this thesis will refer to the term ‘Naxalite movement’, and not to ‘Maoists’ or ‘Maoist movement’. The reasoning for this is that although the movement is based on Maoism, it is the Indian context that makes this conflict an interesting and appealing topic. In addition, the term ‘movement’ is selected, and not for example ‘rebellion’ or ‘insurgency’. Although these terms are also used, particularly ‘insurgency’ is common in the security sector, it is argued that the Naxalites operate within a far broader framework, which includes socio-economic factors, than the term ‘insurgency’ covers.

2.3 Outline of the thesis and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to put the Naxalite movement in a wider context and to assess whether the eminent approaches provide us with sufficient concepts to further the understanding of this conflict.

Therefore, local information is utilized within a broader conceptual framework to develop knowledge on this conflict in specific but also to test available theories on this subject in general. In order to achieve this, the historical context needs to be assessed to further the understanding on the political and social context in which the movement originated. Hereafter, three theoretical perspectives will be applied explain this conflict. Firstly the conflict will be reviewed through the perspective of structural violence. As many aspects of Indian society can be regarded as structural violence, this chapter will also provide us with the socio-economic background and context, and its influence on this conflict. Secondly, a more theoretical approach to understand this conflict will be reviewed, in which the emphasis lies on social movement theory, mobilization and framing processes. The third approach is closely related to the second, as lastly the conflict will be reviewed through a discursive analysis. The discursive analysis does justice to the large number of interviews and as stated before, the way people talk about a phenomenon and the words they use herewith provides valuable information, which will be employed and signified in this thesis. These theoretical approaches and their significance will be assessed by applying them to the conflict in general, and to the local context in the affected districts.

The main question this thesis poses than is:

What explanations for the Naxalite conflict derive from the perspectives of structural violence, theoretical approaches to conflict and discursive analysis, and how do these explanations relate to the local manifestations of the conflict?

To order the obtained knowledge, the following issues will be elaborated on throughout this thesis:

- I. What is the historical context in which the movement operates and how does the present movement relates to this historical context?
- II. What function has the civil society in India and how can this movement be positioned in this civil society?
- III. What structural contributing factors to the conflict can be distinguished and how are they employed by the Naxalite movement to gain support?
- IV. What theoretical approaches to conflict can be distinguished applicable to this conflict and how can they be applied to the Naxalite movement?
- V. What insights on the causes of this conflict can be derived by a discursive analysis and how can it be applied to the Naxalite movement?

Throughout the thesis, the data collected will be associated with the theoretical notions provided by the three approaches explaining this conflict. This thesis will conclude with assessing the usefulness of the perspectives to explain this conflict by comparing the derived insights with the data collected at the local level.

2.4 Limitations with regards to generalizations

An important part of the construction of social research is the acknowledgement and description of limitations. Constraints and limitations alike are an inevitable part of social research. By the assignment of

limitations a researcher is forced to justify certain choices, which will eventually increase the reliability and validity of the research. A fundamental assessment, which cannot be overemphasized, is that India is highly diverse. Although this makes India an unique case study it also lead to concluding that reality, in the context of discourses, perceptions and opinions on the Naxalite conflict and the position of the state herein, can be very dissimilar depending on what region is location of the research. In this thesis all information on local reality and circumstances is based on information collected in the earlier mentioned sites in Orissa. If secondary sources concerning other districts are employed to clarify or stress an argument, it will be mentioned as such. It should be clear that the collected data is only valid for the particular area where the research takes place. The main issue that needs to be addressed is the possibilities to make generalizations about an issue that is spread over a wide territory and has been manifest for over four decades. As Amartya Sen noted, quoting the Cambridge economist Joan Robinson: "The frustrating thing about India, is that whatever you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true", and therefore generalizations must be made with care. A more practical concern is the issue of trust as a limiting factor. The issue is highly politicized and people are afraid to contribute to research conducted by a foreign researcher because they do not know if the researcher is aligned to any party to the conflict and they fear repercussions.

3. Naxalism and mobilization in a historical perspective: Naxalbari and beyond

Although it is admitted that generalizations are difficult to make about a country like India, many features are also, in a sense, unique to India. In order to provide the contextual knowledge necessary to understand the matter and the questions posed in this thesis, the following chapter aims to outline the relevant contextual aspects that are not the focus of this thesis but are nevertheless indispensable for understanding the complexity of this conflict. First, the ideological basis of the Naxalite movement will be discussed and revisited. Their ideology and its current function is a recurrent theme in the broader debate on the causes of the conflict. Secondly, the historical context of the movement and the timeframe in which it originated will be explained. It is argued that the Naxalites have successfully adjusted itself to changing circumstances and grievances. Thirdly, the issue of non-violent mobilization within the civil society context will be assessed, as most resistance and other social movements in India are non – violent. Fourthly, it will be explained why tribal are the main support base of the movement and what impact this has on the policy options. Lastly, the main perspectives on the present movement will be shortly discussed, hereby bridging the contextual analysis with the theoretical analysis.

3.1 Revolutionary theories of violence: Maoism and its origins

Both the state as well the Naxalite movement itself often refer to the ideology, the first to its justification of violence and the second to its aim to free the masses from the unequal, feudal system. There is no doubt that the individuals who join the movement are not persuaded by the appeal of Maoism. In all interviews, being held with academics, police officers or government officials this was the general conclusion on the present function of the Maoist ideology. It is the ideological interpretation of local grievances that is a strategy that has increasingly become evident in recent years. An important remark here is that the leaders and ideologues of the initial Naxalite movement often were well-educated people from well to do families. This remains a common feature as most of the current movements leaders and ideologues are also from outside the “Red corridor” and have enjoyed higher education in the cities.

The most eminent revolutionary theories of violence were constructed by Marx, Lenin and lastly by Mao Zedong. Marxism has been the inspiration for numerous groups propagating armed revolt. Marxism is based on the principle that revolution is inevitable because of the structure of the social system. This revolution is violent, as the working class has no other option in the capitalist system, which is an instrument of violence itself. In the academic debate there is no agreement on the locus of violence in Marxism and this debate is still ongoing. Lenin further developed Marx’ rules of revolution and he also identified violence as an inherent aspect to the class struggle. The final ideologue discussed here, Mao Zedong, is most relevant for this thesis as the Naxalite movement is based on his ideology. Mao not only combined Marxism and Leninism, but also made a comprehensive study of Chinese society. He put the peasantry at the forefront of his revolutionary formula and made ‘land reforms’ the central issue, on which the capture of state power was premised (Kujur 2011: 11). On violence Mao stated that: ‘We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war, but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun’ (Mao 1972: 225).

Although Daniel Bell declared the end of ideology already in 1960 in his groundbreaking book 'The end of Ideology: on the exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties', Maoism has unquestionably proved to be more tenacious. On the causes of this persistence of Maoism, DeBlicek distinguishes three compelling reasons for Maoism's existence and persistence in South Asia: firstly, it employs tactically effective methods, secondly, it springs from political organizations that are prone to extremist schisms, and lastly, it targets populations that have not tasted the fruits of political and economic development (DeBlicek 2006: 2). However, political violence does not derive directly from the presence of ideologies that justify violence. As Snow and Byrd argue, 'the use of the concept ideology is often encumbered by two misguided tendencies: the first is to view ideology in a homogenized, monochromatic matter; the second is to conceptualize it as a tightly coupled, inelastic set of values, beliefs and ideas' (Snow and Byrd 2007: 132). These tendencies are clearly visible within the general discourse propagated by the proponents of a 'law and order' approach to the problem. On numerous accounts security analysts and policemen referred to the ideology as inherently violent and herewith creating justification to not directly speak or negotiate with the movement. Additionally Snow and Byrd conclude that this is not because ideology is irrelevant, but because it is seldom automatically clear which aspects or strands of an ideology best apply to and inform the flow of events and various categories of actors or political geographies that might be relevant to any particular movement in a manner that attends to the problems of mobilization (Snow and Byrd 2007: 133). The issue of the use of ideology by both the state as the Naxalite movement will be further elaborated on in the discursive analysis. What can be stated with relation to the support base is that almost all interviewees agree that the lower level constituents are hardly aware of the significance of Maoism. They are mobilized on local grievances before they are educated on the ideological basis.

3.2 Left wing extremism in India: not a new phenomenon

The growing concern over the Naxalites as a security threat does not signify that the movement and its aim to construct a new social and political order is a new or recent phenomenon. As noted in the introduction, the movement has its origins in the peasant uprisings of 1967, also baptized the "Spring Thunder" by the Chinese leader Mao Zedong (Sing 1995: 9). As it is often the case with left wing movements in industrializing or developing countries, issues over land, or more specifically the unequal distribution of land, provoked the "Spring Thunder" peasant uprising in Naxalbari, West-Bengal. The leadership of the early movement derived from the radical elements within the existing Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M). This political party abandoned the armed struggle and complied with the parliamentary path. The radical elements rejected parliamentary democracy and strongly opposed the CPI-M joining the West-Bengal government and formed a separate more radical movement. Hereafter, many internal divisions over ideological differences followed and often groups were not only challenging the state, but also each other.

Many scholars have reconstructed the early phase of revolt and have tried to identify the specific causes of this outbreak to construct patterns and conditions for revolutionary violence in other areas of India. Although this revolution was short-lived due effective state repression, it has left its marks on the present movement. In statements by Naxalites often is referred to the early stages of the revolutions and the

leaders are viewed as martyrs. What is often overlooked in the literature is the context in which the early movement developments took place. The current emphasis on '1967' as the starting point of the Naxalite issue ignores the fact that there had been peasant uprisings and other forms of left oriented social unrest before 1967. As Verghese points out: the 150 years before Independence had also witnessed a series of tribal and peasant revolts asserting the rights of these oppressed classes to land, livelihoods and a life of dignity (Verghese 2008: 69). With the formation of the Indian Constitution, more opportunities were created for the lowest castes and tribal peoples to defend their newly obtained rights, as defined in this Constitution. It contained for example laws on issues like landownership, bonded labour and political participation. The caste system was abolished legally, although in practice it perseveres until today. These developments threatened the existing elite's interest and culminated in numerous violent incidents between landless peasants and the landowning elite all over India. To comply with its long-standing commitment to vest land with the tiller of the soil, the Congress Party brought an end to Zamindar and other intermediary rights to tax collection of the peasantry and legislated tenure and other agrarian reforms, including land ceilings. Landed interests and the feudal order fought back with tenacity and guile and the ruling political class and administration, while willing to bark, appeared unwilling to bite (Verghese 2008: 72). Although there had been many forms of revolt and social unrest before independence, the period after 1947 forms the breeding ground in which movements like the Naxalite movement could arise.

Since independence, the central government has labelled many rebellions and uprisings over land reforms or other social issues as "left wing extremist", or as "Maoist". By labelling different kinds of unrest as left wing extremist or Maoist, the Indian state has enabled itself to increasingly frame socio – economic issues as security issues, and thereby creating space for tougher measures to deal with civil unrest. The creation of a certain "rights discourse" through the Constitution contributed to the proliferation of this social upheaval, which was manifested all over India in different circumstances and performances, both violent and non-violent. It is often forgotten how radical the Indian constitution was in those days (after independence), especially in light of the limited reach of democracy elsewhere in the world (Dreze and Sen 2002: 7). Although the Constitution is presently considered as radical, the chairman of Constituent Assembly's Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar, himself born in a lower caste family, concluded his work with a often quoted warning, reading: "On the 26th January, we are going to enter into a life of contradiction In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality" (Government of Maharashtra 1994: 1216).

3.3 Phases of Naxalism: organization, fragmentation and reconsolidation

As explained earlier, there is a focus on the history and origins of the movement in the contemporary literature on the Naxalites. Most of the literature divides the history of the Naxalite movement in India into three phases, generally known as the organizational, fragmentary and the reconsolidation phase. In the first phase lasting from 1967 until 1972, the organizational phase or simply Naxalite phase, the main objective was 'land to the tiller'. The strategy was the elimination of the feudal system in the Indian countryside to free the poor peasants from the clutches of the oppressive landlords and replace the old

system with a Communist society that would implement land reforms (Nayak 2011: 56). The issue of land reforms has been a source of conflict throughout India since its independence. The Constitution provided for a “land ceiling” act, which states that there is a maximum to land ownership, but the state governments rarely implement this act. Ironically the only state that has successfully implemented the land ceiling laws is the conflict-ridden state of Jammu and Kashmir.

State repression, internal divisions, and the death of the ideologue Charu Mazumdar caused the decline of the movement in 1972. The second phase, lasting from 1972 until 1991, was characterized by internal violent struggles and therefore also called the fragmentary period. Although there had been internal struggles over the to follow ideological line before, this period signified a culmination of violence between different left wing oriented groups. Additionally, one of the movement’s flaws was its failure to follow the strategic prescriptions of Maoism regarding rural based warfare: it failed to create sustainable rural bases and was fighting with state security forces before it had time to consolidate its control of the countryside (DeBlicke 2006: 8). The revival of the movement from 1991 onwards is partly due to the inclusion of other issues in its discourse. After the economic reforms from 1991 and the corresponding rapid industrialization, tribal rights and forest issues were addressed by the Naxalite movement, which led to increasing support base. The ‘land to the tiller’ discourse had become insufficient to mobilize the masses but the issues deriving from industrialization and direct foreign investments in forest areas proved to be more successful. In the following years, issues on governance, upper caste attacks on dalits, the lowest caste and corruption were also incorporated, thereby responding to dissatisfaction and frustration among large groups of Indian society. It could be stated that industrialization initiated what is now regarded as the reconsolidation period, which lasts until today. The last decade, displacements have become an additional source, as economic activity increasingly dispels people from their lands and villages. As Lama clarifies, ‘development projects, particularly dams, have always generated serious controversy in India as they have tended to be a major source of displacement related conflicts. The fact that development projects are usually located in remote villages, hills and forests means that those displaced tend to be indigenous people. Here displacement has meant a loss of livelihood, habitat and assets, social disruption and disorder and severance from an eco-system which had sustained them’ (Lama 2000: 25).

3.4 Non violent mobilization and social movements in India

The relevance of these notions on firstly the historical account and secondly on the civil society in India lie in their resonance on the movement today. In a historical sense, the movement has changed its discourse as to include other grievances and let go off the pure Maoist ideology, as then they would need to mobilize the peasantry. On the other hand, one of the main issues is that the Maoist movement has this significant appeal to people while there are certainly other ways and possibilities to express grievances a non-violent way. The presence of a thriving civil society has apparently not the effect that people feel like their issues and grievances are addressed sufficiently, or at least, the people who join the movement obviously do not. This is reflected in what Kujur argues, namely that: ‘it is true that democracy in India has given voice to the peripherals. What is ironical is its failure to create an adequate space in which ‘a sense of public purpose’ can be articulated’ (Kujur 2008).

India is home to a thriving civil society in which social movements have gained significant influence. A significant part of the people interviewed for this thesis are 'activists' for profession, which also indicates that there are many opportunities for civil society actors to articulate themselves and their aims, unlike many other countries in the region. During the fieldwork for this thesis in spring 2011, thousands of people demonstrated all over India to achieve stricter laws against corruption in government institutions. They call for an anticorruption agency, Jan Lokpal or more commonly known as Ombudsman, with extensive powers. Opponents fear that this agency would develop into an 'unchecked superagency'. The national coalition government, led by the Congress Party, is presently plagued with corruption scandals including cases involving the allocation of telecom licenses and the execution of the Commonwealth Games. Due to the public pressure, the government had to comply with the anti corruption movement and convened a drafting committee that included Hazare and four other activists. This successful example is far from the only civil movement in India. Minority groups as well as groups subject to displacements or other damaging economic activity are very well organized. Another example, which is situated in Orissa, is the movement against POSCO, a Korean steel company, which has acquired state, national as well as international level support from movements and civil liberty groups in its persisting demand for protecting the livelihood rights of local people. Still the civil movement has been subject to repression as they have questioned the very rationale of the project and the type of globalization driven economic development it forcefully implemented (Mohanty 2006: 27).

As an explanation for the thriving civil society Chandhoke states 'Following the rediscovery and reinvention of civil society in the 1970s and more particularly the 1980s, the sphere came to be seen as practically a substitute for the 'power hungry' state and the 'profit driven' market. The reasons for this development are well known by now: tremendous disenchantment with the 'overarch' of the state in the advanced capitalist, the erstwhile socialist, and the developing world' (Chandhoke 2010: 91). Additionally, the decline of institutions and particularly of the institutions of representative democracy gave rise to several mass-based political movements and grassroots activism. 'By the year 2000, it was estimated that 20 to 30 thousand grassroots movements, social movements, non-party political formations, social action groups, movement groups and in general non-party groups were raising issues of political significance' (Seth 2004: 45). The widespread occurrence of social movements in India as a positive aspect of Indian democracy is also subject of debate. For example Mohanty, a well-known professor and activist designed the concept of the 'creative society', which refers to a phase of development of a society in which a large number of potential contradictions become articulate and active. Although this seems a positive development, this phase is especially visible when oppressed social groups get politically mobilized and demand their rights. According to Mohanty this situation, present in India during the last quarter of the century, has been regarded by the ruling class as one of disorder leading to fissiparous tendencies in the development process in the country. In his words: 'every movement for regional autonomy has been treated as disruptionist and separatist for a long period of time. Most of the environmental movements, especially those that question the establishment of big dams, are regarded as anti-development and therefore, 'against national interest'. The movement for gender justice and women's rights has been seen as disrupting the cultural milieu, being derived from western models and creating social instability.

Increased militancy of the movements of peasants and tribals is considered a problem of law and order' (Mohanty 2010: 106).

3.4 The tribal issue and its relation to the Naxalite movement

The main support for the Naxalites comes from the tribal population, called *adivasis* in India and from members of the lowest caste, known as *dalits*. Dalits and tribals encompass the poorest and most deprived sections of the Indian population. Although the caste system was abolished legally, it has proven to be an assiduous part of Indian society and social mobility is negligible. The population groups have little resemblances very dissimilar concerning culture, history and position in Indian society, they both face economic, social and political exclusion, denial of justice, unresolved land disputes, non-payment of minimal wages, eviction from their land on account of mining and other projects, attacks from upper castes, contractor lobbies and so on (Chenoy and Chenoy 2010: 57). *Dalits* and *adivasis* comprise about one fourth of India's total population and mainly inhabit the forested regions in central India.

The report on development challenges in extremist affected areas states: 'dalits continue to face widespread economic and social disadvantages, denial of justice and violent atrocities. Their situation is marked by poverty, low education, limited employment opportunities and marginalization in all spheres of public life' (2008: 4). According to this report the genesis of the discontent among Dalits lies in the age-old caste-based social order, which condemns them to a life of deprivation, servility and indignity. The situation of the tribal people differs from the dalits in the sense that much of the adivasi condition derives from the fact that they predominantly inhabit forest areas, which are often remote and lack governance structures. According to the census of 2001, there are 84, 3 million tribal people in India. The majority of the scheduled tribes live in conditions of serious deprivation and poverty and they have remained backward in all aspects of human development. Also, there has been a steady erosion of tribal rights and their command over resources.

The "Naxalite infected areas" as the Indian government calls them, fall mainly in what is called "Fifth Schedule areas". These areas have a special status in the Indian Constitution, meant to preserve the existence of tribal communities and their distinct identities and practices. As being labelled a 'scheduled tribe' entitles certain rights on land, tribes do often not receive the recognition of being a 'scheduled tribe'. When fieldwork was conducted in Bhubaneswar, approximately 300 tribal people held a demonstration at the Orissa state assembly to protest against the verdict to not recognize them as a scheduled tribe. When talking to the leader of the demonstration he explained that although his tribe met all the conditions, the government changed their status. The reason for this is that it is officially prohibited for the government to sell tribal lands for commercial interest, therefore often tribal communities have to prove that they are qualified as 'scheduled', a label that is often denied by the same authorities. When discussing this event with an activist, he stated 'Orissa is witnessing complete tribal unrest and it will not be solved any time soon. They are criminalized and suspected of being Maoists but often they only become Maoists because the police harass them. But the police is afraid of the Maoists so by joining they get protection'. Another view came from a local police officer that, asked about the nature of the problem, said: 'it is actually very simple: the poorest people are sitting on the richest land, and the government wants them off'. Thus,

although tribal communities have specific rights, the authorities often thwart the implementation of these rights, while the effects of poverty are already worse on the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, due to discrimination and policies of exclusion (Sukumar 2010: 149).

It is often said that after the government launched its crackdown on the movement in the 1970s, many of the original Naxalite found refuge in remote areas, inhabited by tribal communities. Not hampered by the presence of any governance structures, they could expand their support base and activities. It is important to note that it might not have been the ultimate aim of the original Naxalites to mobilize tribals, as Maoism actually prescribes mobilizing the peasantry. Many pro-Naxalite accounts tell of how the Naxalites came to the forests and helped the tribal communities to improve their living conditions and how the Naxalites brought medicine and empowered the women (Satnam 2010, Navlakha 2010). It remains an issue of debate whether tribal communities benefit from the presence of Naxalites or that they just use them as foot folk. Many believe that their intentions might be benevolent and charitable before, but that in recent years they have become as exploitative as others have been before them.

3.5 Perspectives on the present movement

When discussing the causes of the increasing significance of the movement often is referred to the frequently cited report “Development challenges in extremist affected areas” (2008). It stated that: “inequality accompanying India’s growth, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, has meant that a large section of people are angry and feel alienated from the polity”. Furthermore, “the contradiction between the tribal community and the state itself has become sharper, translating itself into open conflict into many areas”. These remarks sharply summarize the popular belief that India’s non-inclusive growth and the neglect of tribal communities are the main contributing factors of the growth of the movement. Although it might be clear that the movement has grown in recent years both in strength as geographical expansion, the reaction of politicians and other stakeholders have varied. The earlier mentioned police magazine for example states: ‘the Naxalites are focusing their attacks on railway, mines, industries, steel plants and oil-gas pipelines to disrupt the economic lifelines of the nation’, and thereby pointing to a totally different element of the situation than the earlier mentioned government report. This ambivalence marks the current state of affairs regarding the Naxal issue.

In an interview with professor Chenoy, she states that there are five general views on the movement. First there is the state view: they view the Naxalite movement as a law and order problem or a problem of national security. This vision emphasized that the movement is purely ideological, and they are determined to overthrow the state. Mining companies and other industries are viewed as being favourable for development. Civil society actors and human rights activists mostly express the second view. They oppose the first view and argue that it is development issues that have led to the strengthening of the movement. The neglect in those areas is such, that people do not have other options than to join the movement if they want to change anything about the condition they live in. The third perspective would be that of common citizens. According to Chenoy, people just want to continue with their daily lives. The growing lower middle class still upholds traditional values and they are very critical of the Maoists. Although they are also cynical of the government and politicians in general, in the end they have more

affinity with the state. An important remark is here that most of the Indian people does not often have contact with the tribal population. The fourth distinguishable category is the Naxalites or Maoists themselves. Their views and strategies, although remaining to be based on Maoism, have radically changed since its origination. As explicated before, it is not easy to reconstruct the discourse that the movement propagates. The inaccessibility of the category causes a dependency on secondary sources. The last category is the tribal population. They are often described as being caught between the state and the Naxalites. Apparently dalits, the scheduled castes, are not viewed as a distinct category, in none of the conducted interviews people have referred to this group.

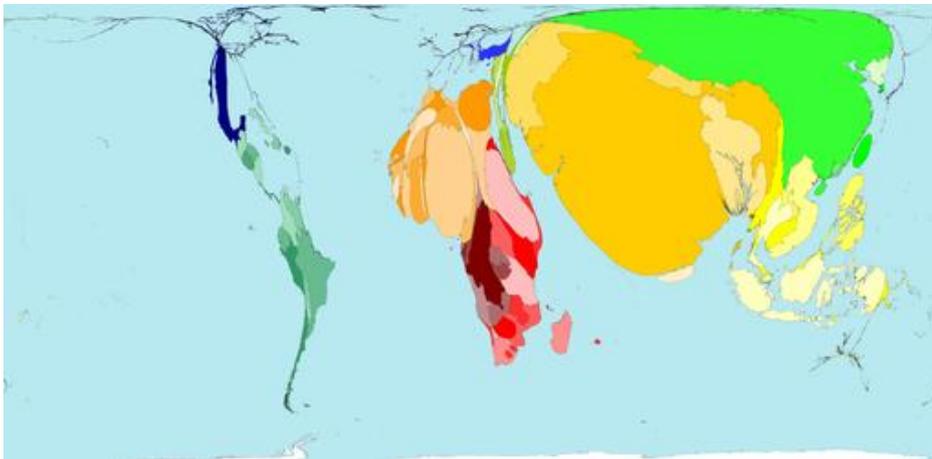
4. Structural violence and its relation to the Naxalite conflict

The following section is concerned with those aspects of Indian society that are often pointed to as causes of the Naxalite conflict. It will be argued that those aspects could be regarded as structural violence, as they are viewed as an inextricable part of Indian society. What will be discussed within the framework of structural violence should be clearly distinguished from the structural violence, as the Naxalites themselves perceive it. In statements of the Naxalites emerges that for them, structural violence is inherent to the present political system. In the field of conflict studies, structuralist approaches explain conflict as deriving from violence, which is *inherent* to political, economic, cultural and geopolitical contexts (Demmers forthcoming, chapter 3). Furthermore, two kinds of violence are differentiated being 'subjective' and 'objective' violence. The first is regarded as direct, visible acts of hurt and the second as underlying the former, being more subtle and invisible forms of coercion in the structure of the social system. Galtung is considered the founder of the structuralist approach to conflict studies. He argues that social conditions that result in massive social discrimination and injustice are a form of violence: 'Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization' (Galtung 1969). Subsequently, Galtung distinguishes three components of conflict; *behaviour*, *attitude* and lastly the *contradiction*. Whereas behaviour is manifest, attitudes and contradictions are latent (Galtung 1996: 71). According to Galtung, the contradiction lies in the system that holds the three components together. As attitudes and contradictions are assumed to be existent in the subconscious, awareness of the contradiction inherent to the system can be achieved through a process which Galtung calls *conscientization*. Central to Galtung's argument not only physical actions can be regarded as violence, but also practices that preserve the situation in which people's realizations are below their potential, herewith broadening the scope of what should be considered as violence. In the following section, a number of structural aspects of Indian society will be elaborated on, as to assess their potential influence on this conflict. Questions of poverty, relative deprivation, lack of governance, repression, industrialization will be employed to further understanding in the structural aspects of this conflict as these themes consistently reappeared in the interviews.

4.1 Poverty: appearances and causality

The first structural aspect considered as structural violence is one of the most complicated matters in Indian society, as well as in relation to conflict in general. It seems generally accepted that poverty and inequality are contributing factors to conflict. While in a general sense, it seems plausible that poverty can create the desperation that fuels conflict, or inequality can foster resentment that stokes conflict, the precise nature of the causal linkages are not so evident (Kanbur 2007: 3). Besides, "poverty" itself is a contested concept and the discussion on how poverty should be measured is ongoing. The standard measurement of poverty and inequality in economics starts with a definition of individual wellbeing, which is specified in terms of monetary based measures such as income or consumption. This is increasingly accompanied by non-income dimensions of human development such as education, health and 'empowerment' (*World Development Report 2001: Poverty*). The Tendulkar Committee Report (2010) estimated that 37 per cent of India's population lives below poverty line. This report and especially its negative conclusion were immediately criticized. Allegedly their measurement methods and their

assessment of rural poverty as the commission responsible for the report had used far too stringent methods to measure rural poverty according to the government. Suspicion was raised on the plausibility, as an increase of poverty would implicate a failure of government policies to eradicate poverty. Moreover the results on the question of poverty of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector were even more appalling. The report, released in 2009, claimed that 77 per cent of the people in India live on less than 20 Indian rupees a day. It continuously argued that: 'Such a sordid picture coexists uneasily with a shining India that has successfully confronted the challenge of globalization powered by economic competition'. Rightly so, as, according to *Forbes Magazine*, India reached a record number of billionaires in 2010. In the words of the earlier quoted economist Amartya Sen, 'there are two India's, the first lives a lot like California; the second, and more populous, a lot like Sub – Saharan Africa' (Sen in Guha 2009: 38).



World poverty map. Source: SASI Group, University of Sheffield

Poverty is often cited as a cause for the existence as well as the endurance of the Naxalite movement. However, poverty *alone* cannot explain Naxalite mobilization. Several scholars have for example pointed to the existence of similar areas, in terms of development and poverty, where there is almost no Naxalite presence (Chenoy and Chenoy 2010). In his study on the linkages between poverty and terrorism in India, Piazza argues that those Indian states that suffer from severe and prolonged political instabilities, and lack the means to resolve those conflicts are most likely to experience significant levels of terrorism. Thus, Piazza claims that political instability is the explanatory factor and not poverty, because: 'their governmental institutions are not able to provide adequate political goods to their citizens or to peacefully manage domestic conflict and secondly, they have an incomplete capacity to police their territories or promote law and order' (Piazza 2009: 407).

In the interviews, poverty is often named as a contextual factor contributing to the conflict. On the other hand, people will not go as far to state that it is the only, or main reason for the conflict. It is more viewed as a "side issue" and a causal relation is not claimed by any of the respondents. When discussing this with a professor in development studies in Sambalpur, he explained that people are so used to poverty, it is so much part of "being Indian" that it is not considered as a main cause for conflict. To put poverty in a wider

perspective, the following will relate to the issues of relative deprivation and the relation between the so-called centres with the periphery.

4.2 Relative deprivations and the centre – periphery relation

“Relative deprivation” can be regarded as a theory or method to determine the probability of violent conflict. In this case it is used to exemplify a structural feature of Indian society, as the growing middle class in India is not paralleled by the uplifting of the rural masses. Marx and Engels recognized that dissatisfaction with the *status quo* was not determined by absolute conditions but by relative expectations. Gurr further developed this notion by linking expectations with capabilities and stated that violence is likely to develop in a society where there is a wide spread relative deprivation, defined as ‘a perceived discrepancy between men’s value expectations and their value capabilities’ (Gurr 1970). Value expectations are goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled, value capabilities are the goods and conditions they are capable of attaining or maintaining’ (Gurr 1970: 13). In other words, Gurr considers relative deprivation not only in terms of expectations but also in relation to perceived capabilities. Whereas the notion of structural violence points to the circumstances that retain an individual from realizing its potential as being violence, relative deprivation takes this a step further, by pointing to the contradiction between expectations and reality as a breeding ground for conflict.

As explained in the previous chapter, the tribal people in India form the main support base of the Naxalite movement. It would be blunt to state that relative deprivation of tribals is the main cause of the Naxalite conflict as other factors evidently also are of influence. Nevertheless, in accordance with observations noted on poverty as a contributing factor, Indian society has evidently changed from a third world country in a developing country. Although the middle class continues to grow, the gap between rich and poor is widening. When talking to a professor in development economies at Delhi University, he points out that the level of development in parts of the cities has by far yet reached the remote areas but still, the closer the periphery is to the centre, the more evident development becomes. In the interviews held in tribal villages, a topic on the question list was the question what they were worried or angry about. For most of the people the issue of not having land was named first. Secondly, they said that they were worried about the misuse of money meant for development. This could be related to relative deprivation as the people do know that the schemes are meant for them, but are not implemented properly.

Others have point to the centre – periphery relation as contributing factor to this conflict. For example Misra and Pandita write: “Urban India has become a hungry demon – child that has to be fed constantly with the soft pap of materialism and to feed that beast, New India digs into the ‘Other’ India” (Misra and Pandita 2010: 33). The argument here is that while the differences between poor and rich and between rural and urban India are increasing, the centre is putting more and more pressure on the periphery. One security analyst states puts the conflict in another perspective related to this notion by stating that ‘when looking at the Indian landmass and resource configuration, including fundamental resources as water, can never service the population according to the standards of the Western idea of a “developed country”, even if all Indian people would be members of the lower middle class’. According to him, India doesn’t

have the capacity to provide as much as 50% per cent of the western living standards without destroying its resource base in a year or two: 'we'll never be able to make everyone rich, there will always be an underclass, which will be angry. We'll have to learn to deal with that underclass'.

4.3 Governance, corruption and implementation

Issues related to governance are the most frequent recurring in the interviews, even in statements made by government officials. For example even the Home Secretary of India, G.S. Pillai stated at a conference that 'in many areas there is a total gap, there are no doctors, teachers, nurses, police or anything like that, making the Naxalites the only political institution available'. He continued with saying that India has the lowest level of government employees, security forces and judicial workers per 100.000 inhabitants of the developing countries. Thus, Pillai, acknowledges that a lack of governance has created a political vacuum in which the Naxalites operate. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that he is very optimistic about the future as he continued: 'now roads and schools are being build, there is really something happening now'. A very significant detail is that one of the organizers of the conference from the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies in Delhi had used his twitter account to express his appreciation for the "candid" presentation of the Home Secretary. Within minutes, he received a phone call from the Ministry of Internal Affairs asking what exactly he had said and how many foreigners were present. The relevance of this anecdote lies in the observation that even the highest officials have to speak and operate carefully especially on the issue of corruption in development schemes.

On a lower level, this is manifested in a slightly different way. When talking about corruption to the sub – collector of Sambalpur, who is the head of all block development officers responsible for the implementation of government schemes, he bluntly stated that there was no corruption in his district. The local administrators in Koraput gave a similar reaction: a complete denial of anything like corruption in that area. There is a stark divide between responsible government officials and all other interviewees on the issue of corruption. All interviewees mark corruption in government services and development schemes as one of the important reasons that the support for the Naxalites has increased. One journalist in Sambalpur explained that 'corruption is at the core of all problems in the rural areas, but can you blame those officials who take some of the money? Who would want to work here in this mess? They only want to work here because they know they can make an extra profit'.

Even police officers admit that there is a problem with corruption and implementation of development schemes. An infamous example, which is only came to the surface recently, is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, commonly known as the NREGS. In a survey carried out in the Koraput region in Orissa, the Centre for Environment and Food Security estimated that out of the 733 crore Indian rupees, one crore is ten million, spent under the NREGS in 2006-07, more than RS 500 crore had been siphoned off and misappropriated. In an open letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh the director of the CEFS declared that: "It is not the epidemic of cholera, but the cancer of corruption that is killing hundreds of adivasis" and "we have reason to believe that the entire state administration is party to this loot". Although it has always been a feature of Indian society, the rampant corruption in the

implementation of development programs has intensified the discontent in poor, rural areas, resulting in fertile grounds for the surge of the Naxalite movement and their recruitment drives. Misra and Pandita rightly argue that “instead of being the biggest threat, the Naxalites have become the biggest opportunity at least for thousands in the government and for contractors working on tax-payer financed government projects in those regions’ (Misra and Pandita 2010: 24). Money designated for the development of those areas, whether it is for education, healthcare or law enforcement, has been leaking in all kinds of directions but to the people it was meant for.

A remarkable observation is that corruption is not only recognized as a problem by civil society and criticism also comes from within the government sector. For example in an article in the magazine for government employees the author writes: ‘Can there be such a massive and widespread corruption and fall of governance without the convenience of civil servants – Indian Administrative Service officers and Indian Police Services officers?’ and: ‘due to the collective failure of civil servants living up to the covenant of the Constitution, India’s democracy has diminished, giving place to a “kleptocracy” a government of, by and for thieves’ (Devasahayam 2011: 16). As indicated, when talking to local civil administrators they never admitted the existence of corruption in their districts. What is observed is a strong call at a national level to combat corruption, but a denial of the whole issue at the local level. Concluding, whereas higher officials often point to the problems of capacity and implementation, activist and journalists see corruption as the biggest obstacle to bringing development to the Naxalite infected areas. The local officials, who are assumed to be the most corrupted interviewed for this thesis, denied even the presence of corruption in their districts. Although this could be valid, it is remarkable that the government officials interviewed dismiss an issue that is a recurrent theme in almost all other conversations. Even police officers view that local administration do not exercise enough control over development schemes. Then again, the reputation of the police is also doubtful, and allegations of corruption and indiscriminate use of violence are commonplace.

4.4 Government repression

Structural matters affecting the Naxalite conflict are also found in practices of repression, mostly by the police on request of governments to maintain order. As explained before, disputes over land remain at the core of the Naxalite issue. This is not restricted to the poor implementation of land ceiling laws but also the result of forcible land acquisition, which has been an on-going aggravation between the Indian government and village communities. Often the police rely on brutal force as a method to counter protest movements against land acquisition. According to Sundar, a leading researcher on tribal communities in Bastar, one of the Naxalites strongholds where the police have a considerable presence recent years, those struggles are not led by the Naxalites. Instead, they are usually local campaigns with activists taking care to keep their distance from any armed action, the repression against the Maoists provides an occasion to arrest and harass the activists in all these campaigns (Sundar 2011: 49).

The most criticized government response is the arming of civilians in Chhattisgarh, under the name of Salwa Judum or *purification hunt*. According to both the central as the state government, the armament

was a follow up of a spontaneous civilian uprising against the Naxalite movement. Whether the government had deliberately armed civilians or whether it was a spontaneous uprising remains subject of debate. Assuming that it was a counterinsurgency method, it eventually backfired at the government as the Salwa Judum is accused of severe human rights violations and caused great public outrage. Villages were burnt en plundered, women raped and many tribals were killed in the chaos that aroused. Many tribal people fled the forests and were received in camps guarded by members of Salwa Judum. Even the most devoted police officers condemned Salwa Judum, although they consistently state that it was unplanned by the government. The public opinion turned against the government and they quickly denounced the civilian army. It is said that a new operation has started since, called "Operation Green Hunt". At universities in the cities as well as in Orissa, pamphlets and wall paintings state "Stop Operation Green Hunt" but again the authorities deny that there is an operation under that name.

Concluding, all above features of India can be regarded as 'structural violence' as it prevents people from realizing their potential. Clearly, poverty, relative deprivation, lack of governance, corruption and repression are intertwined, and together they have an interrelating dynamic, which is inherent to the system. However, these factors, both on itself as well as in relation to each other do not explain the present conflict. The structural violence approach is closely associated with the "root causes" approach, which is the dominant liberal perspective. In this view poverty, lack of development, corruption and the absence of primary services are the main cause of the Naxalite conflict. Although this view includes many contextual factors that lie on the basis of the existence of discontent, it fails to adequately include the agency part of the problem. For example, it fails to explain the absence of Maoist movements in other poor backward areas. It is said that the combination of mining activity and the presence of tribal communities would be the explanatory factors but as tribal communities as well as economic activity in the different Indian states is highly diverse, this would be an overgeneralization of the whole issue. Also, it does not sufficiently explain why this mobilization is violent and other forms of mobilization are not. The structural violence approach is valuable as it enables to create a comprehensive description of what factors contribute to conflict. Still, it fails to explain why in some areas the conflict has become manifest, and in other not. The second approach discussed in this thesis aimed to interpret this conflict through a theoretical framework, which included a more agency approach to conflict. This explanation provided insight in how both the government and the movement are actively engaged in gaining support for their views, and blaming the other party for violations of human rights and making development impossible. For the movement change orientation and collective mobilization are the key features, the state on the other hand, has successfully securitized the issue while consistently acknowledging that there is a development component to it. This dichotomy between words and actions on the government side leads to a general feeling of political apathy, which again leads to support for the movement. People themselves do not feel like they have any influence on the corrupted political, institutional and judicial processes, and therefore become to sympathize with violence as only means of resistance against the system. What is overlooked then is that most people do not mobilize on ideological premises. Instead, local economic grievances form the main mobilizing factor. The last approach aimed to review how discursive processes are used to influence perceptions and provided with a broader discourse analysis. The use of words and

specific terms, especially in conflict, has gained in academic interest as it connects words with actions, claims and events. As the debate has become entirely polarized and politicized, themes as development and violence have become employed by both parties to prove the right of their position and the wrong of the other position.

5. Theoretical approaches to conflict: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes

As the title suggests, this chapter concerns some of the theoretical approaches designed to study conflict, and more specifically violent conflict. A theoretical framework is as a 'lens' through which a certain phenomenon is assessed. The main objective of this chapter is to analyse whether the theoretical concepts and frameworks sufficiently help us to understand the underlying causes of this conflict. Social research in general is about positioning yourself within a broader theoretical framework, or in other words, a researcher must select a 'lens' through which a particular phenomenon is analysed. In this case, the theoretical notions are argued to be interlinked which will be demonstrated throughout this chapter.

Attention to extreme forms of political violence in the social sciences has been episodic, with some peaks of high visibility of terrorist attacks, but little accumulation of results (della Porta 2008: 221). One of the reasons for this is the tendency to reify definitions of terrorism on the basis of political actors' decisions to use violence (Tilly 2004). Also, explanations tend to focus either on macro-level systemic causes, meso-level organizational characteristics or micro-level individual motivations, with little communication between different levels of analysis (della Porta 1995). In contemporary social movement studies it is assumed that social movements develop and succeed not because they emerge to address new grievances, but rather because something in the larger political context allows existing grievances to be heard (...). The very conditions that favoured the escalation of violence in the left-libertarian movements often stimulated radical *counter-movements* as well, and thus national 'radical sectors' composed of left-wing as well as right-wing radical groups, violent movements and violent counter-movements (della Porta 2008: 224).

Increasingly one finds movement scholars from various countries and nominally representing different theoretical traditions emphasizing the importance of the same broad sets of factors in analyzing the emergence and development of social movements/revolutions. These three factors are (1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; (2) the forms of organization (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and (3) the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action. Or perhaps it will be easier to refer to these three factors by the conventional shorthand designations of *political opportunities*, *mobilizing structures* and *framing processes* (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 2). In recent theoretical debate in the field of social movements, protest, and collective action, there has been a significant amount of convergence between the main competing paradigms, so that the need to combine political opportunities (contextual factors), mobilizing structures (organizational resources), and framing processes (discursive resources) is an accepted tenet of much social movement research (Koopmans and Statham 1999: 203).

5.1 Social movements and political opportunities

As noted before, there are different ways of describing the Naxalite problem. Some call it an insurgency others have argued that the socio economic context of the issue demands defining it as a social movement. In this thesis the emphasis is put at the movement aspect of the Naxalites, as it involves more features than the term rebellion of insurgency covers. According to Rao a social movement is defined by two

characteristic practices. 'It essentially involves sustained collective mobilization through either informal or formal organization, and secondly, it is generally oriented towards bringing about change, either partial or total, in the existing system of relationships, values and norms, although there are efforts, which are oriented towards resisting change and maintaining the status quo' (Rao 1979: 2). In other words, a social movement is defined by involvement in collective mobilization and change orientation. The Naxalite movement would fit this description as they are actively engaged in mobilizing people. What sets the Naxalite movement apart though, is that their orientation towards bringing about change is directed at the entire political and social system, whereas many other movements in India have not offered the perspective of this kind of radical change. In addition to mobilization and change orientation, Benford and Snow point to the importance of meaning as they state that "movement actors are signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonist, and bystanders or observers" (Benford and Snow 2000: 613). The process of giving meaning to events is closely related to the practice of framing, which will also be discussed in this chapter. Benford and Snow rightly argue that meaning is not only produced for constituents but the process is also directed at those who are not party to the conflict.

The last authoritative authors discussed here, Tilly and Tarrow, are both viewed as pioneers in social movement and mobilization research. According to them, a social movement involves a "sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Whereas Benford and Snow focus their definition on the appointment of meaning and signification, Tilly and Tarrow take this a step further by defining a social movement as a sustained campaign of "claim making", which essentially assigns the movement actor even more agency. A more conceptual approach to social movements and violent conflict is provided by the concept of "contentious politics". According to Tilly and Tarrow, *contention*, *politics* and *mobilization* overlap in so-called contentious politics. This process takes place within the broader political opportunity structure. Several actors are involved in the interactive, collective process of claim making, claims that bear on other people's interests and involve governments as claimants, objects of claims, or third parties. It is important to note that a social movement does not develop itself outside a political structure; instead it develops in interaction with the political structure. Deriving from all above, social movement actors are actively engaged in change oriented claim making and the appointment of meaning in order to achieve the objectives on which the movement bases its existence. As said before, when analyzing social movement processes it is imperative to include the study of mobilization. Therefore, in the following the issue of mobilization will be discussed, with a focus on violent mobilization.

5.2 Mobilizing structures and violence

Mobilization processes are often referred to as resource mobilization, thereby including material means as well as non - material means like popular support. It is often stated that the more a movement is able to mobilize resources, the more successful it is. In this case, by resource mobilization is meant the way the Naxalites succeed in mobilizing support and constituents and therefore not how they generate material resources. When analyzing social violent mobilization within a state context, meaning violent mobilization

against the state and the representatives of this state, it is generally accepted that processes of mobilization take place before violent action. However, as Brubaker and Laitin have argued, there is no reason to assume that mobilization and violence are naturally linked (Brubaker and Laitin 1998: 446). As explained before, India is home to many social movement organisations and they mostly operate within the democratic institutions and thus in a non – violent manner. Furthermore, according to King, there are too few connections to long traditions of scholarly theorizing about group mobilization and collective violence (King 2004: 432). Hereby King points to the fact that academic literature often focuses on mobilization or on collective violence, without theoretically analyzing the possible linkages between these processes. Still, the inclusion of mobilization processes is imperative when studying social movements or insurgent groups, whether they deploy violent methods or not. One of the main authors on this subject is Azar, who introduced the model of *protracted social conflict*. According to Azar, four factors are essential in understanding mobilization in the context of conflict: *communal content, deprivation of human needs, governance and the role of the state* and finally, *international linkages*. In the case of the Naxalites the most applicable factor as designed by Azar is the *deprivation of human needs* as ‘grievances resulting from need deprivation are usually expressed collectively’. And ‘failure to redress these grievances by the authority cultivates a niche for protracted social conflict’ (Azar 1990: 190). The fact that the support base of the Naxalites comes from the most deprived sections of the Indian population needs no further explanation. Basic human needs are lacking and poverty is rampant in the areas under Naxalite influence as clarified in the chapter on structural violence. Relating to governance and the role of the state, it is evident that tribals and other rural poor have real and legitimate grievances against both the economic policies of the government as well as grievances related to the lack of government institutions and services. The presence of communal content is more difficult to assess, as the tribal population of India is far from a unified entity. However, the nomination of being a ‘Scheduled Tribe’ and the generality of the described grievances lead to the conclusion that there is a form of communal content present. The last factor Azar defined, international linkages, is of less importance in the case of the Naxalites. The government views the developments in Nepal with suspicion, where the Maoist party there is part of the government after years of civil war, but this is never deemed possible in India. With regards to China, especially police officers have hinted to a foreign influence aiding the Naxalites, the name China however is never spoken out loud by anyone. Concluding, all the factors defined by Azar as leading to protracted social conflict are present in the context of the Naxalite conflict.

The second important scholar in this respect is Gurr, who identifies several ‘incentives for political action’ that determine the “nature, intensity and persistence of the group’s actions” (Gurr 2007: 136). Significant ‘incentives for political action’ are, according to Gurr, *collective disadvantages, economic, political and cultural discrimination* and *repression*, among others. As with the factors designed by Azar, the distinguished incentives for political action are very general. Although they are valuable for firstly recognizing grievances and secondly for making distinctions between different types of grievances, it does not provide us with in-depth knowledge on how these grievances lead to violent mobilization. Also, as already elaborated on, the context of the conflict is such that it can be assumed that to a certain extent there are collective disadvantages, forms of discrimination and repression. However, the mere

observation that these incentives are present does not necessarily explain violent mobilization. The third author discussed here, King, contributed to the broader debate on mobilization by formulating a set of opportunities as a critical area for inquiry. King argues that *material, ideological* and *temporal* opportunities present can be seized by potential entrepreneurs 'to get the mobilization game going' (King 2007: 117). By distinguishing these more abstract factors, King is less focussed on discontent as a mobilizing factor. He brings in the issue of opportunities, which is increasingly becoming the focus of mobilization theorists. The factor most present in the case of the Naxalites is that of temporal opportunities as their emphasis has changed from mobilizing the peasantry on deficiencies within the feudal system to mobilizing the rural poor on issues of structural violence.

According to Sen and Teitelbaum, the present success of the movement is due to the fact that their core strategy centres on mobilizing the poor, around shared economic grievances. Furthermore they argue: "the first wave was primarily an, elite – centred endeavour that was easily crushed because of its lack of ideological coherence and connection to the poor. Despite its militant intentions, the present movement is more difficult for the government to repress, because of its grass-roots orientation and its focus on social justice (Sen and Teitelbaum 2010: 5). The commitment to the Maoist ideology and the use of this ideology as a mobilizing factor remains an important question, which has not received much attention in relation to the Naxalite movement. As the nature of the movement impedes obtaining reliable data on this issue it is difficult to assess whether ideological opportunities have had significant influence on the development of the movement. Considering the material opportunities present, it is not clear whether these have significantly changed over the last four decades. For example Suykens has argued with regards to the Naxalite movement in Telangana, in a situation of long – term conflict relatively joint extraction regimes can be organized, by which all parties can benefit from multiple authority over certain resources (Suykens 2010: 154). The relevance of this conclusion as formulated by Suykens is that he argues that in some of the Naxalite controlled areas both government representatives as the Naxalites are able to levy taxes on forest produce, in this case Tendu leaves. Without simplifying the complexity of such commodity chains, this conclusion points to the possibility that material opportunities for the Naxalites are not confined to areas where they are the only relevant authority. Concluding, the study of mobilization is essential to understand firstly why movements originate and secondly why movements engage in violence to pursue the perceived objectives. However, it should be acknowledged that the incentives and conditions explicated above alone do not provide us with a proper understanding of the interactive aspects of contemporary conflicts. Mobilization processes are not isolated events and are influenced by states and other types of authority in the broader political opportunity structure. Notwithstanding the fact that mobilization scholars have stressed the contextual character of mobilization processes, the concepts described advancing mobilization processes can be regarded as plausible or at least probable. Deprivation and collective discrimination, in whatever form, are likely to lead to discontent, regardless how this is manifested.

5.3 Framing processes and collective action framing

In relation to social movements, framing processes have come to be regarded, alongside resource mobilization and political opportunity processes, as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000: 612). For Goffman, one of the founders of frame analysis, frames denoted 'schemata of interpretation' that enables individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Goffman 1974: 21). In other words, framing denotes an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction (Benford and Snow 2000: 615). Furthermore, framing processes are deeply embroiled, along with the media, local governments, and the state, in what has been referred to as "the politics of signification" (Hall 1982: 58). Linked to mobilization processes, framing is 'the way in which the goals and objects of mobilization, whether violent or otherwise, are presented to potential adherents, to the designated opponents, and to third parties' (King 2007: 121).

Benford and Snow also argue that it is of utmost importance to move beyond the 'description of movement ideology and the corollary tendency to treat meanings as given, as if there is an isomorphic relationship between the nature of any particular set of conditions or events and the meaning attached to them' (Snow and Benford 1988: 198). From a framing perspective, ideologies constitute cultural resources that can be tapped and exploited for the purposes of constructing collective action frames, and thus function simultaneously to facilitate and constrain framing processes (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). When applying these notions to the Naxalite movement, it can be assumed that the Naxalite movement is actively engaged in framing processes and thereby give meaning to its own objectives as well as to the policies to counter them. By framing their struggle around the social – economic grievances of mostly tribals, and other issues of rural poverty such as displacements and environmental degradation because of industrialization, the Naxalite movement has successfully provided a counter frame to the security approach of the government. Whereas the government tends to frame all kinds of civil unrest in terms of security threats, this strategy does not have the desired effects as the support base for the Naxalites is increasing.

Tarrow built upon the concept of framing in the specific context of mobilization and developed the notion of *collective action frames*. He states that collective action frames "redefine social conditions as unjust and intolerable with the intention of mobilizing potential participants" (Tarrow 1998:111). Collective action frames are, in part, cognitive entities that aid interpretation and social action, but their essence resides in situated social interaction, that is in the interpretative discussions and debated that social movements actors engage in amongst each other and in the framing contests that occur between movement actors and other parties within the movement field of action, such as counter-movements, adversaries, and even the media (Snow and Benford 2000: 58). Oberschall distinguishes four dimensions of collective action: (1) discontent; (2) ideology-feeding grievances; (3) capacity to organize and (4) political opportunity. A positive value on each dimension is necessary for collective action in whatever form, be they insurgencies, social movements, dissidents or guerrillas. According to Oberschall, first there have to be widespread discontent and dissatisfaction for which the usual means of relief are ought to be lacking. Absent such

discontent, a terrorist group will be defined as a criminal gang seeking personal goals and not as “social bandits”. Second, there has to be an ideology or belief system, spread widely in a population, which frames discontent into legitimate grievances (Oberschall 2004: 27). This remark is extremely relevant when applied to the Naxalite conflict, as the government is very committed to in framing them as the main obstruction to development activities in many backward areas. However, the counter frame propagated by the Naxalites has found fertile ground in India, as the ‘root causes’ discourse remains an accepted viewpoint.

5.4 Securitization theory applied to the Naxalite movement

The Copenhagen School, especially Wæver and Buzan, has developed concepts to rethink security, mostly through its notions of securitization and de-securitization. It has played an important role in broadening the conception of security and is part of an attempt to re-conceptualize the notion of security. Its main claim is that any specific matter can be *non-politicized*, *politicized* or *securitized*. The first category is not a matter of state action and not included in the public debate. The second, politicized matters are ‘part of public policy requiring government decision and resource allocations’ (Buzan, Wæver de Wilde, 1998: 23). Finally, an issue is plotted at the securitized end of the spectrum when it requires emergency action, beyond the state’s standard political procedures. Securitization theory argues that language is not only concerned with what is ‘out there’, as realists and neo-realists assume, but is also constitutive of that very social reality. Buzan and Wæver (1997: 245) claim, for instance, that securitization is ‘constructivist all the way down’. Wæver posits it in the following way: ‘with the help of language theory, we can regard ‘security’ as a *speech act*. In this light, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it something is done (...) the *word* security is the act (...) In this instance, security is an illocutionary act, a ‘self-referential practice; its conditions of possibility are constitutive of the speech act of saying ‘security’ (Wæver 1995: 55).

The concept of ‘securitization’ is widely accepted as both a theory and a practice in politics and international relations and extensive research has been conducted on its relation with framing processes and discourse analysis. In other words, if a matter is successfully securitized, it is possible to legitimize the employment of extraordinary means to solve a ‘perceived’ problem. Moreover, when a subject is labelled a security problem, it can be considered to be an illegitimate subject for political and academic debate (Chakrabati 2010: 74). In the case of the Naxalite movement, it was particularly obvious that by securitizing the movement, it has become an illegitimate subject for academic debate. Academics critical of the government are regarded as ‘leftist’ and ‘pro-Naxalite’, not only by the government but also, and more vigorously, by police officials in affected areas. When talking with all kinds of police officials most of them could not hide their irritation and resentment with arguments put forward by academics. The superintendent of the police in Koraput for example said: ‘Who are those people in Delhi talking about the problems here, and thinking that they have the solution, if they know so well what is the problem, where are they now? Sitting in Delhi judging us (the police) doesn’t make things better here in Koraput, let them come here and they’ll see that we are not the human rights violators, the Maoists are’.

According to many, the 'law and order' rhetoric has only become to the fore in recent years. Before, the government would emphasize the development deficit that laid the basis for the current state of affairs. One of the interviewed police officers explained that before, they were trying to solve the issue half-heartedly. For example the Chief Minister of Jharkhand stated, "Naxalites are our children". The police officer in question explained that he felt humiliated and demoralized when he heard this, and that the change in government stance is greatly appreciated. The securitization is however not only visible in rhetoric, duties that were normally performed by the police are now performed by the military police. These forces are also deployed in order to secure mining projects and the building of dams.

6. The Naxalite movement in discourses

As explained before, there is a clear divide between the defenders of the government line and those who argue that the Naxalite conflict is a development issue. These are considered the two dominant discourses in the overall debate on the Naxalite movement. The first group merely labels the movement as a “law and order” problem and often call for a crackdown on the movement. On the other side, activists, academics, writers and journalists propose that lack of development, exploitation and neglect have caused this issue. They also express that people who join the movement don’t have real other options because deprivation is in the system. The latter is regarded as the “root causes” or “development” approach. As explicated before, the use of language and the appointment of meaning to language has increasingly become part of the study of conflict. In the following chapter the collected data will be reviewed through the discursive approach. Firstly, the theoretical foundations of discourse analysis will be set out. Secondly, the dominant general discourses will be described on the basis of the interviews held and their position in the broader debate on the Naxalite conflict will be determined. Throughout this thesis it became apparent that the position of tribal people in Indian society and the question of how development measures are implemented and, more importantly, what kind of development is desirable in these regions are contested issues that have become incorporated in the debate on the Naxalite conflict. Therefore, these issues will be incorporated in the description of the broader discourses. Lastly, two discursive set of data collected in the Koraput district will be applied to assess whether the dominant discourses correspond with manifestation of the conflict at a local level, meaning areas where the Naxalite movement is active.

6.1 Discourse analysis and its theoretical implications

The use of discourse analysis is closely associated with the study of social movements. Discourses are actively constructed through the discursive description of practices, events, behaviour and so on, deployed to gain support for a particular attitude or course of action. To create the desired discourse, whether dominant or a counter-discourse, framing and the use of narratives are essential activities. The notion of ‘discursive hegemony’ points to the privileged position held by dominant social groups with respect to discourse (Jabri 1996: 133). Although the use of discourse analysis is common practice in the field of political science and public administration, less attention is given to firstly the function of these discourses, frames and narratives in the field of violent conflict and secondly on how the state is equally deploying these strategies to win support for their policies. Conceptualizing conflict as *constructed discourse* places a specific conflict within the wider discursive and institutional continuities within which the conflict is embedded. For example Schröder and Schmidt stated that ‘violence needs to be imagined in order to be carried out’ (2001:9). With ‘imagined’ they mean the ‘discursive representation of reality’, which can ultimately lead to different forms of violence. The linguistic constructs used to provide versions of a conflict by parties and observers alike are not peculiar to that conflict alone, but derive from pre-existing discursive modes, which are implicated in the construction of the conflict (Jabri 1996: 128).

A discourse is essentially constructed by language and therefore, discourse analysis is closely related to structuralism as a school of thought. Relating this the theory of conflict Jabri states: ‘conflict is the time at which the language of politics becomes a discourse of exclusionist protection against a constructed

diabolical hated enemy who is deserving of any violence perpetrated against it' (Jabri1996: 134). Analysis of the discourse constructed by a party to the conflict not only gives insight in the way people view a matter, development or phenomenon but also enables to further understanding on the violence deriving from it. This knowledge is important, as it can be deployed to gain support for a policy or course of action, or to mobilize people in order to effectuate change. Lastly, it will give information on the way people perceive a movement, their aims and objectives.

6.2 Dominant discourses on the Naxalite conflict: polarization and incompatible views

It has become common to differentiate between the “law and order” approach, and the human rights or “root causes” approach. The first approach views the movement as a security issue and aims to frame the Naxalites as being only motivated by private gain. The “root causes” approach conversely, opinions inequality and exclusion at the root of all Naxalite mobilization and violence. The latter approach is strongly criticised by proponents of the first. For example, security analyst Sahni argues in an interview that: ‘the “root causes” perspective seeks to rationalize terrorism in terms of social, political and economic grievances, and it insists that countering terrorism and political violence requires a neutralization of these “root causes” rather than any use of force directed against the practitioners of extremist violence’. By this, he not only labels Naxalites as ‘terrorists’, but also appoints blame to those interpreting it in another way. Additionally Nayak writes: ‘in the last forty-four years, the Maoists have been giving an impression that they are fighting for justice, tribal welfare and good governance. They benefit from the view of some political leaders, intellectuals and civil society that Maoism in India is due to socio-economic problems and that it needs to be addressed with the development approach’ (Nayak 2011: 59).

On the other side, accounts from people who did get access to the movement are focus on structural violence and emphasize both the hopeless situation that drives people in the violent struggle and the benefits that the movement has brought, especially when it comes to the brutality of the police before Naxalites controlled the area. For example Arundhati Roy, a famous writer and activist, wrote the lengthy well-known article “Walking with the Comrades” in 2010. After spending several days “walking with the comrades” as the title suggests, she concludes that the Maoists in Dandakaranya are merely “Ghandians with guns”. The article is a beautifully written accusation addressed at the government, who allegedly puts corporation interests above its own people. A similar narrative was given by Satnam in his “Langalnama: travels in a Maoist guerrilla zone” in which he writes about how villagers welcome the Naxalites and how everyone is equal for them. Although both writers articulate a completely different view of the situation than the mainstream media, it is also a very ‘romanticized’ picture, in which tribal rebels are Ghandians with guns and the police are coldblooded murderers and rapists. The described dichotomy is a recurrent theme in all discussions on the subject. In every interview, whether it is conducted with hardliners or activists, remarks are made about the validity of the judgement of the “other”.

Within the debate on causes of Naxalism it is difficult to find a ‘middle ground’ in which people can agree to disagree on some aspects, but at least create space for alternative solutions and strategies. This situation is fostered by the Home Minister P. Chidambaram, who takes a Bush-like ‘either you are with us

or against us' position in what he calls the "state's war against left wing extremism". When confronting people with this dichotomy, either hardliners or activists, they often admit that the contrasting views are incomplete versions of reality, and they expressed to feel very uncomfortable having to choose a position between these extremes. Whereas defenders of the "law and order" camp accuse the 'other' of naivety, the "root causes" members demonstrate that they feel "cornered" because their views point to structural deficiencies in Indian society and the general public is reluctant to learn about those issues. Especially the new lower middle class is very critical of the view that development issues have caused a violent conflict. According to an activist involved in the protest against a plant in Orissa, the middle class is not interested in struggles over life and death as long as it is not their fight. 'For corruption' he argues 'they will protest because it also affects them'. Tribal people on the other hand 'are only viewed as a burden to development'.

The indicated polarization of the debate is not a unique phenomenon. Just like the above describes, governmental policies and politics are influenced by the symbolic struggles that evolved, in different public arenas, between a "law and order" and a "civil rights" coalition (della Porta 1996). Furthermore, the emergence of protest increased public concern for law and order, prompting the more conservative elites to choose hard-line tactics, but, at the same time, demands for a more liberal understanding also spread in the society. The development of political violence then may be seen as a force that polarizes the debate on democratization, often resulting in a weakening of the civil rights coalition (della Porta 2008: 227). Although this finding is based on the study of European movements, this notion has a remarkable resonance in the Indian context. Also, the government actively brands its critics as 'Maoists', 'Naxalites' or 'enemy's of the state'. Criticizing the government leads to being accused of 'anti-nationalism', a very serious claim in a country deeply divided by ethnic and religious cleavages. The polarization of the debate also led to certain weariness with the subject, as most people feel that there has been no progress in recent years. Activists in Koraput expressed that they do not expect a change in the situation anytime soon. One of them even states that 'as long as the political and economic system does not benefit from tribal welfare, nothing will change here' and 'in election time people may come here, but after that we never see them or hear from them'. This situation could be particular for Koraput but in Sambalpur, similar comments have been made.

The debate is not only polarized in the sense that critique on the governments leads to allegations of being Naxalite. In the process of framing of the Naxal issue, critiquing the government automatically implies that the person in question is pro - violence. In interviews with government officials and the police, when confronted with opposing views often remarks were made like: 'of course we know that there is neglect and we want to change this as well, but not through violence like they do', or 'how can these people (sympathizers) say that they understand the Naxalites? Then do they also approve of murder?' The issue of violence is incorporated in the overall discourse, in a way that sympathizing with the Naxalite movement equals the justification of violence perpetrated by them. In doing so, often hardliners like Ramana from the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) refer to the fundamentals of Maoism and by stating that for Maoists 'revolution comes through the barrel of a gun' and that violence is inherent

to its ideology. This practice has contributed to the unease apparent in the discussion on the Naxalites. Accusing left-wing scholars of sympathizing with the Naxalites and therefore with the use of violence to accomplish social change is a common practice. For example, in their book 'Maoist and other armed conflicts' senior Jawaharlal Nehru University professors Chenoy and Chenoy argue in favour of the human security approach to armed conflicts, in which the state sees its own security as inclusive of the security of individuals (Chenoy and Chenoy 2010: 21). Although both authors have a respectable record in academic circles as well as in advisory institutions on conflicts in India, a well known former army chief and expert on Naxalite movement wrote in a book review that: 'the book seems sympathetic towards Maoist rebels and their efforts to disintegrate the Indian state' (Sing, 2010).

The divide between the two approaches become more evident when discussing solutions. Even the most stringent police officer recognizes that there is a development component to the conflict but still, how this component should be regarded is contested. For example security analyst Sahni describes the relation between development and conflict as a choice with two options, stating that: 'the government has to choose between the development and the law and order approach. This is an insurgency and how can we fight an insurgency with development, or bring development in areas where there is an insurgency'. Nevertheless, all persons interviewed, including policemen in Delhi as well as in Naxalite affected areas, state that they realize that it is not only a law and order issue, and it should not be regarded or strategized as such. This is remarkable because in most of the literature the "law and order" approach is often represented as being the only option. In reality the people concerned have more moderate views and even stress that without development, the problem will not be resolved. For example, one former police officer stated that he did not necessarily agree with the state's position, strategy and arguments, but didn't approve of the violent methods deployed by the Naxalites either. He expressed the feeling that if he did not support the government stance and strategy, he would be viewed as sympathetic to the Naxalites instead. Also, a high police official in Bhubaneswar explained that if he and his colleagues would want to 'we can eradicate the whole problem and kill them all any moment', but he explained eventually this would not be the solution of the broader issue. On the other hand, many 'development camp' activists also acknowledged that they were aware of the fact that some of the Naxalites actions are worsening the tribal situation. Nevertheless, they are convinced that the government ultimately is using these "exceptions" to discredit the movement and to silence all criticism on government policies.

6.3 Position of tribal people in the general discourse

When constructing and analysing the discourses around the Naxalite conflict, the position of tribal people within this broader debate must be incorporated. As explained before, the main support for the movement comes from the impoverished tribal populations in remote, forested areas, for various reasons. In accounts that relate to customs and practices within the movement, idealization or "romantization" of tribal life is strikingly existent. To cite one example by the poet Varavara Rao, "the innocence of adivasis is such that they question our use of cow's milk and the hen's egg. Isn't the milk for the calf, and isn't the egg a chick waiting to be hatched?" (Rao in Satnam 2010: 198). The idea of tribals (or adivasis) as "innocent" and to a certain extent "naive" but mostly "harmless" is prevalent in Indian society. Even a security

analyst in Delhi stated that: 'tribals are so easily impressed that they'll always follow or obey that person that has a gun, whether it is a police officer or a Maoist'. Or, quoted by a police officer in Bhubaneswar: 'tribals are like kids, you can easily win their trust and the Maoists take advantage of them'. But not only government officials engage in this practice. On the side of the defenders of the human rights perspective we also see idealization and simplification of tribal life, for example 'tribals only have their lands, and that is all they'll ever need or want' or 'tribals don't want to be part of mainstream society, and can we blame them? They don't need money or business, they'll just take what they need from the land'.

This practice however, has contributed to the "victimization" of tribal people. It appears like they don't have influence on reality, and that they have no 'agency' in this conflict. This is reflected by one of the recurring issues in the debate, namely whether the Naxalite movement intends to defend tribal rights or only use them for their own benefit. The tribal issue plays an important part in the discourse generated by the movement. There are innumerable examples of written statements in which the protection of tribal people by the Naxalite movement is put forward. For example the activist Kumar writes about Chhattisgarh: 'The adivasis regard the Maoists as their friends for it is these rebels who have stood by them. All the normal channels of redress are closed to them. The police beat them. The political parties are with the Salwa Judum. The courts do not give them a hearing. The media does not care. Were else will they go except the Maoists? When the police attack them, it is the Maoists who save them' (Kumar 2009: 8). This quote indicates that the Naxalites are viewed as the defenders of tribal welfare. The opponents of this view often point to activities that indicate the opposite: for example that tribal people are forced to join the movement, the rape of women, extortion, and lastly the killing of police informers. The superintendent of the police in Koraput explains that articulates that so many people in his district have been killed because they were so-called police informers. But, he said, almost none of them were actual police informers.

6.4 Development: a contested concept

In many areas where the Naxalites movement is present it is stated that development activities decrease. However, as with many issues within the debate on the movement, there is no agreement on the validity of this account. It is often said that the Naxalites prevent development because they prohibit developers from entering the villages and forcefully stop the building of roads, schools and agricultural projects. There are several accounts of development organisations, contractors and non - governmental organisations that were forbidden to work in certain areas by the Naxalite movement. According to a high police official, the Naxalite movement even forces villagers to return blankets, food and other necessities to the development agencies. As with the position of tribal people, the issue of developments is more complicated. For example employees of an development organisation in Sambalpur claim that Naxalites only target those organisations that are suspected of corruption or other crimes involving money meant for welfare and relief schemes. Furthermore they argue that only those contractors that build roads to further industrialization become target of the movement. Thus, although the movement does engage in violent attacks against some actors, they never hamper others. An employee of the Swaminathan Foundation in Koraput also affirms this. He accounts that he once was visiting one of the villages where he

works, he unexpectedly ran into a meeting that the Naxalites were holding. Asking if he was afraid, he said: 'of course not, the villagers know me, they know I do good work and that I am not political'. Instead, he joined the meeting to listen, and went home afterwards. Although lack of development is often attributed to presence of the Naxalite conflict, it appears that in reality, in Koraput, it is far more complex. It appears that some activities by outsiders can continue while others cannot. It remains unclear under what conditions the Naxalite movement does allow development activity. The building of roads and dams seem to attract the most resistance but other kinds of activity, like the trade of forest produce continues. It must also be emphasized that the Naxalite movement also needs resources and in some areas, the Naxalites levy taxes on contractors. Thus paradoxical, the movement is making money of what they say to be fighting. When confronted with this, a Naxalite sympathizer did not see this contradiction as a major issue. He said: 'of course they do, they need to eat and to buy weapons, right? And if the government can levy taxes why shouldn't they?'

What became increasingly evident during the research in Orissa, is that the Naxalites have put forward a new discourse of development by challenging both the state and the market-led development paradigm. The Sambalpur professor Kujur wrote that: 'Maoism has put forward a new discourse of development by challenging both the state and market-led development paradigm. Maoism is not a 'revisionist' doctrine, but a Marxist formulation to address the basic contradiction in an agricultural society where feudal land relations are still well – entrenched' (Kujur 2008:10). As India's growth is not inclusive, many are drawn to an alternate view on development and on the enhancement of their livelihoods. The underclass views economic reforms as being at the expense of their livelihoods. As Arundhati Roy puts it: 'in a country like India, the 'structural adjustment' end of the corporate globalization project is ripping through people's lives. 'Development' projects, massive privatization, and labour 'reforms' are pushing people off their lands and out of their jobs, resulting in a kind of barbaric dispossession that has few parallels in history' (Roy 2004: 39). Hardly any displaced get rehabilitation or compensation, which furthers the view that the government is favouring industrial interests over tribal interests. It often seems like the government equates industrialization with development. In a statement the former Chief Minister of Orissa posed that "nothing will stand in the way of Orissa's industrialization", a warning to the Naxalites that were preventing contractors from entering the remote areas. Naxalites often attack people building roads, as roads make it easier for the police to enter the forested areas. The issue of roads is a recurring theme in the broader debate on the conflict. It is said that roads need to be built to bring development to the infected areas. Whether this is valid or not, the perception by villagers is that the roads are only built to make it easier for the police to regain control over the area. There is no unilateral definition of development, but in this case it seems to mean something totally different for the government as it does for villagers. According to Felix Padel, there must be a re-naming of the words 'development' and 'underdevelopment', as the existence of the first has led to the infliction of measures to 'escape' from the latter. In the dominant narrative 'development' is viewed as 'progress' and the word indirectly implies 'improvement'. In India however, the prevailing development paradigm has firstly failed to comprise the majority of the people and secondly it has led to the displacement of thousands for dams, mining industries and other 'development' projects. What Padel calls a "human sacrifice" in order to satisfy corporate interests (Padel 2011), is applauded by those

who have benefited from the 1991 economic reforms which led to the rapid industrialization of India. By aligning with the poor, criticizing the way 'development' is brought to the people and lastly by offering an alternative, the Naxalites have successfully mobilized persons that were not politically active before. Now even development has become a contested concept in the broader discussion.

6.5 Local manifestations of the Naxalite conflict

Throughout the entire thesis, data collected in affected areas is used as to clarify statements made or to review the applicability of theoretical concepts. In order to provide more specific information on how the conflict is viewed and perceived at the local level, and to what extent the theoretical framework are still applicable, two events will be described to make deductions on this issue. These local case studies give a more profound insight in how this conflict manifests itself in rural areas. As this chapter is concerned with the discursive approach, the events discussed here are derived from discursive data. The first case that will be analysed is an email conversation between human rights activist and a government representative, the sub-collector of Koraput district, about a report on violent incident between tribal people protesting and the police. The second event that will be analysed is the abduction of the collector in Koraput. After negotiations he was set free by the Naxalites and ever since there has been a status quo in the district. Three influential academics from outside Orissa were recruited, on demand of the Naxalites who had abducted him, to conduct the negotiations for his release. The demands as they are formulated give valuable insight in the actual aims of the Naxalite movement, as they were in a position to make demands in exchange for the collector. The described interactions have taken place on the lowest level of interaction between Naxalites and local authorities and therefore provide us with valuable information on how the conflict is demonstrated and interpreted at a local level.

6.5.1 Democracy at its worst: from a shooting incident to tribal welfare

As mentioned, the first event discussed here is a discussion, over email, on a report by a human rights organization. This conversation between human rights activists and the sub-collector in Koraput gives insight in the complex interaction on the micro level in Koraput district. The subject of the emails is the fact-finding report, "Democracy at its worst" written by a human rights organization called Action Aid. The subject is a violent incident in November 2009. Tribal organisations had gathered to protest against land acquisition and the police fired at the rally, several tribal protestors died and many were wounded. Among the tribal protestors was a group called Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sang (CMAS). According to the Orissa police, this group is affiliated with the CPI-(Maoist), the political wing of the Naxalite movement. Conversely, an activist interviewed in Bhubaneswar claims that it is grassroots organisation and it only got into contact with Naxalites when the police chased their members into the forests. As explained before, often people and organizations are branded as 'Maoist' when critical of the government. Whether this is the situation here cannot be stated with certainty, yet it should be noted that it is subject to discussion.

On the shooting incident in 2009, the report from Action Aid states that the local police fired indiscriminately at the unarmed crowd, the police replied that the crowd was planning to attack the police station. The acts on what exactly happened are contested but that is not where the relevance of this case

study for this thesis lies. Instead, it is in the exchange of accusations, the naming and labelling of causes and the appointment of guilt where important information for this thesis is found. The described interactions have taken place on the lowest level of interaction between Naxalites and local authorities and therefore provide us with valuable information on how the conflict is demonstrated and interpreted at a local level. Three earlier described issues occur in this case study: first there is the contradiction between those who state that this group is a tribal self-defence group and others who state that they are Maoists. Secondly, the intentions of this group are debated, but their intentions are criminalized to justify the use of violence. Thirdly, the issue of land was the main ignition, which eventually led to escalation of violence.

A human rights activist writes: *"I am very disillusioned with processes like judicial inquiries, having witnessed them at close quarters"* and *"at the present, the state is equally lawless as the leftist groups, violating every fundamental rights of its citizens: beginning with the very fundamental right to life and getting away with it. In fact the state in its present form today is more lawless than the extreme left groups, which is what makes these groups so alluring to many (...)* It is time we all developed zero tolerance for the lawless ways of our governments". On the fact-finding report: *"Our fact finding is based on people's views because the police refused to speak with us, rather they threatened us"*.

A striking remark is that the police were inaccessible for this fact-finding report, as most of the police men encountered for this research have been very willingly to give interviews. What this quote furthermore exemplifies is that again the causes are sought in structural aspects of Indian society and more specifically the lack of justice. This human rights activist blames the government for the increasing of left wing extremism, as they are violating every fundamental right of its citizens. This quote lastly emphasizes that there is a general feeling of weariness when it comes to accounting the government for human rights violations.

In his personal response to the author of the report the sub-collector of Koraput states: *"Your report is factually incorrect and one sided. It generally happens if one looks at the issues with prejudice and has other extraneous motives"*. He continues: *"Who is responsible for this all? We all so called activists, rightist, leftist, NGO, civil society (and) of course politicians use the tribals. Use them in whatever situation they are. All the communist guys who were guiding them all along are nowhere to be seen. They have very conveniently escaped the place leaving the tribals in a mess. We use them whatever way we like. Some people make career writing about them in which it becomes readable and attractive, some others work for them making career and earning money and accolades for it. In the name of helping tribals we do more harm to them"*.

Above indicates that government officials like this sub – collector also perceive the tribals as victims of the whole situation, without taking notion of the mobilization of tribals themselves. Secondly, the author recognizes the fact that politicians have used tribals. This is remarkable, as none of the other respondents in government functions has openly acknowledged their own contribution to the situation with regards to tribal welfare. Thirdly, according to the writer, it seems to be everyone's fault, except for the tribals

themselves. Given the appalling circumstances many tribals have to live in this might be understandable. Still, it is noteworthy that tribals are only portrayed as victims of 'everyone else' involved. Lastly, it is interesting to see how an argument on a shooting incident is becoming an emotional discussion on a completely different matter.

6.5.2 Naxalites making demands

The second event that will be discussed for this thesis is the abduction of the collector, the bureaucratic head of the Koraput district in February 2011. Naxalites abducted the collector, Vineel Krishna, when he went into some of the most interior pockets of Koraput district without any security personnel. The details on why the collector went inside those areas, without any police protection remain debated. According to many, the collector is a very popular man and the general view is that he went inside to 'view with his own eyes' how the situation was in the villages. Although the Director Inspector General of the Koraput police was not keen on giving too much details about it in an interview, he acknowledged that he had found it 'unwise' of the collector and that it had led to an 'uncomfortable situation'. After it became clear that he was abducted, a team of negotiators was formed and after some three or four days he was released. The negotiators were academics known to be sympathetic to the Naxalite movement and released several statements on the negotiation process. The demands made by the Naxalites in exchange for the collectors were made public and are listed below. What is important to note is that the collector was released without any commitment of the government to actually comply with the demands merely they expressed their commitment to seriously consider them.

- 1) Declare Nookadora and Kondareddy communities as Scheduled Tribes.
- 2) Stop Polavaram Project which is going to submerge villages in Orissa and Telangana.
- 3) Issue Pattas to the Tribals of Koraput, Malkangiri, Narayanpatna, Visakhapatnam whose lands have been illegally possessed by others.
- 4) Construct a canal from Kotapalli to Maneguda to provide irrigation facilities to Kalimela farmers.
- 5) Due to torture by the Koraput jail authorities and lack of provision for health care Tadangi Gangulu and Ratanu Sirike have died. Pay compensation to their families.
- 6) Release central committee member Sheela'di who is suffering due to ill health and Padma who is in Chhattisgarh jail.
- 7) Stop the mining operations and cancel the mining lease of Mali, Deomali Bauxite mines in Visakha district.
- 8) Cancel all Memorandums of Understanding (MoU's) signed with various Multi-National Cooperation's (MNC's)
- 9) A tribal by the name Sitanna was taken away by the police from Narayanapatnam, Dusundi village in November 2010. Indicate what has happened to him? If he is alive, release him.
- 10) Pay compensation to the Farmers of cut off and submerged areas of Balimela reservoir. Since there is a possibility of the same area getting submerged in future, the farmers should be provided with alternative facilities.
- 11) Provide justice to the displaced persons of Nalco project in Damanjodi.

- 12) Immediately stop Green Hunt operation
- 13) By withdrawing the cases, release the tribals and Chasi Mulia workers in Koraput and Malkangiri jails
- 14) Release central committee member Ashtok Sen and other members. They are in Malkangiri jail.

Although this list of demands might seem random and perhaps would need separate explanation, it still provides us with important information on what the movement actually strives for in a local context. Almost all of their demands relate to local issues and projects, which might be expected as local issues form the incentives for mobilization in the first place. However, the welfare of tribals also prevails in this list of demands: for example the first demand: 'declare Nookadora and Kondareaddy communities as Scheduled Tribes'. Being or not being labelled a Scheduled Tribe has great importance in India, as a Scheduled Tribe certain claims on land and relief schemes can be made under the Indian Constitution. The thirds demand also concerned the declaration of a certain group as tribal, because now their land has become 'illegally possessed' by others. The Orissa government might reject the belief that the land is 'illegally possessed' but it still relates to tribal welfare. The following demands also include themes as tribals right to land, irrigation and displacements, all issues that are connected to the tribal situation in Orissa. An interesting remark is also that on two large construction projects, the Balimela reservoir and the Nalco plant, they ask for justice and compensation for displaced, instead of focusing on the injustice done by the displacement in the first place. Looking at the demands further, only two of them relate to the broader Maoist aims: namely 'cancel all Memorandums of Understanding signed with various MNC's' and 'immediately stop Green Hunt operation'. These demands do relate to the broader discourse propagated by the movement and those are the demands least likely to be taken seriously by the Orissa government. What can be learned from this list is that although it is often claimed that Naxalites are only using tribals for their own gain, there clearly is concern over tribal welfare in the movement, as most of their demands relate to tribal issues. It cannot be overemphasized that the situation can be different in other areas, yet this example indicates that in this district, the tribal issue is an important aspect of the Naxalite activity.

7. Conclusions

This thesis has consistently focused on the question of how the Naxalite conflict can be explained. In doing so, it derived explanations from three different perspectives: firstly the structural violence perspective, secondly theoretical approaches to conflict and lastly through a discursive analysis. These approaches should not be regarded as vast, separate entities. Instead they are likely to influence each other through complex relations between structural components that further conflict proneness, and agency related processes mobilizing people to involve themselves in violent conflict. The relation between structure and agency in conflict, here articulated as the distinction between structural sources of conflict and theories of agency related processes as framing and mobilization, remains subject to debate. As most scholars acknowledge, it is often a combination of both, and this is also reflected in the Naxalite conflict. In the following, important observations and conclusions will be set forth. This thesis essentially has described the Naxalite conflict in India and the ways this conflict can be explained. In social research however, the “why” question does not suffice as it is deemed necessary to connect the collected data with broader theoretical themes and concepts. Throughout this thesis, many contributing factors to the Naxalite conflict have been named and given a place within the myriad of causes. The structure of the conclusion is as follows: first I will reflect on four recurrent and intertwined themes, namely the use of violence by the movement; the use of ideology; the position of the tribal population and lastly the question of development. Second, the theoretical frameworks used to interpret the conflict will be assessed as to appreciate their ability to provide explanations for the Naxalite conflict. Lastly, this conclusion aims to reflect on the study of conflict in general by elaborating on the personal experiences and objectives.

The use of violence is a central theme in the wider debate on the Naxalite conflict. Although there are many social movements and other civil society actors articulating grievances, the support for the Naxalite movement is increasing, despite the use violence. Apparently adherents to the movement do not feel that grievances can sufficiently be addressed through non – violent methods. The Naxalites themselves justify the use of violence by stating that the system is inherently violent and this message has found fertile ground in remote rural areas where lack of governance combined with industrialization has created alienation with mainstream politics. Still, the Naxalite movement mostly takes up local grievances to mobilize particularly tribal people in deprived, rural areas. By focusing on shared economic and social grievances of the rural poor the Naxalites have made it increasingly difficult for the government to frame the issue solely in security terms. The ideology remains an important feature of the Naxalite movement and supporters of the “law and order” approach often refer to it as an explanatory factor of the conflict. Nevertheless, the only can refer to written statements and the question of how ideology affects these mobilizing processes remains underexposed. It could be stated that the ideology is used by the opponents to frame the issue as a choice between violence and non – violence, which has alienated the movement further from the mainstream. On the other hand, most people do agree on the fact that ideology is not the main mobilizing factor and even the toughest hardliners acknowledge that essentially it is a problem of development. As the movement has increasingly focused on mobilizing tribals their position in Indian society needs to be clarified. It is evident that they suffer from deprivation, neglect and lack of governance. This situation however, also existed before the Naxalite movement took interest in tribal welfare. What is

argued here is that the development paradigm imposed by the state has a strong focus on industrialization, which has negative effects on the livelihoods of the tribal population. This tendency to focus on industrialization is paralleled by developments in the civil society, where options for organisation and protest have increased leading to increasing articulation of grievances. In other words, it could be argued that the development paradigm imposed by the state, paralleled with increasing options to organize and protest has led to more conflict. Because, and this is the crux of this argument lies, tribal communities have not yet experienced the fruits of democracy or development. Years of neglect, exploitation and lack of basic services have led to the creation of fertile ground for a movement that was essentially on its decline. Lastly, deriving from the above, is the issue of development or actually, the question of 'what is development?' Because this is where the state has lost its tribal population to the Naxalite movement. For the tribal population, the question of development is still determined by the issue of land ownership. For the state on the other hand, development means mines, dams and roads. The tribal population is essentially not concerned with accessibility or being brought to the mainstream. With the imposing of a certain development paradigm, the state has eventually alienated its tribal population from the mainstream, and resistance grew. It is often said that the Naxalites stepped into a political vacuum, what I would like to add is that the Naxalites stepped into a political vacuum that was filled with grievances on how the state imposed development without bringing any governance structure or any basic services.

In this thesis three perspectives have been used to define and explain the Naxalite conflict. Through the structural violence perspective, structural aspects of Indian society fostering conflict have been illustrated. It is argued that these factors alone do not sufficiently explain the rationale of mobilization, also because these factors also occur in regions where it has not led to conflict. When focussing on the second perspective, more in depth knowledge is obtained on the agency factor. Although theoretical knowledge on the social movements, mobilization theory and framing processes provides valuable insights on how this conflict can be put in a broader perspective, specific intentions and perceptions remain underexposed. All theoretical concepts discussed in this thesis have resemblances when applied to the Naxalite movement, but still they do not grasp the complexity of the entire conflict and when applied to local settings the concepts give little guidance. Concepts like discontent as a mobilizing factor, or securitization as a practice, can easily be applied but give little insight on how the conflict is experienced and perceived through the people directly involved in it. The discursive approach is therefore the most suitable to get grip on the complexity of this conflict as it is experienced and performed. The discursive analysis has shown that the two main perspectives, the "law and order" and the "root causes" perspectives are not as opposing as it might seem at first hand. Propagators of the first recognize the development aspect, and propagators of the second acknowledge that the use of violence has not helped the tribal population. The biggest disparity then lies in the fact that the "root causes" approach relates the conflict through structural violence through the system, whereas the "law and order" approach does not include this in its assessments. The discursive approach has also been useful to point to the domination of issues of tribal welfare in the activities of the Naxalite movement, hereby undermining the focus on the use of violence. On the other hand, without the knowledge abstracted from the other perspectives, the discursive

analysis would not be sufficient to understand the Naxalite conflict and discursive analysis always necessitates a contextual framework in which situational factors are described. Therefore, this thesis will conclude with the belief that although discursive analysis enables to grasp local complexities, it should be used alongside methods because structural factors need to be included to complete the understanding of this conflict.

7.1 Personal considerations

In the field of conflict studies, one comes across various concepts like 'poverty', 'development' and 'justice' as contributing factors to conflict and obviously this is not unique to India. While doing fieldwork I was mostly focused on obtaining data from as many angles as was possible. After the first ten interviews or so, the outline of the conflict becomes clearer and people start telling you things that other have said before them. That is the moment when I as a researcher tried to map explanations and to look for patterns. What happens however is that in a way you've become "immune" for the meaning of certain words and concepts, because you have heard them so many times. For example in this case, in every interview people would tell me about the miserable conditions of tribal people in general. Then, when I visited tribal areas I saw their living conditions and understood what people had tried to tell me, but in a sense it had nothing to do with the words anymore because it was all labelled as 'poverty'. In a sense, while doing discursive analysis I lost the meaning of words. The same goes for the concept of "mobilization". Several scholars have tried to identify causes for violent mobilization, for example through concepts like deprivation of human needs or relative deprivation. The fact that I know that people are deprived actually tells very little about why someone decides to join a movement that uses violence against authorities. It could be because he or she did not see any other option to improve living condition or maybe he or she was ignited by an ideological fire: the point here is that I actually don't know why people are joining. On the basis of theories explained in this thesis I can make an informed presumption, at the most. There are obviously factors contributing to this consideration as me not being Indian, which has lead language and culture barriers. On the other hand, being an outsider is also an advantage as it fosters unbiased research. However, as it has proven to be immensely difficult to get in contact with members of the movement and because villagers clearly feared to talk openly about their opinions and perceptions of the movement and its activities it remains difficult to make assumptions on the reasons why people mobilize.

Still, I would never state that the field of conflict studies is meaningless, research in the field of conflict has proved to be very useful for understanding conflict and putting contemporary conflict in perspective. But the question one must ask is also if understanding is the ultimate aim, or do we as conflict scholars also aim to advice or even influence. I came across this reflection after many interviews with police officers who sometimes asked me after I posed critical questions: 'what would you do if you were me and your people were being killed only for being a police man?' None of them expected me to have an adequate answer but still the question lingered on. Therefore, people engaged in conflict studies should realize that being an outsider is an advantage that people rarely have. Also because every time I thought 'now I have it, now I understand what is going on' the next day I would talk to someone who would help me to lose this

brief feeling of confidence, but as stated before, maybe that is what India does to a person, as Amartya Sen already said, everything you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true.

Bibliography

Azad (2006) 'Maoists in India: a Rejoinder', *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No 41, 4379 – 83.

Benford, Robert D. and Snow, David A. (2000) 'Framing processes and social movements: an overview and assessment', *Annual Review Sociology*.

Brubaker, R., Laitin, D. (1998) 'Ethnic and Nationalist Violence', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O. (1997) 'Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies,' *Review of International Studies*, 23, 2: 241-250.

Buzan, B. Wæver, O. de Wilde, J. (1998) '*Security: a new framework for analysis*', Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

Chakrabarti, B. Kujur, R.K. (2009) '*Maoism in India: reincarnation of ultra-left wing extremism in the twenty-first century*', New York & London: Routledge.

Chakrabarti, S. (2010) 'Evolving Insurgency and India's Counter-Insurgency options: Entering into the age of Fourth-Generation Warfare?', *The Quarterly Journal*, Spring 2010, 65 – 78.

Chandhoke, N. (2010) 'Putting Civil Society in its place', in Vanaik, A., Bhargava, R. (ed), *Understanding Contemporary India: Critical Perspectives*, Orient Black Swan, 91 – 104.

Chenoy, Anuradha M., Chenoy, Kamal A. Mitra (2010) '*Maoist and other armed conflicts*', Penguin Books.

DeBlicck, S. (2006) 'Why Mao? Maoist insurgencies in India and Nepal', *Peace, Conflict & Development*, Issue 9, July.

Della Porta, D. (1995) '*Social movements, political violence and the state*', Cambridge University Press.

Della Porta, D. (2008) 'Research on Social Movements and Political Violence', *Quarterly Sociology: Special issue on political violence*, 31: 221 – 230.

Demmers, J., Forthcoming, '*Theories of Violent Conflict*', New York & London: Routledge.

Devasahayam, M.G. (2011) 'Civil Servants: Unite! Babus have nothing to lose but their servility', *G-Files Magazine*, 4: 12, 16 – 18.

Dreze, J., Sen, A. (2002) 'Democratic Practice and Social Inequality in India', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 37: 6.

- Galtung, J. (1969) 'Violence, Peace and Peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6 (3) 167-191.
- Galtung, J. (1990) 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27 (3) 291 – 305.
- Goffman, E. (1974) *'Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience'*, New York Harper Colophon.
- Guha, R. (2009) 'Two India's', *National Interest*, July/August 2009, 31 – 41.
- Government of Maharashtra (1994) 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches', Vol. 13: Dr. Ambedkar: The Principal Architect of the Constitution of India. Bombay: Education Department.
- Gurr, T.D. (2007) 'Minorities, nationalists and Islamists; managing communal conflict in the twenty-first century', in Crocker, C., Hampson, F.O., and All, P., (eds), *Leashing the dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, Washington DC, United States Institute for Peace.
- Gurr, T.D. (1970) *'Why Men Rebel'*, Princeton University Press.
- Hall, S. (1982) 'The rediscovery of ideology: return to the repressed in media studies', in Bennet T., Curon, J., Woolacott, J., Gurevitch, M., (eds.), *Culture, Society and the Media*, New York: Methuen.
- Jabri, V. (1996), *'Discourses on violence: conflict analysis reconsidered'*, Manchester: University Press.
- Jha, S.K. (2008) 'Political Bases and Dimensions of the Naxalite Movement', in Ramana, P.V. (ed) *The Naxal Challenge: Causes, Linkages and Policy options*, New Delhi: Dorling Kindersly, 62 – 82.
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2003) 'The ontology of "Political Violence": action and identity in civil wars', *The American Political Science Association*, 475 – 494.
- Kanbur, R. (2007) 'Poverty and Conflict: The Inequality Link', *Coping with crisis*, Working Paper Series, International Peace Academy.
- Karmali, N. (2010) 'India's Richest', *Forbes magazine*, September 9, 2010.
- Kataria, S.K. (2010) 'Left Extremism in India, Causes and Remedies', *The Indian Police Journal*, Vol. LVII-No. 3, July – September 2010.
- King, C. (2004) 'The Micropolitics of social violence', *World politics*, 56, 431 – 455.

King, C. (2007) 'Power, Social Violence and Civil Wars', in Crocker, C., Hampson, F.O., and All, P., (eds), *Leashing the dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, Washington DC, United States Institute for Peace.

Kujur, R. K. (2011) 'Political violence: a theoretical discourse', in *Sambalpur University Journal of Politics*, Vol. 1 Issue 1, March 2011, 3 – 26.

Kumar, H. (2009) 'Who is the problem, the CPI (Maoist) or the Indian State', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIV No. 47, 8 – 12.

Lama, M.P. (2000) 'Internal displacement in India: causes, protection and dilemmas', *Forced Migration review*, No. 8, 24 – 26.

Mao Tse-Tung (1973) '*Introducing the Communist*', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. II, Foreign Language Press: Peking (Beijing).

Misra, N., Pandita, R. (2010) '*The Absent State: Insurgency as an Excuse for Misgovernance*', Hachette India.

Mohanty, M. (2006) 'Two faces of the Indian state: Kalahandi to Kalinagar and operation Barga to Lalgargh', *Mainstream*, Vol. XLIV, No. 43, 23 – 30.

Mohanty, M. (2010) 'Social Movements in Creative Society: Of Autonomy and Interconnection', in Vanaik, A., Bhargava, R. (ed) *Understanding Contemporary India: Critical Perspectives*, Orient Black Swan, 303 – 322.

Nayak, N., (2011), 'Maoist movement in Urban India: Emerging Issues and Threats', in *Sambalpur University Journal of Politics*, Vol. 1 Issue 1, March 2011, 55 – 66.

Padel, F. (2011) '*Sacrificing People: Invasions of a Tribal Landscape*', New Delhi: Orient Black Swan.

Piazza, J. A. (2009) 'Economic development, poorly managed political conflict and terrorism in India', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32, 406 – 419.

Rai, P., (2007), 'Rural Job Scam: Survey Report on implementation of NREGA in Orissa', *Centre of Environment and Food Security*, New Delhi.

Rao, M.S.A. (ed). (1979) '*Social movements in India*', New Delhi, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, last edition: 2008.

Report on the Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihood in the Unorganized Sector, (2009), Chairman: Arjun Sengupta.

Report of an Expert Group to Planning Commission (2008) 'Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas', New Delhi, *Government of India*, Chairman: B.D. Sharma.

Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty (2010) Chairman: Tendulkar, *Government of India Planning Commission*.

Roy, A. (2004) 'An ordinary person's guide to Empire', *South End Press*.

Sahni, A. (2011) '*India's Maoists: Ideology, strategy and response*', New Delhi, Institute for conflict management.

Satnam (2010) '*Langalnama: travels in a Maoist guerrilla zone*', Penguin Books, afterword by Varavara Rao.

Schröder, I.W., Schmitt, B.E. (2001) 'Introduction: violent imaginaries and violent practices' in Schmitt and Schröder (eds) *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, Routledge.

Sen, A. (2005) 'Contrary India', *The Economist*, November 18, in: *The world in 2006*, print edition.

Sen, R., Teitelbaum, E. (2010) 'Mass Mobilization and the Success of India's Maoists', *Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies*, City University of New York.

Seth, D.L. (2004) 'Globalization and New Politics of Micro-Movements', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 1. 45 – 58.

Singh, P. (1995) '*The Naxalite Movement in India*', New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

Singh, P. (2011) 'Terror's name is Red', book review in the *Sunday Pioneer*, February 13, 2011.

Shah, G. (2002) '*Social Movements and the State*', New Delhi: SAGE publications.

Snow, D. A., Byrd, S. A. (2007) 'Ideology, Framing processes and Islamic terrorist movements', *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review*, 12 (1): 119 – 136.

Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. (1988) 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization', *International Social Movement Research*, 1: 197 – 217.

Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. (2000) 'Comment on Oliver and Johnston: Clarifying the Relationship between Framing and Ideology', *Mobilization*, 5: 55 – 60.

Sukumar, N. (2010) 'State Institutions and Poverty: A case study of Chittoor', in Vanaik, A., Bhargava, R. (eds), *Understanding Contemporary India: Critical Perspectives*, Orient Black Swan, 149 – 175.

Sundar, N. (2011) 'India's Vietnam? Constructing Naxalism as India's biggest Security Threat', in Kugelman, M. (ed) *India's Contemporary Security Challenges*, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 46 – 68.

Suykens, B. (2010) 'Diffuse Authority in the Beedi Commodity Chain: Naxalite and State Governance in Tribal Telangana, India', *Development and Change*, 41: 1, 153 – 178.

Tarrow, S. (1998) *Power in Movement: social movements and contentious politics*, Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (2004) 'Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists', *Sociological Theory*, 22: 5 – 13.

Verghese, B.G. (2008) *Rage, Reconciliation and Security: managing India's diversities*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India.

Waeber, O., (1995), 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in Ronnie, D.L. (ed) *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Wooffitt, R. (2001) 'Analysing Factual Accounts', in Gilbert, N., (ed) *Researching Social Life*, second edition, Sage publications, 324 – 342.

World Bank (2000) *World Development Report 2001: Poverty*, New York: Oxford University Press.