

**INEBRIETY AND INDIGENEITY: THE MORAL GOVERNANCE OF
ADIVASIS AND ALCOHOL IN JHARKHAND, INDIA**

By
Roger Begrich

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland
October 2013

© 2013 Roger Begrich
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

This dissertation is an investigation of alcohol and indigeneity in India. Based on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the state of Jharkhand, I aim to describe the complex and contradictory roles that alcohol plays in the lives of people variously referred to as adivasis, tribals, or Scheduled Tribes. By taking a closer look at the presence of alcohol in various registers of adivasi lives (economy, religion, social relations) as well as by studying the ways alcohol is implicated in the constitution of adivasis as a distinct category of governmental subjects, I hope to provide a nuanced and multilayered account of the relationships between adivasis and alcohol. I will thereby conceptualize these relationships in terms of obligations, which will allow me to approach them without the constraints of determination or causality inherent in concepts like addiction and/or alcoholism, and to circumvent the notion of compulsion implied in ideas about adivasis as either culturally or genetically predisposed to drinking.

In the chapters that follow, I will first discuss how the criterion of alcohol consumption is implicated, discursively, in the constitution of adivasis as a separate population, and a distinct subject category through governmental procedures of knowledge formation and administration. I will then describe the ways alcohol is present, as a substance, as a commodity, and as an intoxicant, in two distinct landscapes of Jharkhand: an (unauthorized) settlement of migrant laborers adjacent to a massive industrial enterprise at the outskirts of the state capital Ranchi, and a rural environment inhabited by

subsistence farmers, who had, for almost three decades until shortly before I began my fieldwork, resisted against a planned, massive hydro-electric dam. I will furthermore investigate the regulation of alcohol, and show how regulatory mechanisms approach tribal drinking as a problem *sui generis*, thereby distinguishing between populations capable of responsible drinking, and others (i.e., *adivasis*) that are not. And I will finally discuss the role of alcohol in relations between *adivasis*, as well as in their relations to spirits, deities, and ancestors, and approach the relationships between *adivasis* and alcohol as a problem of moral governance and ethical self-making.

Advisors: Aaron D. Goodfellow, Jane I. Guyer (Chair)

Readers: Rina Agarwala, Rebecca Brown, Renée Marlin-Bennett

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the modest result of a long and agonizing effort, during which many people generously and patiently supported me. I am immensely grateful to all of them. First and foremost, I am intensely indebted to the people of the places I call Koylatoli, Jil-ingsereng and Diankel, and to the many, many Adivasis in and around Ranchi, as well as throughout the Koel-Karo region, who at one point or another have shared their time or wisdom with me. Without their generosity, their patience, their hospitality, and their trust, my work would have been impossible. I wrote this dissertation for them, just as much as I wrote it in the hope of advancing knowledge, or to obtain my degree. In particular, I would like to mention Gyan Mani Ekka, Sagar Kandir, Sirat Kachchap Stephen Kachchap, Anup Minz, Soma Munda, Lorentus Guria, Rejan Guria, Roylan Guria, Notrott Guria, Birsa Nag, Gopal Tirkey, Binod Topno, Birsa Topno, Idan Topno, and John Topno. Also, the conversations with Ajay ShahDeo, Sanjay Sahu, Sunil Sahu, Shanti Sawansi, Nagendra Nath Singh, and Sister Anna Varkey were instrumental, as was the hospitality of K.J. Anthony and his family.

This dissertation is an effort of scholarship, and I am deeply grateful to my teachers and advisors in the Department of Anthropology at the Johns Hopkins University for having made this effort possible. Without the patience, persistence, and the sober wisdom of Jane Guyer I would probably still be struggling with writing. And the help I received from Aaron Goodfellow cannot be measured with words. I am convinced that he is among the

smartest anthropologists and the best teachers currently alive, and I feel blessed, not only to have learned so much from him, but also for his friendship. I am also deeply indebted to Veena Das, from whom I have learned so much over the years, and I am grateful for having been her student.

A very great deal of the intellectual development I underwent in my years as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins did not take place in the classroom, but was forged in interactions with fellow students. I want to express my appreciation for this, in particular to Thomas Cousins, Andres Dapuez, Chris Kolb, Citlalli Reyes Kipp, Sylvain Perdigon, Valeria Procupez, Isaias Rojas-Perez, Aditi Saraf, Vaibhav Saria, and David Schrag and Bhrigupati Singh.

In the course of the years, and in particular during to my extended periods of absence from Baltimore, I was fortunate to have profited from inspiring conversations, and received important inputs from teachers who are not (or no longer) at Johns Hopkins, namely Hoon Song, Pamela Reynolds, Lawrence Cohen, and Pratiksha Baxi, as well as Roma Chaterji. I am particularly grateful and deeply indebted to Shalini Randeria for her tremendous support and her wonderful mentorship. I owe much to her phenomenal energy and her commitment – she keeps providing hope in the possibility of scholarship, even in the most hostile of circumstances. And I thank Kaushik Ghosh for the wisdom and the friendship he keeps sharing with me – and for embodying, what in my view, scholarship should be about. I had heard of him for quite a while – first in academia, and

then in the field – before we finally met. His rapport in the Koel-Karo region was so good, that I never had to explain my work to anyone there – simply referring to Kaushik elucidated the purpose of my visits and my curiosity, and I was warmly welcomed. My gratitude also goes to Mohammad Yusuf Ansari, my Hindi teacher – I wish I could have been as good a student of the language, as he is a teacher of it.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Becky Daniels, Pia Kumar, Melody Walker, and especially, to Richard Helman – without whom this dissertation would have been impossible. Among the many others whose help was indispensable for my research, and to whom I am immensely grateful are Joy Baxla, Birsing Horo, Dilip Tirkey, Bijay Topno, Roshan Xalxo, as well as Razia Hamid, Fatima Moumouni, and especially Shashi Bhushan Bari and Lynn Huber.

Over the years, conversations with fellow anthropologists have shaped and improved my work, and have given me hope for the future of our discipline. I would like to thank, therefore, Hussein Agrama, Evangelos Karagiannis, Deepak Mehta, Nandini Sundar, Andrea Mühlebach and Andrew Gilbert, Mubbashir Abbas Rizvi, as well as Carlo Caduff, Rohit Jain, Jago Wyssling, and Ayla Zacek. My gratitude for wisdom, help, and wonderful conversations also go to Sarada Balagopalan, Alia Hasan-Khan, Bea Glaser, and Elina Horo.

When I first returned from my fieldwork, academia seemed utterly removed from anything that mattered in the world, and for two months I found it impossible to even pick up a scholarly text. But then I began teaching, and I discovered the beauty of my duty towards my students, which returned meaningfulness and purpose to being a scholar. I thank all my students in Baltimore and Zürich for this, and for allowing me to learn so much from them.

I am also grateful for the friendship of Tanja Berger, Laurenz Bolliger (thanks, man, for the title of chapter two!), Daniele Ganser, Philipp Schweighauser, Marco Storni, and Ursula Regehr. And very special thanks go to Ratnaker Bhengra and Bineet Mundu – not only for the innumerable ways in which they have helped me in my research over the years, but also for the wonderful gift of their friendship. I sincerely hope this dissertation will not disappoint them.

Four people who would have loved to see this dissertation completed have had to leave this world too early. My grief over their loss is slightly lessened by my gratitude for having shared time with them, and for the various ways they supported my work: Barbara Lüem was partially responsible for lighting the spark of passion for anthropology in me, and Ramdayal Munda was eager for scholars to study Jharkhand, and always very supportive of my research. Bijoy Kr. Srivastava, his intellect, his curiosity, and his knowledge were great inspirations – talking to him always meant learning, and I still find it difficult to accept the fact that I cannot talk to him any longer. My uncle Hans Heiner Kno-

bel was taken away much too soon, and much too quick. His love and support were very important to me, and he is dearly missed.

My gratitude also goes to Roswitha Brengmann, for being part of the family, and for understanding so much and so well. I have much, much gratitude and respect for Brother Ashiq, Jamila, Shahanaaz, Sohail, and Yusef Daulatzai, who have welcomed me into their very special family, and from whom I am learning so much. Their commitment to justice and their achievements are phenomenal inspirations. To Jamila Daulatzai I owe very, very special thanks. Without her support much of my post-fieldwork existence would have been considerably more strenuous and difficult. And I am grateful to the Amani family for their love and their support. Rishiraj Pravahan and his amazing family (in Cal and in Cali) have been at my side since my very first day at Johns Hopkins. I admire their extraordinary commitments to education and social justice, and their love and their support have been a true blessing to me, and I am grateful for having become part of their family.

Finally, the impossible: there are no ways to express my gratitude to Anila Daulatzai for her companionship, and for providing so much love and so much light, nor will I ever be able to do justice to the love and support I received from my family. Anila's selfless determination to do the right thing, no matter how hard it might be, is extraordinarily inspiring. Walking the paths of life and of scholarship together with her is an exceptional blessing. The immensity of the care and affection of my sister Annette Begrich never cease to give comfort and to motivate, and I admire how helpful her unmitigated intelligence can

be. The thirst for knowledge of my mother Traudl Begrich-Knobel have certainly shaped me, and I hope that just like her, I will never tire of caring and of asking questions. And my father Rainer Begrich has taught me how to ask questions, to never take anything for granted, no matter how authoritative or taken-for-granted a form of knowledge might be. The education their parenthood has given me was as important for my scholarship as the many, many years of studying in schools, universities, and libraries, and I am truly grateful for all this privilege. In the years of working towards my doctorate, I often had to think that it was utterly unreasonable for them to keep standing by me, no matter what. But they never stopped believing in me, and I owe everything to them. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

Roger Begrich

Zürich, Switzerland , October 2013

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	4
Chapter I: Introduction.....	13
Prelude: The drunken adivasi.....	13
Overview over the argument: Tracing the flows of alcohol.....	16
Obligation.....	20
Incorporative and exclusive governmentality.....	22
Autological subject and genealogical society.....	24
The research project.....	26
Beginnings.....	26
Sites and methods.....	31
The Drinking Method.....	33
Chapter overview.....	39
Second chapter.....	39
Third chapter.....	43
Fourth chapter.....	44
Fifth Chapter.....	46
An afterthought on the trajectory of my research project.....	49
Chapter II: Coming to terms.....	53
Who or what are adivasis?.....	54
Mangra.....	54
James.....	56
Taxonomies.....	59
Taxonomical shifts: the Kurmis.....	61
Measuring differences between castes and tribes.....	64
Primitivization and labor markets.....	69
Anthropologically minded administration: difference and the prevention of resistance.....	71

Inclusive and exclusive governmentalities	74
Aboriginals or backward Hindus?.....	77
Classificatory practices of the state.....	81
Contemporary terminologies: adivasi, vanvasi, moolvasi.....	83
The transnational perspective: indigenous peoples.....	87
Transnational vs. local perspectives.....	89
Incorporative and exclusive governmentalities.....	92
Domicile riots of 2002.....	92
The Adivasi Chhatra Sangh.....	96
Adivasi alterity as a relational subject position.....	101
Who or what are adivasis: tracing governmental rationalities.....	103
Tracing continuities: essential others.....	104
Tracing continuities: population management as counterinsurgency.....	105
By way of conclusion: returning to the taxonomic murk of adivasi religion.....	108
Difference as a mode of belonging.....	111
No liquor license.....	114
Chapter III: Landscapes, livelihoods, and liquor.....	116
Koylatoli.....	116
Livelihood, and liquor.....	121
Precariousness.....	124
The success of displacement.....	127
Jilingsereng and Diankel.....	130
Livelihood, and liquor, slightly different.....	133
The failure of displacement.....	136
A landscape of resistance.....	138
Reinventing the resistance.....	142
Research in Jharkhand (insight into a political landscape).....	145
Chapter IV: Regulating alcohol and indigenous subjects.....	150
Concerns about alcohol and the female subject in Ranchi.....	151
Contradictory legal norms.....	153

Exceptional governance.....	157
Gautam.....	158
Under the influence of morality.....	160
Gandhi.....	161
Constitutional mandate for prohibition.....	165
The “false notions” and “queer thoughts” of low castes and aboriginals.....	167
Recognition of tribal difference.....	171
Tribal drinking: a problem sui generis.....	174
Prohibition for a race of drunkards.....	177
Anomalies to the norm.....	179
Birbal.....	181
Lack of enforcement	183
Law enforcement by outlaws, or whose sovereignty is it anyway?.....	185
Concluding remarks on the population-specific governance of alcohol.....	187
Chapter V: Drinking as Moral Obligation & Ethical Practice.	193
Determined to drink.....	196
Drinking as obligation.....	205
The original gift.....	210
Rice beer relations.....	217
Le Souci de Soi(f).....	225
Drinking as Ethical Practice.....	227
Soma.....	227
Mani.....	233
Jeffrey.....	235
Conclusion: conflicting obligations	237
Conclusion	243
References.....	252
Curriculum Vitae.....	268

Chapter I: Introduction

Prelude: The drunken adivasi

On February 2nd 2001, some 4000-5000 people, mostly adivasis of the Munda tribe,¹ gathered in front of the police station in Tapkara, a small market town approximately 80 km southwest of Ranchi, the capital of the Indian state of Jharkhand. The villagers had gathered to protest an incident of police brutality that had occurred the evening before. After a few hours, and after local leaders had submitted a memorandum to the officials in the station, the police opened fire with rifles and sten guns. According to witnesses, the shooting continued for approximately an hour, and as per official police statements, 136 rounds were fired. Five people died on the spot, three others later succumbed to their wounds, and 36 others were injured, some of whom with permanent disabilities. When the police fled the scene later that night they left behind four burned down vehicles and a ransacked police station. Several conflicting versions exist about how the events had unfolded: The police claimed that they had been attacked by protesters pelting stones and bricks, and later with fire arms, and that the police station and the vehicles had been burned and looted by protesters. The local leadership and several fact finding missions insisted that the protest had not been violent, that the police had resorted to firing suddenly and without provocation, and that the burning and looting had occurred at the hands of the police (Balagopalan, Ghosh, and Megnath 2001; Bhatia 2001; Sachar et al.

¹ I will employ the terms tribal, adivasi, and Scheduled Tribes/ST interchangeably. While they are by no means synonymous, in India, they operate alongside each other and often overlap semantically. The second chapter of this dissertation contains a more detailed exploration of this terminological landscape.

2002).

The day before the tragic shooting, late in the afternoon, two police jeeps had broken a barricade villagers had erected on the unpaved road connecting the village Lohajimi to Tapkara. The barricade, known locally as “gate” and erected in 1984, consisted of a simple wooden pole, resting on supporting frames on both sides of the road, which was not built by the government, but by villagers, on privately owned land. The gate was not intended to restrict access, but primarily served the purpose of slowing down approaching vehicles, thus allowing the villagers to find out who was entering the area and for what purpose. The motivation for such improvised surveillance had arisen because the villagers were determined to prevent the construction of the planned *Koel-Karo Hydro-Electric Power Project*, which would have resulted in their displacement, as it involved the construction of a large dam across two rivers, the Koel and the Karo. As a consequence of the dam, at least 112 villages – as per official estimates – would have been partially or completely submerged. According to the *Koel-Karo Jaan Sangathan*, the local movement resisting the dam project (which had also called for the protest in Tapkara on February 1st, 2001), 256 villages would have been affected, resulting in the displacement of an estimated 150,000 – 200,000 people, mostly adivasis of the Munda and Oraon tribes.

Amrit Guria, a Munda from Gutuhatu village, while returning home after collecting firewood in the forest, observed the police breaking the gate and loading it onto one of their vehicles. Dropping his bundle of wood he ran towards the scene, blocking the road,

and inquired why the gate had been destroyed. He pointed out that the police officers were well aware that the gate had been erected collectively by the villagers, and that there was no reason to break it even if one wished to pass it. As a matter of fact, the police broke the gate while *leaving* the area, having driven around it when they had entered, allegedly looking for Maoist insurgents. But rather than providing a reason for breaking the barricade, the police gave Amrit as well as Lorentus Guria, who came running to Amrit's aid, a beating – hitting them repeatedly, especially on their heads, with *lathis*² and rifle-butts (Balagopalan, Ghosh, and Megnath 2001).

One of the police officers-in-charge later claimed that Amrit Guria had been drunk when he tried to stop the police and questioned their actions, and that the police therefore had no other option than to beat him (Bhatia 2001). By invoking the image of the drunken adivasi, the police mobilized a stereotype about the tribal populations of Jharkhand which is both ubiquitous as well as stigmatizing, and which can easily serve - as this example illustrates – as a justification for police brutality. In the case at hand, the stereotype was used to render Amrit Guria as a primitive subject, an adivasi incapable of sobriety and responsible conduct. Combining the wildness of the primitive with the irrationality of the intoxicated, the image of the tribal drunkard can easily be mobilized in instances of racist violence or political oppression against adivasis. By taking recourse to such a stereotype, the authorities can render violence against adivasi subjects as a necessary condition for law and order, rather than as a transgression thereof. And actions, such as the stance Amrit Guria took that evening as he challenged the police who had broken the “gate”, can

2 *Lathis* are heavy bamboo sticks, reinforced with metal, which police in India carry as weapons.

be dismissed and stripped of their political content.

A stereotype, as a form of representation, can either be an exaggeration or a lie about certain aspects of the represented. For the arguments made here, however, it is not relevant whether Amrit Guria had been drinking or not before he was beaten by the police. What matters, is that it was possible for the police to claim that Amrit was inebriated, that the image of the drunken adivasi was available and plausible, and that it thus provided a justification for their actions.

Overview over the argument: Tracing the flows of alcohol

This dissertation is an investigation of alcohol and indigeneity in India. Based on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Jharkhand between 2002 and 2010,³ I aim to describe, in the chapters that follow the complex and contradictory roles that alcohol plays in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand. By taking a closer look at the presence of alcohol in various registers of adivasi lives (economy, religion, social relations) and by studying the ways alcohol is implicated in the constitution of adivasis as a distinct category of governmental subjects, I aim to provide a nuanced and multilayered account of the relationships between adivasis and alcohol. I will thereby conceptualize these relationships in terms of *obligations*, which I understand as forms of relationality that, as Elizabeth Povinelli states “constitut[e] a no man’s land between choice and

3 My fieldwork took place over the course of five stays in Jharkhand (between 2002 - 2010) ranging from three weeks to a 15-months period (January 2007 - May 2008).

determination” (Povinelli and DiFruscia 2012:84). This will allow me to think about these relations without the constraints of determination or causality inherent in concepts like addiction and/or alcoholism, and to circumvent the notion of compulsion implied in ideas about adivasis as either culturally or genetically predisposed to drinking. For my understanding of indigeneity I build on the work of both Kaushik Ghosh (1999; 2006a; 2006b) and Elizabeth Povinelli (2002; 2006; 2011). Ghosh has shown that the issue of indigeneity in India needs to be approached along histories of governmentality, rather than as a question of ontological differences. Thus contextualizing adivasi subjectivities within histories of governmentality permits addressing the question of who or what adivasis are (and why this question cannot be conclusively answered) but it also enables ways of understanding contemporary political subjectivities of adivasis. And Povinelli's analytical dyad of the *autological subject* and the *genealogical society* enables indentifying a discursive matrix according to which various state and non-state actors address adivasis as *specific (kinds of) populations* grounded in a particular logic of governance which “differentiate[s] kinds of people, societies, civilizational orders” (2006:5). This framework is helpful to understand why the use of alcohol by adivasis is conceptualized, for example in the law, as a problem *sui generis*.

The stereotype of the *drunken adivasi* mentioned above, which one of the police officers who beat Amrit Guria the day before the Tapkrara massacre had invoked, is of course reminiscent of similar stigmatizing representations of indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world, such as native American populations, Maoris in New Zealand, or Australian Aboriginals. But the situation in India is somewhat different, as alcohol was not

introduced to tribal India by colonial settlers, i.e., alcohol was known and used in pre-colonial times by the ancestors of present-day adivasis. According to one myth of creation found among the Munda tribe, alcohol is of existential importance to adivasis, as they were unable to procreate until Singbonga, the Supreme Being, taught them how to prepare rice beer.⁴ As I will show in the following chapter, drinking alcohol has served – at least since colonial times – to mark an essential alterity of the populations now known in India variably as *adivasis*, *tribals*, or *indigenous peoples*. For various governmental practices of description and representation have used (and continue to do so) the availability of customary forms of alcohol in certain communities as a criterion to identify these communities as *tribal* or *aboriginal* populations, and to distinguish them from Hindu or caste communities. And through a range of representational discourses, such as those of the state, Christian churches, Hindu nationalists, Maoist insurgents, and developmental NGOs, this identificatory criterion has crystallized into a stereotype, and a modality for stigmatization, which is furthermore reproduced within adivasi communities.

And by ethnographers. More than 100 years ago, S.C. Roy⁵ had written about the Mundas, the Scheduled Tribe community to which Amrit Guria belongs: “Their love for drink appears to [be] an almost inborn propensity with the tribe (Roy 1912:66).” Even in recent ethnographic writings declaredly sympathetic to their plight (as well as to their

4 This myth will be discussed in more detail in the fifth chapter.

5 Sarat Chandra Roy, a Bengali lawyer from Calcutta, who worked for the colonial administration in what is now Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, had become – with his writings about the people living in the area – “one of the pioneers of anthropological studies in India” (N.K. Bose, cited in Dasgupta 2004:169).

drinking practices), the role of alcohol in adivasi communities figures like something akin to a cultural imperative. One such article alludes to notions of an authentic adivasiness, whereby customary alcoholic beverages are described – in a manner reminiscent of functionalist arguments – as if operating quasi-organically and harmoniously within social structures and cultural practices of adivasi communities (Shah 2006a). Efforts at reform, aiming to curtail adivasi drinking are criticized in the same article as inauthentic and as alienating adivasis, and as outside influences corresponding to upper-caste values and middle-class notions of modernity.

However, such descriptions of adivasi alcohol use, as my research has shown, are curiously devoid, for example, of the particular role of customary forms of alcohol in local economies in Jharkhand, and neglect the genealogies of the various strands of criticism permeating adivasi communities with regard to questions of alcohol. In the hope of providing a more nuanced perspective on the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand, I will attempt, in the chapters that follow, to probe the contradictory and morally charged relationship between adivasis and alcohol, by tracing flows of alcohol through local economies, religious practices, and social relations, and by documenting the regulation of alcohol through law and various moral projects.

I thus hope to provide an alternative perspective to the ways in which adivasi alcohol use is usually rendered in ethnographic, administrative, and missionary representations of tribal India as a compulsory cultural condition (or even a pathology with both cultural and genetic etiologies). I will also refrain from approaching tribal drinking as a problem

of anomie resulting from acculturation stress, or as a consequence of psychological trauma, as is often assumed of the high prevalence of alcohol use in indigenous communities elsewhere in the world (cf., e.g. Gray and Saggars 2002). Rather, my aim is to disentangle these compulsory links between marginality and addiction to reconsider indigenous substance use as a problem of moral governance and ethical self-making. Instead, I approach the relationship between adivasis and alcohol as a complex and contradictory constellation of *obligations* – moral and ethical, religious, as well as social, economic, and material obligations, leaving aside notions of *compulsion*, or *determination*, which are inherent in concepts such as alcoholism and/or addiction.

Obligation

The notion of *obligation* is of course a “foundational [concept] in anthropology” (Guyer 2012:500), where it became an important concern with Marcel Mauss' famous essay on the gift (1990(1925)). Mauss argued that the exchange of gifts is not simply a matter of material transactions, but a question of social relationships of a contractual and moral nature involving the triple obligations of giving, receiving, and returning gifts. Such an interpretation of gift giving is extremely helpful – as I will show in the fifth chapter – to understand the role alcohol (that is, especially gifts of rice beer) plays for many social relations adivasis maintain, as well as with regard to their obligations towards deities, spirits, and ancestors. I would, however, not want to reduce my understanding of *obligations* to a defining criterion of the exchange relations Mauss described. Rather, I conceptualize *obligations* as a possible characteristic of any form of relationship.

An obligation always has an object – *to obligate* is a transitive verb (and *to oblige* is primarily transitive as well), which means that one is always obligated (or obliged) *to something* or *to someone*. Jane Guyer also points out that in French (the language Mauss used to write his essay), *obliger* can be a reflexive verb (*on s'oblige à*), meaning that *one can oblige oneself to someone or something* (2012:493). This means, that an *obligation* always exists in a relationship. In this way it is possible to think, for example, of humans as obliged to substances like alcohol. In her book *Psychosomatic*, Elizabeth Wilson describes *obligation* as “a mutuality of influence, a mutuality that is interminable and constitutive” (2004:22). Wilson encountered the notion of obligation in the context of Freud's writings on neurasthenic melancholia, where he describes neurons as “obliged” to the psyche to give up excitation. She thus shows how Freud thought of soma and psyche as tied to each other by “obligation rather than unilateral control” (2004:22). Obligation is thus offered as an alternative to the notion of causality:

The vectors of governance (what determines what?) are here fully disseminated-which is not to say that they are undecidable (an unsystematic array of random associations), but rather that they are not delimitable within conventional parameters of cause and effect, origin and derivation. The action of neurology (source) on psychology (outcome) has been routed, by Freud, through the accountability of the source to the outcome (Wilson 2004:23).

Approaching the relations between adivasis and alcohol in terms of obligations thus allows me to think about these relations without the constraints of determination or causality inherent in concepts like addiction and/or alcoholism, for example, or to circumvent the notion of compulsion implied in ideas about adivasis as either culturally or genetically predisposed to drinking. However, alcohol is not only something adivasis

may be immediately obliged to, but it can furthermore also form a part of their obligations to (human and non-human) others, and it stands in relation to other forms of obligation which might facilitate or restrict relations to alcohol (such as, for example, livelihoods dependent on the sale of home-brewed rice beer, or interdictions against alcohol of religious moralities). Thus understanding the relations and obligations adivasis have to alcohol as part of a much larger range of relations and obligations, I hope to provide a nuanced perspective on the complex and contradictory roles alcohol plays in the lives of adivasis.

Incorporative and exclusive governmentality

Fundamental to my understanding of indigeneity in India are the writings of Kaushik Ghosh. My use of his model of dissimilar but coexisting governmentalities⁶ is a thread that weaves throughout the chapters that follow. Ghosh describes two parallel governmental rationalities, two colonial processes of knowledge formation and population management which were both based on assuming as well as constituting adivasi subjects as an “irreducible otherness in relation to Hindu India” (Ghosh

6 The term *Governmentality* was coined by Michel Foucault (1991). It refers to the specific ways in which power is exercised over the populace of a modern state, which can be summarized – in a minimal understanding of Foucault's notion – as the “conduct of conduct” (Gordon 1991:2). This means on one hand, that people contribute to their own being governed. But it also means that specific forms of knowledge are generated, which are required to exercise power, or to control populations. Governmentality is not *of the state*, which means that it should not be understood as a process enacted (or controlled) by state institutions or state representatives alone. A wide range of non-state actors are crucially implicated in governmental processes (such as in Jharkhand, e.g., Churches, educational institutions, industries, and developmental NGOs). Nevertheless, governmentality takes place *in the state* – the various efforts of knowledge formation and population management implicated in governmentality are all part of a process through which the modern state, and the modern subject are mutually constituted. Governmentality, however, is better understood not as this process, but as the logic/rationality according to which such processes work.

2006a:507). For one, an “*incorporative governmentality*” aimed at absorbing tribal populations in the Indian mainstream, and worked towards overcoming the differences posed by the essential alterity of the tribal subject through “a process of gradual assimilation through the rule of law and the market” (Ghosh 2006a:507). On the other hand, an “*exclusive governmentality*” was geared towards minimizing the potential for conflict (or tribal uprisings) by safeguarding the essential alterity of tribal populations, for example, through the recognition of customary rights, or the granting of protective measures for tribal land-ownership (Ghosh 2006a:508). These dissimilar governmentalities live forth in the post-colonial period and continue to impact processes of adivasi subject formations. The incorporative rationality, for example, is manifest in constitutional measures of positive discrimination intended to facilitate the inclusion of tribal populations in the national mainstream.⁷ And the exclusive governmental logic continues to separate adivasi populations from the mainstream, for example, by granting protective measures in terms of land-ownership (or the permission to brew customary rice beer).

Contextualizing adivasi subjectivities within histories of governmentality makes it possible to address the question of who or what adivasis are (and why this question cannot be conclusively answered, as I will discuss in the following chapter) but it also enables ways of understanding contemporary political subjectivities of adivasis. Following Ghosh's parallel modes of governmentality allows me, for example, in the fourth chapter, to show how the conceptualization of tribal drinking practices as a

⁷ This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter (Coming to terms).

problem sui generis in excise legislations is both constituted by as well as constitutive of notions of irreducible tribal alterities.

Autological subject and genealogical society

When Elizabeth Povinelli elaborates the distinction between what she calls the autological subject and genealogical society in *The Empire of Love* (2006), she refers to a discursive matrix according to which differences between “kinds of people, societies, civilizational orders” (2006:5) emerge in the context of what she calls *late liberalism*.⁸ Povinelli is interested in this discursive matrix not only because of its role in the governance of difference, but also because of how this governance of difference is implicated in the organization and distribution of power, as well as of suffering. She characterizes her analytical dyad as follows:

“In brief, the autological subject refers to multiple discourses and practices that invoke the autonomous and self-determining subject, and which are therefore linked to, but not exhausted in, liberalism's emphasis on “freedom,” more narrowly conceived as a political philosophy. The genealogical society, on the other hand, refers to discourses that stress social constraint and determination in processes of subject constitution and construe the subject as bound by various kinds of inheritances (Povinelli 2011:26–27).”

The distinction between autological subjects and genealogical societies is not something

8 “I have gone back and forth between reserving the phrase late liberalism for the liberal governance of difference that began to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s as liberal governments responded to a series of legitimacy crises coming from anticolonial, anti-imperial and new social movements and using the same phrase to refer to a phase of liberalism, namely the internal and external conditions and dynamics of contemporary European and Anglo-American governance as two of its key pillars—neoliberalism and multiculturalism—emerged in the 1970s and are now undergoing significant stress. I think—or hope—my vacillation is symptomatic of the absolute need to distinguish these two modes of governance and the absolute need never to let either out of the site (sic.) of the other (Povinelli and DiFruscia 2012:76).”

that maps onto actual people – it is a discursive spacing of the world, and people have to orient themselves (or rather: their selves) and their lives according to this spacing. This “civilizational division” (2011:13) is probably best explained with reference to Povinelli’s own ethnographic writing: She conducts research with indigenous Australians, as well as with queer spiritual communities in the U.S.A. whose participants are known as radical faeries. Because of the discursive spacing of the world according to the matrix of autological subjects and genealogical societies, both of these groups of people are limited with regard to the possibilities of life choices available to them in liberal societies (which, however, claim to accommodate differences on the basis of public, rational deliberation). For an indigenous Australian to be recognized as an indigenous Australian, she or he needs to comply with specific expectations of difference placed in him or her through liberalism as a form of governance. And these expectations form part of the discursive register on genealogical societies. This means that the indigenous person needs to act and behave and just generally *be like* an indigenous person. She is a “subject as bound by various kinds of inheritances”, and her agency is limited to a preconceived range of choices limited by the ways her inheritances were made legible. He is tied to his genealogy, a “supra-individual agency threatening to condition [his] choice” (Povinelli and DiFruscia 2012:82). Constrained by the discursive matrix of autological subjects and genealogical society, an indigenous Australian person has no choice – only obligations. The radical faery, however, is tied to the other end of the civilizational division, which preconceives of queer lives as completely self-authored, without any ties to traditions, moralities, of families (and certainly without genealogy), “the nightmare version of the modern unattached self” (2006:101). The radical faery is all choice – no obligations.

I am probably doing harm to Povinelli's analytical framework, not only because I remove it from her contextual setting of *liberal settler colonies*, but also because I separate it from her interest in theorizing power and violence through intimacy. But I suspect it could be applied more broadly. While she clearly delimits her theorizing to what she describes as *liberal settler colonies*, I nevertheless find it productive to project her conceptualization onto contemporary India, because it seems to me to provide a fruitful approach for analyzing the ways populations are sorted there. Furthermore, her analytical dyad of the *autological subject* and the *genealogical society* seems very helpful to me for identifying the discursive logic according to which various state and non-state actors address adivasis as *specific (kinds of) populations*, and in particular how relationships between adivasis and alcohol are conceptualized as radically different from the ways non-indigenous Indians relate to alcohol. The drinking of an adivasi is thus interpreted, for example in the law, but also in various narrative representations, as a collective phenomenon – a genealogical obligation rather than as the choice or preference of an autological self.

The research project

Beginnings

I became interested in investigating the relationship between adivasis and alcohol during a brief visit to Jharkhand in September 1998. At the time, I was an MA student in

anthropology at the University of Basel in Switzerland and was participating in an international research collaboration on mental health and mental health care in rural Bengal, directed by the Swiss Tropical Institute. I had also been, while a student in Basel, affiliated with a Copenhagen-based NGO dedicated to advancing the rights of indigenous peoples and had in that capacity attended various conferences on indigenous peoples' rights at the United Nations and the World Health Organization in Geneva. It was through contacts I had made with adivasi activists at these conferences that resulted in my invitation to visit Jharkhand in 1998. The occasion I was asked to attend was a stone-laying ceremony, an event during which a large stone is put up to commemorate an adivasi who has passed away (and henceforth to propitiate this ancestor). The deceased had been the son of prominent adivasi-rights activists, and at least 150 adivasis from surrounding villages congregated for the ceremony. Each of the families arriving for the event brought along a large *handi* (narrow-mouthed cooking pot) with fermented rice, and in the course of the next three days I witnessed for the first time, how a seemingly incessant supply of *diang* (rice beer)⁹ formed a crucial component of an adivasi celebration, like a catalyst that facilitated the transformation of the people present into the particular form of sociality occurring at this occasion. The drinking did not seem dramatic or excessive to me – after all, this was a celebration, and back home (in Switzerland), people gathering on festive occasions would also ensure sufficient supplies in alcoholic beverages. But I knew from the literature as well as from activist narratives that drinking was understood to be a problem for many adivasi communities. I was

9 *Diang* is the word for the particular variety of rice beer prepared by the Ho, one of the Scheduled Tribes of Jharkhand. Other terms used throughout this dissertation are the Mundari *bodé* and *ily*, as well as, most frequently, the Hindi word *harīa*, which is derived from the kind of vessel in which rice beer is usually prepared and transported, the characteristically shaped *handi*.

therefore not surprised when Ignatius – the activist who was hosting the event, the father of the deceased person in whose honor the stone was put up – began talking to me about the problem of drinking.

Upon hearing that I was involved in a research project on mental health-related issues, Ignatius¹⁰ asked me whether I knew of literature on collective depression. Ignatius is an activist from South India, who had been working in Jharkhand for more than 30 years as an organizer in various movements resisting the displacement of adivasi communities by mining developments and other industries. He told me that he has often seen adivasis sitting around in apparent apathy, and that he suspects that the various encroachments on their lives – with communities being displaced by industries or dams, families being tricked into giving up their ancestral land by so-called *dikus* (outsiders, or more specifically, non-adivasis), and people harassed and exploited by institutions such as the forest department - are causing something akin to clinical depression, but at the supra-individual level, so that whole communities are affected. According to Ignatius, this collective depression might be the reason for the high prevalence of alcohol abuse among adivasis.

10 I replaced the names of individuals with pseudonyms throughout this dissertation in accordance with the requirements for confidentiality mandated by the institutional review board for research with human participants of the Johns Hopkins University (with the exception of names of individuals who participated in my research in their capacity as officials or public figures). It needs to be stressed, however, that in complying with these mandated requirements for anonymity, I was forced to neglect the interests of many participants who would have preferred to appear in my research in an identifiable capacity (either as individual authors of their statements, or collectively, as communities exposed to particular predicaments). I am thus infinitely indebted to them for their generosity to put the needs of my research and the institutional requirements under which it occurred before their personal and collective priorities.

I found Ignatius' hypothetical musings rather interesting – and I can probably say that this is what got me started on the trajectory which led to this dissertation. On one hand, they resonated with the ways that the health of indigenous peoples was debated at UN and WHO-conferences, where representatives from various parts of the world had stated that health in indigenous communities cannot be approached from a medical perspective alone, but that it was closely tied to rights, and in particular, to land rights. The opening speech at one such conference I had attended at the WHO in Geneva¹¹, for example, ended with the statement: “Land is Health, Oppression is Disease”. On the other hand, I had just been reading a book by medical anthropologists, which called for an analytic paradigm shift in understanding human suffering. Since suffering frequently had political, economic, social, or even historical etiologies, Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and others argued, it was a serious limitation if it would be approached solely as an individual problem, and from medical and psychological perspectives alone (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997). This understanding of “social suffering”, I realized that evening, was ultimately also what Ignatius had in mind when he spoke about alcoholism and collective depression in adivasi communities, while he introduced me to *rassi*, the sweet and intoxicating liquid exuded by fermenting rice (before water is mixed in to make rice beer). And Ignatius' analysis was of course also a local manifestation of the transnational activist discourse on indigenous health (which I had witnessed at the conferences in Geneva).

My connections to activists were what gave me access to the field when I began to

11 cf. Alderete (1999)

conduct research for this dissertation project in the summer of 2002. Building on these contacts, I travelled through various parts of the newly formed state, to get a first impression of the role alcohol plays in the lives of adivasis, but also to develop an approach for conducting ethnographic fieldwork. Two things became clear after this first trip to the field, and in the course of two brief follow-up visits in 2003 and 2005: Firstly, I wanted to study adivasis in the urban context – primarily because increasing numbers of adivasis live in urban (or urbanizing) settings, and because even most adivasis living in remote or rural areas aspire to transcend their dependence on subsistence agriculture and to benefit from the amenities available in urban contexts – such as electricity, schools, or health care. The continued placing of the tribal subject in rural settings by contemporary research thus seemed anachronistic to me. Nevertheless, my interest in urban adivasis should not be understood as implying a teleology, keeping in mind that Kaushik Ghosh points out that the prioritizing of urban or even metropolitan settings in much contemporary research is as problematic as the reduction of tribal subjects to rural environments (2006b). While I dare not claim that this dissertation successfully heeds his call to deconstruct the rural/urban divide, I nevertheless hope that I have taken a first step in that direction by studying adivasis in both rural as well as urban settings. Secondly, I realized that my reliance on activist contacts was a limitation. Even though these activist networks made it rather easy for me to build rapport in various local contexts, I began to realize that as a result of this particular access to the field – and the range of conversations which this enabled - my insights into the lives of adivasis were inflected by a specific framing of questions of indigeneity in India along ethnic lines.

Sites and methods

While activists still play an important role in my ethnography, I made sure, upon my return to Jharkhand for fieldwork in 2007, to extend my network of contacts, and to begin a new range of conversations. The two localities where I collected the bulk of my ethnographic data are described in detail in the third chapter – an urban settlement of migrant laborers at the outskirts of Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, and two villages in the rural context of the Koel-Karo region (where the shooting incident mentioned earlier had occurred). While the juxtaposition of an urban settlement with a rural setting might imply a comparative approach, my intention was rather to complement the data I collected in the city with occasional visits to the rural field site, in order to document certain aspects of the circulation of alcohol, which only occur in rural contexts. This concerned, for example, the mahua economy, as the flowers from which the liquor is distilled, are collected in forest areas and constitute an important source of cash income for subsistence farmers. My visits to the rural field site lasted from two to eight days, and took place throughout the year, but with seasonal variation: between March and May I travelled to the area almost every other week, as weddings were celebrated, it was the mahua season, and Sarhul – an annual religious festival – was observed. The rainy season (monsoon) from July until September is also the main agricultural season, and everybody was busy tending to their fields from dusk to dawn. It was therefore very difficult for me to talk to anyone in the Koel-Karo region during this period, and I only visited the area twice then. The rest of the year, I travelled there at least once a month.

At the urban field site – which I call Koylatoli – I conducted a household survey covering demographic and economic aspects, as well as questions regarding the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol. While the information thus gathered was useful for me, for example, with regard to the role of alcohol in the local economy (which I discuss in the third chapter) the generation of data was actually of secondary importance. The main objective of the survey was to facilitate a regularized presence in Koylatoli, as well as to ensure that I would be able to interact with all inhabitants, and not primarily with the local elite – who frequently assumed the role of spokespersons, and who were also regarded as such by their more marginal neighbors – or with the dozen or so of regular drinkers, who eagerly welcomed me whenever I approached the *basti* (settlement). Apart from the survey in Koylatoli, I conducted a wide range of semi-structured interviews and informal observations in both the city and at the rural field site. In addition to these two sites of concentrated ethnographic data collection, I conducted additional interviews and observations throughout the city of Ranchi. The informants thus targeted were state representatives, three members of a family who controlled the local (legal) liquor business in the third generation, clergy of the Catholic and Lutheran churches, adivasi rights activists, as well as a group of young men aspiring to careers in state bureaucracies. Furthermore, important insights into the relationship between adivasi and alcohol were also gained accumulatively, on account of my living in Jharkhand for 20 months and participating in the lives of friends and acquaintances.

I conducted my fieldwork in Hindi (although I still had to rely on interpretation during the preliminary phase of fieldwork in the summer of 2002). This allowed me to directly

converse with all research participants except for one, even though Mundari is the first language of many inhabitants in Koylatoli and of all residents of the two villages in the Koel-Karo area. Nevertheless, I frequently worked alongside a research assistant who was able to translate between Mundari and Hindi whenever I or my interlocutors reached a linguistic impasse.

The Drinking Method

The most considerable methodological challenge this research project posed, however, was not linguistic. Rather, it was bodily and cognitive in nature, and resulted from the circumstances posed by the fact that I was investigating alcohol use under the ethnographic paradigm of participant observation. This ideal of exposing oneself bodily and experientially as a researcher to the subjects and objects one is studying raises a whole range of ethical and epistemological concerns. For me, it meant that I found myself in countless situations where I did not only have to negotiate the contradictory balance between simultaneous participation and observation, but also the added challenge of getting intoxicated while trying to maintain an astute and acute – if not sober – sense of observation. Needless to say, this was not always easy, and I needed to ensure that I was able to continue taking notes even during festive occasions, where I was often expected to drink much more than I would have preferred. It happened, in such situations – for example at weddings or when a child was born, or during certain religious festivals - that I was sitting on the ground with a bowl of haṛia in my hands, facing a woman with a bucket full of rice beer who would immediately refill my bowl to the rim as soon I would

take a sip. The obvious strategy to maintain a modicum of sobriety in such a situation would of course be to drink as slowly as possible, and with small sips. However, the ladies in front of me would not cease to encourage me to “lift” my bowl (i.e., “down” it), or actually tilt it upward with their hands while I was taking a sip in order to prevent me from putting it down without drinking up.

I managed the vast majority of such situations fairly well – not because of an extraordinary capacity to hold my liquor, but because my patience would ultimately outlast the persistence of the persons trying to make me drink faster or more than would have allowed me to remain cognizant (after all, they were motivated by hospitality rather than malice). More frequently, however, the practical challenge in terms of carrying out fieldwork was not inebriety but rather the fact that rice beer would make me rather drowsy. Why would I not abstain from drinking then, if it posed such challenges for my research? The most important methodological reason for not committing myself to an altogether *sober* perspective is probably best explained with a hat tip to Clifford Geertz' well-known essay *Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight* (1973), which will illustrate that what might appear like a strategy for building rapport was an unintended effect of my ethical disposition towards conducting fieldwork. While Geertz' essay is primarily known as a programmatic demonstration of his technique of *thick description*, and a paradigmatic example for his interpretative anthropological approach (implying that “culture” should be studied like a set of texts, to be interpreted by anthropologists), I am referencing it here because of the narrative with which he begins his analysis of the meaning of cock fighting in Bali. Geertz describes how he and his wife found it

impossible to build any rapport with the Balinese villagers they were supposed to study until an illegal cock fight took place. The couple had joined the crowd that was watching the fight, as suddenly, a police raid occurred, and the crowd dispersed in various directions. Because all the villagers were fleeing the scene, the visiting anthropologists did the same and ran behind a man whom they ultimately followed into his courtyard. Geertz describes this moment as the “turning point so far as our relationship to the community was concerned [...]” In siding with the villagers in a potential clash with the authorities, the anthropologists had demonstrated their solidarity - and were henceforth no longer ignored or avoided. While I would certainly not claim that for me, drinking with adivasis “led to a sudden and unusually complete acceptance into a society extremely difficult for outsiders to penetrate” (nor would I think that societies could or should be penetrated), the fact that I did drink with them nevertheless enabled a rapport which would have been difficult, if not impossible to achieve otherwise. The rapport was thereby built by not abstaining, which expressed – on two levels – solidarity with adivasis who drink; firstly, because I drank, and secondly because I drank rice beer and mahua liquor with them. However, even though the context I am studying is permeated by various moralizing and stigmatizing criticisms, my drinking solidarity was not a strategic decision to build rapport with people at the receiving end of such criticisms (and it is for this reason that I see parallels to Geertz story about the raid at the cockfight). I first tried both haṛia and mahua out of sheer curiosity, and while I never enjoyed the latter, I became really fond of haṛia. After I had embarked on this research project, however, drinking seemed not only like a methodological necessity (as well as an impediment), but it also suggested an ethical requirement, as abstaining would have been a betrayal of my

actual fondness of rice beer, and moreover, because it would have made it very difficult for me to make a convincing case to my interlocutors (adivasi or not), that I do not condone the moral and stigmatizing criticisms.

Quite visibly a foreigner, I was in many instances read as a missionary – or at least as someone subscribed to the same moral agenda as missionaries. Christian missionaries have been (and continue to be) very instrumental for the circulation of moralizing and stigmatizing representations of adivasis in Jharkhand, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages by adivasis is construed in such representations as a heathen practice, and as morally unacceptable. Furthermore, missionary discourses align with modern Indian middle class perspectives (in this case an amalgam of upper-caste Hindu and Muslim values), which regard adivasi social forms as primitive, and adivasi drinking practices as one of the most visible signs of this primitivity (along with sexuality). I was therefore initially met with the expectation of sharing in such moralizing criticism, and many people assumed that I would look down upon drinking, rather than partake (and this was true for both adivasis as well as for non-adivasis, who would usually both be rather surprised if they witnessed me participating in adivasi forms of drinking sociality).

While drinking thus moved me away from the moralizing position I was sometimes expected to represent, drinking haria or mahua distanced me from a stigmatizing perspective I was usually expected to share. As I will explain in more detail in the fourth and fifth chapters, rice beer and the liquor made from the mahua flower – the alcoholic beverages customarily produced and consumed by adivasis – are widely regarded as both

dangerous and primitive by most non-*adivasis*, as well as by a great majority of middle-class *adivasis* (even if they are open to drinking alcohol in principle). Also, even people who drink *haṛia* or *mahua* regard bottled beer or English as of much higher quality, and would usually prefer the latter to the former (except for specific religious or ceremonial situations, in which rice beer is required). This association of *haṛia* and *mahua* with danger and primitivity is partly due to their crude production methods, but also because they are primarily consumed in places and by people whom the Indian middle class affectively registers as wild, vulgar, and unclean, such as rural areas, or the poorest among urban settlers. Furthermore, an aggregate of pietist missionary discourses and upper-caste Hindu as well as Muslim values stigmatizes the forms of drunkenness induced by *adivasi* beverages as heathen and amoral. In general common sense, *haṛia* and *mahua* are thus at the bottom rank of the liquor hierarchy.

The fact that I “demonstrated [my] solidarity”, to use Geertz' words, by choosing to drink *haṛia* and *mahua* and by signaling my obliviousness to the prejudices against them, made it not only possible for me to witness a wide range of drinking occasions which occurred at a remove from the view of the general public (and thus to document the forms of sociality that eventuated at such occasions), but it furthermore enabled interactions which are not immediately linked to drinking, but nevertheless conditioned by it. The following episode might help to illustrate this: About three months into my fieldwork, I arrived in *Koylatoli* after having been away in the *Koel-Karo* region for a few days. As I approached the settlement, I began hearing that the day before, another foreign researcher had visited and interviewed the villagers. I was obviously quite curious and wanted to

find out precisely what had occurred and who had come. I thus went to Birbal Nag's house to get a detailed update. Birbal and his wife made and sold haṛia for a living, and are well-respected members of the community. I knew that he would not miss it if a visitor comes to the basti, and that he would certainly be present if a meeting is called. Furthermore, I had experienced him as very outgoing as well as lucid, and he had taken an interest in participating in my research, which is why I assumed that he would be similarly eager and generous to contribute to the work of other researchers. As expected, Birbal could tell me more than the other villagers whom I had already met on the way, and who had all only mentioned that a foreign lady had come to ask questions, just like me, and that she had talked to everybody at the “meeting” (the village assembly, which would usually congregate in front of the school building on Sunday mornings, or if need be). I thus found out from Birbal that the lady had come from London, and that she had requested a meeting with the inhabitants of the settlement (I gathered that she was conducting a focus group interview), and that she was asking a range of questions about their political behavior, how they voted, and how things had changed now that Jharkhand had become a state. However, Birbal told me, he left the meeting after a few minutes, and he did not feel comfortable talking to the lady.

“I was wearing my lungi and a banyan (loincloth and undershirt), and I had been drinking in the morning. I felt embarrassed. With you things are different. I am not embarrassed talking to you if I am in such a state. I know you won't judge me, and I know I don't need to be embarrassed if I reek of haṛia when you want to talk to me.”¹²

12 There is of course also a gender dimension to this encounter between Birbal and the researcher. But the point Birbal made related to the embarrassment of being witnessed by someone who might take a moralizing or dismissive stance towards him because of his drinking – independent of the observer's/outsider's gender.

While choosing not to abstain from haria or mahua thus certainly posed occasional methodological challenges in terms of sobriety and alertness, it opened possibilities for insights which would otherwise have remained closed, as a whole range of interactions in the field would not have been possible. The main reason for this is that in abstaining I would have complied with the expected role of being an outsider who condones the moralizing and stigmatizing criticisms of adivasi drinking.

Chapter overview

Second chapter

The next chapter engages the question of indigeneity in India. It is intended, on one hand, to familiarize non-indianist readers with the conceptual – or rather, the terminological – terrain on which discussions of tribal India take place. It will thus introduce the ethnological taxonomies and administrative categories relevant to an investigation of indigeneity and alcohol in India in an attempt to make sense of terms like *adivasi* or *Scheduled Tribes*, which are used throughout this dissertation. On the other hand, my aim is to show that questions about the ontological status of adivasis (i.e., questions like *who or what are the adivasis?*) cannot be answered conclusively, but that they need to be addressed – following Kaushik Ghosh (1999, 2006a, 2006b) - by tracing histories of governmentality.

I will begin this discussion by raising questions of religious belonging. Two brief glimpses into my ethnographic data will point to the conundrum of whether adivasis in

Jharkhand are a religious community on their own, or whether they need to be understood as a vernacular variety of Hinduism. This debate over whether adivasis are Hindus or not is of course not simply a theological or ritual issue but it is first and foremost a version of the larger question about the ontological status of adivasis, a question which is contested on scholarly and political grounds – and my chapter will provide an introduction to these varied discussions. Most recently, the debate was concerned with framing the question of indigeneity in a larger, i.e., a transnational context, as adivasi activists from various parts of India (and especially from Jharkhand) began, in the 1990s, to articulate political demands through the conceptual language of indigenous peoples rights. The claim that adivasis are India's indigenous peoples has since been contested on both political grounds (especially since the Government of India maintains the position that indigeneity is produced by settler colonialism, and thus not relevant in the Indian context) as well as analytically by scholars who argue that there is no sociological or anthropological justification for the assertion that adivasis are India's aboriginal populations. The latter can be understood as a continuation of a debate which stood at the cradle of anthropology in India: In the 1940s, the so-called *tribal question*, i.e., the problem of how to overcome the destitution and obvious marginalization of the communities known as tribal was unfolding as an argument between the former missionary Verrier Elwin, who was convinced of the aboriginality of India's tribals, and who wanted to preserve their distinct character with protective measures, and the anthropologist G.S. Ghurye, who argued that tribal communities were nothing but primitive Hindu caste groups, which needed to be integrated with the mainstream. The *tribal question* was resolved in terms of concrete administrative measures with the introduction of mechanisms of positive discrimination

in the constitution of independent India (in 1950). These measures rely on governmental techniques of classification to identify *Scheduled Tribes* (as well as *Scheduled Castes*, and later *Other Backward Classes*), i.e., populations entitled to, for example, reserved quotas for government sector employment, or institutions of higher education, or electoral representation. I will try to show in this second chapter, how such governmental measures can lead to contestations over who or what precisely adivasis are, as similar to the question about adivasi religion with which I begin the chapter, governmental categories are instrumental as conditions of possibility for the particular ways in which adivasis emerge as subjects of difference.

As discussions about the difference between adivasis and Hindus thus imply the question whether adivasis are populations which are radically different from other communities in India, I will show how a theoretical framework introduced by Kaushik Ghosh can help to trace the specific ways in which adivasi difference was (and continues to be) constituted – and consequently, how adivasi subjectivities can be understood as emerging from histories of heterogeneous processes of governmentality (Ghosh 2006a). Ghosh shows that colonial discourses constructed India's tribes as an “essential primitive otherness (Ghosh 2006:507)”, and that this tribal alterity was subsequently both assimilated to the Indian mainstream (through inclusion in the legal regimes and markets of the colony) as well as separated from it (through specific protective provisions such as the granting of land rights or the designation of territories governed by customary rule). These two parallel processes of governmental rationality both have the recognition of the “essential primitive otherness” as their point of departure – the former aims at including the tribal

other in the colonial/national mainstream, while for the latter, the principle of recognition is exclusion. This is why Ghosh refers to them as incorporative and exclusive governmentality respectively. Ghosh's model is important for my work, as I believe that it resolves the debates about the differences between tribes and castes rehearsed earlier (or the contested question of indigeneity in India), and because it shows that questions about who or what adivasis can effectively be approached through histories of governmentality. Furthermore, as I try to demonstrate, his framework also helps to understand how the subjectivities of different adivasis are differentially constituted as a consequence of their differing relations to processes of governmentality.

As this second chapter is primarily intended to clarify conceptual and terminological questions with regard to indigeneity in India, the issue of alcohol appears only marginally. Nevertheless, I show that colonial forms of knowledge identified alcohol consumption as a fundamental criterion for distinguishing tribes from castes. And this criterion appears to live forth, for example, in contestations over the status of adivasi religion. I thus end chapter two with a brief discussion of a movement for the formalization and recognition of the adivasi religion, which not only indicates how questions of religious belonging can be seen as aspects of the workings of governmentality, and that the negotiations over such forms of belonging take place on the playing field of politics, but that such movements regularly bring up the question of whether drinking is an authentic (or even a defining) adivasi practice.

Third chapter

In the third chapter, I provide a description of the two most important locations where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork: a settlement of migrant laborers next to a massive industrial plant near Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, as well as two villages located about 70 kms away from Ranchi, in a rural environment inhabited by adivasi subsistence farmers (this is the Koel-Karo area mentioned at the outset, where the local population had mobilized against a large hydro-electric dam). My description of these two localities aims at evoking a sense of the landscape in which I conducted much of my research. Both places are largely unaffected by the economic boom which has transformed India at large since the 1990s, but both places are marked – even though in substantially different ways – by the aftermath of the early postcolonial phase of industrialization in India, and in particular by the grand vision of rapid and massive industrialization of independent India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. This vision entailed the promise of progress, but for the vast majority of adivasis who were affected by the industrial projects that unfolded, this promise remained empty, and for many, it was replaced by the dire truth of displacement. While at my rural research site, the local population was able to fight off the threat of displacement by large developmental projects twice, the urban site is actually constituted by displacement. The basti I worked in at the outskirts of Ranchi – which I call Koylatoli – is an illegal settlement situated on land the Indian government had acquired in the 1950s for the adjacent factory. The people – mostly adivasis – who had lived there as subsistence farmers had to give up their land in exchange for compensations. And the people living there now – under the constant threat of

displacement without compensation – are adivasis who migrated to the city in search of work, but eke out precarious existences as contract laborers, rickshaw pullers, or scavengers, or by selling illegal alcohol. Such illegal alcohol is also sold in the Koel-Karo region, only that for the subsistence farmers living there it is not a livelihood – but a weekly (or occasional) source of cash income.

In the larger argument of my dissertation, this chapter hopes to achieve two minor aims: one is to trace the physical (and economic) presence of alcohol throughout the landscapes in which I worked, and the second is to sketch the frameworks of life unfolding in these landscapes in terms of legal status, as questions of illegality and illegitimacy determine the lives and livelihoods of adivasis there to varying degrees.

Fourth chapter

In the fourth chapter, I discuss the regulation of alcohol through law, and how adivasis are regulated, as populations, through liquor laws. For this purpose I look into the history of excise regulations in India, which can be read as a long and ongoing series of attempts to navigate the fundamental contradiction inherent in laws and policies which aim simultaneously at the generation of revenue and the maintenance of public health. Reviewing colonial reports on excise regulation as well as the efforts of post-independence administrations to introduce prohibition, I found that these governmental representations variously reiterate the cliché of adivasis as drunkards. My aim thereby is to show how the efforts of temperance and taxation work alongside each other in

constituting subject populations, and that contemporary liquor laws entail distinctions between populations that are assumed to be capable of responsible drinking, and those (i.e., adivasis) who are not. I will show how this latter point – i.e., that tribal drinking is treated as a problem *sui generis* in colonial as well as post-colonial approaches to alcohol regulation – can be understood as an outcome of heterogenous processes of governmentality according to Ghosh's model mentioned above. This means that liquor laws – but also non-state norms pertaining to the circulation and consumption of alcohol – are among the ways in which adivasi populations are both included into the national mainstream, as well as excluded from it and treated as exceptional – and that both processes are based on and reify the idea of an essential tribal alterity.

It is well known that there is potential for considerable gaps between the letter of the law – or formulated legal rules – and the ways legal rules are de facto implemented. One could say that the law only exists as a gaze, that is, legal rules (be they proscriptive or prescriptive) only matter when law enforcement can observe their transgression.¹³ This implies of course also that the gaze can be averted by the individuals or institutions responsible for enforcing particular laws. In Jharkhand, this is particularly evident with regard to the laws proscribing the production or sale of customary forms of alcohol, as law enforcement frequently chooses not to see violations (for example, when the illicit sale of alcohol at roadsides or weekly markets is tolerated). I discuss this circumstance of

13 This was made obvious to me in Jharkhand one day when I was about to put on my helmet before leaving towards an interior village by motorbike from my rural fieldsite. I was told that a helmet was not required in such remote areas. Upon further inquiry, I realized that what was meant was that since no police officer would venture into such remote areas, the rule prescribing a helmet for motorcyclists did de facto not apply.

inconsistent implementation of the law in my fourth chapter, which ends with a brief discussion of Maoist campaigns against liquor in Jharkhand. Such campaigns are successful to the extent that they receive popular support for implementing the prohibition of the sale of *haṛia* and *mahua*, which the state mostly neglects, that is, Maoist insurgents focus their gaze on violations of legal norms which the state's law enforcement mostly chooses not to see.

Fifth Chapter

While the second and third chapters touch on drinking as an aspect of essential tribal difference in discursive representations, and trace the physical and economic presence of alcohol in adivasi landscapes of Jharkhand respectively, the fourth chapter discusses how the regulation of alcohol is implicated in the constitution of adivasis as a distinct subject category. In the fifth chapter finally, I will focus on the ways alcohol is present in the lives of adivasis, which means that I take a closer look at what ethnographers, missionaries, and administrators have described (and continue to do so) as an “inborn propensity” among India's tribals for drinking. My aim is thereby twofold: on one hand I will describe various roles alcohol plays in adivasi communities – in the context of religion, i.e., as a crucial aspect of the relations adivasis maintain to spirits, ancestors, but also to the creator; as a substance which is exchanged in order to reaffirm social relations; but also as a destructive force, harming individuals and families. On the other hand I want to demonstrate that rather than drinking being an inborn propensity for adivasis, the relationship adivasis have to alcohol is fraught with contradictions, tensions, and

sometimes paradoxical obligations.

The literature on adivasi alcohol use is sparse. Mostly, ethnographic writing touches tribal drinking only in passing, which is remarkable, considering how alcohol figures in stereotypical representations of adivasis in various public and administrative discourses, and how constitutive a role for adivasi communities alcohol is said to be playing according to many (historic as well as contemporary) ethnographic accounts. I will briefly review this literature in my fifth chapter, and put it in a larger context of writings on alcohol. What is remarkable is that even fairly recent work describes the role of alcohol in adivasi communities as operating like a cultural imperative, and posits a certain idea of authentic adivasiness which is marked by an organic and harmonious relationship to customary alcoholic beverages. Alpa Shah for example, in a recent article thus criticizes the efforts of Maoists in Jharkhand to curtail drinking¹⁴ as a campaign which alienates adivasis because it corresponds, as she states, to certain upper-caste and middle-class values (Shah 2006a). Her description of adivasi alcohol use, however, is curiously void of the particular role alcohol plays in local economies in Jharkhand, and glosses over the various strands of criticism which sometimes split adivasi communities on the question of alcohol, and which can certainly dislocate the notion of a coherent adivasi subject free of internal contradictions.

My discussion of the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis in chapter five will portray individuals with an ambiguous relationship to alcohol, and show that it makes little sense

14 These efforts are briefly discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

to think of critiques of drinking as inauthentic or foreign to adivasi communities. Moreover, I will demonstrate that participating in drinking does not mean that one wholeheartedly endorses it (or that one is opposed to reformist discourses), and on the other hand, that abstaining from alcohol does not imply that one does not participate in relationships constituted by the exchange (or the circulation) of alcohol. I thus approach alcohol use as one among a wide range of relationships that constitute individual and collective lives of adivasis in Jharkhand, and I argue that adivasi drinking practices cannot be separated from the context of moral evaluations in which they occur. I show that the persistent presence of moral criticism makes it possible to think of adivasis in Jharkhand as a moral community, and that decisions of whether or not to drink are not simply moral deliberations (in terms of evaluating behavior as either *good* or *bad*) but also ethical choices about whether or not to be part of this moral community.

I therefore situate this chapter – in at least two dimensions – in the vicinity of emerging anthropological discussions on morality or ethics. For one, I will argue that drinking can be understood as an ethical practice – in Foucault's sense (1990) – i.e., as a technique of the self through which individuals aim to shape their bodies and selves (in relation to the world). On the other hand, I will show how for adivasis, drinking is a practice imbued with diverging moral obligations – both obligations which discourage drinking as well as others that make it a crucial condition for life. In thus conceptualizing the relationship between adivasis and alcohol in terms of *obligations*, my aim is to sketch starting points for a critique of the alcoholism/addiction model by suggesting that a theoretical framework simultaneously sensitive to material, affective, moral, and spiritual obligations

might allow to transcend the conceptual limitations of the existing addiction model.

An afterthought on the trajectory of my research project

When I originally conceptualized my dissertation research – in the period between my first summer fieldwork in 2002 and when I began conducting intensive ethnographic research in 2007 – my project was intended to be an ethnography of the state. This means that I wanted to investigate how the relationship between adivasis and alcohol is manifested in discourses and practices of the state – in particular with regard to tribal reform. However, as it happens to many anthropologists, my research finally developed along a somewhat different trajectory. This was partially because an important premise on which my project had rested – the newness of Jharkhand as a state, and it being a state with a distinct tribal identity, turned out to be largely irrelevant. Secondly, the contingencies of fieldwork gradually directed the focus of my project in other directions.

A new state

Jharkhand became a separate state in November 2000 – and this occurred after more than 50 years of mobilization for statehood, a struggle which had been dominated by and identified with the significant tribal population living in this part of India. The new state's Scheduled Tribe population was somewhere around 28% at the time, and in many ways, Jharkhand was understood to be a state with a distinct adivasi identity – according to an unwritten rule, for example, the state's Chief Ministers have since always belonged to one of the Scheduled Tribe communities.

During my initial summer fieldwork in 2002, the lives of the adivasis I interacted with in Ranchi – as well as in other parts of the state I traveled to – seemed to be inflected by dim hopes and vague expectations of improvements. “After all, this is our state”, many people said. They had fought for it, and they felt entitled to reap the benefits. Jobs in the government sector should now go to adivasis, and infrastructural improvements should now take place in their districts, rather than in Patna, the capital of Bihar, of which Jharkhand had been a part. But most people I spoke to were wary and reluctant to keep their hopes too high. Many of my interlocutors mentioned that it might be impossible, in the long run, to prevent the non-advansi majority of the state to run things among themselves, just as they had during the days of Bihar.

When I returned in 2007, the sense of anticipation and the residual hope for improvements in the lives of adivasis, which I had noted in 2002, had disappeared. Life in Jharkhand had returned to business as usual. The chief minister was still an adivasi, but this had no impact on the lives the adivasis I spoke to. More money was spent on infrastructural developments in and around Ranchi, but by and large, Jharkhand was perceived as a state like any other. The relative newness of the administrative structure, and the fact that this new state articulated itself with a distinctly tribal self-image, made no difference. While the location of the state has slightly shifted, the relationship of adivasis to the state seemed not to have changed at all. For my research – my interest in alcohol – the relative newness of state also turned out to be irrelevant. The bureaucratic structures and procedures had been inherited from the former Bihar and were still staffed

by the same people (if they had not yet reached retirement age). The legal environment had remained the same – the Jharkhand excise law consists only of a slim brochure explaining how the Bihar Excise Act is to be applied in Jharkhand.

The contingencies of fieldwork

Shortly after I arrived in Ranchi in 2007, I requested an appointment with the state secretary of health. I introduced myself explaining that I had come to conduct research on adivasis and alcohol, and that I would like to know what programs and interventions the health department was running in this domain (assuming that there would be campaigns and initiatives, if not concrete interventions such as de-addiction centers and rehab facilities). However, to my amazement, the secretary simply answered: “If you want to study adivasis and alcohol then you are talking to the wrong man. Alcohol is the responsibility of the excise department, and adivasis fall under the purview of the welfare department.”

I was amazed, but not (yet) discouraged, after all, the departments of excise and welfare had been among my intended sites of ethnographic investigation anyway. However, the data I was able to collect at these respective institutional sites was minimal. To say the bureaucrats were rather reluctant to talk to me would be incorrect. Rather, the bureaucrats were not available. It was only in very rare cases that I was able to successfully schedule an interview – usually, I would be asked to just drop by the next day or the next week. And when I did that, the officers-in-charge happened to be absent, and – these being extremely hierarchical environments – their subordinates were not entitled to talk to me. I

managed to have a handful of conversations in the Tribal Welfare Research Institute, as well as one interview with a the State Deputy Excise Commissioner (which I was only able to get because I had become friends with a liquor trader who ordered the excise officer to meet me). Other than that, I spent endless hours, for several weeks, traveling from one end of Ranchi to the complete opposite side of town, only to sit and wait for bureaucrats who had not yet shown up, or already left. Since the data I was hoping to collect in government offices was only one of several aspects of my planned fieldwork, I decided to focus on other sites of ethnographic engagement first – planning to return later. However, even later attempts to schedule interviews and subsequent visits were similarly frustrated.

Nevertheless, even as I began evaluating the data I had collected, I still approached my project as an ethnography of the state. However, in the course of writing this dissertation, a slightly different narrative began to emerge. This narrative approaches the complex and contradictory roles that alcohol plays in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand as a question of moral governance and ethical self-making. By taking a closer look at the presence of alcohol in various registers of adivasi lives, as well as by studying the ways alcohol is implicated in the constitution of adivasis as a distinct category of governmental subjects, this dissertation aims to provide a nuanced and multilayered account of the relationships between adivasis and alcohol.

Chapter II: Coming to terms

In order to make sense of the relationship between adivasis and alcohol in Jharkhand it is necessary to provide an introduction to the question of indigeneity in India. This chapter is meant to serve this purpose, and I believe the best way to approach the conundrum of indigeneity in India – to address the question *who (or what) are adivasis* – is through histories of governmentality. I thus follow a trail blazed by Kaushik Ghosh (2006a; 2006b) who has shown how the subjectivities of contemporary adivasis emerge from the ways in which the populations now known as adivasis were (and are) constituted as objects of knowledge and as targets of administration by governmental processes of inclusion and exclusion since the colonial period. I will begin with two brief episodes engaging questions of religion, and end the chapter with another one. In between, I will provide an overview over how questions of adivasi or tribal difference have been addressed since the colonial period, and will finally return to my ethnographic data to illustrate my understanding of indigeneity as a relational subject position enabled by administrative and epistemological inheritances of the colonial state, and reproduced through multifarious post-colonial and transnational aspects of governmentality. The issue of adivasi religion bracketing this chapter is thereby discussed as one aspect of the larger question of adivasi difference, and of how subjectivities of contemporary adivasis in Jharkhand are informed by histories of governmentality. As I will illustrate later in this chapter, with *subjectivity* I refer simultaneously to three separate (but related) aspects: Firstly, subjectivity describes conditions of *being subjected to something or someone*. Secondly, subjectivity contains a *grammatical understanding in which the subject is the*

author of an action or a state. And thirdly, subjectivity is a perspective, in the sense of an inner state of mind, an affect, a feeling, an experience.

Who or what are adivasis?

Mangra

In early 2008, I was sitting with three of the village elders and Chhottu, my research assistant, in front of one of Koylatoli's houses. It was a late afternoon, and we were drinking rice beer. Earlier that day, one of the villagers, who had passed away the night before, had been buried, and the family of the deceased therefore had to provide *harīa* to all those present after the rituals were completed. It was the very beginning of my fieldwork in Koylatoli, and I had only come to know a few of the villagers thus far. Paulus, the *mukhiya*, the headman of the village council, thus introduced me to one of the other elders sitting with us: Mangra was one of the two remaining residents of Koylatoli who had already arrived in the late 1950s, when the basti began its existence as a settlement of adivasis who had been hired by contractors to build the Heavy Engineering Corporation. Paulus suggested that I might be able to learn a lot from Mangra, who, partly flattered but certainly also somewhat uncomfortable, began introducing himself. He did this – following a governmental model of identification typical for Indian bureaucracy – by providing a list of relationships: “My name is Mangra Kandir, son of late Soma Kandir. I live in Koylatoli Village, Hatia Bloc, Ranchi District, Jharkhand State, India. My caste is ST (*Scheduled Tribe*) Munda. My Religion is Sarna

Hinduism. . . ” At this point, both Paulus and Chhottu interrupted him and said: “No, your religion is *not* Hinduism!” “You are an adivasi”, Paulus stated, and Chhottu elaborated on the categorical difference of the adivasi faith from Hinduism, illustrating his point by stating that Hindus prayed at the *mandir* (temple) whereas adivasis worshipped at the *sarna* (sacred grove), that Hindus burned their dead while adivasis buried them. Paulus strongly affirmed what Chhottu said and stressed the utmost importance for adivasis to maintain their character as populations that are distinct from *the other castes*, different from *the general people*. Mangra, nodded (his body language, however, did not indicate agreement).

Is it possible that Mangra was wrong when he claimed to be a Hindu? What legitimacy did Chhottu and Paulus have to correct him? How could they claim to know better? Was Mangra ignorant? Or confused? Or did the other two simply comprehend things better? What I was witnessing was the negotiation of a question I knew from the literature: The question whether tribes in India are in fact Hindu castes (and tribal forms of worship are actually local versions of Hindu worship), or something categorically different, was already debated at the cradle of Indian anthropology – and will be discussed later in this chapter. The issue is, however, as this brief example shows, not only a controversy among observers and hermeneuts, but even for the people concerned – the practitioners of adivasi religiosity. And the following episode from my fieldwork indicates that it is not simply a question of taxonomy.

James

In May 2008, I attended the wedding of James, my roommate's older brother. Notwithstanding his potentially misleading name James is not Christian. His family belongs to one of the patrilineages amongst whom the *pahans*¹⁵ of Torpa¹⁶ are selected. The wedding took place at the bride's family's home in Sarnatoli, a basti behind Ranchi college. I had arrived early in the morning from Torpa with the *baraat*, the groom's party, on a bus chartered for the occasion. People had already been congregating at the groom's house the day before – relatives, friends, and neighbors – and we had spent the evening drinking rice beer and practicing our dance steps. There were approximately 60 people who had arrived at Sarnatoli with the *baraat*, and we were dropped off about 100 meters away from the house of the bride's family, which was at the very edge of the basti. We had to wait there before entering the compound, as preparations for the wedding were still ongoing. I was sitting with James' brothers and some of their friends. After killing time for what might have been an hour, we began to grow somewhat impatient. Not primarily because we were made to wait, but because we were waiting for *harīa*, that is, *rice beer*. It was a hot day and we had left Torpa before breakfast. We were thirsty and in need for sustenance. After a while, three girls came from the compound and served us some water, but the protocols of hospitality, we thought, would have dictated that we would be served *harīa* – this was a wedding celebration after all! Nevertheless, we realized after what seemed like another hour of shooting the breeze that we were waiting in vain (and we wandered off into the basti, looking for a family selling *harīa* in order to

15 A *pahan* is the person in each Munda village who is in charge of conducting sacrifices.

16 Torpa is a town 65 km southwest of Ranchi (from where one travels to Tapkara, Diankel, and Jilingsereng)

satisfy our craving). We had come to the conclusion that the bride's family must have planned to wait with serving rice beer until after the wedding ceremony was completed. However, we were proven wrong, as we sat through the whole rest of day in the bride's family's compound without a single drop of alcohol. Neither the customary rice beer was served, nor the similarly common mahua liquor, and neither was there any “*english*” or IMFL (Indian made foreign liquor), i. e. , bottled, licensed, distilled liquors such as vodka, whisky, rum, or gin, which at middle class adivasi weddings would often be served in a separate room, frequently provided by a relative or neighbor who had access to army provisions. Some of James' friends kept slipping out during the wedding and went drinking in the basti, but the overall wedding party was kept dry until we returned to James' family home in Torpa in the evening. As we sat in front of their house, imbibing the rice beer which women in James' family had prepared, we recapitulated the day and noted, once more, that it was odd for the bride's family not to have served any *harīa* at all. There are of course many adivasis who abstain from alcohol, in particular Christians of Lutheran or Anglican denomination, and especially the rapidly expanding pentecostals, but also certain followers of Sarna¹⁷ reformist movements. But we knew that this was not the case with the bride's family. Many of us had attended the engagement ceremony at their house several months earlier, and there had been plenty of intoxication: first rice beer was served, and then mahua liquor, and even cigarettes and *khaini* (raw tobacco mixed with lime, which is consumed by placing it under the upper lip) were passed around. The reason for the abstinence must have been related to something else that we

¹⁷ While *sarna* denotes the sacred grove in every adivasi village, where certain sacrifices need to be conducted, *Sarna* has also become to most widely accepted term to refer to the religion of Jharkhand's adivasis. This issue will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter, as well as in the fifth chapter.

discussed that evening after we had “gone and brought a girl for James”¹⁸: the actual wedding rituals were not conducted by an adivasi, but by Brahmins, which had been a surprise not only to me and the guests, but also to James and the members of his family. “It should not be like that” James said, and his youngest brother (and my room mate) Binod added, that some families let themselves be duped into thinking that it is better to have Brahmins perform such rituals, but that this was wrong and not how adivasis are supposed to conduct their affairs. I had no opportunity to inquire into the motivations of the bride's family or to find out why and how they had decided to have the marriage conducted in this particular manner. There was unanimous agreement, however, among everybody sitting with us that evening that the bride's family had erred in hiring Brahmins to officiate the wedding ceremonies. It might be important to stress here that this perceived inaccuracy was not interpreted by those present as having any potential for status improvement or upward social mobility in the sense of M. N. Srinivas' thesis of Sanskritization¹⁹. Much rather, the invitation to Brahmins to officiate the wedding was interpreted as a symptom of ignorance and an insecurity on the part the bride's paternal family. However, the fact of a certain Sanskritization of the wedding – in that Sanskrit texts were recited and typical upper-caste Hindu customs were followed, such as the tying of a knot between the garments of the bride and the groom, and their

18 This is how Mundas would describe the process of traveling to the bride's paternal house (which is due to clan exogamy usually in a different village) to attend the wedding ceremony, after which the bridal couple is accompanied to the groom's paternal house and village (where celebrations continue).

19 Srinivas' theory of Sanskritization included social mobility (i. e. , the efforts of low-caste communities to improve their status in local hierarchies) into the analysis of caste (Charsley 1998). The model assumes a fundamental dichotomy of Indian Society: a division between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, which finds expression in a corresponding opposition between “sanskritic” and “indigenous” customs or practices (in particular: rituals, diet, deities). Sanskritization thus refers to the adoption of dominant caste customs (such as teetotalism, vegetarianism, or the imitation of rituals) by inferior caste groups, and simultaneously, the equation of local/low-caste deities with deities from the Sanskritic pantheon (Srinivas 1965; 1966).

circumambulating a sacral witness (the fire deity *Agni* in the case of Hindu weddings, a sal tree sapling²⁰ in the case of James' wedding) – would also explain why no rice beer (or any other form of alcohol) was served.

The little debate above, over Mangra's religious affiliation, as well as the story about how James and his friends and family were confounded by and disagreed with the ways in which his very wedding was conducted, both contain the question of whether adivasi forms of religiosity are vernacular manifestations of Hinduism or something that is categorically different from other religions, and ultimately point towards the question of *who (or what) adivasis are?* The crux thereby is not that people like Mangra or James' in-laws are not aware of who or what they are, but that the ontological status of the Scheduled Tribes in India in general and in Jharkhand in particular is a contested issue – contested by various political actors (not the least of which is the state), as well as on analytical grounds by anthropologists, sociologists, and historians (whereby there are of course no distinct *political* and *academic* discourses – the various aspects of the debate over the ontological status of adivasis are intertwined and mutually constitute each other).

Taxonomies

The taxonomical conundrum of adivasi religiosity is thereby only one aspect, or one

20 The sal tree (*shorea robusta*) is a species native to northern South Asia, and very important for adivasis in Jharkhand. Its wood is used for construction, and its leaves are, amongst other things, used to make cups for rice beer – especially on ritual occasions or at large celebrations such as weddings. Sal is also of spiritual relevance for the Munda and other tribes in Jharkhand, and one of the most important annual religious festivals, *sarhul*, during which village deities are worshipped, is celebrated when the sal tree is flowering (around April).

version in a whole field of debates over who or what India's tribal populations are. Most recently – in the course the past three decades – the question was discussed as a controversy over the concept of indigeneity, that is, whether it is acceptable (or maybe even necessary) to refer to India's tribal populations as *indigenous peoples*. This controversy was initiated after adivasi activists began attending sessions of the *United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP)* in Geneva in 1985, and to align their politics with the transnational movement of indigenous peoples. The Government of India opposed this and took the position that India is different from settler colonies, and that it would therefore not make sense to apply the category of indigeneity only to certain segments of the population – either all Indians were indigenous, or none. Adivasi activists who had begun using the platform of indigeneity, however, argued that they were living in a situation of internal colonialism, and that their indigeneity had already been implicitly acknowledged by the fact that they were referred to as *adivasis* (meaning: *original settlers*) and governed as *Scheduled Tribes*. A range of scholars jumped into the discussion - either criticizing the use of the conceptual framework of indigeneity in the Indian context on historical, sociological and/or philosophical grounds (e.g. Bêteille 1998)²¹, or defending it – mostly not on scholarly grounds, but out of a political and moral obligation to lend support to some of the most marginalized sections of the Indian population (e.g. Baviskar 2006; Karlsson 2003; Xaxa 1999).

The historian Crispin Bates, in his contribution to this debate (taking a critical stance and

21 Apart from this critique of indigeneity specific to India there is of course also the more generic critique of indigeneity (e.g. Bowen 2000; Kuper 2003).

arguing that instead of as victims of modernity adivasis and the idea of their aboriginality should be understood as an invention of modernity), stated that “[r]ather than ask 'who were the adivasis' [...], it might be better to ask 'who wants to define them' (Bates 1995a).” Constructivist studies such as Bates' have definitely contributed to our understanding of social and administrative categories like *adivasi*, *Scheduled Tribes*, and *indigenous peoples*, or even of concepts such as *tribe* and *aboriginal*, as well as of how such categories need to be contextualized and historicized. I contend, however, that if one considers the conundrum of Mangra and his interlocutors (*is he Hindu or not?*), or also the concern at the core of this dissertation (*what role does alcohol play in constituting adivasi subjects in Jharkhand?*) it becomes clear that the situation is slightly more intricate than what the unmasking of the constructedness of categories (such as *adivasi* or *indigenous people*) would permit us to recognize. This chapter does not aim high – I am not in the pursuit of a major theoretical contribution. As stated at the outset, I am trying to provide a brief introduction to the question of indigeneity in India, and to show that this conundrum – the question *who (or what) are the adivasis* – is best approached through histories of governmentality.²²

Taxonomical shifts: the Kurmis

In India, the status of being *tribal* corresponds with administrative categories that are – amongst other things – tied to governmental mechanisms of positive discrimination. The state governments thus maintain, as specified by the constitution, lists of *Scheduled*

²² As mentioned, I thereby use the analytic framework proposed by Kaushik Ghosh (2006a, 2006b). Juan Obarrio follows a similar approach to understanding indigeneity in Mozambique (2010).

Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), or of Other Backward Classes (OBC). Certain reserved quotas in state-run institutions of higher education, as well as in government employment (including army, police, or public sector enterprises) are set aside for people belonging to such listed communities.²³ Furthermore, specific scholarships and loans are available, and certain electoral districts have seats reserved for ST, SC, or OBC candidates (cf. Parry 1999). The past two decades have seen contestations over the inclusion of certain communities into the category of *Scheduled Tribes* in various parts of India. In Jharkhand, for example, a community known as *Kurmi* or *Mahato* and listed as OBC is demanding to be re-listed as ST. In 2007, I once found myself sitting with a few Kurmi men near the town of Tamar who vociferously argued for the recognition of their community as a tribe. The conversation had occurred by chance. I had travelled there together with Chhottu, my research assistant, after a newspaper article had caught my attention. It was reported that a Maoist group had been putting up posters in the area announcing that they would stop all sale of alcohol. While talking about the Maoists' liquor policy (cf. chapter 4) was not surprisingly rather difficult (since we were unknown to the people and they could therefore not trust us with information on such a sensitive issue), they were more than eager to discuss their conviction that Kurmis should be recognized as a Scheduled Tribe. The men argued that Kurmis have a distinct language,

23 Membership to these communities is proven with *caste certificates*. Obtaining such a caste certificate can be a rather involved process, especially if no other family members have previously been issued one. The certificates are issued by a local office, and require various attested documents in order to proof residence and/or land ownership, as well kinship ties to other identifiable members of the specific scheduled community. One of my acquaintances in Ranchi had obtained his caste certificate during my fieldwork after having travelled several times to his ancestral village, and had to facilitate the issuance of the document with bribes. His account made it clear that while the process was cumbersome for him, it would be considerably more difficult for people who did not, unlike him, belong to a middle class family with resources, education, and considerable experience in dealing with local bureaucracies.

maintain structures of customary village rule similar to those of neighboring tribes like the Mundas or the Santhal – and most importantly, that they were originally recognized as tribal by the British. The latter point is particularly noteworthy, because in 1929, Kurmis had lobbied for recognition as an upper caste (Ravi 2004). The British administration had described the communities from different parts of Northern India known as Kurmi as belonging to different castes or tribes – and even different races. H. H. Risley, who had introduced a race-based theory of caste in order to develop a model to classify and rank caste groups throughout India²⁴, had identified the Kurmis of Bihar as clearly of Aryan and the Kurmis of Chotanagpur as of obvious Dravidian racial origin (Risley 1981:528–537). Interestingly, the spearheads of the current movement for the recognition of Kurmis as tribes invoke these colonial racial categories to legitimize their claims, and are opposed by spokespersons of currently listed ST communities with contemporary governmental uses of scientific data: the Linguistic Survey of India did not recognize *Kurmali* as a distinct tribal language²⁵, hence, – the politician Salkhan Murmu argued in 2004 - Kurmis are not tribal. And Karma Oraon, anthropologist at Ranchi University, explained that the totemistic origin of Kurmi clans cannot be traced since most Kurmis use the same family name (Mahato), and that therefore, claims to tribal status of Kurmis could not be sustained (Ravi 2004). The Kurmi men with whom I discussed this issue pointed out the arbitrariness on which the administrative distinctions

24 Applying his race-based model of caste, Risley introduced the classification of “untouchables” as an umbrella category for the most oppressed caste groups throughout India in the census of 1901, which he was tasked with organizing as Census Commissioner (Charsley 1996; Das 2003).

25 The Linguistic Survey of India was a project of the colonial administration carried out between 1894-1928 under the direction of George Abraham Grierson, an officer of the Indian Civil Service. The findings were published in eleven volumes between 1903-1928 (Grierson 1967).

between caste and tribal communities are based²⁶, and made it clear that their desire to be re-listed derived from the injustice they recognized in the fact that they were living side by side with ST communities (and in considerable poverty), while they were not entitled to any of the benefits their neighbors could avail of²⁷.

Measuring differences between castes and tribes

Colonial construals of tribe-caste differences were built on racial theories, as well as on philological propositions on the history of Indian civilizations. In the course of the nineteenth century, colonial officials began to describe communities living in forest and hill areas throughout India as different from the people living in the plains, and noted that the former had – notwithstanding manifold differences – much in common among each other. At the time, various descriptors circulated (such as *wild*, *savage*, and *tribe*, or *race*, etc.) before the terminology of “aboriginal, forest or hill tribes” began to be used more consistently around the middle of the nineteenth century (Skaria 1997:729). In 1852, John Briggs proposed that “the races of Hill-people in different parts of India [...] were the inhabitants of the country before the Hindus” (Briggs 1852:275). Briggs furthermore contended that India’s aboriginal groups had one common origin, a

26 In his “paraethnography”, C. Townsend Middleton observed how the Anthropological Survey of India assessed whether several communities in Darjeeling, who were aiming to be classified as ST, would meet a range of criteria required for such rescheduling (Middleton 2011a; 2011b). His work resonates what Elizabeth Povinelli has called “the cunning of recognition”, i. e. , how indigenous communities are subjected to a strict range of criteria and expectations (and even performances) of primitivity in exchange for the state's recognition of their indigeneity (Povinelli 2002).

27 These benefits included of course the reserved quotas mentioned before. Another important consideration, however, was land: Under the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 (CNT), which still applies, only members of ST communities are permitted to purchase land listed as tribal land. As a consequence, the pressure on any land that can be traded freely is very high, and prices for this “general” land are exorbitant.

proposition which connected his idea with the theory of the Aryan invasion of India. According to this theory, which goes back to philological hypotheses about the origins of an Indo-Aryan language, the original inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent were partially absorbed, and partially displaced by Aryan invaders, who are often believed to have arrived from somewhere to the North or West of India around 1500 BC (Bryant 2001; Trautmann 1997). The implications of Briggs' hypothesis, namely, that the ancestors of the various tribal groups from different parts of India were the original settlers of the subcontinent, whereas the ancestors of upper castes had been Aryan immigrants, established itself in the second half of the nineteenth century as a widely accepted interpretation of India's ancient history (cf. Bates 1995a; Skaria 1997)²⁸.

Briggs' distinction between the Hindu race and the aboriginal race of India built, as mentioned, on philological studies and therefore did not yet entail a biological understanding of race. Towards the end of the 19th century, however, consistent with the growing importance of racial theories at the time, anthropometric methods were

28 This reading of the history was not only accepted by Europeans, but also by upper caste Hindu Indian elites, who found – for example in the linguistic relatedness of Indo-European languages – a kinship with the Europeans who dominated the world (and thus a purportedly scientific legitimation for themselves to dominate Indian society). Similarly, some leaders of discriminated caste groups now known as Dalits began advocating the hypothesis that they were the descendants of a civilization *before* – and in particular – *different from* Hindu society (cf. Begrich and Randeria 2012). Today, this interpretation of how India was populated is still championed among tribal or adivasi activists, who embrace the idea that their aboriginality allows them to make legal and political demands as *indigenous peoples*. Supporters of the contemporary Hindu right fiercely oppose the Aryan invasion hypothesis and claim that Hindus are indigenous to the Indian subcontinent – thus rendering Muslims as well as Christians intruders (cf. Baviskar 2005; Froerer 2007). These two positions are mirrored in a fierce debate in which (mostly) Western scholars – holding onto updated renditions of the Indo-Aryan migration hypothesis – are challenged by (primarily) Indian counterparts who maintain an “Indigenous Aryan” position and question the epistemological underpinning of the migration hypothesis. Edwin Bryant who carefully reviewed the various positions in the current debate wrote that the question of the Aryan origin has steeped certain academic circles in an “Indological McCarthyism [...] where *anyone* reconsidering the status quo of Indo-Aryan origins is instantly and a priori dubbed a nationalist, a communalist, or, even worse, a Nazi (Bryant 2001:7).”

introduced to the study of castes and tribes in India (Bates 1995b). This marked an important transition in the colonial anthropology of India, not so much on a conceptual level than in terms of method, as the focus shifted from the study of texts to a study of bodies (Pels 1999). Indian tribes were consequently identified as belonging to racial types such as “the Negrito, Protoaustraloid, Mongoloid, and the Caucasoid” (Singh 1993:12). Particularly enthralled by the scientific appeal of anthropometric methods was the 1901 census commissioner H. H. Risley mentioned above. He distinguished between castes as if they were races, and used anthropometric methods to identify lower and higher castes:

“If we take a series of castes in Bengal, Behar, or the North-Western Provinces, and arrange them in order of the average nasal index, so that the caste with the finest nose shall be at the top, and that with the coarsest at the bottom of the list, it will be found that this order substantially corresponds with the accepted order of social precedence (Risley 1981:xxxiii–xxxiv).”

And he used the same approach to distinguish tribes from castes:

“No one could mistake a Brahman for a Kol, but the most minute verbal description of their characteristic differences of feature falls short of the numerical analysis that can be arrived at by measuring specific dimensions of the head, nose, cheekbones, orbits, forehead, and zygomatic arches, and working out their proportions by the system of indices invented by the Swedish anthropologist, Anders Retzius, in 1842. Add to these weight, stature, and the facial angle devised by Cuvier extend the observations to about a hundred specimens of each group, and it will be found that the averages calculated from this mass of figures bring out a uniform tribal type to which all individuals tend to conform (Risley 1981:xxx).”²⁹

While the measuring of characteristics such as noses and cheekbones was an important

²⁹ Kol is an epithet with derogatory connotations that was used in the colonial period for the tribes of the Chotanagpur Plateau.

means of producing taxonomic knowledge on Indian populations in the late 19th century, distinctions between castes and tribes were also derived from sociological findings. Briggs, who had first posited the idea of tribal aboriginality, also provided a list of indicators to determine the differences between tribes and Hindus:

“[Aborigines] differ from the Hindus, inasmuch as the Hindus

1. Are divided into castes. The aborigines have no such distinctions.
2. Hindu widows are forbidden to marry. The widows of the aborigines not only do so, but usually with the younger brother of the late husband - a practice they follow in common with the Scythian tribes.
3. The Hindus venerate the cow, and abstain from eating beef. The aborigines feed alike on all flesh.
4. The Hindus abstain from the use of fermented liquors. The aborigines drink to excess; and conceive no ceremony, civil or religious, complete without.
5. The Hindus eat of food prepared only by those of their own caste. The aborigines partake of food prepared by any one.
6. The Hindus abhor the spilling of blood. The aborigines conceive no religious or domestic ceremony complete without the spilling of blood and offering up a live victim.
7. The Hindus have a Brahmanical priesthood. The indigenes do not venerate Brahmans. Their own priests (who are self-created) are respected according to their mode of life and their skill in magic and sorcery, in divining future events, and in curing diseases: these are the qualifications which authorise their employment in slaying sacrificial victims, and in distributing them.
8. The Hindus burn their dead. The aborigines bury their dead, and with them their arms, sometimes their cattle, as among the Scythians. On such occasions a victim ought to be sacrificed, to atone for the sins of the deceased.
9. The Hindu civil institutions are all municipal. The aboriginal institutions are all patriarchal.
10. The Hindus have their courts of justice composed of equals. The aborigines have theirs composed of heads of tribes, or of families, and chosen for life.
11. The Hindus brought with them (more than three thousand years ago) the art of writing and science. The indigenes are not only illiterate, but it is forbidden for the Hindus to teach them (Briggs 1852:282–283).”

Notwithstanding the diversity among the various groups classified as tribal throughout India, their fundamental racial and cultural distinctness was taken for granted in the late colonial period, and their most important characteristics were that they were considered to be primitive and aboriginal. At the end of the nineteenth century, administrative lists of tribes were collated (the antecedents of the lists in which the Kurmis are now eager to be included) using a range of - essentially arbitrary - criteria for determining primitivity (such as modes of subsistence, living in remote areas, illiteracy, absence of what Europeans could recognize as codified law). However, the similarities in cultural, social, and religious practices between groups classified as tribes and neighboring caste groups were often much more substantial than the commonalities between tribes from various parts of India. This is of course also the situation that the Kurmis of Jharkhand are facing today: while there are very few phenomenological differences between them and their neighbors, both end up on different lists. For this reason, Skaria calls the colonial practice of listing tribal groups a “process of primitivization, or [...] the invention of primitive societies” (Skaria 1997:732). That rather little has changed since then is shown in the reactions to the Kurmi claims to tribal status, where criteria such as *totemism* or the use of a distinct *tribal type* of language are employed. Similar but contemporary procedures of primitivization are documented in the work of Townsend Middleton, who studied how the Anthropological Survey of India assesses applications for changes to the lists of Scheduled Tribes, and who found that the groups reviewed have to comply with specific criteria for primitivity in order to qualify for re-scheduling (2011a; 2011b).

Primitivization and labor markets

The distinctions between tribes and castes were not just an arbitrary creation of British colonial rule but rather an inherent component of its ideological underpinning, as Ajay Skaria has shown (1997; 1999). His argument builds on Partha Chatterjee's ideas about "the rule of colonial difference" (Chatterjee 1993:10), which contend that while the civilizing mission justified the subordination of colonial subjects by European/Christian colonizers, this mission was supposed to never fully succeed, because with the erasure of the difference between colonizers and colonized the justification for colonial presence would disappear. The civilizing mission, Skaria argues, was thus not about overcoming primitiveness, but about subordinating it, about "constructing the colonized as wild, and sustaining that construction" (Skaria 1999:193). While ascriptions of wildness frequently served (and continue to serve – as the Tapkara shooting incident in the introductory chapter shows -) as justifications for the use of violence and the imposition of restrictive rules in and by modern states, Skaria claims that the British colonial ideology did not simply build on a contrast between their own civilization and Indian wildness, but on different "shades of wildness" (1997). These different shades of wildness found among colonial subjects thus permitted the distinction between castes and tribes, whereby castes were considered less wild, and – within an evolutionary framework for the classification of human civilizations – more advanced, while nevertheless clearly more wild and less advanced than Europeans. Skaria contends that ultimately, castes were seen as barbaric whereas tribal peoples, while conceived of as primitive and beyond the scope of civilization, were ultimately construed noble savages, and as occupying "a space of the

exotic opposed to the baseness of Indian civilization” (Skaria 1999:xi).

Kaushik Ghosh (1999) discusses the process of primitivization that runs parallel to the ethnological listing of castes and tribes by the colonial administration – a process in which capitalist labor and commodity markets were implicated. He shows how racial classifications were applied during the colonial period in labor recruitment continue to operate until today, which results in the stigmatizations of tribal communities. Ghosh describes how in the colonial imagination, the Ho, Munda, Oraon, Bhumji, Santal and Paharia people from Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas (in present-day Jharkhand) were transformed from a fierce race of independent warriors (and thus trouble makers for the colonial state) into docile and hardworking coolies. Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas were frontier regions of British India, and their inhabitants had vehemently maintained their autonomy from colonial interferences until a powerful colonial army and the introduction of individualized landownership (as well as taxation, and the trade of land) “pacified” the area at the end of the 18th century. As a consequence of the subjugation an enormous population of dispossessed tribal villagers entered the market for plantation labor, first in the plains of Bengal, then in Mauritius and Trinidad, and later in Assam. Ghosh’s account illustrates how colonial perceptions about the innate qualities of populations worked to facilitate a tremendous demand for *dhangars* (as adivasi laborers from Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas are known) in the plantation labor market. He quotes one planter from Mauritius who praised the tribal laborers because they did not belong to a caste:

“[...] Natives of caste require kinds of food, certain forms of

cooking, and other observances. Of several castes, in the same gang [of labourers], one will not eat with the other, nor allow their food to be cooked by any other than one of their own caste. But in several parts of India there are people to be found who have no caste, especially the Hill coolies of Bengal, a fine athletic race of people, who eat fresh meat or any other kind of food without scruple. They are free from the prejudices of the Hindoos and Mahometans (quoted in Ghosh 1999:19). ”

Ghosh’s essay thus illustrates how stereotypes of Jharkhandis as both exotic and primitive, and as fit and reliable for manual labor began to take shape³⁰, and how this stigmatization of tribal populations worked hand in hand with the expansion of state and capital into tribal domains. Both the stereotypes as well as the markets for *dhangars* persist, even though the latter have altered. Today, adivasis from Jharkhand are recruited for work in brick kilns (cf. Shah 2006b) or on construction sites in various parts of India (I have met a number of people who had worked in Punjab or in Nagaland), or for seasonal farm labor in Haryana or Punjab. Women (more precisely: girls) are in high demand as domestic workers, in particular in Calcutta and Delhi – once, even I was asked to assist in finding a domestic helper by a family in Delhi who had in the past employed an adivasi woman from Jharkhand.

Anthropologically minded administration: difference and the prevention of resistance

In the final decades of British rule over India, “anthropologically minded administrators”

30 Similarly, in her history of the tea garden industry in Assam, Jayeeta Sharma shows how racialized distinctions between tribes of different parts of India were important considerations in the plantation labor market in Assam, where adivasis from Chotanagpur were in demand as cheap, but reliable “Coolies” (2009; 2011).

(J.H. Hutton 1936, quoted in Sundar 1997:157)³¹ began to advocate, paternalistically, the protection of tribal groups. They argued that contact with Hindu castes or with Muslims would corrupt tribal cultural practices, and ultimately deprave adivasis and deprive them of their innocent character. Based on the notion that tribal groups are inherently different from the rest of Indian society, specific administrative set-ups for regions with significant tribal populations were put in place. Under the Scheduled Districts Act of 1874, parts of the country were thus put under a separate framework of laws (or more precisely: exempt from ordinary acts and regulations of jurisdiction) with the intended purpose of protecting tribal communities (Ghosh 2006a; Sundar 1997; Xaxa 2003). This was in principal adopted in the Indian constitution after Independence with the 5th Schedule provisions for the administration of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Areas, and with the 6th Schedule for the tribal areas of the northeastern states of India (cf. Savyasaachi 1998). The codification of customs – customs that passed the colonial litmus test preventing barbarous practices – into customary law was an important step in this process of adapting the model of indirect rule from colonies in Africa (Ghosh 2006a; Ghosh 2006b; Roy 1912; Roy 1961; Sundar 1997).³²

In Jharkhand, for example, there are legal acts which regulate land ownership or that set in place specific provisions for local rule. Certain customary rights and political structures of adivasis were thus recognized by the colonial government, and are still in

31 J.H. Hutton was an Indian Civil Service officer and later Cambridge anthropology professor; as census commissioner he oversaw the 1931 census of India.

32 As Skaria points out, considerations of legal practices were an important criterion for distinguishing tribal from non-tribal groups. Groups classified as primitive were usually groups where codified law was absent, and which were understood to be ruled by customary law (Skaria 1997:731).

place (such as the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908, or the Wilkinson's Rule of 1833) (Ghosh 2006b; Sundar 2005a; 2005b; 2009). I frequently heard adivasi activists as well as missionaries citing these regulations as indication for the relative benevolence of the colonial rulers in comparison to the dominance of “aryans” - as manifested in the rule of *dikus* and the post-colonial *sarkar*. However, it would be misleading to assume that the legal provisions the British administration put in place in favor of tribal communities rested solely on the initiative of “anthropologically minded administrators”, or resulted from the postulates of colonial ethnology, namely, that India's tribal communities are the subcontinent's aboriginal population, and needed protection. Instead, the exceptions were put in place in response to a range of tribal uprisings, and in order to prevent further resistance (Ghosh 2006a; Sundar 2005a). As Ghosh demonstrates, deflecting blame away from the policies and practices of the European imperial enterprise, the colonial government construed the implications of the aryan migration theory as indicative of naturally occurring tensions between descendants of India's aboriginal tribes and Hindu and Muslim settlers from other parts of India. Such a narrative, however, ignored the fact that the policies facilitating (if not necessitating) the immigration of Biharis and Bengalis as money lenders, traders, and in particular, as feudal landlords had been instituted by the colonial administration. So while the anger expressed in tribal rebellions was directed against local landlords (cf. Guha 1983), the conditions of possibility for such anger to arise had been the expansion of the colonial state through law and capital (and in particular taxes, courts, and the military) into tribal domains (Ghosh 2006a).

Inclusive and exclusive governmentalities

Ghosh identifies two parallel processes of governmental rationality that set in as the Chotanagpur region was folded into the colony in the 19th century, two forms of governmentality, which continue to map the background against which adivasi subjectivities take shape, and which made it possible for the modern adivasi subject to exist – since the colonial period – both inside as well as outside the temporality of national citizenship. On one hand, the colonial administration aimed at assimilating the people of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas (the region adjacent to Chotanagpur to the northeast, today also part of Jharkhand state) into the colony, after subduing, in the late 18th century, the polities that had existed there in relative autonomy.³³ This process of assimilation began with the recognition of an “essential primitive otherness” (Ghosh 2006a:507), that was marked as lawless, ignorant, and unaware of the logic of money. And this essential alterity was to be incorporated into the colonial state and economy through trade and taxation – as well as the laws enabling and recognizing individual land ownership. In post-colonial India, this governmental rationality aimed at assimilating the “essential primitive otherness” of adivasis – which Ghosh terms “*incorporative governmentality*” (Ghosh 2006a:507–508) - continues, for example, in the listing of *Scheduled Tribes* and the quotas reserved for them in higher education and public sector employment.³⁴

33 This so-called *pacification* of the “lawless and savage inhabitants” in the hills (quote from a monument erected in 1784 to commemorate the subduing of the Paharias in Bhagalpur; cited in Ghosh 1999) was made necessary – from the colonial administration's perspective by occasional raids of polities in the plains (that were controlled and taxed by the colony) conducted by the people from the hills.

34 Another, less formalized aspect of inclusive governmentality is for example also the unwritten rule that the Chief Minister of Jharkhand needs to be an adivasi (belong to an ST community).

However, a second governmental rationality, which Ghosh calls *exclusive governmentality*, and which equally takes the recognition of an essential tribal alterity as its point of departure, identified this tribal other as vulnerable and as incompatible with the logics of market and citizenship. Protective measures were therefore considered necessary, ensuring that adivasis (who were understood to be pre-aryan) would not suffer a cultural ethnocide at the hands of the aryan majority. This implied a certain degree of segregation and involved, as mentioned above, the instituting of territorial exceptions governed according to what was identified as *customary law* (these forms of *indirect rule* were known in colonial India as *scheduled areas* or as *frontier agencies*). These forms of exclusive governmentality persist today in parts of India which fall under the 5th or 6th schedule – that is, parts of the country that are identified as *tribal areas*, and where special legal provisions exist, designed for the protection of adivasis. For example, electoral districts in scheduled areas have a certain number of seats that are reserved for ST candidates, and there are provisions for the institution of village councils (*gram sabha*) equipped with authorities to approve development projects in their jurisdiction, and which are to be in consonance with customary forms of local governance, and to be headed by STs. In Jharkhand, there are acts such as the Wilkinson's Rule of 1833, which recognizes customary forms of local governance, or the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 and the Santal Parganas Tenancy Act of 1955 which codify customary forms of landownership and prevent the sale of adivasi land to non-STs.³⁵

35 Nandini Sundar has argued that the codification of customary forms of legality have fixed them in problematic ways, for example in that adivasi land cannot be owned by women (Sundar 2009).

The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 (CNT) was drafted in response to the uprising in the Chotanagpur region (esp. along the Karo river) led by Birsa Munda, which took place between 1895 and 1900. Two individuals crucially involved in documenting the vernacular norms and practices to be codified as *customary law* in this act were also the two most significant ethnographers of the Mundas at the time, the Bengali lawyer Sarat Chandra Roy³⁶, and the German Missionary John Hoffman S.J.³⁷ The mutual cross-pollination between anthropological forms of knowledge, missionary endeavors, and colonial administration has of course been thoroughly discussed in the literature. Nicholas Dirks, for example, describes an “ethnographic state” (2001)³⁸ during the late colonial period in India, because of the particular manner in which ethnographic knowledge (in particular knowledge on caste) and colonial policies were generated alongside each other.³⁹ This relationship between colonial rule and anthropological knowledge is clearly tangible in the Chotanagpur region of the late colonial period. Inclusive governmentality was very much an aspect of the “ethnographic state” in that knowledge about different tribes and castes and their particularities was generated in order to integrate these communities into the colony, and the forms of knowledge produced were consistent with the aim of maintaining British rule. Thus, for example, in 1824, a tax on rice beer was introduced, whereby the colonial excise policy was

36 S.C. Roy was the author of various ethnographic texts on the tribes of Chotanagpur, including the monograph *The Mundas and their Country* (1912); he was rather sympathetic to the situation of adivasis, and – according to Sangeeta Dasgupta – also to the British rule of Chotanagpur (Dasgupta 2004).

37 Father Hoffman, as he is known in Jharkhand, was the author of the 16 volume *Encyclopedia Mundarica* (John Hoffmann and Arthur Van Emelen 1990; cf. Tete 1986).

38 After the rebellion of 1857, which colonial historiography has called the Indian Mutiny, and which nationalist Indian historians have referred to as India's First War of Independence.

39 However, as Talal Asad pointed out already in 1973, the role anthropology (or anthropologists) played in enabling colonialism is much less significant than the importance of the colonial context for the kind of knowledge produced by anthropologists at the time (Asad 1973).

specifically adjusted to the cultural context of the tribes of Chotanagpur, who had been identified as particularly fond of this form of alcohol. However, this tax “cause[d] discontent”, in the words of Sarat Chandra Roy (1912:Appendix lv). In 1888, “aboriginal tribes” were thus granted permission to brew rice beer for domestic consumption free of taxation (Roy 1912:Appendix lx), which illustrates the manner in which *custom* (i.e. the use of rice beer in tribal societies) became the basis for specific exemptions granted to tribal societies. As an expression of the exclusive mode of governmentality described by Ghosh, the identification of custom and the granting of exemptions were thereby not only means of administrative pragmatism, but also constitutive of the very *populations* identified as *tribal*.

Aboriginals or backward Hindus?

Anthropological forms of knowledge continue to be implicated in various processes of governmental rationalities in post-colonial India, and various actors inside as well as outside administrative institutions⁴⁰ continue to be involved in debating issues related to the governing of populations, the management of difference, or the question of *who (or what) India's tribal populations are*, with which I began this chapter. As outlined above, this latter question was answered in the second half of the 19th century by the colonial administration as well as by the human and social sciences of the time with the following two propositions: 1) *Tribals are India's aboriginal populations*, and 2) *Tribals are*

⁴⁰ Among the administrative institutions that are dedicated to producing anthropological knowledge for governmental purposes is the Anthropological Survey of India (which is, amongst other tasks, involved in assigning communities to the lists of Scheduled Tribes, as mentioned above) or various research institutes at state levels, such as the Tribal Welfare Research Institute in Ranchi, as well as the Ministry for Tribal Affairs in Delhi.

therefore categorically (and racially) different from Hindus, and thus also different from castes. These two propositions are unquestioned by many adivasi activists in Jharkhand today, as well as by their international supporters from indigenous peoples' rights groups⁴¹, but they have also come under scrutiny. On one hand, exponents of Hindutva dismiss the aryan migration theory and hold the position, that *the Hindu civilization* is indigenous to India, and that tribals are in fact Hindus, even though they might be unawares of it (cf. Bryant 2001).⁴² On the other hand, since the early 20th century, scholars began to doubt whether it makes sense – on analytic grounds – to distinguish tribes and castes categorically. Interestingly enough, this debate, which began in the 1940s with a controversy between the sociologist G.S. Ghurye - who argued that tribes are in fact “backward Hindus” (Ghurye 1963:19) – and Verrier Elwin – who was convinced that tribes are India's aboriginal populations – appears to be re-surfacing occasionally in varying incarnations.⁴³ In the past two decades, various scholars have thus addressed this issue in the form of a debate over the question whether India's Scheduled Tribes can legitimately lay claim to being *Indigenous Peoples*, or whether the concept of indigeneity is at best appropriate in the context of a settler colony.

At stake in the anthropological debate between Ghurye and Elwin about the ontological

41 Such as, for example, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (iwgia.org), Survival International (survivalinternational.org), the Minority Rights Group (minorityrights.org), or the Society for Threatened Peoples (gfbv.de).

42 Mangra, with whom I opened this chapter, who – provoking objection – self-identified as a Hindu is someone who had, according to his neighbors, been exposed to such Hindutva teachings.

43 Elwin was an Englishman who had come to India as a missionary in the 1920s. Later, Elwin not only defected from his conviction that salvation for Indians lay in the Christian faith, but became a critic of colonial ideology and an ardent supporter of the Indian National Congress and its struggle for independence, only to secede again due to his beliefs that the nationalist agenda was not favorable to the tribal people to whom he had devoted his life as an ethnographer and advocate (Elwin 1958; Elwin 1964; Guha 1999).

status of India's tribes – whether they are categorically different from Hindu castes or not – was also an administrative question, ultimately: the quest for the right way for the independent Indian nation-state to address the obvious poverty and sometimes outright destitution of tribal populations. Elwin saw the poverty in tribal communities as an outcome of an aggregated onslaught of colonial policies (such as taxation, the criminalization of shifting cultivation, etc.) and mainstream Hindu society, first impoverishing tribal communities economically, and then crushing them culturally. The collective deprivation resulting from these pressures would ultimately lead to a psychological trauma, a condition which Elwin called “the loss of nerve”. He proposed a national park for the isolation and protection of tribes – not to prevent progress and development, as he stated, but because contact with the larger Indian society would lead to decadence and further aggravate destitution (Elwin 1939; 1941).

Ghurye responded to Elwin in a book called *The Aborigenes – So-called – and their Future* (Ghurye 1963)⁴⁴, and accused Elwin of wanting to create a zoo for India’s tribal population. He argued that India's tribal people were “imperfectly integrated classes of Hindu society” (Ghurye 1963:19), rather than distinct from the latter. Ghurye explained tribal destitution as an outcome of British systems of law, revenue, and individual property in land, which had eroded tribal solidarity, impoverished them, and paved the way for money lenders and liquor contractors to take advantage of the “improvidence and ignorance of the people” (Ghurye 1963:207). In contrast to Elwin, Ghurye thus saw the exploitation of tribals by Hindus as a secondary phenomenon, enabled by the conditions

44 The book originally published in 1943 was revised in 1963 and released under the title *The Scheduled Tribes* (Ghurye 1963).

of British rule. Ghurye's opposition to a policy of segregating tribal communities (and of making them subject to a different set of laws for the purpose of guaranteeing their survival and their distinctiveness) was in line with a sentiment prevailing at the time among nationalists, and especially among supporters of the Indian National Congress Party: anything that might be interpreted as a challenge to the idea of India as a nation (and its unity) would be opposed as a colonial attempt to exert power through an ideology of divide and rule. However, Ghurye based his opposition to special protective provisions on an anthropological argument: He rejected the idea of tribal aboriginality. The long and complicated history of migrations throughout the subcontinent would make it impossible to determine questions of prior (or first) settlement, as would the similarities in customs and religious practices and beliefs found between groups known as tribes and neighboring caste groups. Elwin's view on the other hand – notwithstanding his opposition to the British rule of India – was very much a continuation of the ways in which the colonial administration had conceived of India's social and cultural heterogeneity. He was convinced that tribes were fundamentally different from castes – a view that had emerged in the mid-nineteenth century through the confluence of administrative and anthropological practices in the service of British colonial rule (Appadurai 1993; Cohn 1984; Skaria 1997; Sundar 1999; Xaxa 2003). In contrast to Elwin's plans of creating a national park for their protection, Ghurye's ideas for improving the living conditions of tribal groups did not include the protection of tribal difference, but rather its erosion: Contact to disadvantaged caste groups, and more generally, exposure to mainstream Hindu society would – he contended – facilitate improvements such as the adoption of better modes of cultivation and cure them from

their drunkenness (Guha 1999; Sundar 1997).

Classificatory practices of the state

Even though in post-colonial India, constitutional protections and affirmative action for adivasis were introduced with the category of Scheduled Tribes, the 1940s debate between Elwin and Ghurye about the ontological (as well as anthropological) status of India's tribal populations – and about the policies to be adopted vis-à-vis them – was decided in favor of Ghurye's position. The emphasis of the policies vis-à-vis Scheduled Tribes populations has been, at least since the 1960s, on development and modernization (Skaria 1960). In independent India – and in the schedules that list them – tribal people are understood not as aboriginals, but as backward, and their backwardness epitomizes the backwardness of the Indian nation – to be “overcome and extirpated for the nation to become modern, or simply for the nation to become” (Skaria 1997:742). The groups now classified as Scheduled Tribes under the Indian constitution are more or less the groups identified as tribes – and distinguished from castes – already by the colonial state (Bates 1995). While the category of Scheduled Tribes continues to be debated in terms of its usefulness as a policy measure, it is widely acknowledged that its semantic content cannot be defined (with sociological or anthropological criteria), but needs to be understood as determined by “political and administrative considerations of uplifting (Singh 1993:12)” a certain segment of the Indian population. The sociologist André Bêteille states that the necessity to identify tribal populations arises solely from the fact that India maintains policy measures requiring the identification of tribal communities:

“The problem in India was to identify rather than define tribes, and scientific or theoretical considerations were never allowed to displace administrative or political ones (1991:58).” He remained one of the few anthropologists who, until recently, continued to reflect on questions of defining the tribal in India (1960; 1986; 1998) and states: “the constitutional provisions have in certain respects sealed the boundaries between tribe and non-tribe, and given to the tribal identity a kind of definiteness it lacked in the past (Béteille 1997:77).”

This solidification of tribe and caste identities is of course inherently tied to classificatory practices of the state.⁴⁵ Of particular importance is thereby the census, which takes place in India every ten years since 1871. The counted categories are constantly revised – for example, the census discontinued counting caste in 1931, and began collecting caste data again in 2011 (Samarendra 2011; EPW 2010). And while it contains information on religious affiliation, the respective census categories available for adivasis have changed frequently, and are absent from the census since independence (Sundar 1999; 2000). Tribal groups were first listed under *forest tribes* as a sub-category of *agricultural and pastoral castes* in 1881; as *so-called animists* under *caste and others* in 1901 and 1911; and again in 1921, even though *animists* was then reformulated as *tribal religion* (Xaxa 1999b). After independence in 1947, STs were enumerated under *Hindus* if they did not follow any other major religion (Xaxa 2005).

45 This dynamic between classification and subjectivity has been analyzed in studies of the state as a form of rational organization working through strategies of enumeration (cf. Appadurai 1993; Cohn 1984).

Contemporary terminologies: *adivasi*, *vanvasi*, *moolvasi*

The most important term currently employed throughout India (except for the Northeast) to refer to the groups known (in early anthropological work and administrative classifications) as tribal, or as indigenous peoples (in contemporary scholarly and political debates) is *adivasi*. It is used by the concerned groups themselves, as well as by others. The word is a combination of *adi* – meaning *beginning*, or of *earliest times*, and *vasi* – meaning *inhabitant*, or *resident*. While the term *adivasi* has probably been around for a long time, historians found that it became the descriptor of choice during the nationalist movement for India's independence in the course of the 1930s in the Chotanagpur region (now Jharkhand), and was popularized on a national level by the Gandhian A.V. Thakar (Bates 1995a; Hardiman 1987). The preference for this term at the time needs to be understood against the background of nationalist critique of existing ones: *tribe* was rejected as an analytical construct, rooted in colonial thought and justifying imperial rule; vernacular terms (such as *kaliparaj* – *black people*, which prevailed in Western India, or *vanvasi*, *vanyajati*, and *girijan* – which all somehow signified *residents of the forest*) were replaced with words that were supposed to be less derogatory (such as *adivasi*; Skaria 1997). *Adivasi* is generally not considered derogatory, and its usage is rarely contested because it does not have necessary legal implications (such as the term Scheduled Tribe in the Indian context, or indigenous peoples due to its potential in international law) nor is it understood to make any claims to anthropological or sociological accuracy. According to Skaria (1999), the term *adivasi* was successful as a signifier for tribal communities, because it was free of metaphoric reference to the

forest, and because it invoked autochthony, and – more importantly -, a certain outside to the narratives of the Indian nation state.

In the 1980s, *adivasi* began to emerge as what is probably best described as an ethnic identity, a development that needs to be historically located within particular social and political movements. Baviskar for example, describes how, during the 1980s, an anti-dam movement in the Narmada Valley (in the state of Madhya Pradesh) joined forces with a union, and while both groups organized around discourses of dispossession, they together managed to reproduce an *adivasi identity*, and thus mobilized support against the beleaguering of their habitat and their distinctive cultural practices by various (secular and Hindu) manifestations of modernity. Their claims to land and forest were based on combined invocations of aboriginality and ecological stewardship, whereby the former was articulated as implying the latter (Baviskar 1995; Baviskar 2005). Pramod Parajuli describes the phenomena leading to such invocations of “ecological ethnicity” as the parallel processes of “ethnicization of ecological destruction” and “ecologization of ethnic subordination” (Parajuli 1996). He argues that ecological exploitation is tied to ethnic subordination, and that the historic convergences of various environmentalist and human rights discourses contest state hegemony, especially as it is manifested in processes of national integration and development.

However, the idea of aboriginality, or autochthony is why the term *adivasi* was challenged around the time when Jharkhand became a separate state. The bifurcation of Bihar had occurred in November 2000 after a long history of *adivasi* movements'

demanding autonomy going back at least to the late colonial period. While adivasi activists would often posit a genealogy linking the Jharkhand movement with the tribal insurrections of the 18th and 19th centuries, formal demands for a separate state named Jharkhand were made by adivasi leaders as early as 1928 before the Simon Commission, a committee of seven British parliamentarians which had been deputed by the British Government to study parliamentary reform in the colony of India. When statehood was finally granted to Jharkhand on 15 November 2000, a coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ran the central government in Delhi⁴⁶, which is worth mentioning for two reasons: Firstly, the separation of Jharkhand from Bihar needs to be understood - amongst other reasons - against the background of electoral politics. The BJP led the ruling coalition at the center, but the state of Bihar was governed by an oppositional party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). And while the BJP was able to expect majorities in state and national elections in the southern districts, undivided Bihar was firmly in the hands of the RJD (or more specifically: the hands of RJD founder and leader, Lalu Prasad Yadav). Secondly, while support for a separate state in the southern districts of Bihar was growing among the political forces involved in the ruling coalition at the center, certain Hindutva ideologues preferred the new state to be called *Vananchal* rather than *Jharkhand* (thus not having to acknowledge the legacy of the Jharkhand movement and its political claims, which, above all, were about addressing the exploitation and marginalization of tribals by creating a state with a distinctly tribal identity). Consequently, the terminology of Hindutva preferred to refer to *vanvasis* rather than to

⁴⁶ The BJP is discussed briefly in the next chapter, as are its allegiances to Hindutva and the Sangh Parivar.

adivasis. While the difference between *Jharkhand* and *Vananchal* is etymological rather than semantic (both meaning: area of bushes or forests), the difference between *adivasi* and *vanvasi* is more significant, since the latter means *forest-dwellers*, whereas the former denotes *original inhabitants*. The use of the term *vanvasi* (*forest dwellers*) thus circumvents the challenge the notion of *original inhabitants* poses to the indigenous aryan hypothesis espoused by Hindutva (Fernandes 1998). Furthermore, by placing the tribal in the jungle through the usage of a label like *vanvasi*, a certain contrast between the tribal and the modern is posited (which is not similarly the case with a term referring to original inhabitants) thus invoking the necessity of relating to the tribal through forms of paternalism. This agenda – a combination of patronizing welfare and Hindu proselytism among adivasis in Jharkhand – is carried out, for example, by the charitable welfare organization *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram*, but also through activities of the volunteer corps of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)*.

With the new state being named *Jharkhand*, however, and the subsequent losses of the BJP-led coalitions at the center in 2004 and in Jharkhand in 2005, the term *vanvasi* lost currency, and became restricted to occasional usage by Hindutva hardliners. In early 2002, however, a new term had entered the political vocabulary of Jharkhand: *moolvasi*, which is practically synonymous with *adivasi* (the former meaning *inhabitants from the beginning* and the latter *original inhabitants*), was introduced into the Jharkhandi landscape of political rhetoric by then Member of Parliament Salkhan Murmu. Murmu, a Santhal⁴⁷ who had begun his political career as a union leader in the industrial town of

47 The Santhal are adivasis living in the eastern Indian states of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, and

Jamshedpur, had variously shifted his political affiliations until he received a ticket from the BJP in 1999 to run for parliamentary elections from Mayurbanj, a reserved constituency in Orissa (the state bordering Jharkhand to the south). In 2002, Murmu founded the Jharkhand Disom Party with the central demand of increasing reservations for government-sector jobs in the scheduled areas of Jharkhand to 100%, whereby 60% would go to STs, and 40% to SCs. The category of *moolvasi*, which he introduced, incorporated both these groups (according to a model proposed by the state government for determining domicile status on the basis of survey and settlement records of the 1930s – discussed in more detail below). This new category of first settlers thus included not only the descendants of the communities the British had determined as *aboriginal tribes* – and which are now mostly known as *adivasis*, but also the so-called *sadans*, who are mostly low-caste communities that had been living alongside adivasis, sometimes for centuries, and who speak the Sadri language (Chaudhuri 2002).⁴⁸

The transnational perspective: indigenous peoples

While this new nomenclature – grouping adivasis and sadans together - acknowledged the support that many sadans had lent to the movement for a separate state of Jharkhand, it was, obviously, first and foremost a strategic, populist political move by Salkhan Murmu, who thereby significantly increased the constituency on behalf of which he politicized. But the concept of *moolvasi* was strongly criticized by some of my adivasi

Orissa, and are one of the largest groups identified as *Scheduled Tribes*.

48 *Sadri* – also known as *Nagpuri* - is not only spoken by the *Sadan*, but is furthermore the first language of many Oraons, especially in heavily Christianized areas, and it serves as a lingua franca between the different tribes of Jharkhand.

activist friends for undermining the adivasi cause, in particular, as they would argue, because much of the exploitation of adivasis had historically occurred at the hands of sadans. I cannot go into the potential historical (in)accuracies of such positions, but I would like to point out that this particular reading of history (which rejects the term *moolvasi*) is consistent with the colonial interpretation mentioned above, building on the aryan migration theory and thus assuming both racial, religious, and social differences as well as an age-old conflict between tribals and their non-tribal neighbors (or landlords). One activist who rejected the usage of the term *moolvasi*, is a friend of mine whom I call Mani, who was particularly opposed to the emerging concept for the exact reason that it blurred the boundaries between adivasis and non-adivasis. As a lawyer and a member of a Jharkhandi human rights group, he had attended meetings at the United Nations in Geneva and New York for several years, where he had participated in discussions over the draft of the UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁴⁹. Even though the Indian government – as already mentioned – holds the concept of indigeneity as not applicable to the Indian context, Mani is convinced of its long-term potential for contributing to justice for adivasis.⁵⁰ But indigeneity is for him not simply a political tool

49 These deliberations finally resulted in a declaration in 2007:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

50 When the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN general assembly in September 2007, Mani invited me to celebrate. I asked him that evening, why he was so optimistic about the declaration's potential. After all, it was only a declaration and not binding international law – not to mention that even international law cannot be properly enforced. Mani responded that the fact that the Declaration ultimately had no teeth was irrelevant. What mattered was that it existed. “Of course” he said, “the UN Declaration cannot be enforced, but like Human Rights (which are also not enforceable; R.B.) it can motivate a wide range of work.” For him, what counted was the Declaration's potential as a signal, a symbol.

What Mani had aimed for in his struggle for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights in international law, and in particular in his efforts of having such rights extended to India, was the establishment of a legal framework wherein local communities and local political structures would be better protected, where ultimately, adivasis would no longer find themselves in a position in which they would have to give up their land and their livelihood for the greater common good (as it had happened

or a juridical concept. He is also convinced of its analytic accuracy for the Indian context as it alludes to the history (or: an interpretation of history he is committed to) of the relationships between adivasis and non-adivasis as well as to the nature of this relationship, which he would describe as a form of internal colonialism. He also argues that the indigeneity of the tribal populations of India is implicitly acknowledged by the fact that these groups are officially recognized and listed as *Scheduled Tribes* for the very reason that they are understood to be different from the mainstream, and that they require preferential treatment. Furthermore, since the widely used vernacular term *adivasi* means *original settlers*, the aboriginality of the tribal communities is popularly acknowledged, according to Mani. Thus, blurring the distinction between sadans and adivasis would in his eyes mean the blurring of a distinction between non-indigenous and indigenous populations and thereby undermine the goal of getting official recognition of India's Scheduled Tribes as indigenous peoples.

Transnational vs. local perspectives

As already mentioned, the compatibility of the transnational discourse on indigenous peoples' rights with the situation of Scheduled Tribes in India has been widely discussed in the scholarly literature. But apart from such conceptual concerns, there is also the more

in Hatia with the Heavy Engineering Corporation, discussed in the next chapter) or fight a decades-long struggle ripe with sacrifices (as was the case for the Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan, which had prevented the construction of a dam that would have flooded their fields and villages, which is also discussed in the next chapter). (*I am using past tense here because Mani is no longer active in the transnational network of indigenous rights activists, and has not travelled to any international conferences for several years now. He has redirected his efforts and is primarily active as a vakeel, an advocate in the high court in Ranchi.*)

pragmatic question of whether (or to what extent) the transnational activist discourse does justice to the needs and priorities of the people on the ground, the adivasis that activists like Mani aim to represent when they make statements in international fora. This question has been addressed with regard to Jharkhand by Kaushik Ghosh (2006a) as well as by Alpa Shah (2007; 2010), who both come to a similar conclusion: the cultural politics and the rights-based claims that trickle down to the local context from transnational activist arenas like the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City, or the headquarters of support organizations in Bangkok, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, London, or Cambridge MA rarely speak to the particular contingencies of local communities in Jharkhand. For Shah this is a problem of misrepresentation, occurring almost as if by force of nature. “[W]ell-meaning activists from urban middle-class backgrounds (2010:32)” are in her eyes incapable of sharing the perspectives of “poor rural adivasis (2010:30)”. Her explanation is that “[t]here is an impossible distance between middle class *adivasi* leaders and Jharkhand's subaltern classes (Shah 2007:1822)”.⁵¹ Ghosh, building on his model of

51 The reason for why adivasi activists are unable to accurately represent adivasis, in Shah's account, seems to be her particular notion of “class”:

“The indigenous rights activists, whose rhetorical positions and actions I compare with the experiences of the poor rural adivasis, are urban based and highly educated middle classes - some even have Ph.D.s from foreign universities. [...] I do not engage in a detailed sociology of the activists. However, it is important to know that some are adivasis who come from Christian convert backgrounds. Many others go only by their first name, to hide their upper-caste identity and the fact that they are recent immigrants to the area (Shah 2010:30).”

While she is certainly right that many adivasi activists are from urban, middle-class families, that many are educated and many are Christian, and also about the fact that there are activists who come from upper-caste backgrounds and/or who hail from other parts of India, it is unfortunate that Shah does not explore in detail why and how such subject positions would prevent – as Shah implies – taking political stances that are in line with the needs and priorities of the rural poor. Does receiving a higher education make it per se impossible to understand the plight of the poor? Are Christians categorically suspect? Or does Shah suggest that being Christian is opposed to being adivasi – and thereby implicitly reiterate the Hindutva position on this question?

multiple governmental rationalities, provides a more nuanced analysis. He similarly identifies a discrepancy between the politics of the middle-class adivasi leadership of Jharkhand, and the local struggle against the planned dam in the Koel-Karo region⁵². The former are committed to notions of indigeneity and adivasi difference grounded on one hand in colonial era ideas about tribal aboriginality historically threatened by aryan invaders, and on the other hand in the transnational discourse on indigenous peoples' rights, which envisions international legal instruments as panaceae for local conflicts. And Ghosh shows that this analytical and strategic framework is unable to take into consideration the kinds of politics at play in local adivasi struggles against displacement. The example of the Koel-Karo movement demonstrates how “spaces of adivasi contestation emerge as unanticipated effects of the governmental rationalities of the nation state (Ghosh 2006a:503)”. The customary land ownership rules codified in the tenancy laws during the late colonial period, for example, have effectively been invoked to prevent the sale of adivasi land. Even prejudices against adivasis have successfully been deployed by proponents of the Koel-Karo movement: by stating that adivasis cannot handle money a case is made against compensatory payments for land, and by getting drunk the leader of the movement has repeatedly prevented negotiations with project representatives (Ghosh 2006a:510-512). The local resistance movement is thus emerging from and reacting to the specific ways in which governmental discourses and practices have imagined and managed places such as the Koel-Karo region and the populations inhabiting it since the colonial period. But because the politics of the transnational

52 The Koel-Karo region and the struggle against the planned dam are described in more detail in the following chapter.

movement of indigenous peoples, and of the urban middle-class adivasi leadership aligned with it, are not attuned to the particular ways in which this local movement fits into the histories of governmentality that have produced it, there is a mismatch, a discrepancy between the two. However, as Ghosh shows, it is not only the subject positions and strategies of the rural populations that need to be understood against the background of histories of governmentality. The fact the urban-based middle-class relates to indigeneity primarily as a question of difference and/or a question of an idealized “*adivasi culture*” in need of protection is a consequence of “middle-class adivasi leadership [being] products of an enumerated ethnicity enabled by incorporative governmentality (2006a:515)”. Thus, while for rural adivasis, aspects of exclusive governmentality – such as the codification of customary forms of land ownership – provide the means of their livelihood and have a deep impact on their subjectivity, in the city, and especially for the middle-class, the access to higher education and jobs facilitated by measures of incorporative governmentality have since independence been significantly more relevant.

Incorporative and exclusive governmentalities

Domicile riots of 2002

I will try to illustrate this importance of incorporative governmentality with reference to mobilizations around the sensitive issue of reservations, i.e., the measures of positive discrimination, which are a crucial aspect of incorporative governmentality in the post-

independence phase. In the summer of 2002, I travelled to Jharkhand for a first brief stint of fieldwork on my dissertation project. Only a few days after my arrival, riots struck the capital of Ranchi, where I was based, as well as in other urban (and industrial) centers in the state: Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro. The clashes – between adivasis and “outsiders”, as well as between both groups and the security forces – during which five people died, occurred in the context of what is known in India as a *bandh*, a general strike, usually declared and enforced by a political party, or occasionally by armed opposition groups such as Maoist insurgents. I stayed home on the day of the bandh, which various adivasi organizations had called for on July 24th, as it was impossible to find transportation. Only in the late afternoon I ventured out, curiously, after I had begun noticing some activity in the nearby shops. I managed to find a cycle-rickshaw driver who was willing to take me to towards Dangratoli Chowk, a large intersection about 2 kms from where I was staying. On the way there, however, I realized that there was no traffic at all, and the usually busy roads were empty except for some boys playing cricket. Almost all the shops were closed, except for a few stands selling tobacco and betel nuts, who were serving their customers behind half-closed shutters. There were piles of garbage and tires burning in the middle of the road, and the few men out on the street kept calling out to my rickshaw driver. I had only just begun studying Hindi and was unable to understand what they were trying to tell him. However, the context and the various body languages involved seemed to indicate that he was being warned – or rather asked whether he was insane for taking me out on his rickshaw. There was no other vehicle on the road, which caused a somewhat eerie feeling, but I trusted my driver who was very confident and gave me the impression of knowing exactly what he was doing.

Before reaching the intersection, I had to get down from the rickshaw as the road had been made impassable with nails and broken glass. After arriving at Dangratoli, I visited my friend Deepak, who excitedly told me “I am very proud about our adivasi bandhi”.

The measure of success of a bandh - and thus the measure of the influence which the party commands that calls for it - is how well it is observed, that is, how complete the standstill is. This bandh had caused a total standstill (and the papers the next morning would report widespread chaos). As dusk was falling and people slowly began to reappear on the streets, and some shops had begun resuming their most urgent business with their shutters only half opened - we could still see small groups of young adivasis roaming the alleys, carrying clubs. Based on the looks in their eyes, their movements, and the exhilaration in their voices they appeared intoxicated, but it was impossible to tell whether they had been drinking or whether they were simply high on their excitement of having enforced the bandh and claimed their rights to the city and the state for a day. As the evening approached and Deepak and myself were sitting with a few of his friends at Dangratoli Chowk, rumors began trickling in about two or maybe three young adivasi men having been killed in Hatia by *dikus*. The next morning, the papers reported that five people had been killed, massive clashes had occurred between opposing factions and overwhelmed security forces, and various shops and a police station (in Hatia) had been torched. Furthermore, the papers lamented the inaction (or the tacit support) of the Chief Minister and the authorities with regard to the lawlessness of the bandh supporters.

What was remarkable about this bandh was that the political affiliations and ideological

preferences of its supporters appeared to be somewhat irrelevant: all the adivasis I spoke to were unconditionally in favor of it. The bandh had been called for in support of a government policy (which had been announced, but not yet implemented) – but more importantly – in response to the protests against this policy, which had caused disturbances in the preceding days. A few weeks earlier, the government of Jharkhand had announced that it was planning to implement a policy which would increase reservations in the unskilled government employment sector for people domiciled in the state to 73%. After it became known that domicile status – required for such jobs – would be granted only to people who (or whose ancestors) were recorded in the settlement records of 1932, anger broke out among people who had moved to the region after 1932, and who would thus officially be considered outsiders. Protests against the proposed domicile policy were held in several cities, and a bandh was announced. And these protests in turn triggered the anger of adivasis, who identified the people opposing the new domicile policy – most of whom had moved into the region from the north when Jharkhand was part of Bihar – as *dikus*, as *non-adivasis* and as *outsiders* (which is implicitly equivalent with *exploiters*). Jharkhand was still very young then – just 20 months before, the southern districts of erstwhile Bihar had been declared a separate state in the Indian Union. And one of the most prominent concerns which supporters of the movement for a separate state had been voicing throughout the struggle was that Jharkhandis should be permitted to run their own affairs. In particular, it was felt that the labor market, as well as the government were unjustly controlled by Biharis. Jharkhandis, and in particular adivasis therefore perceived it as particularly provocative that Biharis would still lay claim to jobs reserved for “locals” when after decades of

domination by Biharis Jharkhandis had finally been granted “their” state. The support for the bandh on July 24th 2002 was thus so unanimous among adivasis in Ranchi because many of them seemed to share a sense of entitlement, after a long and occasionally bloody struggle for their own state, to the benefits (and in particular the employment) generated by this state. It was thus noteworthy that the two localities in the Ranchi area where violence had occurred on the day of the bandh were the sites of public sector industrial enterprises: in Hatia, where HEC is located, where a police station had been torched, and in Doranda at the Headquarters of MECON (Metallurgical & Engineering Consultants Ltd.) two protesters were shot by security guards. When I asked the friend in whose house I was staying at the time, and who had been driving around all day on his scooter to get a sense of the situation around town, what the clashes between the protesters and the guards were about, he said: “These boys have no political ideology, they are just moved by emotions.”

The Adivasi Chhatra Sangh

Also involved in the agitations around the domicile policy was a group of young, middle-class adivasis who had formed an adivasi student organization – the *Adivasi Chhatra Sangh* - in 2000. I met Gaurav Ekka, one of its founders, in August 2007 at a petrol pump in Ranchi. Gaurav and his group of friends would meet there every evening to hang out, drink tea, smoke, and to exchange news and information (and sometimes relocate to a less conspicuous venue to indulge in liquor). The petrol pump was their *chowk* – which means *square*, but also signifies a particular form of pre-nuptial male sociality consisting

of such daily, informal meetings. Gaurav as well as most of his friends had not grown up in the city, but all had spent most of their young lives there getting educated. At the time I met them, they had all finished their education – several of them with Master degrees - and were preparing for UPSC or JPSC exams⁵³ in order to qualify for various kinds of bureaucratic positions in the state or central governments, or for a job with the police forces. I cannot provide a detailed analysis here of the economic landscape and the job market in Jharkhand, but since independence, the urban adivasi elite – as well as rural residents who have enjoyed some degree of education – have aspired almost exclusively to a *sarkari naukri*, a job in the public sector, an administrative branch, or the security forces. This very considerable reliance on the state as a provider of employment is related to the fact that other jobs have historically been – and continue to be – very difficult for adivasis to access⁵⁴, and that since the signing of the constitution in 1950, members of Scheduled Tribes are entitled to avail of reserved quotas intended to provide them with easier access to government sector employment. Further factors for the popularity among adivasis of the government sector as a potential employer are the facts that sarkari jobs are secure, which means that one is guaranteed employment until retirement and a pension thereafter, and that such jobs – especially positions in the higher echelons of the

53 The Union Public Service Commission conducts the competitive exams for the Civil Services, Defence Services, etc.; the JPSC is the equivalent for the administration of Jharkhand state.

54 This is because – especially in rural areas – private businesses (other than those of traders) are extremely scarce throughout Jharkhand, and where they exist, employees are often recruited within the particular caste/religious communities. As for educated middle-class adivasis in Ranchi, like Gaurav and his friends, other, less prestigious livelihoods would be working for an NGO – which some of Gaurav's friends did while studying for their exams, or independent work as contractors. NGO work is a precarious form of livelihood, because it depends on the availability of (mostly international) funding. I met a number of NGO workers who had gone for several years without funding because they had been unable to adjust their (small organization's) field of expertise to the shifting priorities of donor agencies. Independent work as a building contractor was taken up by several of my acquaintances shortly after I had left Jharkhand in 2008. The market of building construction is certainly a booming one, but I have currently no information on how economically successful my acquaintances have been.

bureaucracies – convey considerable social status.⁵⁵ Obtaining such a sarkari naukri can be quite challenging in general (and might involve bribery and/or nepotism), but in order to become a bureaucrat – as Gaurav and his friends aspired to – one must pass the UPSC (or JPSC) exams mentioned above, which are highly competitive. Even with the possibility of profiting from the reserved quotas for STs, the pool of eligible candidates (adivasis with sufficient education) is steadily growing, and some of Gaurav's friends had already been studying for several years without being able to qualify for careers as bureaucrats or high ranking police officers.

The *Adivasi Chhatra Sangh (ACS)*, which Gaurav Ekka and some of his friends had founded in 2000, had meanwhile become – under a new leadership - an important voice in the struggle for the official recognition of Sarna as a religion (for example, in the census), as well as in the campaign to defend the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act.⁵⁶ However, the ACS originally emerged on the political scene in 2000, in reaction to the case of a young man named Anjan Kumar, who was challenging a court decision that had ruled his Scheduled Tribe Certificate invalid. Anjan Kumar had an adivasi (i.e., ST) mother, and a non-adivasi father (belonging to the *Kayastha* Hindu caste), and had appeared for exams at the UPSC, stating to be an adivasi and thereby claiming the quota reserved for ST candidates (cf. Sema 2006). This was considered a provocation by Gaurav and many of

55 All this has led to an environment where social expectations for and the aspirations of young adivasis in the job market focus almost exclusively on the government sector. As Gaurav expressed in an interview, he would be happier if he could continue to pursue his political ambitions (and remain an activist), but he feels a certain pressure of expectations from his family to obtain a job as a bureaucrat.

56 The CNT, which codifies customary adivasi land ownership and prohibits the sale of adivasi land to non-adivasis has been under attack for some time now by non-adivasis who consider it an impediment to Jharkhand's economic development (and who somewhat euphemistically argue that the CNT is of disadvantage to poor adivasis who are prohibited from selling their land).

his friends, which is why they began to mobilize, in order to ensure that legal precedent could not be set for offspring with non-*adivasi* fathers to claim tribal status.⁵⁷ One might be tempted to interpret this story from a utilitarian perspective and argue that for Gaurav and his friends, this was simply a case of protecting their privileges and of eliminating competition. However, their mobilization also needs to be contextualized against the background of the affective terrain on which their lives unfold, where widespread anger exists or even hostility towards *dikus* in general and *Biharis* in particular, and where there is a great deal of frustration about the ways in which *adivasis* are marginalized by the state and the majority populations.⁵⁸ This anger is tied to a perception of broken promises, as in the case, for example, of HEC in Hatia⁵⁹, where land and livelihoods were given up in exchange for the promise of being catapulted into an industrialized, participatory modernity. But there is also a certain anxiety about being reduced to a minority by the influx of people from other parts of the country, and in particular from Bihar (of which *Jharkhand* was a part), and considerable discontent due to the disregard with which *adivasis* are often treated by these outsiders, whereby racist and casteist ideas contribute to the stigmatization of *adivasis* as primitive. Such sentiments of anger or frustration are

57 The ACS actually lost their case in a Bihar court, but another case had been filed elsewhere and in 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that tribal status is inherited from the father, and not from the mother. The judgement states furthermore, that Anjan Kumar had no justification to claim Scheduled Tribe status in order to benefit from reservations since, while growing up, he had not been “subjected to any disability” (Sema 2006), meaning, he had not suffered from the same difficulties of accessing educational resources and infrastructures as someone growing up in his mother's native (tribal) village.

58 In February 2008, Bombay saw several days of pogrom-style violence against so-called *immigrants* from northern India and in particular Bihar. The violence was instigated by Raj Thackeray, leader of the Marathi right-wing political party MNS (*Maharashtra Navnirman Sena – Maharashtra Reformation Army*). I was shocked then, when I noticed one evening that the young men hanging out at the petrol pump - Gaurav's friends - were quite supportive of Thackeray. Upon further inquiry I found out that this had nothing to do with Thackeray's actual politics but simply with his hostility towards *Biharis*. Anand, one of Gaurav's friend even told me “I support Raj Thackeray because I hate *Biharis*”.

59 Which will be discussed in the next chapter.

especially present among the adivasi middle class who feel they have been disadvantaged while competing against dikus in educational institutions and the job market, but also among populations living near industrial developments, mines, etc., who have lost both land and livelihoods in the face of a significant workforce imported from other parts of the country.

The ACS – which had been formed spontaneously by a group of students angered by Anjan Kumar's attempt to claim reservations as an adivasi – crystallized into a full-blown political movement two years later, in the context of the domicile issue mentioned above. Here, again, the attempts of dikus – and in particular of Biharis – to claim what people like Gaurav and his friends considered to be rightfully theirs, was taken as a provocation and an expression of the Biharis' disregard for adivasis. As Gaurav explained it to me: “Jharkhand was created because of the demands made by the tribals of Jharkhand. So more reservations should be given.” What is of particular interest for the point I am trying to make here, however, is that Gaurav explained the reasons for forming the *Adivasi Chhatra Sangh* culturally; they had to intervene in the case of Anjan Kumar because of the threat that the law might disrecognize that inclusion in tribal communities is regulated according to customary rules of patrilineal descent: “we don't consider such persons to be tribal, because the lineage goes according to the father. [...] We formed the student association [because] such candidates who are of disputed lineage should not be given tribal status.” Reservations – for which Gaurav Ekka and his friends thus fought for, both in their case against Anjan Kumar as well as in their involvement with the domicile issue – are certainly one of the most important expressions of governmental enumeration, and a

crucial strategy for the inclusion of enumerated communities (STs in the case at issue) into the national mainstream. This indicates how the political subjectivities of urban middle-class adivasis such as Gaurav are tied to incorporative governmental rationalities. The actions of the ACS were, however, also guided by a concern with maintaining a certain idea of authenticity (of what it means to be tribal), as well as with the recognition of tribal status by the law as a crucial aspect of what constitutes modern adivasi selves. The subjectivities of urban middle-class adivasis are therefore informed by the same notions of an essential tribal alterity that serve as the basis for the recognition of adivasis as Scheduled Tribes by various state and non-state actors, and for their inclusion into the national mainstream.

Adivasi alterity as a relational subject position

Enumerated ethnicity as expressed in categories such Scheduled Tribes (vs. Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, etc.) is thus highly pertinent for the subjectivity of urban middle-class adivasis like Gaurav and his friends. However, in a rural environment such as Jilingsereng, the situation can be quite different. In September 2007, I was present while Soma Munda met with Rejan and the leadership of the Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan to discuss their stance towards the steel plant which ArcelorMittal was planning to build in the area.⁶⁰ As will be discussed in the following chapter, they were opposed to selling any land to the corporation – primarily because they had no reason to trust that it might be to their benefit. At that meeting however, Soma expressed a certain

⁶⁰ Due to my presence they conducted their meeting partially in Hindi rather than in Mundari.

discomfort about a campaign against the steel plant, which Dayamani, an adivasi leader from Ranchi, had been leading. Dayamani had organized rallies both in the capital as well as in Torpa, the town near Jilingsereng, where ArcelorMittal was trying to acquire land for the plant. For the media, Dayamani had become the spokesperson of the burgeoning resistance movement against the steel plant. She represented this resistance as yet another incarnation of the age-old conflict between aryan and adivasis, and as aligned with the struggles of indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world. Soma disagreed with the way Dayamani represented the movement against the steel plant as an adivasi movement. He said: “This is not a movement for adivasis. It is against displacement. We are fighting for all those who would be affected by the steel plant. Not just for adivasis.”

While speaking of “adivasis”, Soma ultimately used the same enumerative category as Dayamani did in representing the movement. The difference, however, was that for Soma, this enumerative category was largely irrelevant with regard to the struggle for survival he was engaged in. While Dayamani would represent the resistance against the steel plant as yet another incarnation of an age-old conflict between aryan and adivasis, and align it with the struggles of indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world,⁶¹ Soma, understood it to be about the land of his clan, which was crucial to their livelihood, but which was also where their ancestors were buried, and over which they held customary rights as per the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act. Both Dayamani as well as Soma articulated their resistance against the steel plant from their subject positions as adivasis – but they arrived at their positions on quite different paths. Both, I would argue, exemplify how

61 see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL_89U8590U or <http://tehelka.com/ground-warriors/>

indigeneity is a relational subject position. But while for Dayamani this subjectivity is constituted in opposition to dikus and the sarkar, for Soma, it does not emerge primarily in opposition to the outside, but in relation to his community, and to the land they live on and off (and which – because of the connections the Mundas and their neighbors have to it through their ancestral spirits, as discussed in the fifth chapter – is a part of the social fabric). Soma thus recognized himself – and his possibilities to act and react – in response to exclusive governmentality, i.e., the ways in which essential tribal alterity and the codification of customary law made it possible for him to reject advances of the state and capital to displace him. For Dayamani, however, as well as for adivasis like Gaurav or Mani, their struggles were very much what Ghosh calls “products of an enumerated ethnicity enabled by incorporative governmentality (2006a:515)”.⁶²

Who or what are adivasis: tracing governmental rationalities

I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter that the question raised at the outset – *who or what are adivasis?* - needs to be approached through histories of governmentality rather than as a pursuit of an applicable conceptual terminology (*aboriginal, adivasi, autochthonous, indigenous, tribal, etc.*). Such an approach allows for tracing how the people identified through categories like *adivasi, Scheduled Tribe, or indigenous people* came (and continue) to be constituted – through forms of knowledge tied to specific governmental rationalities – as *populations*, and how the categories and terminologies

⁶² This does not mean, however, that the consequences of exclusive governmentality are completely irrelevant for urban or middle-class adivasis. The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, which safeguards tribal landownership, has facilitated the market for land – especially near Ranchi – to become an extremely profitable business.

used to describe and distinguish them emerge as meaningful at various moments in history. Therefore, attention to how the specific populations thus constituted are managed (by various state and non-state formations of power) permits important insights into the formation of modern adivasi subjectivities. As stated at the beginning, with *subjectivity* I refer simultaneously to three separate aspects (which are, however, each folded into the others). Firstly, *subjectivity* describes conditions of *being subjected to something or someone* – for example, the enumerative technologies of governmentality creating the category of *Scheduled Tribes*, which are then used to administer social relations. Secondly, *subjectivity* contains a grammatical understanding in which the *subject* is *the author of an action or a state* – such as, when individuals like Gaurav or Soma take political action and thereby explicitly invoke (or not) adivasi difference. And thirdly, *subjectivity* is a *perspective*, in the sense of *an inner state of mind, an affect, a feeling, an experience* – such as when adivasis felt angered and/or insulted by the attempts of Biharis to claim domicile status (and reservations) in Jharkhand, or the experience of insecurity created by the precarious conditions of existence of a basti like *Koylatoli* (which might be vacated any day).⁶³

Tracing continuities: essential others

With regard to the governmental rationalities with which various formations of power have related to adivasis in Jharkhand, there is a noteworthy continuity between the

⁶³ I am clearly not assuming a coherent or unified subject - Spivak's critique of the early Subaltern Studies has of course shown how problematic this would be (Spivak 1985; 1988). However, I think that the conceptual framework of subjectivity allows me to circumvent the pitfalls of identity (which is a crucial concept for many studies of indigeneity) precisely because it allows for a much more flexible understanding of the ways in which individuals are tied to collectives

colonial period – when the populations now known as adivasis were identified as essential (and aboriginal) others requiring specific management – and the present. For one, the conceptual language – or rather, the descriptive frames of reference – with which adivasi populations and their needs in terms of development are identified is reminiscent of, and often identical with colonial formulations. On the website of the *Ministry of Tribal Affairs*, for example, a “Definition” of tribal groups, given under the heading *Approach to Tribal Development* contains the following sentence: “There are some tribal groups, which are still at the food gathering stage, some others practice shifting cultivation, yet others may be pursuing primitive forms of agriculture (Ministry of Tribal Affairs n.d.)” Similarly, the *Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)*, a government-controlled program for income generation through the marketing of handicrafts has state-wise lists on its website with short descriptions on the tribes living in the respective states. Remarkably, these brief, one-paragraph portraits always contain information on the habits of alcohol consumption, such as, what forms of alcohol are used, whether it is produced at home or purchased, etc. For the Munda the respective paragraph contains the following:

“They are fond of a home-made rice beer (Harīa) and distilled country liquor (daru). This distilled beverage is purchased from local markets. Men drink these beverages almost regularly, but the women consume these only occasionally (TRIFED n.d.)”

Tracing continuities: population management as counterinsurgency

Furthermore, as in the 18th and 19th century, when the colonial government devised specific forms of governmental rationality in response to rebellions in tribal territories,

the state in India is presently facing armed resistance in many of the same regions. What is variously known in India as *Naxalism*, *Maoism*, or *Left-Wing Extremism* was described by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2006 as India's biggest threat to internal security.⁶⁴ In a remarkable continuity with the approach of the British colonial government, the current Government of India tries to contain tribal rebellions by designating territories and populations (primarily the present-day Scheduled Tribes) which require exceptional modes of governance. Recognizing that there is a “sense of alienation among certain sections of the community, especially the tribal community”, Prime Minister Singh suggested in 2009 that to counter Naxal recruitments, “deficiencies in the pace of development” would need to be addressed (Gaikwad 2009). The Minister for Rural Development thus proposed to revise a whole range of entitlement programs so that they could be utilized more effectively in areas of Naxal influence. He also proposed

64 In 1967, a faction that had split off from the erstwhile Communist Party of India, opted out of parliamentary democracy to take up arms, and joined a peasant uprising in a West Bengal village called Naxalbari. The movement – which came to be known after the village as the Naxalite movement – spread quickly, mobilizing against the exploitation of rural masses by feudal landlords, and aiming for overall social, political, and economic transformation and the seizure of state power by means of a “people's war” (along the lines of Mao's strategies). This original Naxal insurgency was quickly subdued, but the revolutionary movement never completely disappeared; it subsided and resurged several times, but it has also undergone a range of internal splits, feuds, and reunifications. While far from achieving the goal of a communist revolution, the Naxal struggle for social justice nevertheless has had some degree of success, in particular in Bihar, where land redistribution, better wages, and a certain degree of dignity and respect for the rural poor were the outcome of Naxal mobilization in the 1970s and 1980s (Bhatia 2005; Banerjee 2009). The focus of the mobilization, however, has in the meantime shifted, from overturning the exploitative and feudal landlord-tenant relations to resistance against displacement caused by the claiming of resources (land, water, forest, minerals) by state and private corporations in the interest of economic growth (People's March, Ganapathy, and Kishan 2004; People's March 2004)

(People's March, Ganapathy, and Kishan 2004; People's March 2004)

. Maoist insurgent groups are now operating in more than a third of India's districts, throughout a so-called *red corridor* in Eastern India, reaching from the northern border with Nepal to the southernmost state of Tamil Nadu, but also across the country from Orissa in the East to Maharashtra in the West. This red corridor is largely coterminous with the areas with the most significant concentration of tribal populations, and Jharkhand and the neighboring states of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and West Bengal are the most affected areas. At the time of this writing, Naxal groups are present in 20 out of 24 districts in Jharkhand.

the creation of a special branch of the civil administrative service specifically for affected districts Sethi (2011). In order to address such needs of extraordinary administrative attention, the Government of India has designated “60 Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts”, which constitute a space of heightened coordination across states on issues of policy, governance, and in particular, security. Existing laws can thus be suspended or adjusted specifically for these 60 districts according to the needs of the counterinsurgency. The 60 LWE-affected districts can also claim special assistance for security-related expenses.⁶⁵ Another measure specifically drafted to undo the disaffection of the population in the *red corridor* is the “*Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Selected Tribal and Backward Districts*”, focussing on the development of basic infrastructure (schools, drinking water, electric lighting, etc.), and on the effective implementation of already existing laws specifically addressing adivasi communities (Sethi 2011; Ministry of Home Affairs (Government of India) 2010; Chhibber 2011; Kumar 2011b). Reading between the lines of a recent report laying out the implementation plan for a water supply and sanitation project in Jharkhand under this *Integrated Action Plan* reveals that what is proposed as basic infrastructure development is much rather an intricate effort in

65 As a matter of fact, Naxalism is primarily discussed as a security issue and the government has militarized the counterinsurgency on a grand scale. Apart from the extra-legal *Special Police Forces* of the *Salwa Judum* in Chhattisgarh, the state to the West of of Jharkhand, which have received a lot of attention (Sundar 2006, 2010a, 2010b; Venkatesan 2010; Guha 2007; Bhatia 2011; Guha et al. 2006; People’s Union for Democratic Rights (India) 2006; Sanhati 2011) (Sundar 2006, 2010a, 2010b; Venkatesan 2010; Guha 2007; Bhatia 2011; Guha et al. 2006; People’s Union for Democratic Rights (India) 2006; Sanhati 2011), villagers have also been armed and paid as police informers in Jharkhand (Yadav 2013), and special anti-Naxal units of state or central security forces specifically equipped and trained for “jungle warfare” or “guerilla warfare” have been formed in recent years, such as the *Jharkhand Tigers*, or the *Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA)* (Human Rights Watch 2010; Human Rights Features 2004; Legal Sutra 2011; Dhavan 2008; Shah 2011; Kumar 2011a; Langer 2011; Jharkhand Police 2009). However, I am trying to point here towards the not explicitly militarized aspects of the counterinsurgency.

preventive counterinsurgency. The six districts where the project will be implemented happen to be the districts most affected by Naxalism (Garhwa, East Singhbhum, Saraikela-Kharsawan, Khunti, Dumka and Palamau), and much of the project's attention and resources will be devoted to extending the presence of the state in these areas by establishing administrative infrastructures and strengthening *gram panchayats*, i.e., the constitutionally mandated form of local governance (as opposed to “traditional institutions”) (IPE Global Pvt. Ltd. 2013). The manner in which the state and central governments respond to the armed resistance of Naxal groups with this Tribal Development Plan is thus indicative of the governmental rationalities which Ghosh had identified (2006a) – both the incorporative forms of governmentality (manifest, e.g., in the efforts of the state to advance its institutions of local governance) as well as its exclusive forms (by enabling specific legislative and paramilitary provisions applicable only to the affected areas).

By way of conclusion: returning to the taxonomic murk of adivasi religion

Finally, I would like to return to the cases of Mangra or James, with which I began this chapter, and which had raised the question whether the Munda spiritual beliefs and practices are different from Hinduism or not. As stated at the outset, this question is illustrative of the fact that the ontological status of adivasis is contested by various political actors as well as on analytical grounds. I hope I was able to show here that this very question can thus not be answered conclusively, but that it needs to be addressed by epistemologically contextualizing the respective categories (or distinctions) – *Hindu*,

Sarna, adivasi, Munda, Scheduled Tribe, etc., as these are not categories that can be defined, but that need to be approached genealogically. They are of course forms of knowledge which emerged in the colonial context as aspects of governmental rationalities, and as such they continue to operate as parameters that inform adivasi subjectivities.⁶⁶ I would argue that the confusion in Mangra's case (who was told that he was wrong to self-identify as Hindu), or the irritation of James (who was not expecting to be married by a Hindu priest) are related to the circumstance that while the governmental practices of enumeration of the contemporary state in India register and manage Scheduled Tribes as an essential difference, they leave open the taxonomic question about adivasi religion. This is not to suggest that enumerative forms of governance completely determine adivasi lives (I have in fact argued the contrary a few pages earlier with regard to rural adivasis like Soma Munda). However, enumerated forms of difference play an important role for certain political processes of mobilization, and these processes in turn inform adivasi subjectivities.

In order to understand how difficult (if not impossible) it is to answer the question about the difference between Hinduism and Sarna (as which the adivasi religion in Jharkhand is most frequently referred to), two considerations are relevant: Firstly, the question implies exclusive categories. Hinduism is, however, a rather inclusive phenomenon (and as such quite different from exclusive religions like the Abrahamic traditions). There is no

⁶⁶ I am following such a genealogical approach not in order to tell a story of a pre-colonial form of difference which was articulated colonially, ossified in the modern state, and re-articulated post-colonially. Such an approach would assume an authentic point of origin, and rather than searching for such an authentic origin of adivasi difference, I am trying to trace the forms of difference which matter in the historical present, and how they emerged, in order to understand how they set the conditions of possibility for modern adivasi subjectivities.

uniform, dogmatic system of Hindu forms of worship and religious ethics; multifarious local manifestations exist. It is therefore not very difficult to construe the local spiritual practices of adivasis or the forms of worship conducted at Sarnas (holy groves in adivasi villages) as part of rather than different from Hinduism. In other words, it is possible, from a Hindu perspective, to consider Sarna practices as part of Hinduism even if Sarna practitioners would disagree. Secondly, the spiritual beliefs and practices of Mundas and other adivasi communities are not formalized, and until very recently, there was probably no need for their believers and practitioners to think of themselves as a religious community beyond the village or the clan. Therefore, no frame of reference compatible with the modern enumerated religious communities existed for adivasis to self-identify.

However, there are now efforts underway to formalize adivasi spiritual beliefs and ritual practices in order to render them recognizable as a religious form comparable to established religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, or Islam. In adivasi neighborhoods of Ranchi for example, so-called *Sarna Pujas* take place on specific days of the week, during which women uniformly clad in red and white saris bow down in prayer before a sal or mango tree – a practice which appears to emulate Hindu forms of worship. And on occasion of annual religious festivals, big public events are organized where proponents of this formalization movement hold speeches on the particularities of the *Sarna Dharm*⁶⁷, and propagate regularized forms of worship. Closely related to the efforts of

⁶⁷ The Sanskrit word *Dharma* means *law, duty, or cosmic order*, but the vernacular use of *Dharm* in Northern India can be translated with *religion*. The *Sarna Dharm* would thus be the Sarna religion. Certain proponents of the formalization efforts, however, oppose the term *Sarna* because it denotes a place of worship – the holy grove in every village – and argue that other religions are also not named after their respective places of worship. Ram Dayal Munda, a Chicago-trained linguist, one-time vice chancellor of Ranchi University, and a prominent adivasi activist and politician had proposed the term

formalizing *Sarna* as a religion is a campaign to have it officially recognized by the state (cf. Munda 2000; Correspondent 2010). As mentioned earlier, late colonial censuses listed a category of “*Animism*” (as which colonial ethnographers had described adivasi religions), but this category later disappeared, leaving adivasis with the options of getting listed in the census as either *Hindu*, *Christian*, or *Other*. In September 2007, I attended a large gathering known as a *Sarna Prarthna Sabha* (*Sarna Prayer Congregation*) near the town of Lohardaga. The event was partially spiritual – with offerings and propitiations, and with people (mostly women) going into ecstatic trance – but entirely about the celebration of adivasi difference. While the primarily spiritual aspects took up only a part of the time, most of the day consisted of musical performances during which adivasiness was explicitly displayed through clichéd markers of adivasi difference, such as dances, drumming, dresses and head decorations. But there was also a series of speeches by the event's organizers, spiritual leaders, and invited dignitaries such as a local MP and others with political ambitions.⁶⁸ These speeches all addressed two linked concerns, which I will briefly discuss in the following to conclude this chapter.

Difference as a mode of belonging

The first of these concerns was the demand that the adivasi religion needs to be recognized by the government, and that adivasis need to keep up their resistance against

Adi-Dharam instead of *Sarna* (Munda 2000)

68 As a matter of fact, I had been brought to the event by an acquaintance without any prior information other than that it would be “very important” for my anthropological research. I only realized in the course of the day, that I had been taken there as a trophy because I was considered cultural capital: my acquaintance had political ambitions and was hoping that displaying his “close friend” from overseas would compensate for his lack of influence in the constituency.

the dikus' efforts at annihilating them. As Ayush Oraon, a leader of the Adivasi Chhatra Sangh who was involved in organizing the meeting explained to me, the fact that the government did not recognize their religion was tantamount to its complicity in annihilating adivasis.

A.O.: We have our own religion; it is called *animism* – you know about this, you are an anthropologist. S.C. Roy wrote about this.⁶⁹ In the times of the British this was officially recognized, but today's sarkar is trying to deny that we have our own religion. We are demanding that it will be included as a census category, because otherwise we continue to show up in the census as *Other*, or even as *Hindu*. Many of our people do not know how to read and write, and could easily be duped into getting listed as *Hindus* by census takers.

What Ayush was referring to with his remark on the danger of adivasis getting listed as Hindus was on one hand what Nandini Sundar has described as the “unmarked Hinduism of the state” (Sundar 2006a:357), i.e., the fact that the enumerative practices of the state in India treat Hinduism as the default religion for classifying adivasis. On the other hand, Ayush was also alluding to the proselytism of Hindutva organizations such as the RSS, the *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* mentioned earlier, or the *Arya Samaj*. Such groups are quite active amongst adivasis all over India in what they describe as *re-converting* adivasis, i.e., of recruiting adivasis to Hinduism by informing them that they have always been Hindus, and by conducting so-called *shuddhi* (purification) or *ghar vapsi* (home coming) rituals. Cases like the ones of Mangra as well as James' in-laws were, from the perspective of Ayush, results of the circumstance that *Sarna* was not recognized as a religion, as the undefined status of their religious belonging had left them vulnerable to

⁶⁹ As a matter of fact, Roy considered *animism* to be a misnomer and preferred to describe the religions of the Munda and the Oraons as *spiritism* (1912; 1999).

the machinations of Hindutva missionaries. However, it is important to note that Hindutva and the state, as well as the Sarna formalization movement are not the only players that are relevant to understand the controversies over the ontological status of adivasi religion. The negotiations over the question whether adivasis are Hindus or not occur, after all, in an environment which is marked, in Sundar's words, by “competitive proselytisation” (Sundar 2006a:357), and proponents of Hindutva as well as of Sarna formalization position their work in opposition to the prominent presence of Christian churches (and schools, hospitals, etc.) in many adivasi communities.

More importantly for the point I am trying to make here, however, is that the efforts of the Sarna formalization movement should be understood as a symptom of the particular formations of governmentality that conceptualize and manage adivasis as populations – in particular, but not exclusively, the enumerative practices of the state. The aim of the event I attended, a Sarna Prarthna Sabha, was the propagation of a religious community. The spiritual practices performed that day, the propitiations and the worshipping, were all conducted in a manner that would achieve maximum visibility (which does not mean that they were not spiritually meaningful for the participants). The presence of dignitaries and VIPs was required to give the event importance and to ensure that newspapers would report on it, and that the demand for the recognition of Sarna (or *Animism*, in Ayush's words) as an official category of the state would be heard. Noteworthy thereby is that for adivasis like Ayush, who belongs to a middle-class engaged in activist agendas, the possibility for a Sarna religious community to exist seems to depend on the recognition of this community by the state as an enumerated community. Ayush's subjectivity thus needs

to be understood as emerging from his position both inside as well as outside the nation and the national mainstream. Difference is his mode of charting the territories that define his belonging, and both the specific modes of difference and the particular ways of belonging are tied to formations of governmentality and to categories of the state.⁷⁰

No liquor license

The second concern which was addressed by virtually all dignitaries who spoke at the Sarna Prarthna Sabha was alcohol. Speaker after speaker reiterated that alcohol had nothing to do with adivasi culture or with adivasi religion, that drinking was nothing but a bad habit and that it was of utmost importance to uproot the evil of alcohol because it renders adivasi communities vulnerable. While there is definitely widespread agreement in adivasi communities on the potential for harm in drinking, the position that alcohol was alien to adivasi social and spiritual life is at odds with what I had observed in my research in Jilingsereng, Koylatoli, and at many other places I had visited in Jharkhand. Rice beer was always not only present at but an inherent component of any occasion where the supreme being was worshipped or spirits and ancestors needed to be propitiated. “Nothing can be done without haṛia” I was often told. Even apart from the religious or spiritual roles alcohol plays for the Sarna faith, many Christian adivasis also consider rice beer or the liquor distilled from Mahua flowers to be central and crucial aspects of the social life in adivasi communities.⁷¹ Countless times adivasis told me –

70 This is of course reminiscent of what Elizabeth Povinelli has so aptly termed, with reference to her research on indigeneity in Australia, “the cunning of recognition” (2002).

71 There are however significant differences in the respective dispositions of different denominations towards alcohol: While drinking is not prohibited in the Catholic church, Anglicans are opposed to it and for Lutherans it is (de iure) prohibited. Pentecostals, who are rapidly gaining ground in recent years

either with great concern, or with sly smiles on their faces, sometimes also in slurred words – that alcohol accompanies adivasis from birth to death, and at every important step in between (meaning that adivasis drink when a child is born, or when someone passes away, as well as at every occasion in between, such baptisms or name giving ceremonies, engagements, weddings, etc.).

However, while the claims voiced at the Sarna Prarthna Sabha in Lohardaga about the inauthenticity of alcohol in adivasi communities might not appear realistic to the vast majority of observers of and participants in adivasi social and religious lives, they are – as mentioned – indicative of a widespread concern in adivasi communities about the harms of drinking. More importantly, they must be understood as a reaction to strong and stigmatizing moral critique of adivasi drinking habits from social forces such as Christian churches, upper-caste Hindu society, Naxalites, and the state. Furthermore, the attempt at social reform through advocating teetotalism stands in a long tradition in India, in particular also with religious or religiously-inspired movements among communities at the bottom ranks of local or national social hierarchies. The multiple roles alcohol plays in the lives of adivasis is what I will address in the following chapters.

are fundamentally opposed to intoxication.

Chapter III: Landscapes, livelihoods, and liquor

In the following, I will introduce two localities where I conducted much of my ethnographic fieldwork. The place I call *Koylatoli* is a settlement of migrant laborers at the outskirts of Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, and *Diankel* and *Jilingsereng* are two villages in the rural context of the Koel-Karo region (approximately six, or eight kilometers respectively, from Tapkara, where the shooting incident mentioned in the introduction had occurred). As I will show in the following, both localities are marked – quite significantly, but in rather different ways – by the aftermath of the early postcolonial phase of industrialization in India, and in particular by the grand Nehruvian vision of rapid and massive industrialization (and both are largely unaffected by the economic boom which has transformed India at large since the 1990s).⁷² The juxtaposition of the two localities is not intended to be read as a contrast or a comparison, but rather as an invitation to see the legal and economic conditions of possibility for the lives of adivasis in a wider spectrum. I will end with a brief discussion of the political landscape of contemporary Jharkhand, which might appear slightly tangential to the rest of the chapter, but is intended to provide important contextual information about the contingencies of my research.

Koylatoli

Koylatoli⁷³ is a settlement of migrant laborers in Hatia, an industrial township at the

72 This overlap was a mere coincidence and not a strategy in my choice of sites to conduct ethnographic research. When finding places to stay and places to do research, one thing had led to another.

73 All names of places and individuals have been changed to protect the confidentiality of people involved in this

outskirts of the state's capital Ranchi, near the airport and a major train station. In 1958, the Government of India set up the *Heavy Engineering Corporation* (HEC, <http://www.hecltd.com>) in Hatia, the largest integrated engineering industrial complex in India. HEC is a paradigmatic example for the vision of rapid modernization through massive industrialization of independent India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. HEC was once glorified as the “giant behind industrial modernization”, as a decrepit signboard (which was taken off in the course of my fieldwork) near its head office declared. The residents of the settlements surrounding the massive company compound – mostly poor people belonging to low caste and tribal communities – still talk about the day when Nehru came to inaugurate the factory. While still operating, HEC is now an ailing enterprise and has become, at least for many middle class Indians, a symbol for the inefficiency of public sector undertakings and a testimony to their inability to perform according to the needs of a booming, liberal economy. While establishing HEC in the late 1950s, the Government of India had acquired 7500 acres of land, in the process of which 32 villages and several thousand residents were displaced. The premises of the company (and its auxiliary enterprises, employee quarters, etc.) however, while huge, cover only a fraction of the land that it owns. Vast stretches of the HEC-owned land lie vacant, while at many places settlements (“*bastis*”) have come up, some of them inhabited by the formerly landholding families or, mostly, by migrant laborers who have come to the city from rural areas in search of livelihood.

research. It might be interesting to remark here that this practice was met with resistance by the inhabitants of “Koylatoli”; they would have preferred to have their names attached to my research findings. This however, is a request I can obviously not fulfill due to IRB requirements.

Koylatoli is one such *basti*. It is separated from the HEC factory compound by abandoned railway tracks, known locally as the “line”, and an open field, approximately 300m wide. When I came there for the first time – walking from Hatia bazaar – I was struck by the sight on the other side of the open field, of watchtowers with armed guards and search lights, which interspersed a large wall with barbed wires. It looked as if the walls and the towers had been erected to keep prisoners from escaping – only that the guards, the guns, and the search lights were directed outwards, towards the open field, and were meant to keep possible intruders from entering the huge factory premises of the Heavy Engineering Corporation. I would later learn that youths from Koylatoli would periodically try to enter the factory compound through gaps in the wall, partially on a dare, but also in order to find things – metal, tools, etc. - that could be sold.

Koylatoli – to the south of the “line” - is situated in a grove with mango and tamarind trees, and surrounded on three sides by rice fields, which are irrigated by a rivulet flowing from the factory– most likely industrial waste water. At the time of my fieldwork, the *basti* was entirely made up of mud houses – some with tin or asbestos roofs, some with tiles, and those who could afford it would combine the two and their respective advantages (while tiles are better to keep the heat from building up during the hot months, asbestos or tin are more likely not to leak when it rains). The only two buildings in the *basti* that were not *kacca*⁷⁴ constructions were the Anglican church (the

⁷⁴ *Kaccā* literally means *raw* or *unripe*, and is used in South Asia to refer to constructions of mud or organic materials. A *kacca* house is thus usually a construction of dried (but not baked) mud bricks, while a *kacca* road is unpaved. *Kacca* is opposed to *pukka* or *pakkā*, which means *cooked* or *ripe* and is used to refer to buildings made from solid materials such as concrete, stone, or baked bricks (which can, in contrast to *kacca* buildings, be multi-storied), and to paved roads. *Kacca* houses require regular maintenance and annual repairs (such as the patching of walls with fresh mud). Needless to say, the

other one, a Lutheran church, was also built from mud bricks) and a one-room house known as the “school” (but barely ever used as such), which had been built with funds from the international NGO Worldvision. Some of the houses stood in little compounds containing one or two fruit trees, a laundry line, and a spot where pots and clothes could be washed. These compounds, in which chickens would roam about, were enclosed by low fences made of rocks and amorphous blocks of a hardened, black material. I later found out that these black blocks came from a place locally known as the “*dumping*”, which lay on the other side of the abandoned railway tracks, and where several times a week, trucks would offload piles of cinder and slag – waste material from the HEC furnaces.

Notwithstanding the immediate proximity of the state's capital and one of the country's largest industrial complexes, Koylatoli lacked access to electricity – not even the tapped variety so ubiquitous in urban squatter settlements throughout India (cf. Das 2011; Chatterjee 2004). Neither had the basti any water supply, except for three wells from which water was fetched bucket by bucket, and which depended on the precarious monsoon rains to be replenished every year. Koylatoli could only be reached by a trampled-down mud path, on which nothing larger than a motorcycle could travel. I would later find out that a road was one of the most urgent demands of the people living in the bastis. In one of the settlements adjacent to Koylatoli, a women's self-help group had collectively joined the Congress Party in the hope that the local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) would - in exchange for the promise of re-election – use

distinction between *kacca* and *pakka* housing is always also a distinction of wealth.

his funds and his influence to construct a road connecting the bastis with Hatia.⁷⁵ Very few people in Koylatoli (and only men) had bicycles, and fewer even a motorcycle or a scooter. Without access to any means of transportation, most people (and all women) would thus have to walk at least 20 minutes before they reached Hatia Bazaar, where they could catch a bus or a shared auto *rickshaw*.

At the time of my fieldwork, Koylatoli consisted of 56 households. Except for two households, whose members are Oraon, all of Koylatoli's inhabitants were Mundas⁷⁶, who had migrated there in search of work from rural parts of Jharkhand. While most of the adults were born and raised in their ancestral villages and had arrived in the basti as young adults, three of Koylatoli's families were already living there in their third generation. The first houses in the basti were built in 1957, when HEC was under construction, as a settlement for laborers contracted to build the factory⁷⁷. Some of these adivasi laborers obtained menial jobs in the factory after it began operating, but only one of the two remaining original residents of Koylatoli was ever employed at HEC: she had served tea inside one of the office buildings. The other person now living in Koylatoli (with his wife, two sons, three daughters, and three grandchildren) who had arrived in Hatia at the time when the factory was being built and the basti emerged, never held a

75 A cousin of the local MLA of Hatia told me that the hope for a road to be built there was futile. The abandoned railway tracks of the “line” are a property of the central government, and hence (according to the MLA's cousin, who is himself a politician and would later become the Vice-Mayor of Ranchi) an unsurmountable obstacle.

76 *Oraon* and *Munda* are names of two of Jharkhand's *adivasi* or *Scheduled Tribe* communities. The intricacies of these terminologies and how they relate to the global category of *indigenous peoples* have been discussed in the previous chapter.

77 The date is an estimate, based on the triangulation of interviews with Koylatoli's oldest (in terms of duration rather than age) residents, as well as with former residents of the village displaced by HEC (on whose land Koylatoli now stands), and recorded historic facts such as the inauguration of the factory.

permanent job, even though he had worked inside the factory compound – hired by contractors – for many years.

Livelihood, and liquor

The *dumping* – where the waste from the HEC furnaces was offloaded – was an important source of livelihood for many households in Koylatoli (and it was frequented by people from other localities as well). Every day, women and children would go and sift through the dusty piles of cinder and slag in search of tiny pieces of usable coal. These small bits of coal would be packed in bags, which could then be sold to traders for 70 rupees each (approx. US\$ 1.60, at the time). It would usually take about two days of scavenging in order to fill one such bag – which meant a daily income of 35 rupees. But even members of households that did not depend on the income earned from selling coal would go to the dumping to collect fuel for cooking.⁷⁸ The work was not only tedious but physically taxing, due to the exposure to the dust from the waste, and – most days of the year – to the sun, as there was no tree or built structure that would offer shade.

The way to and from the *dumping* would lead along the *line*. In the late afternoons, when the “coal pickers” (as they were referred to by an NGO active in the area) returned from work, several women would bring large vessels to the *line*, offering homemade *haria* (rice beer) for sale to people coming from the dumping, as well as to thirsty costumers from Koylatoli and the nearby bastis. During this daily (with the exception of Sundays)

⁷⁸ 20 out of the 40 households covered by my survey had someone working on the *dumping*. Four of these households (10% of the surveyed) had no other source of income.

“*line bazaar*”, the women selling *haria* would sit on one of the rails, while their customers would take seat on the opposite one, facing the women who would pour the rice beer into aluminum bowls. One *dubba* (bowl) could be had for two rupees, and whoever could afford it would order a snack of roasted or germinating chick peas along with it.

Koylatoli's *line bazaar* was a well-known institution for the bastis in its vicinity. Even though most of the customers tended to be regulars from Koylatoli itself – both male and female, groups of young men from other localities would also come there, usually several of them piled up on a bicycle or a motorbike. Thus, on some evenings, a considerable crowd of 50 people and more would accumulate, and occasionally, as intoxication among patrons progressed, so did the noise level and the potential for arguments. I never witnessed any violence beyond people pushing or slapping each other, but the drinking and the drunkenness were considered a nuisance by some of Koylatoli's inhabitants. As the path towards the basti led along the abandoned railway tracks, and the *line bazaar* took place in the early evenings, everybody who returned from work or from running errands would have to walk alongside the rice beer vendors and their customers. This caused inconvenience to many, and in particular to young women who would get accosted by inebriated men. Several times during my fieldwork, after the *line bazaar* had been particularly busy and frequented by a large number of outside customers, Koylatoli's village assembly or its elected leadership would decree a ban on the sale of alcohol at the *line* (and thus a closing of the bazaar). However, it would usually take no more than a few days until the first *haria* sellers would begin to reappear, and after a few more days, the

line bazaar would be back in full swing.

In reopening their business, the *haria* sellers were not intending to disregard a decision by the village assembly but driven by the sheer inevitability of earning a livelihood, or of substituting meager household incomes generated on the *dumping* or by daily wage labor on a construction site or in a nearby factory. And the *line bazaar* was also not the only place in Koylatoli where alcohol was sold. A total of eight households prepared *haria* on a daily basis and sold it either at the line, or in their courtyards, in their houses, or in the alleyways. When I first began my fieldwork, I only knew of two such houses where *haria* was available for sale, but I later found out that there were in fact several more. They had arranged themselves in such a way that their hours of operation did not significantly overlap – while some started offering rice beer in the early morning, others would get their batch ready around midday, and yet others would follow in the afternoon. Two households also offered a distilled liquor called *arki* (also known as *daru*, which simply means liquor, or as *mahua*, which is the name of the tree from the flowers of which *arki* is made). For all of these households, the sale of alcohol was indispensable, as they depended on the cash thus generated – either exclusively, or because their other sources of income were too scarce or irregular. With eight out of 56 households, every seventh household in the *basti* was thus making a living selling alcohol.⁷⁹

Even though Koylatoli came into existence in the late 1950s as a settlement

⁷⁹ Unfortunately I could not precisely assess where the customers came from. But based on my observations, between 50%-70% of the alcohol sold in Koylatoli was consumed by inhabitants of the *basti* itself.

accommodating migrant laborers that built – and of whom some later worked for – HEC, when I conducted my fieldwork, not a single one of its inhabitants had a job there. At the time, only one person in all of Koylatoli had a permanent job. He worked at the state's traffic department and had thus a guaranteed – even though meager – income. All the other people going for work, day by day, were temporarily hired by contractors as wage laborers on construction sites, or in one of the factories in HEC's economic field of gravity. There were a number of so-called *ancillaries and auxiliary industries* that had come up in the 1970s on the land acquired by the central government in the 1950s for (but not used by) HEC. These auxiliary plants were originally intended to produce items required by HEC, but in the meantime, many operated in completely different domains (a testimony to the fact, probably, that HEC was not – and had never been – a thriving enterprise, and that it had been conceptualized at a capacity much larger than economically sensible). One such factory that was located in the “Ancillary Industries Area” of Hatia was a bottling plant operated by the local liquor syndicate, where several of Koylatoli's women worked. Thus interestingly enough, even some of the women who did not prepare or sell rice beer in Koylatoli were dependent on alcohol as a source of livelihood.

Precariousness

Notwithstanding the fact that its houses were of a permanent (even though *kacca*) nature, and despite an infrastructure consisting of wells, churches, and a school building, and even though its inhabitants thought of themselves as permanent residents, Koylatoli is a

settlement of precarious nature. The land on which the basti is located belongs to the Government of India, who had acquired it in the 1950s for HEC. Thus most people living in Koylatoli owned their houses (i.e., they had at some point built the houses themselves), but the titles to the land on which these houses were built were held by HEC. As a result, Koylatoli was strictly speaking an illegal settlement – an *encroachment* in the official terminology of Indian governance. As an encroachment, Koylatoli could be forcibly vacated any day, and the main reason for why this had not yet happened was that the company (and the Central Government) had thus far never needed or claimed the land. However, the poor economic performance of HEC had created a situation that began to cause anxieties in the bastis outside the factory boundaries: Because HEC had not been paying electricity bills for many years, the company owed the Jharkhand State Electricity Board several billion rupees. In 2006, the government of Jharkhand had thus entered a deal with the company, in which HEC would be forgiven a debt of more than 8 billion rupees in exchange for 2342 acres of “surplus” land (of the 7500 acres originally acquired), which included the land on which Koylatoli was situated (Sinha 2006; Biswas 2012). This change of land ownership had shifted the threat of eviction from potential to imminent.

The people of Koylatoli understood this as a legal matter of fact, but considered it unfair and inappropriate. The land was not used by the company, it was outside its factory boundaries, and the basti's inhabitants had a sense of ownership over it – or rather, a sense of entitlement to ownership. This sense of entitlement derived from a combination of factors, such as their having been assigned this particular patch of land by the

contractors for whom they were working while the factory was being constructed, or their having built the whole village with their own hands. But the villagers also sensed a certain injustice stemming from the fact that the land had been taken from adivasis by the government for the company, while the company did neither use the land, nor provide livelihoods for the families who had given their land for it (or their labor, as was the case for the earliest inhabitants of Koylatoli).

While the people of Koylatoli were thus facing the loss of their village and their houses, they were also looking for ways to improve their condition. With the help of one of the NGOs active in the area, they had explored the possibility of obtaining title to the land – an endeavor which had proven to be utterly futile. They were also – in tandem with an NGO worker, a young female resident of the neighboring basti – trying to get Koylatoli connected to the electricity grid by making inquiries with and petitions to the electricity board. And as already mentioned, in the neighboring basti, a women's self-help group had collectively joined the Congress Party in the hope that the local MLA would support their demand for a road. Such negotiations over infrastructural facilities have been discussed, for example by Chatterjee (2004) and Das (2011) as possible ways for squatters to attain provisional recognition of illegal settlements by authorities, thus moving them (at least partially) outside the realm of illegality (and minimizing the threat of displacement without rehabilitation). In the case of Koylatoli and the bastis in its vicinity, however, the odds of arriving at any kind of legal recognition for their settlements, or of obtaining a guarantee against displacement through the logic of exception were clearly stacked against the inhabitants: the land was owned by the Center (through HEC) and was to be

handed to the State in order to annul the gigantic debt. Neither of the parties involved – the company, the central government, or the state government – had any incentives to enter negotiations with the *encroachers*. The company and the central government, which controls HEC, were forced by the debt to transfer the land titles. The encroachers living in Koylatoli and its adjacent bastis would thus no longer be a concern for the company or the Center once the land was transferred. The state government on the other hand, which was to receive the titles, had equally little interest in accommodating squatters who had thus far never been officially acknowledged – through inclusion into any grids of state infrastructure, such as electricity, transportation, education, health care, etcetera. Shortly after the state of Jharkhand was created in November 2000, the government of the new state had signed 74 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with national and transnational corporations – most of which had failed to materialize into actual industry developments, not least because of great difficulties with land acquisition. Obtaining the land owned but not utilized by HEC in Hatia, where Koylatoli was situated - land that had already been cleared for industrial development (even though more than 50 years earlier) - is thus a very convenient opportunity for the state government to move forward with some of these developments.⁸⁰

The success of displacement

The story of the villages around Hatia that were displaced in the 1950s is well-known throughout Jharkhand, and serves as a deterrent for other adivasi communities facing the

⁸⁰ The first sections of this HEC land were cleared from “encroachers” in 2010, which immediately called politicians on the plan who began leading anti-encroachment campaigns.

prospect of giving up land for industrial developments. The villagers who were displaced for HEC were made to believe at the time that they were not only contributing to the grand Nehruvian project of industrial development, but that they could participate in the progress that was to ensue. Families were offered jobs in exchange for the land they were giving up, and they were promised to be resettled. However, only one of the 32 displaced villages was ever relocated, and in this case, resettlement concerned only the houses of the displaced families – their agricultural land was not replaced. Proportional to their land holdings, families were given a certain number of jobs in the factory. However, while land could be handed down from generation to generation, the same would not apply in the case of jobs. More than 50 years later, many of the families who had been dislocated the late 1950s were both without land and without a regular income. For many of the displaced families, the only livelihood available is the production and sale of alcohol. In conversations with middle-class Ranchiites, the image of an adivasi woman sitting at the roadside or at the weekly bazaar in Hulhundu (near Hatia), selling *haria* or *mahua* liquor epitomizes the relationship between adivasis and the promise of modernization: while many (among them most adivasis) find this image expressive of widespread disregard for adivasis (as in: *disowned and neglected, tricked out of their property and their future, adivasis are left with no option but making a living in illegality and inebriety*), others (many non-adivasis) argue that the reliance of adivasis on illegal alcohol as a livelihood is expressive of both their inherent laziness and their perpetual drunkenness. While the former blame *dikus* (in this case meaning: the collusion of the state with Hindus) for this failure of the promise industrial development had offered, the latter hold adivasis responsible.

The case of Hatia as a bad example looms large in the Koel-Karo region, where the villages I call Jilingsereng and Diankel are located. In June 2008, the world's largest steel manufacturer, ArcelorMittal, announced that it had secured a lease from the governments of Jharkhand and India to mine iron ore in the area, and that it was beginning to obtain land for a greenfield integrated steel plant with a production capacity of 12 million metric tons of liquid steel per year near the town of Torpa (ArcelorMittal 2009). In the months before the official announcement, while rumors about the project had already been circulating, I had spoken to a number of people in and around Torpa and received mixed opinions about the prospect of a massive factory being built in the region. Several young men welcomed the plan considering the dire need for jobs and for the development of infrastructure in the area, and they expressed hope that the steel plant would set forth the necessary dynamics. The majority of the people to whom I spoke, however, were opposed to the project and advocated against the selling of land to the company. Their opposition was always formulated with reference to HEC and the experiences of the villages around Hatia that had been displaced after the government had claimed their land for the factory: While the former adivasi landowners were dispossessed, the company is staffed primarily by dikus (outsiders), and after the first generation (of former landowners) retired from the jobs they were offered in exchange for their land, their family members are now unemployed, and many of them have to make a living selling alcohol. Based on this narrative (and similar ones from other parts of Jharkhand), many of the adivasis in Torpa are skeptical about entering a deal in which they would have to give up their land and thus their livelihood, as modest as the latter might be. Adivasis in the region feel that in

the case of HEC, the *sarkar*⁸¹, and its allies have betrayed the former landowners by not providing the bright future the Nehruvian vision had promised. Similarly disappointed by the promise of industrial modernity are the inhabitants of Koylatoli: The people who had migrated to Hatia to build the factory were never given employment, and they had to make a living working precarious jobs, as does the generation of their children struggling to make a living now. After 50 years of existence in immediate vicinity to the propounded “giant behind industrial modernization”, there is still no electricity in Koylatoli, there is no running water, the basti is not connected to a road, and in the whole settlement of adivasis who have migrated to the city in search of work there is only one person who holds a job.⁸²

Jilingsereng and Diankel

The villages of Jilingsereng and Diankel are situated on the left bank of the Karo river, in a rural area which I refer to, in this dissertation, as the Koel-Karo region, due to the significance which a planned dam project (across the rivers Koel and Karo) and the adivasi-led resistance against this dam (the *Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan*), have had for the region. Since 2005, the two villages can be reached by road from Ranchi, which is approximately 70 km to the northeast, via the market town of Tapkara (where the shooting incident mentioned in the introduction had occurred). At the time of my

81 A Hindi term which semantically merges the English equivalents of *government* and *state* (cf. Fuller and Harriss 2001).

82 In the meantime, the massive steel plant mentioned earlier, which the multinational ArcelorMittal was hoping to build near Tapkara, and which was a great concern in the Koel-Karo region in 2008, is also off the table because the company was unable to acquire the land needed for it. With the anxieties that disappeared when the scrapping of this mega-project was announced, the hopes also vanished.

fieldwork, electricity was not available in the area (but it is being established there now), and neither were telephone lines nor cell phone towers. The only form of state infrastructure established in these villages were poorly operating primary schools (the needs in the region with regard to education are attended to primarily by Christian missionaries). In many ways, this is an impoverished, remote rural area, and must be described as – with a hat tip to Anna Tsing (1993) – an out-of-the-way place.

Jilingsereng and Diankel are inhabited primarily by members of the Munda tribe⁸³ who live there as subsistence farmers. Their main crop and staple food is rice, apart from that they cultivate lentils, potatoes and a few other vegetables. They maintain mango, jackfruit and tamarind trees around their houses, and the forests provide certain “minor forest produce”, such as mahua flowers or mushrooms – as well as firewood. The climatic conditions permit only one harvest per year (unless irrigation would be systematically improved) and for that people are of course dependent on the monsoon rains. While in most years, sufficient rice can be harvested to feed everybody, there is certainly no plenty here. The diet is almost exclusively carbohydrate-based and mostly consists of rice, with potatoes (or jackfruits during the rainy season) – even lentils, which are so common throughout India, are only prepared occasionally. Vegetables, fruits, and forest produce are sold on the weekly market in Tapkara when cash is needed, but even then, families depend on sending members away for wage labor – girls and young women would often get hired as domestic helpers in Delhi or Calcutta, and boys and young men would work

83 Apart from Mundas, there are also a few Chik Baraik families (another community classified in India's registers of governmentality as *Scheduled Tribes*, who used to live as weavers among other tribal communities in Chotanagpur) as well as descendants of former Rautia landlords, who are classified as OBC (*Other Backward Classes*).

for contractors in agriculture, construction, or in brick kilns in places like Haryana, Punjab, and elsewhere.

As rural localities, Jilingsereng and Diankel, even though they had finally gained access to a paved road and a regular bus service when I conducted my fieldwork there, remained – in many ways – difficult to reach, as any kind of communications there were tedious. In the course of my fieldwork there in 2007-2008, I witnessed how cellphones made their way into the area. First, it was only visitors, coming in from the towns and cities who carried phones, but slowly, some of the villagers began having their own devices. Their use, however, was fairly limited, not only because in order to charge the batteries people needed to travel to Tapkara (which would usually happen on Saturdays, for the weekly bazaar), or because they could – due to their meager financial resources – only add very little airtime credit to their accounts and were often only able to receive (but not to make) calls. The actual challenge, however, was reception, as there were no antennas nearby: for one provider one had to stand under the big tree at the entrance of Jilingsereng, and to make calls with another company one needed to climb the roof of one of the houses adjacent to the school building. This meant of course that receiving calls was even more difficult than making them, since one was not sitting under that very tree or standing on that particular roof all the time.⁸⁴

84 Communication by cell phones was further complicated by the fact that their use in small towns and even in a city like Ranchi had increased so rapidly that the providers were hopelessly overextended, as too many clients were using their networks. As a consequence, one would often have to try endlessly before being able to connect – which is why people who could afford it would simultaneously carry cell phones of different providers. This meant that even if one had a charged cell phone battery in Jilingsereng, credit on one's account, and was standing at the right spot (and the climatic conditions were not disturbing the cell phone signals) one was frequently still not able to connect.

Livelihood, and liquor, slightly different

The possibility of making a decent profit off their produce is an important concern for the villagers of Jilingsereng and Koylatoli. At the time of my fieldwork, they sold their vegetables, fruits, and forest produce at the weekly market in Tapkara, where the prices are considerably lower than in Ranchi. However, they could not reach the markets in Ranchi unless they sold to middlemen, whose prices are exploitative. I was told how a few years earlier, the villagers had collectively rented a truck and brought their combined tamarind harvest to Ranchi. There, however, they had to face the reality that the traders immediately recognized them as adivasis and as farmers, and collectively refused to buy at a higher price than what the middlemen in Tapkara would have offered. This illustrates that selling produce is not simply a question of supply and demand, but that access to a market requires certain networks, skills, and social capital. This is complicated, moreover, in a place like Jharkhand, by the question of caste, as the markets are controlled by certain trading communities (Sahus, Banyas), which is also why for adivasis, alternatives to cultivation have thus far been limited to the government sector (including the army and the police), as well as to precarious forms of physical labor (as already mentioned: domestic help, construction, etc.).

While the sale of produce was important for the subsistence farmers of Diankel and Jilingsereng in order to endure in the contemporary market economy of Jharkhand, cash was not a requirement for the sheer survival of their families. This was therefore a

distinct contrast to the context of Koylatoli, where a cash income was required as a source of livelihood. Consequently, the presence of alcohol – which, as mentioned above, is what every seventh household in Koylatoli depended on – was somewhat different in Jilingsereng and Diankel. While mahua and haria were produced here as well, and also sold, they did not constitute the livelihood of any of the families in either of the two villages. As a consequence (and also because in such an economic environment, less people have disposable cash at hand), alcohol was not available for sale there on a daily basis. Institutions similar to the “*line bazaar*” existed – where people would gather to drink, either in groups or alone, and buy small snacks to go along with their beverages – but they only emerged on certain days of the week. On Saturdays, for example, when the weekly market was held in Tapkara, haria as well as mahua (especially in the cold season) would be sold at various places along the road leading there. In addition to that, every village had a small market once a week, and alcohol was always available there. Some people prepared haria or mahua also on other days (and for reasons other than selling), and would then take the opportunity to make a few rupees if any other villagers would suddenly face an obligation to offer alcohol to someone (as discussed in chapter five). And because there was no regularized market for alcohol, it could also happen that people would prepare haria in anticipation of selling it, but then ended up having to drink it before it went bad.

A second contrast with regard to the alcohol economy between the urban setting of Koylatoli and the rural context of the Koel-Karo region, is the mahua trade. Mahua liquor (*arki, chullu, daru*) – which is the other customary form of alcohol used by adivasis in

Jharkhand, apart from rice beer (*haria, illi, diang, bodé*) – is distilled from the fermented flowers of the mahua tree (*madhuca longifolia*).⁸⁵ In Koylatoli, mahua liquor is only sold, there are no mahua trees growing in the area (and the liquor sold there comes from moonshiners like Gautam, whom I will discuss in the following chapter). The flowers are collected in forested areas, such as the Koel-Karo region, when they fall off the trees around April. After that, they are dried and then sold to traders at a weekly *hat bazaar*, or to traders in a market town such as Tapkara. In April 2007, the rate at which dried mahua flowers could be sold was 15 Rs. per kg. Half a year later, around October, after the monsoon rains, when temperatures began to drop, the demand in mahua liquor began to rise. In order to distill – and sell – mahua liquor – adivasis then purchased the flowers back from traders at the market in Tapkara – but now at a rate of 60 Rs. per kg. The substantial loss incurred, if these transactions are added up, is not something that the villagers from Jilingsereng with whom I discussed this matter were unaware of. They would also have had space to store the flowers during the intervening hot and rainy months, during which the demand for rice beer significantly outweighed the demand for mahua liquor. The villagers were nevertheless forced to sell the flowers at a low price, and later buy them back from the traders at four times the rate, because at both times they needed the cash (from selling the flowers in April and May, and from selling the liquor during the cold months) to cover immediate expenses (such as school fees, clothes, fuel

85 Among adivasi-rights activists in Ranchi, I occasionally heard the claim that mahua liquor was not used “traditionally” by adivasis, but that it had been introduced by outsiders in order to subject adivasis. Mahua is, however, deeply rooted in the everyday life of Jharkhand's adivasis, and is part of many ritual, social as well as economic transactions. I would therefore find it futile to debate whether or not it would make sense to consider it a traditional, or customary beverage. Similar doubts do not exist in the case of *haria*. It is uncontested that the Munda, the Oraon, the Kharia, the Ho and other tribes of the region had been brewing this rice beer, and using it for various social and religious purposes since time immemorial.

for a motorbike, or talk time for a cellphone, but also things like soap, oil, salt, spices, etc.).

The failure of displacement

As the site of a large hydro-electric power project, the Koel-Karo region was intended to contribute, like Hatia's HEC, to the vision of a modern, self-reliant India, where rapid modernization would be brought forth by massive industrialization (Ghosh 2006b; Parry 2003). A key author of this vision was India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who thought of factories, dams, industrial townships, submergence areas, etc. as sacred sites for a modern India, entailing the “possibilities of both the destruction of poverty and the replacement of traditional religion by a new Sacred appropriate for the modern community of the Nation (Ghosh 2006b:63)”. However, unlike in Hatia, the Koel-Karo project did not materialize because the sacrifice necessary to build this sacred shrine of modern India could not be made: the local adivasi population refused to be displaced. The lives of the people living in the area are marked in significant ways by the history of the struggle against this dam.

The National Hydro-Electric Power Corporation (NHPC), which was supposed to build the Koel-Karo project, had planned to erect a 55m high dam across the Karo river⁸⁶, and it was from here that a movement against this dam project was spearheaded by the local adivasi leadership. The project would have required the acquisition of more than 50,000

⁸⁶ Another 44m high dam was planned for the nearby Koel river, and the two were to be linked by a 34.7 km long canal.

acres of land and affected 112 villages and 7063 families (as per the official projections of the project planning committee; according to the local resistance movement, the dams would have led to the submergence of 256 villages, and displaced between 150,000-200,000 people – more than 90% of them adivasi/ST) (Balagopalan, Ghosh, and Megnath 2001). While the dam project had been conceived in the 1950s (just like HEC), the first steps to implement it were taken in 1975. The people of Jilingsereng, Diankel, and the other villages to be affected were left unawares that they would be displaced by the dam, and that their houses and their land would be submerged, their families displaced, and the burial grounds of their ancestors lost. As a matter of fact, they had even been hired as contractors, providing labor and wood for the construction of a bridge across the Karo river at Jilingsereng. At first they believed that the bridge and the road leading towards it would improve their lives by allowing them to access markets, schools, and the places of administration much more efficiently. However, the road was intended to facilitate the construction of the dam and the power plant, the bridge was necessary to access the locations of the power house and the turbines. When they realized where the dam was actually going to be and how high the water would be retained, the villagers began organizing their resistance, and successfully prevented any further land acquisition or construction work. The road from Tapkara into the submergence area and the bridge remained the only bit of infrastructural development in the area until the middle of the 2000s. The government had probably no intention of upgrading an area before drowning it, and the local population mobilized against the dam on the basis of a dialectic of ancestral ownership versus modernization, to the point where even electrification was

rejected.⁸⁷ Kaushik Ghosh has studied the Koel-Karo movement in great depth and found that its success lay to a considerable extent in its refraining from adopting the political forms and strategies of other, similar movements (Ghosh 2006b). For example, rather than taking the battle with the state over land to court (where others, and most famously the movement against the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river lost), the Koel-Karo movement maintained the community's moral (as opposed to legal) claims over the land the government aimed to acquire. The Mundas simply refused to enter any negotiation with the state thus de facto rejecting the state's de jure territorial sovereignty. However, the Koel-Karo mega-dam project is off the table since 2003 (even though its scrapping was never officially notified).⁸⁸

A landscape of resistance

The movement that led the struggle against the dam is the *Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan* (KKJS, the Koel-Karo people's movement). During its final phase in the late 1990s, KKJS had acquired a fairly substantial presence and considerable attention in the Chotanagpur region, as well as beyond. This was the time, of course, during which transnational indigenous activism was beginning to make its presence felt in significant ways internationally (above all also in institutional settings such as the UN, cf. Muehlebach 2001), and during which tribal activists from various parts of India (most significantly from Jharkhand and the Northeast) began articulating demands for rights

87 A popular slogan in Mundari against the Koel-Karo dam translates into: *we do not want electric light – [the rivers] Koel and Karo are ours!*

88 According to an article in the Calcutta-based English daily *The Telegraph*, the Jharkhand State Electricity Board has in the meanwhile revived the plans for a hydro-electric dam at the Koel and Karo rivers (Biswas 2011)

and recognition in the institutional frameworks as well as the political language of transnational activism (which meant that *adivasis* or *Scheduled Tribes* were beginning to be referred to as *Indigenous Peoples*, as was discussed in more detail in the previous chapter). One reason for why transnational indigenous activists from all over the world (first the European settler colonies in the Americas and the Pacific, but later also Scandinavia, Asia, and Africa) were able to draw attention to the demands of local communities was that they successfully aligned their claims for rights with other transnational civil society demands, such as human rights, and especially, ecology (cf. Parajuli 1996). This meant that movements such as the one against the Koel-Karo dam were not simply operating in a political discourse against displacement, but that the struggle of the people who inhabited the area resonated as a fight for cultural survival, and a campaign to safeguard a habitat. As a consequence, KKJS received a considerable degree of attention in activist circles. Supporters of indigenous peoples movements came from Denmark, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and other places, social activists from other parts of India visited, and Jharkhandi politicians made sure to travel to the submergence area in order to publicly express their solidarity with the movement.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Kaushik Ghosh, in his dissertation (Ghosh 2006b), describes the movement as rather extraordinary, not just in that it did not comply to the political forms and strategies of movements with similar aims (which is why he suggests that it might be more suitable to speak of a political idiom rather than of a movement), but that it was the only peoples' movement in India which successfully prevented a mega dam project based solely on their non-violent struggle and their refusal to engage the state in courts (another dam project in Kerala could be stalled, but in this case, the resistance had mobilized around ecological arguments; and a dam on the Subarnarekha river in Jharkhand was prevented, however, other dams of the same larger project were built). Ghosh also states that notwithstanding its continuation of more than 25 years and its considerable success, the Koel-Karo movement was virtually unknown to the outside world. My description of the movement as receiving considerable attention might appear to contradict Ghosh's account, but this is only because I lay the focus on the final phase of the movement (in the 2000s), whereas Ghosh has followed it for 10 years before that already. Furthermore, his assessment finds the outside interest minimal in comparison to what the movement was able to achieve, whereas my characterization of the transregional and transnational attention as quite significant is based on my understanding of what this attention meant (at least temporarily) for the people in Jilingsereng and Diankel, in particular also in comparison to other parts

The reason for the success of the movement against the Koel-Karo dam was not the support from outside – in Jharkhand, but also nationally as well as internationally – nor was it the emergence, in the 1980s and 1990s, of the idiom of indigenous peoples' ecological resistance (cf. Parajuli 1996; Muehlebach 2001). Much rather, as Ghosh shows (2006b), the contrary was the case: due to the nature and the success of the people's movement against the Koel-Karo project, Jilingsereng, Diankel and the surrounding villages had become showpieces of adivasi resistance. When I began visiting the area for my ethnographic fieldwork in January 2007, I noticed that it was very exposed to activists and researchers from other parts of India and the world. Apart from the mandatory visits of aspiring adivasi politicians paying tribute to the people's movement at events commemorating crucial moments in the struggle (which is seen in continuity with resistance movements that occurred in the Jharkhand region during the colonial period, such as the Kol insurrection (1832), the Santal Hul (1855), the Birsa Revolt (1895-1900), etc.), the area was frequented by various kinds of social activists, activist-minded social researchers, and NGO workers. The day I arrived in Jilingsereng for the first time, for example, I was told that a delegation of Japanese activists had just left the day before, and when I returned two weeks later, a young couple from Germany was visiting, who were studying the Koel-Karo movement for their degree in social work. I remarked, in my field notes at the time, that the local population took tremendous pride in being able to withstand what were understood to be efforts of *dikus* and the *sarkar* to subdue them. I found that as a result, social institutions in the area operated with a hyperrealization of

of Jharkhand (and other local movements against displacement).

adivasi difference (or what one could casually refer to as *culture* and *tradition*). I illustrated this in my notes with reference to my research interest, the relationships between adivasis and alcohol: Whenever rice beer was being served in the early phases of my research in the Koel-Karo region, I was given elaborate explanations for why the *haria* had to be provided. For example, to remunerate communal labor, “which is done with money elsewhere, but not among us”; to seal the resolution of a conflict by the village council; at the celebration of religious festivals or events such as births, weddings, or funerals; or simply because it is the hot season).⁹⁰ Whereas in the city, tropes of loss or decay (of things like “culture”, “traditional values”, etc.) seemed to abound (as in: “now drinking is a problem, it used to be our culture”), in Jilingsereng and Diankel, there was no trace of such concerns.

I left Jharkhand in May 2008, and when I returned for a very brief visit after two years in July 2010, I was met with a certain degree of surprise: “Oh, you are back?”, or “So, you have returned!” were the reactions I got when calling on my friends and acquaintances. I was a bit surprised about these expressions of amazement, and responded by stating that after all, I had told them that I would return. “Yes you said that you would come back” people responded, and I realized that the villagers of Jilingsereng and Diankel had gotten

⁹⁰ I refer to such explanations as a “hyperrealization of adivasi difference” not because the reasons given to me for using alcohol were made up (I will discuss them in more detail in the fifth chapter), but rather because I found it remarkable that such a conscious effort was made at making me, as a visitor, understand cultural peculiarities (without me ever asking for such explanations). Retrospectively, I would interpret these explanations not only as a consequence of the particular role adivasi difference played at the time for the ways in which the resistance against the dam was recognized by outsiders, but also as a strategy of immunizing the local use of alcohol against potential moral criticism: The adivasis of the *KKJS* were quite aware that by *culturalizing* local drinking practices they could prevent most visitors (who had come to express their solidarity for the survival of an indigenous population) from *moralizing* them.

used to take such pronouncements as empty promises. Finally, the mother of one of my friends reacted with more elaboration: “Earlier, during the days of the *andolan*, many people would come here, from all over the world. Nowadays nobody comes anymore.” I realized the full extent only then of what I had known subliminally throughout my fieldwork – that the importance of the Koel-Karo region as a site of pilgrimage for activists, politicians, and the sympathizers of indigenous peoples I had noted so distinctly at the beginning of my work there in 2007 had meanwhile subsided. I had witnessed the tail end of this hustle and bustle when I began my research, but never came across any further visitors later on. The region had returned to the ordinariness of rural Jharkhand, where adivasi subsistence farmers struggle to persevere.

Reinventing the resistance

The leader of the Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan is Soma Munda, a former soldier in the Indian army who after returning to his ancestral village Jilingsereng, became a subsistence farmer, the *Munda* (customary village headman) as well as the *Mukhia* (headman of the *Panchayat*, the village council elected under the governmental regime of the Indian state).⁹¹ In the final phase of the struggle against the dam, however, many practical aspects of the movement were run by a young man from Diankel village called Rejan Guria. Rejan was the general secretary of KKJS, and in this role he kept visiting (with a small moped, as well as by foot) many villages potentially affected by the dam in

⁹¹ Soma Munda, his political philosophy, his strategies, and his style of leadership have been discussed in great depth and with much acuity by Kaushik Ghosh (2006b; 2006a). He has already briefly appeared in the previous chapter, and also plays a role in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

order to spread news and to organize meetings, and he was the movement's representative who also travelled outside, to Ranchi and other places in order to network among activists from other adivasi movements, as well as with supporters of their cause. He was headquartered in a church compound in Torpa (a town on the road between Ranchi and Simdega), from where Tapkara could easily be reached (and from where one would proceed to the site of the Karo dam in Jilingsereng), and where Rejan ran – as a front for the KKJS office – a school for typewriting. After the Koel-Karo Hydro-Electric Power Project was finally off the table in 2003, it was decided to transform the anti-dam movement into an NGO. For people like Rejan, who had come of age playing a central role in the movement, the success of the resistance had left a certain void. He commanded a lot of influence and respect in the region as well as among activists in Ranchi, and it made sense to utilize the momentum that existed. Furthermore, he was in the meantime well of marriageable age and in need of a livelihood, and he had no ambition of returning to Diankel in order to live as a subsistence farmer⁹²; playing a leading role in an NGO would thus make perfect sense. The aim was to acquire funding and to bring in development projects – after all, as a combined effect of the state's intention to sacrifice the area for the greater common good, and the people's resistance, virtually no infrastructure had been developed in the area for more than 25 years. The National Hydro-electric Power Corporation had built an office near the river in Jilingsereng, but this had been completely disassembled by the villagers, and the building materials were used elsewhere. Similarly, when traveling towards Diankel and

92 The family's land was being farmed by his oldest brother Sagar (who appears in the fifth chapter) who was living there with his wife and mother, a daughter, and two sons (of which one already had a family of his own). A third son was living outside Diankel.

Jilingsereng from Tapkara, one can see naked poles for electricity lines – the wires (and several of the poles themselves) had been removed and put to other uses. The point of such demolitions was not vandalism or theft, much rather, they are symptoms of the people's rejection of the narrative that the state and its vision of modernity had drawn up for them⁹³: they were refusing to be sacrificed for the sake of development, but had consequently also rejected the perks of development.

But after the threat of the Koel-Karo mega dam project had been banished, a different approach became possible. The first project which the reinvented KKJS envisioned was the construction of a small hydro-electric dam at Jilingsereng. This may seem ironic at first – after all, the organization owed its very existence to a more than 25 year fight against a dam. However, the circumstances were very different. The new dam was only going to be a small check dam to operate one turbine, which would have supplied electricity to the two adjacent villages (Jilingsereng and Diankel). Only a modest reservoir was required to power the single turbine, along with a narrow canal, for which very little land needed to be sacrificed. No agricultural land would have been affected, and nobody was going to be displaced. But it was not only the difference between a mega dam project demanding considerable sacrifices and a small check dam, which allowed the local population to embrace and pursue the latter after having fought the former. Of equal if not larger significance was the fact that the check dam had not been conceived by the

93 At least a partial rejection of this narrative. As Kaushik Ghosh shows (2006a; 2006b), the subject position from which such acts of refusal became possible is also the result of incorporative and exclusive forms of governmentality which placed the adivasi in the “savage slot” (cf. Trouillot 1991), including the recognition by the colonial and postcolonial state of specific adivasi forms of land ownership.

sarkar, that it was a project planned and controlled locally, and in particular, that the people of Jilingsereng and Diankel would be able to control the use of the electricity themselves. While the villagers were going to provide the land and all the labor required for the construction of the check dam, the engineers were to be contracted through an NGO in Orissa experienced with hydroelectric check dams. The funding for the project was supposed to come from the Gossner Mission, a Lutheran organization from Germany (the institutional descendants of the first missionaries to arrive in Chotanagpur in 1845). During the time of my fieldwork in 2007 and 2008, I witnessed how Rejan and others involved in KKJS laid the groundwork for this project. The representatives of the German funding agency had shown great enthusiasm for supporting KKJS's transformation from an anti-dam people's movement to a development NGO, but had also very specific demands and requirements from the people in the Koel-Karo region. In February 2008, a canal was dug out and cleared of boulders and bushes in an impressive effort of communal work. Correspondence with the engineers in Orissa was ongoing and KKJS was hoping for survey work to begin. However, after two years of preparation, the Gossner Mission finally decided not to support the project.

Research in Jharkhand (insight into a political landscape)

The first time I traveled to Jilingsereng, in 2002, a paved (but rather decrepit) road led to the market town of Tapkara – after that, one had to continue on a *kacca* road, or on footpaths. I was coming with a friend from Ranchi, accompanied by a young Munda who was assisting Rejan in both his work for KKJS as well as at the typewriting school. The

three of us were sharing a moped – not a comfortable means of transportation to accommodate three grown men, but not an unusual one either in most rural or impoverished parts of India. It was during the monsoon season, the road had been transformed into an ankle-deep mud trail, and we had to push or pull the moped more than it was possible to actually ride it. When I returned to the area in 2007, things had improved: the road was now paved, and there was a mini-bus plying once daily between Jilingsereng and Ranchi. Both the road as well as the mini-bus were made possible through “distributive” government schemes (cf. Gupta and Sharma 2006): The road had been built by inhabitants of the villages it passed through, under a scheme of the National Rural Employment Act (NREGA), which the central government had introduced in 2005 in order to guarantee an annual minimum of 100 days of paid work for manual labor on public infrastructures. The mini-bus was provided for by the state government through an income generation scheme for adivasis. Thus, while it had become significantly easier to travel from Diankel or Jilingsereng to the market in Tapkara, the Block Office in Torpa, the District Office in Khunti and the even the capital, Ranchi, one could make such a journey exactly once daily. Transporting things (such as produce to be sold) was still a major endeavor, and was only possible during the market days (Saturday) when Jeeps would ply between Jilingsereng and Tapkara, taking people and goods to and from the market.

However, for me as an outsider – and quite visibly a foreigner – the most significant change with regard to accessing the area had occurred between 2002 and a prior visit to Chotanagpur in 1999, when I was advised not to travel to the Koel-Karo region at all. At

that time, I was visiting Jharkhand (which was then still part of the state of Bihar) on behalf of a Scandinavian-based NGO to evaluate a project this organization had funded, as well to network among adivasi activists and proponents of the movement for a separate state. The resistance against the dam was still in full swing, and the Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan was controlling access to the area by maintaining a barrier on the road into the submergence area at Tapkara (as described in the introductory chapter). With this barrier, or gate, the affected villagers wanted to keep an eye on who is coming into the area, in order to be alarmed if any state representatives arrived (or even better: to keep them out). The access thus restricted was not the main reason why I was advised against going there – since I was fairly well connected among adivasi activists in Ranchi with close contacts to the Koel-Karo movement, I could have been easily identified to the local population as a sympathizer rather than a threat. However, the police, from their post in Tapkara, was also watching who was visiting the area controlled by the anti-dam movement. It would have been difficult if not impossible for me to travel there without the authorities noticing the presence of a foreigner in the area, and this might have caused problems for the local population. However, the police had fled their post in Tapkara after the tragic shooting incident of 2001 (discussed in the introductory chapter), and the post was still vacant when I arrived in the summer of 2002, so that I could travel to Jilingsereng without causing the authorities to be immediately alarmed (especially since my trip there was only for a brief, three-day visit).

At the time of my first visit to Jharkhand, the political climate was rather tense for movements advocating tribal autonomy: at the state level, the Bihar government was

concerned about the ongoing demands for a separate state (and thus the threat of a division of Bihar), and at the center, the Government of India was troubled by the fact that certain adivasi leaders had begun articulating their demands as demands for the rights of *indigenous peoples*. Tribal movements (in the Jharkhand region but also elsewhere) that challenged the developmentalist state agenda (by resisting projects such as mines, dams, etc.), or questioned the political status quo (by demanding a separate state such as in Jharkhand, or by demanding secession, as was the case for the Nagas in the northeastern border region with Burma) were thus placed under the general suspicion of being anti-national and influenced from abroad. From 1998-2004, the central government was in the hands of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), which is – along with other organizations of the right-wing, Hindu nationalist *Sangh Parivar* (family of associations) - committed to maintaining (or *restoring*, as they would argue) a dominance of Hindus over India⁹⁴. According to its ideology of *Hindutva* (Hinduness), the *Sangh Parivar* understands Christianity and Islam as foreign to India and frequently represents Christians or Muslims as controlled from the West or Pakistan respectively, and thus working against Indian (viz. Hindu) interests. In Jharkhand, Christianity has had a very important influence both in the Ranchi area, as well as in the Koel-Karo region, and many adivasi leaders are Christians (Aaron 2007; Bara 2007; Ganguly 1969). This fact was used very efficiently during the years that BJP coalitions ruled India and/or Jharkhand to delegitimize adivasi-movements. In 1999, my presence – as a foreigner - was therefore considered a risk in an area so sensitive and under such close scrutiny, as it

94 The Sangh Parivar includes, apart from the BJP, a range of organizations, most prominently the social activists of the paramilitary *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS), and the *World Hindu Council* (Vishwa Hindu Parishad, VHP).

could have given grounds to the suspicion that the Koel-Karo movement was supported from abroad, and hence anti-national.

In 2004, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost the general elections and a coalition under the leadership of the Congress Party took over the central government in Delhi. In September 2006 the BJP-led coalition also had to resign from the state government in Ranchi, and when I arrived for my fieldwork in early 2007, I could notice a palpable difference – especially amongst activist-minded Jharkhandis. The tense atmosphere of suspicion that had persisted in Jharkhand not just in the late 1990s (during *Bihar Raj*, the rule from Bihar so despised among many adivasis), but that continued after a separate state had been formed, was gone. It is difficult to analytically grasp this affective dimension of being in Jharkhand, but it is clear that the end of *BJP Raj* had to some degree suspended the influence of Hindutva, and thus allowed the veil of suspicion and distrust to be lifted, which had earlier clouded many of my interactions in Jharkhand and limited my movement.⁹⁵ This circumstance, as well as the fact that the Koel-Karo Hydro-Electric Project had been scrapped, contributed to my being able, during my fieldwork in 2007-2008, to move freely in the area without causing difficulties to the local population by the sheer nature of being present as a foreigner.

95 For example, in 2002, I was present in Ranchi during the celebrations for the International Indigenous Peoples' Day, which takes place every year on August 9th (as proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1994). The organizers of this event were friends of mine, adivasi activists linked to the transnational movement of indigenous peoples. I had been instructed, however, to keep to myself that day and neither to talk to any journalists that might approach me, nor to any of my adivasi friends (as they were certain that the event would be closely watched).

Chapter IV: Regulating alcohol and indigenous subjects

“With the aboriginals matters are different. They drink as a race; their children are brought up to it, and no man or woman can avoid the habit. [... Tribals] as a whole are a race of drunkards and it is scarcely possible for any individual among them to make himself an exception to the general rule. In a word they have no freedom of choice. As a race they have very little chance of improvement, economic social or moral, as long as their habit of drinking remains. In my opinion therefore, prohibition, if feasible, is required more in these areas than in places where individual freedom of choice is at any rate possible and where the racial damage is not so obvious (Symington 1950:65–66).”

The regulation of alcohol can be studied as an archive of social and political reconfigurations. I am approaching regulation broadly, moving beyond state-centered regulatory frameworks such as liquor laws or excise policies, by the means of which the sovereign reaches out into the lives of people. My understanding of alcohol regulation in the Indian state of Jharkhand includes efforts of non-state actors such as armed insurgents as well as various religious groups. Nevertheless, the main emphasis will lie on an exegesis of official state policies, or on the “anthropological study of formal sector regulation”, which Jane Guyer (1993:797) has identified as crucial to the understanding of important political processes, and in particular, as a lens onto the ways in which local arenas (where anthropologists work) may be shaped by “processes that originate elsewhere (1993:798)”. The particular processes at stake here are temperance and taxation – but the fact that these processes have originated elsewhere (in time and space) is not my concern. Rather, I will try to show how the efforts of temperance and taxation work alongside each other in constituting subject populations, and how their inherent

contradictions point towards fundamental questions about the legitimacy of state and law. But first a little detour in order to outline the range of concerns in contemporary Jharkhand with regard to alcohol regulation.

Concerns about alcohol and the female subject in Ranchi

The following newspaper article - titled "Drinking still taboo for girls in Ranchi" - appeared on the occasion of the International Women's Day 2008 in the Ranchi edition of the English daily *The Pioneer*:

"If you think Ranchi has become hot, chicque (sic.) and happening, think again. There are many urban habits which are still not considered cool in here today.

No matter how much you go on saying, but drinking is still a taboo here. When a gang of girls enters a pub, the waiters there welcome them with an uh oh expression.

Drinking is still not cool for the fairer sex in the bars of Ranchi. Gang of girls, well all they are socially allowed to do is hang, move around on scooties, at the most hang out in coffee shops and discuss the latest fashion trends.

Neha (name changed), studying in Pune said, "The waiters first give us a smile and show the mocktail menu. If we order a cocktail and that too the strongest one, then the waiter tries to pursue us to change our order."

Since it is International Women's Day and the whole world talks about women's liberalisation (sic.) and empowerment, etc., it was interesting to see how liberated the women are in our own society.

Leave out teenagers and youngsters, but even if a married couple sit and drink together people look back and give them a second look. But we can hope that "the ice breaks" soon. So say cheers to life and say cheers to womanhood this women's day (Pioneer News Service 2008).

The sentiments expressed in this article indicate that access to alcoholic beverages has for

some among the Indian middle class become a measure for cosmopolitan modernity and an indicator for the transgression of anachronistic social mores, if not a benchmark for assessing the condition of contemporary Indian society more generally. It is not at all exceptional, that such efforts at overcoming non-modern restrictions focus on the female subject. The fact that the battle over the alcohol/modernity nexus is fought over women's bodies links the issue to a long list of justifications for colonial and post-colonial interventions – launched in the name of particular notions of modernity – to liberate women from various forms of subjecthood. A similar concern with the liberation of women from subjection was motivating an event that took place in Ranchi in September 2007, but in the latter case, access to alcohol was not an indication for progress, but a symptom of its lack: After a dormancy of several years, the *All Churches Council* in Ranchi wanted to revive their *Women's Wing*. In order to provide the necessary momentum to what was hoped to become a dynamic organization, it was decided to organize a *Nasha Vimukhtikaran Andolan*, an alcoholism eradication campaign. The larger concern was to build an active *Mahila Shakha (Women's Wing)*, as a Belgian Jesuit who had initiated the effort and guided the women in their preparation of the campaign told to me during an interview. The alcohol issue appeared to be the perfect vehicle for this purpose, as it is understood to be a common denominator for the various Christian churches in the area, as well as for women. With the setting being Ranchi – Jharkhand's capital, but more importantly a town in the heartland of India's so-called *tribal belt* – there was no room for doubt that the campaign was addressing Ranchi's indigenous communities – known locally as *adivasi* and officially as *Scheduled Tribes*. A series of meetings were held, pamphlets printed and banners painted, and finally, a procession was

held through Ranchi's Main Bazaar, ending in the massive courtyard of the Lutheran church with speeches and performances decrying the various harms of alcohol - and in particular, the harmful irony inherent in the fact that it is adivasi women who prepare and sell alcohol, while also bearing the greatest burden of suffering caused by it.

While current notions of progress for urban and urbanizing upper middle classes thus appear to include increasing the availability of alcohol, strategies to facilitate progress among tribal communities are marked by the contrary: Access to alcoholic beverages for the female urban middle-class is meant to symbolize agency, while the sale of alcohol by tribal women indicates subjection (or, putting it in Povinelli's terms: autological drinking in the former case, genealogical drinking in the latter). As I will try to argue in the following, inherent in this discrepancy is the distinction between populations who are considered to be capable of responsible drinking, and those who are not, and I thus contend that the discrepancy between the forms of sociality that alcohol is allowed to generate among the Indian upper middle class, and those which are discouraged among adivasi in Jharkhand (which parallels the mutual constitution of modern and primitive subjects in colonial India; cf. Banerjee 2006; Ghosh 2006a; Skaria 1999) finds expressions in the law, which thus reifies the essential otherness of the tribal subject in India.

Contradictory legal norms

The laws that are relevant in the case at hand are excise laws which regulate taxes, duties,

and licensing fees for the production, trade and purchase of alcoholic beverages (among other things). In regulating for which beverages licenses can be issued for the production, trade, or sale respectively, excise laws thus define which beverages are legal, and which ones fall within the domain of illegality. If one consults the excise law of Jharkhand one notices that all forms of alcohol mentioned therein – with the exception of customary adivasi beverages, such as the liquor made from the flowers of the mahua tree⁹⁶, and rice beer – can be licensed and thus be legally produced, traded, and consumed. Both mahua liquor and rice beer are widely used in Jharkhand – primarily but not exclusively by adivasis. While claims are made – especially among the adivasi elite – that the mahua liquor was not used traditionally but that it had been introduced by outsiders to subject adivasis, the liquor is deeply rooted in the everyday life of Jharkhand's adivasis and is part of so many ritual, social as well as economic transactions that it would make little sense not to consider it a traditional, or customary beverage. Similar doubts do not exist in the case of *haria*, the other customary drink of Jharkhand's adivasi. It is uncontested that the Munda, the Oraon, the Kharia, the Ho and other tribes of the region had been brewing this rice beer, and using it for various social and religious purposes since time immemorial. A myth of creation frequently recounted throughout the Chotanagpur region (to which Ranchi belongs), according to which the first human couple remained childless until the creator had taught them how to prepare rice beer points to the existential importance attributed to the beverage.

While the current excise regulations allow for rice beer to be prepared by members of

96 (*Bassia longifolia* L., also known *Madhuca indica* J. F. Gmel or *Madhuca longifolia*)

Scheduled Tribes for what the law calls “bona fide personal consumption on festive and social occasions”, its sale is prohibited. Mahua liquor, on the other hand, is completely illegal in Jharkhand. It can thus be argued that the law contains a separate sphere of illegality for customary adivasi beverages.

The difference between legal and illegal forms of alcohol makes apparent the contradictory nature of laws that regulate production, trade, and consumption of intoxicants: on one hand, taxes and duties are being raised while on the other hand, prohibitions are put in place. On one hand, the state is interested in enabling the sale of regulated substances – and thus to generate revenue to satisfy its fiscal needs, while on the other hand preventing the availability of such harmful substances in order to pursue its biopolitical ambitions to protect the population. This inherent contradiction is resolved in the case of – for example – taxes on tobacco in many parts of the world today, where (at least in public debates) taxes are primarily rendered as public health measures: if one has to pay more for a pack of cigarettes one might ultimately smoke less (Liang et al. 2003). This is, however, different in the case of alcohol in Jharkhand; here, alcohol duties are discussed primarily in the light of the possibility to maximize the state's tax revenue (Srivastava and Prasad 2006)⁹⁷.

Before discussing the impact of such laws on marginal populations such as Jharkhand's

⁹⁷ This was expressed to me in several interviews with the Deputy Commissioner of Excise of Jharkhand, and it was furthermore the concern of a series of articles in the Hindi newspaper *Prabhat Khabar* in the course of 2007. The dependence of the state in India on revenue generated from excise duties on intoxicants goes back to the early colonial days (Courtwright 2001; Gilbert 2007) and was also a key issue of contention for Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and his fierce advocacy for total prohibition (Fahey and Manian 2005; Gandhi and Kumarappa 1952).

Adivasi it might be worthwhile to dwell for a moment on the contradictory nature of the two conflicting legal norms, that is, the tendency to encourage sale and the inclination towards prohibition: The intentions behind the sale-oriented aspects are fairly obvious because they have a fiscal nature, and the state understandably needs financial resources to conduct its business⁹⁸. The taxation of mood-altering substances such as liquor and opium by means of excise duties had been introduced in India already in 1790 by the East India Company. According to a report commissioned in 1954 by the Planning Commission of the central government to evaluate strategies for introducing the prohibition of alcohol in India, the excise rules of 1790 were “in consonance with a policy of maximum revenue with the minimum of consumption [...] followed in the United Kingdom (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:4)”. By the end of the 19th century, the excise revenues generated by mood-altering substances amounted to almost 15 percent of the total revenues of the Government of India, and had thus become indispensable (Gilbert 2007; Saldanha 1995).

The necessity for the other aspect of the contradiction – that is, the norm of prohibition – does not as immediately and obviously become apparent from the logic of the daily functioning of a state apparatus. A hint, however, can be found in an interview in which Jacques Derrida reflected on the prohibition of drugs: He explains that prohibition is a basic condition for the existence of a legal order, of the law per se, because “[t]here can

98 In India, consumer taxes are mainly levied to generate state revenue “[w]ith a view to raising more resources to meet the growing developmental needs (Ministry of Food Processing Industries 2006: iii)”, not to curtail the consumption of harmful goods.

be no law without the conscious, vigilant, and normal subject, master of her intentions and desires”. Prohibition, Derrida states, is the “very possibility of a respect for the law in our society” for it “assure[s] the integrity and responsibility of the legal subject, of citizens (Derrida 1993:3)”.

Exceptional governance

If one were to apply this logic to the Excise Law of Jharkhand, one would have to assume that the customary adivasi beverages – the sale of which is prohibited – are considered to be particularly harmful to the “integrity and responsibility of the legal subject”, while beverages such as beer, whisky, gin and rum, or even the country liquor from authorized outlets, do not pose a similar threat. One might argue that different substances require differing regulations, but the fact that there is a distinct difference between the populations consuming the respective substances (which is the case in the situation at hand, since mahua liquor and rice beer are primarily consumed by adivasi) indicates that there is something different at stake here. However, the state uses economic arguments to justify the different treatment of the various substances. In an interview with the deputy commissioner of excise, I learned that it is simply not worth the bureaucratic effort to license the production or trade of mahua liquor or rice beer, since these beverages are traded at very low prices, and consumed by the poorest demographic, and that therefore no significant taxes could be added to their market value. This line of argument is consistent with the emphasis of Indian excise laws on revenue generation mentioned before, but it is contradicted, for example, by the fact that the neighboring

state of Orissa allows for the licensing of mahua liquor⁹⁹. Furthermore, the excise law of Jharkhand rules that even the trade in legally licensed liquor is banned in villages (panchayats) with an adivasi population of more than 50%, and the provision of PESA hold that “the Panchayats at the appropriate level and the Gram Sabha are endowed specifically with [...] the power to enforce prohibition or to regulate or restrict the sale and consumption of any intoxicant (Government of India 1996)”. All this indicates that the state sees a need for specific measures to govern the alcohol consumption of its tribal populations. The deputy commissioner of excise explained this need for a population-specific ban on trade in alcohol to me: Adivasi are prone to drinking, and prone to ruin themselves financially by drinking, he said. Special measures are thus required for the benefit of tribal subjects.

Gautam

The implications of such population-specific governance of alcohol in Jharkhand become particularly apparent when one considers the ways such legal norms are put (or not put) into practice. I will try to illustrate this with the example of Gautam, a young adivasi father and moonshiner. Gautam distills and sells approximately 15 to 20 liters of mahua liquor every day. Even though this business is illegal, about 30 other families in Gautam's village Mahatoli depend on it for their livelihood. Apart from that, there are three distilleries in the village that commercially produce mahua liquor in large quantities.

⁹⁹ Mahua liquor in Orissa is a market with an annual growth rate of 40% (private conversation with the license holders). In Chhattisgarh, Mahua can be produced for domestic consumption in limited quantities by STs (personal communication, Nandini Sundar).

Mahatoli is about 20 kilometers from Ranchi, the state capital, and can only be reached on shabby dirt roads. Neither electricity nor telephone lines reach there; communications in every sense of the word are everything but easy. It is this spacial situation – the remoteness in combination with the proximity to the city – which predestines Mahatoli for the illicit liquor business because even though there is great demand of mahua liquor in Ranchi, distilleries are not tolerated there.

Gautam enjoyed education and is thus, as he says, not interested in tilling the land of his ancestors and leading the live of a cultivator. But because he cannot find a job he makes a living distilling and selling mahua. When I asked him when he had begun to make his livelihood from moonshine he did not mention a particular point in time, but instead begun telling me that on that day the Excise Department had conducted a raid in Mahatoli. After the three large distilleries had been busted and dismanteled, Gautam managed to prevent the policemen from entering further into the village to search the smaller enterprises. He thereby succeeded to argue that the small businesses – in contrast to the large distilleries – do not yield profits but simply provide for livelihoods. This difference between the commercial producers and the subsistence distillers made sense to the excise officer that was commanding the raid - an adivasi himself as Gautam explained – and he was appreciative of the circumstances that would make a family man like Gautam earn his livelihood beyond the legal; he let the small distillers go scot-free. Contrary to my expectations, the agreement between Gautam and the excise officer was not facilitated by a financial transaction (i.e., a bribe) - the officer simply demanded purity, that means, that the liquor was to remain unadulterated and that its production was

not to be expedited with the help of chemicals¹⁰⁰. Gautam and his fellow small-scale distillers could thus benefit from the fact that there are occasional discrepancies between laws and their implementation. Such gaps can be of advantage to the people for whom laws have been made, or to their disadvantage. In this case, the moonshiners of Mahatoli – with the exception of the commercial producers - were lucky; the officer-in-charge decided to overlook the doubtless illegality of their livelihood, and to spare them.

Under the influence of morality

A report on the revision of Jharkhand's liquor policies states that “liquor traffic has always been looked upon as a source of pauperism and crime (Srivastava and Prasad 2006:53).” The study, commissioned by the Government of Jharkhand with the aim of increasing tax revenue, makes explicit that the trade in alcoholic beverages is subject to state control because it is not a right, but a privilege, and that the “power of control rests upon the right of the State to care for the health, morals and welfare of the people (2006:53).”

Indian Excise laws have been revised repeatedly – one might even claim that they are under constant revision – at least since the late 19th century. Obviously, tax codes in general are under perpetual scrutiny because they have to balance the opposing interests of the state (i.e., to maximize revenue income) and tax payers (to be taxed as minimally as possible), and the ensuing debates are frequently taking on moral tones. The taxing of

¹⁰⁰ It is a widespread fear in Jharkhand that alcohol might be adulterated.

intoxicating substances, however, adds an additional layer of morality to the discussion, since the taxes or duties levied in this case are supposed to be incentives for lowering the consumption of the respective substances, and are thus measures of regulation, not simply of the intoxicants but of behavior.

Liquor laws are therefore simultaneously instruments of taxation and of public health and morality. Various reports of expert commissions tasked with optimizing the delicate balance of opposing government interests (maximum revenue generation with minimal consumption) illustrate how the problems caused by alcohol consumption were conceptualized in the late colonial and the early postcolonial periods. These government reports were influenced, to varying degrees, by a range of demands and expectations from the outside, in particular, the temperance movement in Britain and the nationalist movement in India. Both movements had very explicit ideas about the psychological, physiological, economic, social, and moral harms of alcohol and therefore advocated abstinence or even prohibition. Before I discuss some of the government reports with a view on how the relationship between adivasis and alcohol is connected to the relationship between adivasi and governance, I want to briefly point towards these two influences.

Gandhi

Many proponents of the nationalist movement supported prohibition and were not only

intent on preventing the damage of drinking, but furthermore argued that alcohol was an evil foreign to India that was brought on by the British as a means of exploitation and subjection, and as a way of preventing the masses from coalescing in resistance. Most prominently and vociferously, Gandhi spoke out and wrote about the harms of drinking and the need for prohibition, and later on called for the picketing of liquor shops¹⁰¹. For him, “[t]he one thing most deplorable next to untouchability is the drink curse (1952:20).” At the beginning of his career, Gandhi was a teetotaler for whom abstinence was an ethical principle derived from caste and family rules. Before leaving India to study law in London, he took a vow – in order to obtain his mother's consent - “not to touch wine, women and meat” (Gandhi 1939:39, cited in Fahey and Manian 2005:492). In London, exposed to Western vegetarianism and the British temperance movement, his rationale for abstinence “shifted from family and caste traditions to moral and scientific principles” (Fahey and Manian 2005:492–493). Later in South Africa, he was finally transformed into a staunch advocate of total prohibition, after he had witnessed the harms alcohol caused among Indian indentured laborers and black Africans. He made abstinence a requirement on his cooperative farms, and considered prohibition imperative in order to address both poverty and drunkenness. When Gandhi returned to India to join the nationalist movement, other leaders of the Indian National Congress were already advocating prohibition. But Gandhi, seeing sobriety and self-rule as connected goals, made prohibition a crucial component of the struggle for independence. The fact that the British colonial administration depended on excise revenue generated from liquor (as

101 For the following remarks on Gandhi's approach to prohibition I draw from Fahey and Manian (2005) as well as from Courtwright (2001:156–159) (2001:156–159) (2001:156–159).

well as opium) importantly contributed to this stance. Gandhi's campaigns for abstinence and the picketing of liquor shops were therefore also intended as patriotic actions, and were meant to hurt the British financially. He argued that the revenue loss could easily be compensated by limiting the military budget. The British responded to these challenges from nationalists by dedicating excise revenue generated through alcohol to education.

Gandhi's campaign against alcohol, however, was not only part of his struggle against individual and collective bondage, it was also a position of moral superiority and a battle to restore authenticity. Because for him, alcohol was inherently alien to Indians and considered sinful amongst them. He argued that the colonizers had encouraged drinking in order to collect taxes and to exploit the colonized, e.g., through plantation and factory labor, and that alcohol would never be as common in India if it was not advocated as fashionable by the British. He was convinced that the socio-religious context in India – with alcohol being prohibited in Islam and Jainism and unacceptable to many high-caste Hindus - was very favorable to prohibition. “In no part of the world is prohibition as easy to carry out as in India for with us it is only a minority that drinks (Gandhi 1952:43).”

The interesting detail here is that this drinking minority consisted primarily of the poor, illiterate, and disadvantaged – sudras and tribals, as well as factory workers and plantation laborers (who were usually sudras or tribals). Advocating prohibition was thus – as has been pointed out (cf. Hardiman 1985:167; Fahey and Manian 2005:495; Saldanha 1995:326–2331) - an elite position which carried very little political disadvantage for Gandhi and the Congress leadership. Nevertheless, Gandhi was opposed

to the idea of holding a referendum on prohibition. For him, the sin and harm in drinking were so obvious that a ban on alcohol did not require popular consent, and he was furthermore convinced that compulsory sobriety was not a violation of individual rights, but that the imposition of prohibition was necessary in order to protect drinkers from themselves. Simply following an approach of reasoning and persuasion was futile according to Gandhi, since the masses were unaware of what they are doing. He was also not concerned about the fact that prohibition would mean the loss of livelihood for many working for commercial liquor producers or traders and for villagers engaged in illicit alcohol production – they could make a living producing and selling non-alcoholic beverages, Gandhi argued.

Even though his uncompromising position on prohibition was certainly undemocratic, and his view of Indian society as largely opposed to drinking was an elite perspective out of touch especially with adivasi populations, his stance was not in complete disregard of the poor and laboring masses. Gandhi considered prohibition a necessary first step required to rid India of the evil of drinking, but he was aware that it needed to be accompanied by changes in the work conditions in factories and on plantations. His view on drinking was therefore not strictly moralistic, as he acknowledged that alcohol provided relief for laborers and helped them to recuperate from physical and mental fatigue. In 1931, Gandhi thus wrote in his weekly journal *Young India*:

If I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops, destroy all the toddy palms [...], compel factory owners to produce humane conditions for their workmen and open refreshment and recreation rooms where these

workmen would get innocent drinks and equally innocent amusements (1952:16-17).

Constitutional mandate for prohibition

To critics who argued that prohibition was an unrealistic goal - citing its failing in the U.S.A. as an example – and that a legal ban on liquor would not stop people from drinking, Gandhi responded that this would not mean that the state needed to “cater for the vices of its people” and that even though theft could not be prevented by law, “[w]e do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving (1952:3).” Prohibition was imperative for him not only because he was convinced that drinking was a dangerous vice, but also because it would be hypocritical and amoral for the state to profit from the liquor trade. He stated that “[e]xcise makes people pay for their own corruption, moral, mental and physical (Gandhi 1952:33).” Gandhi had thus included prohibition in his “Constructive Programme” - his agenda for “complete independence by truthful and non-violent means”. There was no doubt for Gandhi that India under self-rule needed to enact prohibition. Consequently, the National Congress had included prohibition in its program in 1920, and the 1928 draft for a constitution of free India (the Nehru Committee Report) contained a provision for prohibition. When the Congress formed governments in eight provinces after the first Provincial elections in 1937, prohibition was introduced, however, the so-called Congress Ministries resigned in 1939 (to protest Britain's declaration of war with Germany without having been consulted) and prohibition was lifted.¹⁰² After India gained independence in 1947, a constitutional

¹⁰² The Province of Bihar, which included present-day Jharkhand, was one of the provinces which enacted prohibition under the Congress Ministries from 1937-1939. Unfortunately, I could not obtain any

assembly was formed and the constitution that came into effect in 1950 included an article prescribing the enactment of prohibition by the state governments:

The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health (Constitution of India, Article 47).

Several states began implementing the constitutional mandate and by 1954, a third of the area and a fourth of India's population were under prohibition. The task remained incomplete, however, and after 1969 the states increasingly reverted back to generating revenue through the sale of alcohol (Patil 1976). The only state which has upheld a ban on the sale, purchase, and consumption of alcohol ever since is Gujarat.¹⁰³ Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland followed in the 1990s in response to popular (mostly women's) movements or armed resistance groups, but in these states, prohibition applies only partially or is not regularly enforced. Both Haryana and Andhra Pradesh had also briefly introduced prohibition in the mid 1990s in response to popular movements, but returned to the sale of liquor after the respective governments had lost elections (and after both states had witnessed substantial increases in smuggling and illicit liquor production as well as great difficulties balancing their budgets) (Panjiar 2010; Courtwright 2001:156–159). Thus, while the provision in the constitution still exists, there are currently no efforts at implementing it, and the concern for prohibition is definitely on the wane in

sources documenting the impact this policy had on adivasis. There is, however, a note in a report on the ministry in Bihar by Vallabhai Patel stating that “prohibition has been a fiasco, an utter fiasco if some reports are to be believed (cited in: Fahey and Manian 2005:502).”

103 However, the smuggling and illicit sale of liquor as well as related corruption are reportedly very common (Patel 2011; Mahurkar 2012).

India. Contemporary considerations with regard to liquor laws and excise rules are mostly concerned with revenue maximization.¹⁰⁴

In the first two decades after independence, however, repeated efforts were undertaken to fulfill the constitutional mandate for prohibition throughout India, and various commissions were formed in order to find ways for accomplishing this task. Much can be deduced about the role alcohol played historically (or rather: about the role alcohol was perceived to play) in adivasi communities from these reports, as well as about the ways in which adivasis were constituted as different through legislations such as liquor laws.

The “false notions” and “queer thoughts” of low castes and aboriginals

A 1950 study conducted by University of Bombay School of Economics & Sociology on the “socio-economic effects of prohibition (rural)” (School of Economics & Sociology 1953) is an interesting example for how social science research can be instrumentalized for specific projects of governance. Even though the history of alcohol regulation in India has shown (before the report was commissioned, as well as since then) that the main challenges for introducing prohibition – from the perspective of the state - are budgetary (how can the loss of alcohol-generated excise revenue be compensated?) and related to law enforcement (how to prevent illicit production and trade?) this report focusses on

¹⁰⁴ The Gandhian spirit of teetotalism has not completely disappeared, however, even if it might at times be at odds with Gandhi's non-violent convictions: in order to uphold a zero-tolerance no liquor policy, the anti-corruption activist (and proclaimed Gandhian) Anna Hazare is known to have people found drinking tied to a pole and flogged in his village in Maharashtra (Sharma 2011; Bal 2011). In 1995, a study proposed prohibition considering the health-related costs of alcohol consumption. It argued that the revenue losses of prohibition could be offset by the decrease in alcohol-related health expenditure (incl. accidents) and an increase in productivity as a consequence of sobriety (Abraham 1995).

microeconomic questions. The aim of the study is to show that the introduction of prohibition would benefit the socio-economic situation of the rural population, or, more specifically, that temperance would have a positive impact on their economic performance. For this purpose, various statistics are used to show that families in which alcohol is used are economically worse off, and that this trend holds true even if social structure and poverty are adjusted for. The report observes that occupation and especially caste are correlated with drinking:

"Caste and drink habit seem to be closely related. In all three districts, the low caste Hindus have a much greater proportion of addicts than high-caste. [...] The social status and environment, and customs and traditions which are closely connected with caste account for the close correspondence. In higher castes, addiction very often comes in the way of marital relationships and lowers social prestige. With the low-caste families [...] and the aboriginals addiction is found to the extent of 90-100 per cent (School of Economics & Sociology 1953:16)."¹⁰⁵

Having established this correlation, the report aims to explain why alcohol use is so common among low-caste and adivasi communities. Environmental conditions and “social surroundings” are mentioned, as are “false notions” about the beneficial effects of alcohol for the health and development of children, and “[q]ueer thoughts about moral, ethical, and religious justifiability also play an important part” (School of Economics & Sociology 1953:12). Nevertheless, in order to underline the report's claim it is argued that addiction develops in most persons in childhood, that environmental and social factors can be ignored, and even that the notion that intoxicants are used to self-medicate “depression arising out of worries and unhappiness” can be dismissed. The introduction

¹⁰⁵ Even though “addict” and “addiction” are widely used throughout, the report does not define or conceptualize these terms. My reading of the data used in the study indicates that “addiction” corresponds to alcohol use, and that people who drink are understood to be “addicts”.

of prohibition (implying that this would make alcohol unavailable) would therefore protect future generations and “attack the evil at its root” (School of Economics & Sociology 1953:22). It is possible for the report to argue this because it portrays “addiction” as the consequence of a habit formed during childhood among communities (low caste and in particular aboriginals, i.e., adivasis) that are culturally predisposed towards drinking (or that lack the social stigmatization of drinking common among high-caste communities).

The 1950 report thus primarily conveyed the foregone conclusion that prohibition would improve the socio-economic situation of the rural population by making alcohol unavailable. It was not, however, a study of the feasibility of prohibition. In 1955, the Planning Commission of India appointed a committee to address the challenges posed by the implementation of the mandate entailed in article 47 of the constitution. The main concern of the committee's report though was to make a case for prohibition against its critics, in particular, against the argument that a policy of moderation was better feasible than total prohibition. The report thus argues that there is no point in permitting moderation, because it can lead to immoderation, and that it is easier to "refrain completely from drinks and drugs than to practice moderation” (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:7). It therefore considers the approach of regulating alcohol (and other intoxicants) through taxation as a failure. Addicts would turn to liquor no matter how high its price, even by illicit means if need be, because "demand for [intoxicants] is basically inelastic" (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:8).

The committee argued, aligning itself with the Indian nationalist movement, that the regulation of alcohol was an important aspect of Indian self-determination. Furthermore, very much along the lines of Gandhi, the report held temperance to be an inherently Indian desire, pursued by the elite, though ignored by marginal sections of society:

"There is sufficient evidence indicating that the [...] consumption [of intoxicants] was looked upon with disapproval by Hindu scriptures and society. [...] By and large, the elite were sober and the use of liquor and drugs was confined generally to the lowest strata or 'residuum' of society (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:4)."

The report establishes prohibition as the only justifiable aim for an independent Indian nation state by presenting sobriety as the ethical *modus operandi* of the Indian elite. Alcohol was spread and made fashionable by the British, the report argues (implying that drinking is an inherently foreign practice), and is rooted in Indian social life only in marginal communities, such as tribals. At the time the report was compiled, a part of the country had already enacted prohibition. But "in non-prohibition States and [in the] wet areas of partial prohibition States, the drink habit has [been] gradually spreading among classes hitherto not accustomed." In particular, the report expressed concern that in cities like Delhi and Calcutta, "the evil of drink has spread strongly amongst the younger generation and even among some womenfolk of the upper classes"(Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:40). It was therefore urgent to adopt prohibition throughout India, and the report recommended that it should become a task to be included in the Second Five Year Plan (to begin in 1956), which would "also be in keeping with the high cultural and moral traditions of the nation". Many families would be helped if they were saved from liquor, and furthermore, "the surest foundation for a welfare State is a sober and healthy

people (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:45)."

Recognition of tribal difference

The report of the 1954-55 Prohibition Enquiry Committee specifically addresses tribals, because their "habits and customs permit of the vice of taking liquor on occasions" (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:54). It is noteworthy that tribal drinking is thereby not discussed as something equally harmful and troubling as drinking in general: the liquor tribals brew "is said to be not very intoxicating", and the report even acknowledges that tribals resort to alcohol to supplement or substitute their precarious food supplies. There is thus a certain governmental recognition of difference with regard to alcohol in adivasi communities, but the report does not go as far as to recommend tribal areas to be excluded from prohibition. However, the approach proposed to extend prohibition to "these unsophisticated people" is to rely on information and education rather than on coercion and "normal police enforcement" (Prohibition Enquiry Committee 1955:54-55). Tribal drinking is thus rendered in the 1954-1955 report of the Prohibition Enquiry Committee as a problem of difference warranting a specific, sensitive approach: rather than simply a question of effective policing, the introduction of prohibition in tribal areas is construed as a challenge of enlightening an ignorant population - a symptom of primitivity (drinking) that needs to be treated with with modernization (prohibition). Between the lines, however, the committee's wariness of coercive means might indicate a certain apprehensiveness of tribal resistance.

This apprehensiveness was more explicitly stated ten years later, in a two-volume report collated by a “Study Team on Prohibition” headed by Justice Tek Chand and again appointed by the central government's Planning Commission (Chand 1964a; Chand 1964b)¹⁰⁶:

“Any interference with their drinking customs is felt by them as an inroad into their way of life. They resent and even resist the efforts of the administration either to wean them from drinking or to subject them to punishment for contravention of liquor laws (Chand 1964a:418).

There is no reason given in the report that would succeed to explain the readiness of adivasis to resist interference¹⁰⁷, but the study team approaches tribal drinking with a disposition embracing cultural sensitivity and a certain acknowledgment of the socioeconomic marginalization of tribal communities. The report states that fermented liquors have been “part of their life from time immemorial” and are “not associated with any impropriety or immorality” in tribal communities. And it adds that “[t]heir living conditions are sub-normal, poverty is grinding, health is extremely poor and their standard of life is almost primitive. Interference with their drinking habits through coercion will be a gratuitous cruelty” (Chand 1964a:417).

106 The Study Team was appointed to evaluate the situation with regard to alcohol use and regulation, and to advice on how the mandate of prohibition might successfully be extended throughout India. A very considerable part of the first volume of the report, however, is dedicated to an eclectic array of information on the harms of alcohol as well as the history of alcohol use and regulation throughout the world, including a discussion of prohibition in the United States. The chairman of the Study Team, Justice Tek Chand was a passionate prohibitionist. In 1969 – for the centenary celebration of M.K. Gandhi's birth - he was invited to write a book on the theme of prohibition. “Liquor Menace in India” is a pamphlet containing wide and assorted range of arguments for prohibition, including a “historical survey” containing eclectic statements against alcohol ranging from the 18th century BC Babylonian law-giver Hammurabi (whom Tek Chand however situates in the 23rd century BC) to the nationalist Indian constitution (Chand 1972).

107 There are examples of tribal rebellions that began in reaction to interference in customary alcohol use: the 1905/06 report mentions a rebellion that had broken out in Godavari district in 1879-80 (Thomson 1907:4)

The way in which the role of alcohol in adivasi communities is explained in the 1964 report resembles an argument following a functionalist anthropological approach. Describing alcohol use among tribals in Bihar, the study group states that “their drinking pattern is regulated by the traditional practices and the prevailing customs of the community” (Chand 1964b:171). Drinking became a problem for adivasis in what is today Jharkhand, however, with the commodification and commercialization of alcohol, which according a source cited in the report, began following the Munda uprising of 1895-1900: After the rebellion had been suppressed and its leader Birsa Munda had died in a Ranchi jail cell, a liquor shop was opened in Khunti, the center of the uprising. According to the source quoted in the report, the liquor sold there – as well as in other shops that were opened in the area soon thereafter – was subsidized. “What repression could not do to the community, drinking did. A self-respecting independent and robust community has been laid low through drink, and economically reduced to the verge of destitution (Chand 1964b:172).”¹⁰⁸

It is interesting to note that the report draws a distinction between what it understands as customary (for adivasis), fermented liquors, and strong, distilled liquors, and that the Study Team did not seem to consider it necessary (or possible) to extend the mandate of prohibition to include the former. However, the report also mentions fighting as a consequence of drinking, and suggests that alcohol affects tribal health and prevents

108 While this narrative is by no means implausible I must add a cautionary note here: the Study Team only consulted one source and did not confirm the claim that liquor shops were opened in reaction to an uprising with any further archival investigation.

adivasis from working regularly or from productive and efficient economic performance:

The food products particularly rice are made into a fermented decoction which becomes intoxicating. This causes them to be under-nourished, ill-fed and ill-clothed, lazy and neglectful of their occupational pursuits and careless of their future (Chand 1964b:380).”

Thus on the one hand, “[t]he scheduled tribes are doing themselves untold damage by their addiction to drink” (Chand 1964b:380) but on the other hand it is not possible to extend total prohibition into tribal areas, as “[t]he State feels that dangers discontentment (sic.) would arise in the adivasi areas as the tribals as a class are given to drinking” (Chand 1964b:166). The report states, therefore, that neither coercion nor “unmitigated license” are warranted. “A change has to be brought about in their mental approach and social outlook. [Adivasis] have to be broken in gradually (Chand 1964a:418)” The Tek Chand report hence concludes – or rather concedes – that the existing policy is to be continued, according to which scheduled tribes are permitted to brew their customary liquor, but not to sell it – admitting that the latter stipulation is widely disregarded by both adivasis and the administration.

Tribal drinking: a problem sui generis

The postcolonial treatment of tribal drinking – as manifested in the three governmental reports discussed here – is a continuation of colonial approaches to the relationship between adivasi and alcohol, which rested on two pillars: On one hand, it was subsumed under the general policy of alcohol regulation, which avowedly aimed simultaneously at raising revenue and at limiting intemperance. On the other hand, it was part of a

“[c]olonial discourse [that] constructed tribal (adivasi) India as an irreducible otherness in relation to Hindu India” (Ghosh 2006a:507), and as such, tribal drinking was understood to be a “problem sui generis” (Chand 1964a:417).

For example, after the Bombay Abkari act of 1878 was passed in Bombay presidency with the aim of improving excise regulation (in order to maximize revenue and to minimize drunkenness), the prices of country liquor made from palm juice or mahua flowers rose significantly. However, rather than ending their relationship to alcohol, adivasis in Thana district resorted to smuggling and especially illicit distillation. The government thus continued to face the task of reducing adivasi drunkenness and saw two ways to achieve this goal: either by reducing the duties on (and thus the price of) licit liquor, or by controlling mahua flowers (in order to prevent illicit liquor production). Considering its revenue interests, the government chose the latter option (to control possession and sale of mahua flowers) and introduced legislative measures in 1892 to ban the storing and selling of mahua flowers (it had even considered the cutting down of mahua trees). These measures triggered the outspoken opposition of nationalist groups (such as the Poona Sarvajik Sabha) who argued that poor people and in particular adivasis would thus be deprived of an important (even though not a staple) component of their diet, and that the police would thus be given more means to harass them (Saldanha 1995:2323).

In order to respond to such resistance on the ground as well as to criticism coming from Britain where the temperance movement was gaining influence, the colonial Government

of India appointed the Indian Excise Committee in 1905. It was tasked with investigating existing alcohol regulations and finding ways to improve them (i.e., making them more efficient, or rather: more efficiently enforceable). Different from the postcolonial reports discussed above, the report which this committee chaired by Sir James Thomson produced did *not* advocate prohibition. In contrary, it was aimed at optimizing excise rules (with the two parallel goals of curtailing drunkenness and maximizing revenue) (Thomson 1907). It was the first time that the reform of alcohol regulation was addressed by the Government of India – rather than by provincial administrations. The report opens by referring to exceptions, that is, by mentioning that the general rules for the taxation of intoxicating liquors do not apply to “particular areas and particular classes” (Thomson 1907:3). Apart from “personal privileges” granted as a procedure of indirect rule to certain feudal landlords, collective exemptions were given in the form of “concessions to backward tribes”. That is, the relationship of adivasis and alcohol was governed in a population-specific manner.

The reasons necessitating such exemptions are characterized in the report as "partly political, partly social, and partly administrative" (Thomson 1907:4). Apart from the general difficulties of initiating

"all forms of regular administration [in these tracts], the special difficulty that the tribes concerned regard the privilege of making their own liquor as a long-established right, that they believe rightly or wrongly that in these tracts, which are generally feverish, liquors are necessary to their health, and that in many places, they hold it essential that liquors poured as libations to their gods should be made by their own hands (Thomson 1907:4)."

The report also mentions a rebellion that had broken out in Godavari district in 1879-80 after the privileges of tribes with regard to liquor had been interfered with, and anticipates that in other regions "grave discontent would be provoked" by the introduction of excise regulations in some of the "tracts in question (Thomson 1907:4)".

Among the considerations preventing the lifting of the privileges of adivasis to produce alcohol, the report also lists social and administrative difficulties of taxation. "In most of the areas concerned", it would be easy to introduce licensed liquor traders and thus to replace home-made with store-bought liquor while generating considerable revenue. "But [...] the inevitable tendency of such sellers is to foster drunkenness for their own ends, and to acquire the lands and other properties of the aboriginal tribes whom they reduce to a state of serfdom", which is why – as the report states – it would be "contrary to the principles of sound excise administration to introduce the liquor seller, unless he can be controlled (Thomson 1907:4)." And such control is impossible because "people from the plains" would not be able to travel to, leave alone live in tribal areas, and the effort of checking home-brewing would require "a staff so large as to be a worse evil than any drunkenness that at present exists (Thomson 1907:5)".

Prohibition for a race of drunkards

Another governmental report giving insight into colonial discourses on adivasis and alcohol is the "Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Bombay Presidency" which the civil servant David Symington submitted in 1939 (Symington 1950). Symington strongly recommended prohibition specifically for

adivasis (or in their territory), while he did not seem to advocate it in principal. He had no objection to moderate or occasional drinking, but advocated prohibition for adivasis because they – according to his observation – lacked the free will to decide whether or not to drink, and “as a whole are a race of drunkards” (Symington 1950:66).

The reports on alcohol regulation from the later colonial and the early postcolonial periods discussed here thus all approach tribal drinking as a “problem sui generis” (Chand 1964a:417) whereby the relationship between adivasis and alcohol is described as a) essentially different, b) potentially dangerous (because tribal drinking itself is understood as dangerous and/or because interfering in tribal alcohol use might result in revolts), and c) needs to be approached differently than alcohol use in general. The regulation of alcohol as discussed in these reports therefore exemplifies Kaushik Ghosh's argument about the ways in which indigeneity in India needs to be understood through a history of heterogeneous processes of governmentality (2006). Ghosh shows that colonial discourses constructed India's tribes as an “essential primitive otherness (Ghosh 2006:507)”, and that this tribal alterity was subsequently both assimilated to the Indian mainstream (through inclusion in the legal regimes and markets of the colony) as well as separated from it (through specific protective provisions such as the granting of land rights or the designation of territories governed by customary rule). These two parallel processes of governmental rationality both have the recognition of the “essential primitive otherness” as their point of departure - the former aims at including the tribal other in the colonial/national mainstream, while for the latter, the principle of recognition is exclusion. This is why Ghosh refers to them as *inclusive* and *exclusive governmentality*

respectively. The exclusive processes of governmentality thereby need to be understood, as Ghosh shows, as reactions to (or the prevention of) tribal assertions and revolts.

The regulation of alcohol in tribal territories combines all these aspects of governmentality: the legal and market-economical aspects of inclusive governmentality are expressed in the licensing and taxation of the production and trade of alcohol, meanwhile the manner in which the regulation of alcohol in adivasi territories is approached as an exception requiring specific culturally sensitive provisions and/or entailing the potential of resistance is indicative of exclusive governmentality.

Anomalies to the norm

Returning to current practices of liquor regulation, the role rice beer plays in the Excise Laws of Jharkhand is of particular interest, as it is the only form of alcohol which is dealt with not only in terms of either prohibition, or licensing and taxation, but also in terms of permission. However, the permission to prepare and consume rice beer is limited to members of Scheduled Tribes, that is, to adivasis. When I asked the Deputy Commissioner of Excise, however, how such a legal norm could be implemented – would the excise police go around asking people for their caste certificates? - he responded that it is not enforced. There is thus a specific legal provision, applicable to a specific population, that exists notwithstanding the impossibility of its implementation. It is part of my larger argument that this paradox is an expression of the ways in which the governance of alcohol in Jharkhand reifies the inherent difference of the tribal subject in

India and marks adivasi as a distinct population, and a population worthy of moral reform¹⁰⁹.

I further asked the Deputy Commissioner of Excise why rice beer was permitted to a population the members of which – according to the logic of the law as well as his own reasoning – was unable to drink responsibly? He replied by elaborating on the political impossibility to prohibit rice beer in tribal areas; adivasi were so fond of their *Haṛia* (rice beer), he explained, that any candidate advocating a ban on rice beer would be committing political suicide (which is an absurd claim, as I will later indicate, and also when one thinks of Shibu Soren, the most influential and charismatic adivasi political leader in Jharkhand, who began his career campaigning against liquor traders).¹¹⁰ *Haṛia*,

109 Various social actors are involved in a range of moral interventions in Jharkhand – there is, for one, the missionary attempt (mirrored to a certain extent by Hindu and Sarna forces) of bringing about modernity through spiritual reform, the Maoist/Naxalist attempt to introduce justice through political and economic reform (i.e., revolution), or the efforts of various state and non-state actors to facilitate “development” by propagating a reform of economic survival strategies (e.g., with the formation of *Mahila Mandals* and *self-help groups* women are trained in skills for income generation and to run micro-finance schemes). Particularly this last effort is aligned with what I indicated with the examples at the outset of this chapter, i.e., that such reform efforts frequently focus on women. There is certainly a connection to a global trend in development since the 1990s to focus on “gender”, but locally, the priority given to women in such efforts is also linked to a frequently-made observation about “tribal society”: *while adivasi men are lazy, their women are very hardworking – and they are the only ones able to take responsibility* (I am here paraphrasing statements of various interviewees, such as – most recently – the deputy mayor of Ranchi). However, encouraging income-generation with skills such as tailoring or papad and bonsai-making is also intended to wean adivasi women off the dependence on cash income generated through the sale of alcohol.

Obviously, the focus of reform-projects on women (and the resulting justification for various kinds of intervention) has a long genealogy, including in India for example both colonial rulers as well as proponents of the nationalist struggle for independence.

110 In the 1970s, Shibu Soren led a movement against alcohol – spreading from his initial constituency among the Santhal (in Giridih) throughout the Chotanagpur region. The movement under the slogan *kallaal todo, Jharkhand chhodo - smash the liquor shop, quit Jharkhand!* gained Shibu Soren instant popularity, especially in the districts of Singhbhum, Santhal Parganas, and Dhanbad of what was then still Bihar, and facilitated the success of Shibu's party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, in legislative and parliamentary elections (Sengupta 1980; Roy 2003). The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha – one of the most significant political parties in Jharkhand since it became a separate state – began in the early 1970 by mobilizing against money-lenders and by calling for a boycott of liquor. As a consequence of this mobilization, the Bihar government had to prohibit the sale of country liquor in tribal areas of Dhanbad district of present-day Jharkhand (Sengupta 1980).

the adivasi rice beer thus represents an anomaly in the liquor laws of Jharkhand, as it is deemed unworthy of licensing and can consequently not be a commodity; it is therefore reduced to a ritual, or cultural good, representative of a population for which it is as typical as it is detrimental.

So far the law as it is on the books. My ethnographic research indicates, however, that its implementation is incomplete at best. We have already heard the example of Gautam the moonshiner, who was let off scot-free during a raid by the excise department, notwithstanding the doubtless illegality of his livelihood as a producer of mahua liquor. However, Gautam cannot feel secure about his livelihood because he knows that he cannot count on law-enforcement officers to neglect their duty. One day there might be another raid, and there might be a different excise officer who might be less sympathetic to the predicament of people like Gautam. Every time I come to Mahatoli I inquire with Gautam and so far he could always respond with "so far he [the excise officer] hasn't come". But it is obvious that his livelihood makes him very vulnerable.

Birbal

There are many in Jharkhand, who depend on the sale of illegal Alcohol. Birbal for example, who lives in Koylatoli, a settlement of migrant adivasi laborers at the outskirts of Ranchi which NGOs have termed an urban slum. Birbal and his wife brew approximately 40-50 liters of rice beer every day. They sell it to fellow inhabitants of Koylatoli, as well as to people passing by their settlement in the evenings after a day of

scavenging in piles of cinder and slag dumped by the nearby factory. Young men from the neighboring settlements also come, because Koylatoli is famous for *Haria*, and Birbal and his wife make the best, according to many. They have a son of fifteen who goes to school and is among the few boys his age in Koylatoli who stayed out of trouble during the fifteen months of my fieldwork there, and a daughter of eighteen who studies history in college. Birbal and his wife are respected in the community, and he is a member of the village council. While they hope for opportunities to earn their living from means that are more respectable – Birbal tried to get a loan to buy a car with which he could have worked as a chauffeur-entrepreneur - they are not bothered by the fact that their livelihood is illegal. Even though prohibited, mahua liquor and especially rice beer are ubiquitously and openly offered for sale in most parts of Jharkhand. The excise department does not attempt to prosecute the sale of rice beer and leaves the enforcement of its prohibition to the occasional police man who will express his authority by destroying a stock of fermenting rice, or, more likely, routinely ask for bribes to look the other way. But even this rarely ever happens in a place like Koylatoli. The prohibition against mahua liquor on the other hand is occasionally enforced, but the excise department does not have the means to conduct raids and relies on vehicles, intelligence, and manpower provided to them by the local liquor syndicate¹¹¹. The presence of the law in the domain of customary adivasi beverages is thus not used to enact permanent or ubiquitous forms of discipline or control, but it appears irregularly, with interruptions, quasi-accidentally (Das 2004; Randeria 2003). The fuzziness of the law and its half-

111 This public-private collaboration is not so much a case of outsourcing, as it is the manifestation of a well-established form of corruption, and is only one of many irregular transactions between the excise department and the liquor syndicate occurring on a regular basis.

hearted implementation ultimately create a great deal of power in the hands of representatives of the state – which can be used, as just mentioned, to extract bribes (which would often more precisely be described as protection money). The existence of the law, which supposedly facilitates a predictable and rational administration, results in permanent insecurity. It is as if the law is in force always only temporarily and as if by accident, only to be suspended again, or, as Walter Benjamin famously stated, “the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule” (Benjamin 1968:257).

Lack of enforcement

Obviously, the lack of enforcement of the laws that ban the sale of customary adivasi beverages can be to the advantage of those who have no other source of cash income – which includes many women – and of course to those who relish their daily supply of booze. But it is to the discontent of many who worry about the harmful effects of alcohol on adivasi individuals, families, and communities (such as, e.g., the women who were mobilized in the *Nasha Vimukhtikaran Andolan* mentioned at the outset), and who feel that the state's lack of attention is a form of betrayal resulting in the ongoing subjection of adivasi to marginality – or even a conspiracy to finally annihilate them in order to claim their land which is rich in minerals and forests.

Such sentiments are not a recent phenomenon. David Symington, an officer in the colonial Indian Civil Service, mentioned in in his 1939 report on the situation of

“Aboriginal and Hill Tribes” in Western India that it was beginning to dawn on many of the tribals he encountered (which he considered, after all, “a race of drunkards”, 1950:66) that alcohol was economically harmful to them, and that they had a “desire, albeit perhaps a faint one to be cured of this evil (1950:63)”. The tribals he spoke to thus demanded liquor shops to be closed and argued that the temptation of liquor could be eliminated if the government were committed to prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol. According to Symington, an important reason for tribals to violate excise laws (in manufacturing illicit liquor) was that they had thus far experienced the Government not to be serious about suppressing excise crimes or about preventing tribals from drinking. As a matter of fact, the tribals had come to know excise officers to be expecting (or to be expected by their own superiors) to find at a certain number of violations every time they entered a village, and as a consequence, a pattern had evolved according to which the excise officers would announce how many cases they needed, and the villagers would come forward to pay the corresponding fines. Symington thus rejected the view that tribals would oppose any attempt at introducing prohibition.”[T]hey are beginning to appreciate, in theory, the advantages of abstinence, but they simply have not got sufficient courage and self-control to abstain of their own accord (1950:68).” Ultimately, Symington's argument was about the tribals' inability to drink moderately or to voluntarily abstain from drinking. “The Bhil does not use alcohol like a civilized person (1950:69).” And because he saw drinking for tribals not to be a matter of free choice, Symington considered legal measures (and their sincere and effective enforcement) a necessity.

Law enforcement by outlaws, or whose sovereignty is it anyway?

Maoist insurgent groups, which are active in many parts of India receive popular support because they take up concerns in areas in which marginal populations feel neglected by the state. In Jharkhand, many of these groups are thus enforcing total prohibition in their spheres of influence, thereby actively enforcing the laws banning the sale of customary liquor which the state ignores. This can have drastic consequences, as the Maoists often work according to the following pattern: First posters appear with demands that the liquor business is to be abandoned. If this demand is not heeded, a unit of insurgents will enter the village one night and hold a jan adalat, an ad-hoc tribunal in which the producers and traders of alcohol receive one more warning, before they would finally be executed. Because the Maoists thus manage to enforce the state's legal norms in a quasi extra-legal space, they receive widespread support amongst the population, including the urban adivasi elite, who are usually quite far from embracing Maoist ideals. This is the case because the Maoists thus act to curtail a problem which is generally recognized, which the state however meets with inaction: The sheer omnipresence of alcohol in the adivasi habitat, and the resulting potential for problems for individuals, families, and communities.

With its Excise Laws, the state reifies Adivasis as a separate subject category and thus perpetuates their stigmatization as hopeless, irresponsible drunkards. However, because significant gaps exist between laws and their enforcement, Adivasis are often able to sell their customary alcoholic beverages without interference from state authorities. What

does this mean for the populations of adivasi subjects? Various interpretations circulate: The tolerance of law enforcement agents for the illegal practices of Adivasi is understood as an expression of solidarity (that is, the law enforcement agents can sympathize with the predicaments under which livelihood needs to be maintained beyond the bounds of legality), or as a sign of cultural recognition (what has been used since time immemorial is 'traditional' and can therefore not be criminal). Or it is read as an expression of a conspiracy against Adivasi communities: keeping them drunk is a way of keeping them submitted. This interestingly resonates with Derrida's statement about the relationship between prohibition and law: he explained sobriety a basic condition for the possibility of subjects becoming responsible citizens, that is, owners, or partners in a legal order, rather than simply being subjected to it. According to this line of reasoning, the letting off scot-free of law-breaking adivasis would be a betrayal of the latter's entitlement to equal rights of citizenship, because it is not sobriety that is favored, but inebriety.

Whatever it may be, the toleration of illegality is always only temporary and does thus not suspend the principal, criminalized nature of the ways these Adivasi maintain their livelihood, and because it is always only a phase which can end at any moment, the Adivasi subject permanently oscillates between experiences of illegality, stigmatization, solidarity, recognition, and betrayal. There is thus for these Adivasi subjects neither clarity nor perspective. For their livelihood, and finally for their survival they are subject to the benevolence of law enforcement officers and thus, there is ultimately little difference to life under the rule of Maoist insurgents, where they depend on the favor of the commander presiding over the *jan adalat*, who – like a sovereign ruler – decides over

life and death of his subjects¹¹². Maybe this is one of the reasons for why many Adivasi in Jharkhand are indifferent about whether their village is under the control of Maoists, or subject to the rule of state law.

Ranajit Guha has described the law with the metaphor of the state's emissary, through which “the will of the state could be made to penetrate, reorganize part by part and eventually control the will of a subject population in much the same way as Providence is brought to impose itself upon mere human destiny (1987:141)”. Upendra Baxi, in an important critique of the place of law in early Subaltern Studies, invoked Guha's formulation in order to question the distinction of state practices and grammars of power as law, while “prescriptions, prohibitions, punishments” in non-state legal systems were understood as “custom” or “inofficial justice” – whereby, as Baxi pointed out, colonial categories were reproduced (1992)”.

Concluding remarks on the population-specific governance of alcohol

In bringing into discussion the possibility that “a subject population” might have something at stake in the implementation of law – or the upholding of legal norms – I am not concerned with the distinction of state from non-state legal systems (or practices and grammars of power); instead I would like to point towards the proximity of legal rules to other kinds of rules, such as moral ones. Specifically, I would like to point out that the prohibition of alcohol *can* be a desire resonating with various – including local – moral

¹¹² I do however not mean to suggest here that the Maoists operate with absolute rigidity; there can be room for negotiation and corruption when dealing with Naxalites.

discourses among adivasis in Jharkhand, and that the law operates in a larger context of normativities which must therefore be responsive to other normativities. At the core of this exercise lies the question of how to think about the subject population.

Partha Chatterjee has recently offered, in his writings on what he calls “political society” a conceptualization of the relations between governments and subject populations, which he considers important for a nuanced understanding of the contemporary practice of democracy, particularly in what he (and others) refer to as non-Western societies (2004; 2011). The point of departure for Chatterjee's argument is that not all sections of society (in India – which he discusses exemplary for the post-colonial world) have equal access to power and political processes of decision making. Thus, according to Chatterjee, society in can be split analytically between those who - participating in what in the wake of the French revolution is called *civil society* – have access to the democratic state and its institutions, and those who do not. The former can be understood as citizens (or those who can govern), the latter as subjects (or those who are governed), and Chatterjee coins the term *political society* to refer to the political space of the governed, and to distinguish it from the political space of *civil society*, where citizens operate, but to which subjects have access only in theory. The state relates to those who form civil society as individual citizens, whereas political society is addressed collectively, as populations. While the former can claim rights and entitlements vis-à-vis the state, the latter can only negotiate for spaces of exception through the intervention of politics.

The paradigmatic example for Chatterjee's political society are urban slum dwellers.

Inhabiting spaces occupied illegally and structures built without the required permissions, such populations of urban squatters are not equipped with rights. Often it is not only their forms of dwelling but also their livelihoods which are beyond the bounds of official legality – e.g., in the case of street hawkers (in Chatterjee's examples), or the haria sellers at the *line bazaar* in Koylatoli. But the state grants exceptions – e.g., by connecting illegal settlements to the electricity grid to prevent the tapping of electricity lines – whereby it enters negotiations with collectives, rather than with individual citizens. Such negotiations between the state and populations of the marginalized and disenfranchised take place in the space Chatterjee calls *political society*. The state addresses such marginalized and disenfranchised groups of people “not as rights-bearing citizens but as urban populations who have specific characteristics and needs and who must be appropriately governed (2004:14).” The demarcation and classification of populations and their needs and characteristics – the empirical basis of governmentality – is thus an essential aspect of political society, as is the granting of services not as rights or entitlements, but as exceptions and as consequences of negotiations and political calculations.

Veena Das, in a recent essay (Das 2011), criticizes Chatterjee for relying on binaries (the governing vs. the governed; civil society vs. political society; legal vs. illegal; populations produced by governmentality vs. moral communities). She proposes instead to “to show how these concepts bleed into each other and produce the capacity to make claims on the State as a way of claiming citizenship (Das 2011:320)”. Das offers thereby an important corrective, as it is very difficult – if not impossible – to empirically uphold

analytic distinctions between conceptual binaries the way Chatterjee utilizes them, and in particular, it is important to see citizenship not as a status (which one either has or does not have), but as a claim that the poor (or the governed, the marginal, the indigenous) continually make. Extending her critique to the case of the moonshiner Gautam discussed in this chapter, it becomes possible to see how the excise officer who lets Gautam go scot-free “put[s] aside [the State's] function to punish infringements of law – thus allowing claims of life to trump claims of law (330-331)”. The excise officer acknowledges the presence of customary forms of alcohol in the household as aspects of life rather than only as violations of law. The relations between alcohol and life in Adivasi communities will be discussed in the following chapter.

A crucial aspect of Chatterjee's model is that the state enters negotiations with communities whose individual and collective survival depends on violations of the law (e.g., urban squatters or street hawkers), and that this survival can only be guaranteed by exceptions granted, and not – as in civil society – by rights claimed or through formalized procedures. This framework might at first appear to fit the situation in Koylatoli quite well, which I have discussed in the previous chapter, where many households depend for their livelihood on the production and/or sale of illegal alcohol. And as I have shown in this chapter, exceptions are granted in Jharkhand, both at the level of official policy (for domestic and ritual consumption adivasis are exempted from the prohibition against rice beer), and on an ad-hoc, case by case basis (the prohibition against the production but especially against the sale of customary adivasi forms of alcohol is only rarely enforced). But these exceptions are granted in the form of cultural recognition (at the level of

policies), or they have to be understood as precarious practices of law enforcement giving way to corruption – but they are not the outcome of negotiations (between the governed and the state). *Negotiations*, which figure so centrally in Chatterjee's understanding of political society, do not occur with regard to adivasi and alcohol. My suspicion is that this is because alcohol is such a hotly contested and morally charged issue in adivasi communities that they cannot formulate any particular demand: neither for an official policy of tolerance or licensing allowing adivasi families to support their livelihood with cash earned from customary forms of alcohol, nor for the complete prohibition (or the strict enforcement of the existing prohibitions) which would officially eliminate substances considered harmful to individual and collective adivasi bodies and selves. It is my contention that customary forms of alcohol are not simply an extreme or unusual example, but that the essential otherness as which adivasis are recognized by the state, and their substantial marginality cannot be sufficiently explained by Chatterjee's phenomenology of what he calls political society. While Jharkhand's Adivasis could easily be identified as populations of subjects rather than as individual citizens, Chatterjee's concept of *political society* nevertheless does not seem to fit; the distinction he draws between citizens and subjects, between civil society and political society does not capture the particularities of the relationship between adivasis and non-adivasis, or between adivasis and the state in Jharkhand.

The field of governmentality where the state relates to communities of adivasis as *populations* is one where *difference* matters, not just characteristics like poverty and the need for shelter and livelihood, and the political calculations according to which

negotiations are conducted and exceptions granted operate according to a “politics of cultural recognition”, as Elizabeth Povinelli calls it: Adivasi populations are addressed as *specific* (kinds of) populations, and the benefits and exceptions granted to them (such as the population-specific legislation of liquor) are grounded in a particular logic of governance that “differentiate[s] kinds of people, societies, civilizational orders (2006, 5)”.

Chapter V: Drinking as Moral Obligation & Ethical Practice.

“Their love of drink appears to have been almost an inborn propensity with the tribe. According to their legends, the mysterious root used in the manufacture of *ili* or rice-beer was pointed out to their first parents by Singbonga Himself. Then, as now, the Munda, after a hard day's labour, knew no better occupation than drinking, dancing, and singing up to a late hour of the night (Roy 1912:66).”

Conducting research on drinking posed certain methodological difficulties, which I have discussed in the introductory chapter. One challenge frequently faced by many anthropologists (at least according to various informal conversations I had been part of over the years), however, was largely absent during my fieldwork: I never had to justify my research project to anyone in the field. Whenever I mentioned to someone in Jharkhand that I was conducting research on adivasis and alcohol, the response was tremendously positive; nobody ever questioned what I was doing – as a matter of fact, everybody seemed to agree that mine was an urgent and thus far neglected research topic. It appeared as if the relationship between alcohol and adivasis was unanimously understood not just to be a problem, but an enigma; a question in need of answers. And I was therefore frequently asked: “What is our problem?”

My interlocutors would have liked a straight-forward answer, of course, which I was however unable to give. “It is complicated” I would say, and begin to elaborate on the impossibility of identifying clear-cut causalities: “Drinking can be the source of a problem, but it can also be the answer to another problem.” I would often resort, in such situations, to examples involving the loss of land, and refer to individuals who had

accumulated considerable debts due to their drinking and were thus forced to sell their land. Everybody was familiar with such cases. But I would also relate the story of families in Hatia who had lost their land to H.E.C. and who were left with no livelihood other than selling rice beer. In the first case, a dependence on alcohol had caused the loss of land, in the latter, the loss of land had caused a dependence on alcohol. Continuing my elaborations, I would also add that according to my observations, hegemonic narratives such as those emanating from the state, the Churches, or the media, were interpreting the ways adivasis use alcohol usually rather differently than the alcohol use of the general population. If one were to imagine, I sometimes said, two IAS officers¹¹³ who both have a drinking problem – one adivasi, and one brahmin – then their alcohol use would in all likelihood be interpreted in rather different ways: the brahmin would be understood to be an alcoholic, but the drinking problem of the adivasi would be explained with his heritage: *he drinks because he is adivasi*. Thus, for someone belonging to the general population, drinking could be understood as an individual problem; in the case of adivasis, however, drinking is seen as a symptom of a collective affliction, something inherent in the community or the culture. The distinction I thus pointed out – and which always made a lot of sense to my interlocutors – was the discursive divide between “autological subjects” and “genealogical society” (even though I was not yet familiar with Povinelli's writing on this discursive matrix that produces differences between “kinds of people, societies, civilizational orders” (2006:5)).

113 The *Indian Administrative Service* is the administrative civil service cadre. It represents the top rank of the state bureaucracies, and officers of the IAS are recruited through highly competitive exams by the Union Public Service Commission.

As I pointed out repeatedly throughout the previous chapters, the relationship between adivasis and alcohol is marked by ambiguities and fraught with contradictions. Alcohol definitely has a ubiquitous presence in adivasi communities, and I will illustrate in the following the various roles it plays in the lives of the adivasis I worked with. On one hand, many adivasis understand alcohol to be potentially harmful to individuals, families, and communities, especially because of what is understood to be some kind of a cultural propensity for drinking inherent in adivasis. Various reformist discourses – such as the one manifest at the *Sarna Prarthna Sabha* described at the end of chapter two, or those emanating from various church-based or Maoist groups, as discussed in the previous chapter – are emerging from this perceived potential of harm, as well as from various forms of moral critique, and propagate abstinence or prohibition. On the other hand, alcohol also plays a very crucial role for various aspects of the communal lives of adivasis, in particular (but by no means exclusively) due to its spiritual or cosmological significance. The latter is manifest, for example, in a myth of creation of the Munda tribe, which I was told many times in Jharkhand, and which (or variations thereof) is also frequently documented in ethnographic accounts (Hunter 1877:41; Roy 1912:328; van Exem 1982:31). According to this myth, after Singbonga – the Supreme Being – had created the world, a giant bird laid an egg, out of which came a boy and a girl who should grow up to become the progenitors of the Mundas. However they remained childless for many years as they were completely unaware of the nature of sexuality and the pleasures of intercourse. Only after Singbonga taught them how to prepare rice beer, did they procreate. Haria is thus of existential importance for the Mundas, and the availability of

rice beer a condition for the existence of their people.^{114 115}

I try to offer, in this chapter, a way of thinking about the relationships between adivasis and alcohol in terms of various forms of *obligations*. I will explain my understanding of obligation in more detail below, but I hope to show that for adivasis, drinking is a practice imbued with diverging obligations – both obligations which discourage drinking as well as others that make it a crucial condition for life. I thereby hope to avoid the limitations of causal explanations when thinking about the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand. Furthermore, in discussing diverging obligations – to either participate in transactions of rice beer or to abstain from alcohol, for example – I aim to demonstrate that it might be useful to think of the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis as a moral or ethical presence.

Determined to drink

In September 2007, shortly after I became acquainted with Gaurav Ekka and his group of

114 This myth is referenced also in the quotation from Sarat Chandra Roy, with which I opened this chapter. In addition to drinking, sexuality is a second important marker of tribal difference in the Indian public imagination. Various cultural practices or institutions of different tribal populations – such as, styles of clothing leaving upper bodies uncovered, youth dormitories and pre-marital sexual relations, as well as lesser degrees of spatial gender segregation in domestic and public spaces – contributed, at least since the colonial period (notwithstanding the fact that they have now largely disappeared), to representations of tribal society as given to unrestricted sexuality, and of tribal women in particular as morally uninhibited and sexually available (cf. Yadav 2003). This corresponds of course with similar representational (and exploitative) practices in many other colonial and post-colonial contexts. Sexuality and inebriation therefore serve similar functions in the registers of objectification of the tribal Other in India as simultaneously immoral and pleasurable, and thus desirable while dangerous. While the nature of my research did not permit me to collect any significant information on questions of sexuality, it is important to note that the link between alcohol and procreation, which the Munda myth of creation posits, is certainly not manifesting itself in Munda social life in such a way that drinking and/or drunkenness would be tied to sexuality in a compulsory manner.

115

friends, I sat down with Gaurav for an interview. As mentioned in previous chapters, Gaurav and several others in this group of young, middle-class adivasis had been deeply involved in political activism around the time Jharkhand achieved statehood, but were now all preparing for public service commission exams in order to qualify for careers as bureaucrats. During the interview, I learned much about Gaurav's trajectory as a student activist and the campaigns of the *Adivasi Chhatra Sangh* to secure and expand the governmental measures of positive discrimination which he had led.¹¹⁶ Towards the end of our conversation, he told me about the intense pressure under which he and his friends were now working on their shared aim of embarking on careers as bureaucrats in the administration of either the state or central governments. Even though they all qualified for reserved quotas for Scheduled Tribe candidates, the exams they had to pass are highly competitive. Most of his friends had been trying for several years already and had unsuccessfully sat through at least one round of exams. Some of them saw their chances slipping away as they began to approach the age limit of 35 years.¹¹⁷ They had the pressure of expectations from their families resting on their shoulders, and most of them were also eager to finally land a prestigious job - or at least a secure employment - because this would help them to marry their girlfriends. Furthermore, they were up against a system - at least at the state level - which was prone to corruption and clientelism; at the time I interviewed Gaurav, he and his friends were just preparing to file

116 As discussed in the second chapter, namely the campaign (and court case) to ensure that persons with non-ST fathers would be prohibited from claiming ST status, as well as the mobilizations around the question of who would be entitled to claim domicile status in Jharkhand.

117 The age limit for *Union Public Service Commission* exams is higher for *Scheduled Tribe* and *Scheduled Caste* candidates than for *Other Backward Classes* (33 years) or general candidates (30 years), and there is no trial limit for ST/SC, while OBC have a limit of 7 attempts, and general candidates may appear a maximum of 4 times.

a case to challenge the selection of staff for the state legislative assembly, as they claimed to have proof for rampant corruption. About an hour into our conversation, several of Gaurav's friends had gathered up in the room (we had met at the place where Amitabh, one of Gaurav's friends, was staying as a paying guest). Plastic cups were distributed, and a bottle of Royal Challenge whisky was passed around, and the simultaneity of several unrelated conversations in the room made the interview increasingly difficult. After I had turned off my recording device, Gaurav looked at me while he lifted his plastic cup and said “we can only tolerate this pressure because we can get together and drink”. And a little later, as the collective intoxication had progressed, he stated: “We are adivasis and we are drinking. This is just what we do.” And as a matter of fact, often when I joined this group of young elite adivasis in the course of the following months, they were gathered around a few bottles of liquor, or were making arrangements for obtaining booze or *chakhna*¹¹⁸.

While their situation might have been particular, the general nature of the forms of sociality Gaurav and his friends cultivated is not atypical for groups of unmarried middle-class men in India in their late 20s. Their experience of pressure was probably similar to the situation of students studying for demanding exams, or of people belonging to discriminated populations desperately trying to find a job anywhere in the world. The fact that they got together and drank is therefore not at all unusual or particularly typical for adivasis (I had been part of similar gatherings with upper middle-class Delhiites where

118 *Chakhna* describes something to nibble on, served along with alcohol, which would ideally consist of meat, but can also be a small snack of roasted chick peas, or even something as simple as a chilli pod and a pinch salt.

the exact same brand of whisky was drunk). Nevertheless, as Gaurav's statements indicate, they articulated it in very specific, culturally marked ways; they expressed their own drinking as an inherent aspect of their tribal difference, an “inborn propensity” as S.C. Roy had stated, which set them apart from other groups of young men elsewhere in India. However, my conversations with Gaurav and his friends in the course of my fieldwork revealed that their understandings of the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand were much more nuanced than a statement such as “adivasis drink; this is just what they do” would indicate. Nonetheless, when reflecting on their own drinking, they resorted to such a reified external view of adivasi culture.

It is remarkable that Gaurav and his friends would not turn towards relativizing their drinking in the context of the growing acceptance of alcohol among urban middle-class Indians¹¹⁹, but that they fell back on a deterministic argument: their drinking is typical for who they are, it is symptomatic for the particular form of difference they inhabit as adivasis in contemporary India. As I will briefly show in the following, such an understanding of the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis as culturally (or even genetically) pre-determined is consistent with most writings on the topic. Similarly, the diagnostic languages of various state and non-state actors in Jharkhand imagine the affinities of the adivasi population towards alcohol as causally related to both culture and

119 According to a recent article in the *Lancet*, India is experiencing a very significant increase in alcohol consumption (a growth of sales of 8% between 2005-2008, although this number only includes licit liquor markets, while an estimated two thirds of the alcohol consumed in India is either produced illicitly, or smuggled). Furthermore, the country is seeing a rapid expansion of bars and nightclubs in urban areas. “[India] is fast shedding its inhibitions about alcohol as a lifestyle choice. This situation has led to fears of an undocumented rise in alcohol abuse not only among poorer classes but also in sections of society that were previously considered dry (Prasad 2009:17).”

genetics. The narratives of many *sarkari* bureaucrats, church officials, and NGO activists thus construe problem drinking — addiction, alcoholism — as a predicament that needs to be understood collectively for adivasis, while it is considered to have individual etiologies for non-tribal populations. The relationship between humans and alcohol is thereby rendered – in the terminology introduced by Elizabeth Povinelli (2006) — as a *genealogical* one for adivasis, and as an *autological* one for the general population.

The literature on adivasi alcohol use is sparse. Mostly, ethnographic writing touches it only in passing, which is remarkable, considering how crucial drinking figures in stereotypical representations of adivasis in various public and administrative discourses, and how significant a role for adivasi communities alcohol is said to be playing according to many (historic as well as contemporary) ethnographic accounts. It is however noteworthy that even in recent writings, the role of alcohol in adivasi communities figures like something akin to a cultural imperative – similar to the ways S.C. Roy had described it 100 years ago as an “inborn propensity” (1912: 66). For example, Alpa Shah has recently posited a certain idea of authentic adivasiness which is marked by an organic and harmonious relationship to customary alcoholic beverages. Alpa Shah thus criticizes the efforts of Maoists in Jharkhand to curtail drinking as a campaign which alienates adivasis, because it corresponds, as she states, to certain upper-caste and middle-class values (and notions of modernity) (Shah 2006). Her description of adivasi alcohol use, however, is curiously void of the particular role alcohol plays in local economies in Jharkhand, and glosses over the various strands of criticism which sometimes split

adivasi communities on the question of alcohol, and which can certainly dislocate the notion of a coherent adivasi subject free of internal contradictions. But the situation is more complicated than that. The relationship between adivasis and alcohol is a complex constellation of obligations – religious, as well as social, and economic ones, and obviously touches on questions of pleasure and pain, as well as health and destruction.

The literature on alcohol and drug use among indigenous populations in other parts of the world similarly approaches harmful substance use as a public or collective problem, rather than as an individual one. Dennis Gray and Sheryl Saggars, for example, while acknowledging that different individuals can have a wide range of idiosyncratic reasons for harmful drinking (or drug use), focus their attention at the population level, and investigate the high prevalence of harmful substance use among indigenous Australians. Rather than locating the underlying causes for harmful alcohol use within indigenous communities – be it in terms of genetic factors, or through cultural explanations – Gray and Saggars identify the reasons for indigenous drinking problems as “a function of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies within the broader web of political and economic relationships” (2002:187). Referring to the ways in which processes of colonization created specific demands for alcohol among populations now identified as indigenous in that alcohol was utilized by settlers, administrators, and traders for its capacities to create intoxication and dependencies as a means to extract labor, land, and sexual submission, Gray and Saggars stress that the reasons for contemporary alcohol-related harms are “symptoms of underlying inequalities” (2002:187). Zooming out from Australia and taking a global perspective, Gray and

Saggers explain the similarities of the ways in which alcohol-related problems manifest themselves among indigenous populations in various parts of the world – they refer to former British settler colonies - with the “common historical experience of colonialism, dispossession and exclusion” (2002:14). Even though I find myself sympathetic to the critique of colonialism and of ongoing forms of imperialism and exploitation entailed in such an analysis, I find it difficult not to point out that it rests on a speculative correlation: because indigenous peoples in various parts of the world share a similar symptomatic (harmful drug and alcohol use) and a similar historical experience (colonial dispossession) the later is assumed to explain the former.

I have no intention to dismiss political economy and in particular the history of colonization as important conditions of possibility for contemporary alcohol-related problems in tribal India. The commercial (even if illicit) availability of rice beer and mahua liquor certainly increased the number of drinking occasions in the localities in Jharkhand where I conducted research. Furthermore, I often came across, in the course of my fieldwork, emblematic accounts of traders who handed out liquor to adivasi subsistence farmers only to present them, later on, with a bill the latter were unable to settle, thus forcing them to part with landed property instead. Also, the subaltern historian David Hardiman has, in his work on the millenarian *Devi* movement among adivasis in Western India, shown how the financial interests of money lenders and liquor traders aligned with the strategies of the colonial administration to maintain power (and an important source of revenue) by suppressing the popular religious movement advocating abstinence (Hardiman 1984; 1985; 1987). And Piya Chatterjee, to mention only one more

example, has documented how alcohol served not just as a crucial source of revenue for the colonial government, but as a “currency of control” (2003a:131) employed by plantation managers to extract labor (from Jharkhandis, amongst other tribals) for work in the tea gardens of Assam (Chatterjee 2003b; 2003a).

Nevertheless, I follow a different route here because the quasi-epidemiological population-level approach of Gray and Siggers does on one hand gloss over the multilayered variability in relationships between individuals and alcohol which I found in my research, and on the other hand, it is too strongly committed to the underlying assumption of causality. If alcohol can, for example, both be the source of the problem of adivasi land loss (alcohol-related debt leading to the sale of land) as well as a way to deal with it (production and sale of alcohol as livelihood) it becomes clear that the premise of a unidirectional relationship between cause and effect might not capture the dynamism of the relationships between alcohol and adivasis. More importantly, the epistemological point of departure for Gray and Siggers (and many others who study alcohol and drug use among marginal populations) is the assumption of alcohol use (in particular: harmful alcohol use) as a problem.

While acknowledging the multiple harms alcohol can – and does – cause to adivasis in Jharkhand, I find it important to stress that reducing the relationships between adivasis and alcohol to a range of problems demanding intervention would miss much that is of significance, not just in terms of the role alcohol plays in individual and collective lives of adivasis, but with regard to the situation of adivasis in Jharkhand more generally. I

therefore chose to pay attention to the larger context in which relationships between adivasis and alcohol unfold. If one takes a broader perspective and contextualizes a relationship between an individual human and alcohol in the wide range of other relationships that determine that person's life, then it is quite possible that the harm caused by alcohol is quite insignificant compared to other harms the person might be exposed to. Prioritizing the harm inherent in the relationship with alcohol – in terms of a diagnostic like addiction or alcoholism – might thus on one hand result in a very limited understanding of an individual life, and on the other hand privilege a particular moral evaluation of the person's ways of being alive. My thinking in this regard is indebted to Helen Keane, and in particular to Aaron Goodfellow's work among substance users in Baltimore, MD. Goodfellow demonstrates the analytic advantages of thinking the relationships between humans and pharmaceuticals in terms of relatedness rather than addiction by describing forms of kinship – not just between humans, but between humans and substances such as heroin or methamphetamine (2008). And through the discussion of a woman who is dependent on a psychologically harmful sexual relationship (which is potentially physically harmful as well), Goodfellow shows that the use of potentially addictive and dangerous substances might represent only one among a whole range of dependencies, and might after all not amount to the most urgent risk among an individual's life choices (Goodfellow forthcoming). Similarly, Keane, who criticizes the concept of addiction for entailing a moral evaluation of substances as either good or bad, or healthy and unhealthy, proposes to shift the focus of attention in discussions on harmful substance use on encounters between bodies and substances and away from the actual substances (or behaviors), since even encounters with harmful substances can

either be productive or destructive (Keane 2005).

Drinking as obligation

I thus approach alcohol use as one among a wide range of relationships that constitute individual and collective lives of adivasis in Jharkhand, and I will argue that adivasi drinking practices cannot be separated from the context of moral evaluations in which they occur. For example, the de-facto embracing of an ethnic stereotype by Gaurav and his friends earlier in this chapter needs to be contextualized against the background of an environment highly saturated not just with stereotypes – about adivasis as primitive and as drunkards - but also with moral criticism. I will try to show in the following, that the persistent presence of such moral criticism makes it possible to think of adivasis in Jharkhand as a moral community, and that decisions of whether or not to drink are not simply moral deliberations (in terms of evaluating behavior as either *good* or *bad*) but also ethical choices about whether or not to be part of this moral community. I therefore situate this chapter – in at least two dimensions – in the vicinity of emerging anthropological discussions on morality or ethics. For one, I will argue that drinking can be understood as an ethical practice – in Foucault's sense – i.e., as a technique of the self through which individuals aim to shape their bodies and selves (in relation to the world). On the other hand, I will show how for adivasis, drinking is a practice imbued with diverging moral obligations – both obligations which discourage drinking as well as others that make it a crucial condition for life.

Durkheim had pointed out that the *obligation* to follow a particular moral rule does not derive from what exactly the rule commands, but rather from the fact that one is being commanded. What matters is thus according to Durkheim not so much knowledge of the content of a moral rule to which one is obligated, but rather the knowledge that the obligation obligates, which means that a moral obligation does not need to be spelled out (like a law) – it can be assumed (Karsenti 2012:24). The notion of *obligation* is of course a “foundational [concept] in anthropology” (Guyer 2012:500), where it became an important concern with Marcel Mauss' famous essay on the gift (1990(1925)). Mauss argued that the exchange of gifts is not simply a matter of material transactions, but a question of social relationships of contractual and moral nature involving the triple obligations of giving, receiving, and returning gifts. His theory of the gift thus offers ways of understanding the relationship between the Mundas and their creator as constitutive of as well as constituted by the *obligation* to return the life-giving gift of rice beer (in the form of offerings and libations, as I will discuss in this chapter), or various transactions of alcohol in the context of hospitality and work, for example.

An obligation always has an object – *to obligate* is a transitive verb (and *to oblige* is primarily transitive as well), which means that one is always obligated (or obliged) to something or someone. Guyer also points out that in French (the language Mauss used to write his essay), *obliger* can be a reflexive verb (*on s'oblige à*), meaning that *one can oblige oneself to someone or something* (2012:493). This means, that an *obligation* always exists in a relationship. However, I would not want to reduce *obligations* to a defining criterion of the exchange relations Mauss described, but rather understand them

as a possible characteristic of any form of relationship. In this way it is possible to think, for example, of humans as obliged to substances like alcohol. In her book *Psychosomatic*, Elizabeth Wilson describes *obligation* as “a mutuality of influence, a mutuality that is interminable and constitutive” (2004:22). Wilson encountered the notion of obligation in the context of Freud's writings on neurasthenic melancholia, where he describes neurons as “obliged” to the psyche to give up excitation. She thus shows how Freud thought of soma and psyche as tied to each other by “obligation rather than unilateral control” (2004:22). Obligation is thus offered as an alternative to the notion of causality:

The vectors of governance (what determines what?) are here fully disseminated – which is not to say that they are undecidable (an unsystematic array of random associations), but rather that they are not delimitable within conventional parameters of cause and effect, origin and derivation. The action of neurology (source) on psychology (outcome) has been routed, by Freud, through the accountability of the source to the outcome (Wilson 2004:23).

Inspired by these two rather different but nevertheless overlapping understandings of *obligation*, I thus hope on one hand, to avoid the limitations of causal explanations when thinking about the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand. On the other hand, in discussing diverging obligations – to either participate in transactions of rice beer or to abstain from alcohol, for example – I aim to demonstrate that it might be useful to think of the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis as a moral or ethical presence.

Recent years have seen the emergence of a body of anthropological writings engaging questions of morality and/or ethics which are, according to Joel Robbins, characterized

by a “frontier-like quality” (Robbins 2012). Didier Fassin, in his introduction to a massive *Companion to Moral Anthropology* diagnoses a “moral turn of anthropology” (Fassin 2012:5). What distinguishes these recent contributions from earlier anthropological discussions of morality is, according to Fassin, that the concern has shifted away from the Durkheimian focus on morality as systems of rules of conduct, which were studied as underlying logics of social behavior. The current interest lies with ethics as processes of conduct and reflection, following Foucault, whereby the focus is on “the subjective work produced by agents to conduct themselves in accordance with their inquiry about what a good life is” (Fassin 2012:7).

While Fassin states that the point of departure for the recent approach is a fundamental distinction between the moral and the ethical (as elaborated by Foucault in *The Uses of Pleasure* (1990)) he appears to argue that it does not matter significantly whether anthropologists distinguish between *moral* and *ethical* or not (or between *morality* and *ethics* respectively). He seems to base this argument on the observation that even recent anthropologies following the Foucaultian approach of studying *ethical subjectivation* (rather than *moralties*, or *moral codes*, in a Durkheimian sense) frequently employ formulations relying on the adjective *moral* (Fassin 2012:5-8).

I find it more useful for my purposes to maintain a distinction, and to reserve *moral* for the discursive realm of norms, values, injunctions, and expectations, and to apply *ethical* to the domain of practice, i.e., to refer to actions and processes of self-formation. *Morality* thus conceptualized as a discursive phenomenon refers to norms, values,

injunctions, and expectations that are formulated and circulated in order to elicit or judge particular forms of behavior. *Ethics*, in contrast to this, is understood *not* primarily as discursive, but describes practices, strategies, exercises and dispositions through which persons aim to shape (or improve) themselves. I do, however, not concur with authors who – using Foucault's “subtle distinctions between 'ethics' and 'morality'” as inspiration for studies of ethical practices – conceptualize “ethics as the undoing of social moralities” (Dave 2012:6). In contrary, I would argue, firstly, that ethical practices do not occur in a moral vacuum - rather, they are formulated in response to moral discourse. That is, ethical practices are primarily informed by moral notions, and the practices through which selves are working on themselves to improve their selves are emerging as attempts to either conform with moral norms, values, injunctions and expectations – or to evade and/or possibly reformulate them¹²⁰. Secondly, an understanding of *moralities* as formations of normative injunctions which are primarily restrictive or oppressive – in particular towards radical and/or marginal demographics (queers in India for example, as in Dave's work) whose difference is morally censored – seems limiting. I will try to show with my material from Jharkhand, where various moralities are present in response to which adivasis conduct ethical work on their selves – that it is not possible to assign

120 I am of course building on Foucault's understandings of ethical processes of subjectivation, even though he followed a less stringent distinction between *moral* and *ethical* than I am proposing:

“[S]elf-formation as an "ethical subject," [is] a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself. There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified moral conduct; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectivation" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them. Moral action is indissociable from these forms of self-activity, and they do not differ any less from one morality to another than do the systems of values, rules, and interdictions (Foucault 1990:28).”

positive values to ethics and negative ones to morality, or even to distinguish between moralities which are a priori restrictive and oppressive, and others that would allow for creative self-determination.

The original gift

In the following, I will try to illustrate the spiritual or religious use of alcohol – in particular rice beer (called *haria* in Hindi, and *ili* or *bodé* in Mundari) - in the context of *Sarna*. The locution *Sarna* – as already indicated in previous chapters – is neither an official term nor unanimously accepted to denote the Munda faith. But it is the most widely used way to refer to the religious or spiritual aspects of the lives of non-Christian (and non-Hindu as well as non-Muslim) adivasis in Jharkhand, and I will therefore use it as an approximation to do just that. *Sarna* literally describes the sacred grove adjacent to adivasi villages throughout the Chotanagpur region, where important forms of worship are carried out. There is no physical structure at such a *sarna*, nothing that would identify it as a sacred location or a place of worship – other than possibly traces of offerings made. For the uninformed visitor, a *sarna* is indistinguishable from any other group of *sal* trees¹²¹ (with the exception of adivasi villages that were swallowed by urban landscapes, where the *sarna* might represent the only trees left standing).

As the myth of creation recounted at the outset of this chapter shows, alcohol is of existential significance for the Mundas and other adivasis in Jharkhand. The gift of life

¹²¹ *shorea robusta*

came with the gift of rice beer, and the relationship initiated by this gift, between the Mundas and Singbonga – the Creator – entails the obligation to worship Singbonga, and to return the gift of rice beer.¹²² Furthermore, the landscape in which the Mundas live is constituted by various spirits or deities known as *bongas*, and inhabited not just by the living, but also by their ancestors. In order to prevent misfortune, disease and disaster, it is important to heed to the needs and desires of the bongas and ancestors, which entails propitiating them with rice beer (and animal sacrifices). The story I am telling here is thus one of relationships entailing obligations, and of obligations constituting relationships between humans and the spiritual world of bongas and ancestors, as well as between humans and the material world of rice beer.

By tracing flows of rice beer it is possible to trace relationships between humans, or relationships between humans and the spiritual beings (bongas and ancestors) upon which the lives of Mundas depend (this dependence can be thought of in terms of a gift exchange – the gift of life against the gift of worship). But rice beer is not just a liquid that flows – it is not simply the medium which links relations, and the gift that needs to be offered – it is something which is consumed, a substance which can give pleasure and that can impair its consumer, and it is made from the staple of the Munda diet. Furthermore, as I hope to show, it has a lifespan, it is a substance that needs to mature and that can go rotten, which shows how vulnerable the relationships can be, of which it

122 The idea of the original gift in the title of this section has thus nothing to do with anything akin to the notion of a pure gift (cf. Mauss 1990; Parry 1986) – i.e., a gift free of any obligations. Much rather, it is meant as a word play with the Christian dogma of the original sin, i.e., Adam's originary transgression and the subsequent fall of man. Just as original sin describes a moral condition initiated at the time of creation, an obligation for all subsequent generations of humankind incurred by its progenitors, the obligation of the Mundas to offer rice beer to Singbonga began with the first human beings.

forms a part. I will illustrate the nature of some such relationships in the following by describing how rice beer is used during the annual Sarhul festival. In discussing a Sarhul celebration gone wrong, I will then try to show how fragile and contingent the relations between humans and the spiritual world can be (not *only* because they entail transactions of rice beer, but *also* because of this obligation to offer haṛia).

Sarhul is celebrated in Spring when the sal trees are in bloom. The flowers of the sal tree constitute a crucial component of the propitiations that take place on the occasion of Sarhul, and they are ubiquitous throughout the festival: women will put them in their hair and men stick them behind their ears. Houses and courtyards will be decorated with the flowers, and they will be offered as gifts to every person one meets, in particular to guests arriving at one's house. The precise ways in which Sarhul is celebrated – and even the exact date on which it is observed – can vary from village to village (and probably from pahan to pahan¹²³). I had the opportunity to witness three different Sarhul celebrations: in Diankel in 2007, and in Jilingsereng as well as in Hatia in 2008. The latter being an urban setting, the festivities there were conducted rather differently than in the Koel-Karo region – but more on that later. In both Jilingsereng and Diankel, Sarhul began early in the morning with sacrifices of several fowls, along with offerings of rice beer to the village deities, conducted by the pahan at the respective sarna. In the Mundari language of the Koel-Karo region, the haṛia used for such offerings is called *tapan* (instead of *ili* or *bodé*), and is prepared by the pahan's wife specifically for the occasion. After the village

123 The *pahan* is the person responsible for conducting worship, sacrifices, and propitiations on behalf of the village community.

deities and the ancestral spirits had received these offerings of blood and rice beer, the fowls were plucked, cleaned, cut into small pieces, and finally packed in sal leaves and thus cooked in a fire at the sarna. Some rice was also cooked, and whoever was present finally received a share of the meal, as well as some of the *tapan*. After this, the party returned from the sarna to the pahan's house, where more *harĩa* had been prepared. Neighbors came, and everybody (including children) were offered rice beer. Drinking continued for some time, and after a little while someone began to beat a *nagara* (a large drum), and people began dancing. Eventually, the party left the pahan's house and proceeded – dancing – to a neighbor's, and from there, a steadily growing crowd moved from house to house. At each family's home, *harĩa* had been prepared for the occasion, and the arriving party would be greeted with sal flowers and dance in the courtyard while the lady of the house was getting the *harĩa* ready. Then the villagers sat down to drink, and again got up to dance for a while before moving on to the next house¹²⁴. This would last all day long, and the next day the celebrations would continue where they had left off – i.e., the villagers would visit the families which had not hosted any drinking and dancing on the first day – even though now the celebrations would take place at several houses simultaneously, and the villagers were no longer moving from house to house collectively, in a dancing formation.

The sacrifice and the offerings which the pahan had conducted at the sarna on the first day, before the Sarhul celebrations in the village began, were made with prayers to

¹²⁴ The houses of Christian families, however, were not called on (even though some of the Christian villagers certainly participated in the celebrations) as no sarhul puja would be conducted there (and because Christian families would also not prepare any *harĩa* for the occasion).

Singbonga, and to propitiate the bongas of the whole village. After this, *pujas* (ritual forms of worship, in the case of Sarhul involving offerings of rice beer and sal flowers) were performed in every house by the respective pater familias to propitiate the family's ancestral spirits¹²⁵. In 2008, the pahan of Diankel had to postpone the celebration of Sarhul twice, which caused a delay of several weeks¹²⁶. After the second postponement, some villagers chose not to wait any longer and decided to already go through with what they called a *small Sarhul*. This meant that their families would conduct a puja in their respective houses to propitiate their ancestral spirits. For this, they had to bring sal flowers to their houses, which would usually be done after flowers were brought to the village from the Sarna by the pahan after propitiating the village deities there. However, the concerned families decided not to wait for this *big Sarhul*, because the sal trees had been in full bloom for some time by then, and the flowers were already becoming rare. Furthermore, the women had set sizable amounts of rice aside to ferment in anticipation of the celebrations, and this fermented rice would go waste if it was not going to be used as *tapan* in offerings to bongas and ancestors, and as *bodé* to greet, host, and intoxicate

125 This was not something I could witness, as such spiritual work is conducted in the *ading*, the sacrosanct inner parts of the houses, to which only immediate patrilineal relatives are permitted.

126 The postponements were due to childbirths: As Paulus, the pahan of Diankel told me, after a child is born one has to wait until the child's umbilical cord has fallen off before any important tasks with the bongas can be carried out. Since the umbilical cord is not cut off but simply tied up, it can take several days for this to take place – which is what happened when the first postponement became necessary: the newborn did not lose his umbilical cord for more than a week. Finally Sarhul was announced again, and again a child was born before the sacrifices and propitiations could be conducted. This time however, things were even more complicated, since the child had been born to a Munda mother and a Rautia father. The Rautias are the descendants of the former landlords and do not belong to an ST community. While many people would locally recognize them as adivasis (even though they are not an ST community), as Ghosh beautifully describes (Ghosh 2006a), they are *not Mundas*, which is of grave concern to the bongas, who are believed to generally disapprove of such a union (and the Mundas generally practice clan exogamy while remaining endogamous within the *Munda* tribe). In order to re-establish a suitable atmosphere between the bongas and the villagers, the former had to be propitiated with the sacrifice of a goat donated by the Rautia family before preparations for Sarhul could be re-initiated.

fellow villagers during the celebrations of Sarhul.

However, according to Sagar Guria – who belongs to one of the two families among whom the pahan of Diankel is selected - the bongas were getting upset about the ways events were unfolding in the village. I was staying with Sagar's family at the time, as I had come to Diankel from Ranchi for a few days to observe Sarhul. On my way there I had met Sagar's brother Rejan, who had already informed me that his *bhabhi* (elder brother's, i.e., Sagar's wife) had fallen ill – due to a heat stroke, as Rejan said. She had been out in the unrelenting April heat to collect mahua flowers, which were now mature and falling off the trees, ready to be gathered and dried. In Sagar's view, however, the real reason for his wife's sickness were the bongas, who were troubled for two reasons: For one, they were angry because it was so late in the season and they had not yet received the sacrifices and offerings at the Sarna, which they are owed when the sal flowers are in bloom. Secondly, and this is what really upset Sagar because it could have been prevented if his fellow villagers would have heeded the rules of the bongas and the ancestors: the fact that some villagers had already “brought the flowers”¹²⁷ to their houses before (sal) flowers could be brought to the village from the Sarna (and before the rituals at the sarna for the benefit of the whole village were completed) was a clear violation of these rules. This, in Sagar's view, was why his wife was sick. He had tried to help her with some pills that his brother had brought, whose wife works as a nurse in Bandgaon, about 50 kms from Diankel. But she immediately threw up and could not keep the

¹²⁷ *Bringing the flowers* implies the ritual aspects of Sarhul discussed above, i.e., conducting the propitiating rituals and offering rice beer and sal flowers to the ancestors and neighbors.

medicine down. Because Sagar suspected that it was the bongas that kept her sick, he called for the *bhagat* in order to find out what kind of propitiations would be necessary. The bhagat – a diviner, someone with a special gift of sensitivity to communicate with bongas and ancestral spirits – was able to determine what bongas needed to be addressed, and what kind of fowl (i.e., of what color) needed to be sacrificed. Sagar then conducted a sacrifice accordingly, and afterwards retried to administer the medicine. This time his wife could swallow it and keep it down; the next day she was already much better.

I have described this little incident here in order to provide some insight into the relations between adivasis and bongas, as well as to show what a crucial role – spiritually, and simultaneously also materially - rice beer plays for a religious occasion such as Sarhul. The story of Sagar's wife's sickness illustrates that the world the Mundas inhabit does not only consist of its physical features (rivers, forests, hills, etc.) but also of the bongas – the spirits that constitute the landscape -, and that the village community is not simply composed of the different households, families, individuals, and animals living there, but also constituted by the relationships between the villagers and their ancestors.¹²⁸

Understanding the significance of rice beer for a religious occasion such as Sarhul begins with the fact that rice beer is a *conditio sine qua non* for all spiritual or ritual tasks.¹²⁹

128 The advent of Christianity among the Mundas since the mid 19th century has not significantly altered this relationship between the living and the bongas. Many Christian adivasis would in times of crisis also aim to ensure that the wishes of the bongas and ancestors are fulfilled, and turn to a Bhagat in order to find out what propitiations might be necessary (as in the situation just mentioned, where Sagar's wife could not be cured without ensuring that the bongas are appropriately propitiated). Even Christians need to maintain such relations – obligation towards bongas and ancestors

129 The exception to this rule are of course religious/spiritual/ritual occasions conducted by followers of Sarna reformists advocating abstinence, as discussed at the end of the previous chapter.

During my fieldwork, I was frequently told that “without haṛia, no work is possible”, meaning that no celebration, no worship, and no contract is complete without rice beer. The importance of haṛia for religious occasions can be derived from the mythological truth that Singbonga – God himself – had taught the Mundas how to prepare rice beer and encouraged intoxication as a creative force; haṛia can thus be seen as responsible for the very existence of the Munda clans. Furthermore, the bongas and the ancestors are equally fond of drinking as the Mundas are and therefore require to be propitiated with haṛia. But sharing haṛia with ancestors and bongas is by no means restricted to specific religious occasions or ritual contexts – it is a practice deeply woven into the texture of everyday life. Most Mundas (as well as other adivasis in Jharkhand) usually dip three or four fingers of the right hand into their drinks before taking a first sip and then sprinkle a few drops in libation on the ground. This is not done in a ceremonial manner – it frequently happens very casually, or instinctively, without the need to interrupt an ongoing conversation, for example.¹³⁰

Rice beer relations

Alcohol – and in particular haṛia – does not only play a fundamental role in the relations

130 Many Christian adivasis also follow this practice of sharing drinks with bongas and ancestors (at least Christians who do not abstain from alcohol), which underlines what I stated above: the theological intervention which the advent of Christianity meant for the Mundas did not completely uproot the cosmological order of the Munda world. However, this does not mean that Christianity has not substantially impacted the world of adivasis. As a matter of fact, the importance of Christianity for adivasi modernity cannot be underestimated. Since colonial days, churches have been the primary provider of education for adivasis in many rural parts of Jharkhand. Furthermore, Christianity played an important role in configuring the political and ethnic identities of adivasis in Jharkhand, and the beginnings of the movement for a separate state of Jharkhand lay with Christian adivasis (Aaron 2007; Bara 2007; Ganguly 1969).

between adivasis and their ancestors, the bongas, and the supreme being Singbonga, but is also constitutive of a wide range of social relations, whereby it is not primarily the alcohol per se which matters (or the intoxication it may produce), but the fact that it is offered in exchange or consumed collectively when a particular task is completed. This is most obviously evident with regard to labor: If a Munda family needs to ask neighbors or even relatives (living in a different household) for help, they will provide them with haria after the work is completed (or in winter maybe with mahua). This particular practice of providing alcohol after benefiting from somebody's labor is something that many adivasi find very characteristic for their communities, and which they also take pride in. Several times, in the early phase of my fieldwork – when I was understood by many of my interlocutors in the field to be largely illiterate in cultural aspects of Munda lives - when witnessing a drinking party after a particular task had been completed collectively, I was told: “This is how we adivasis do it. We don't pay with money for work, we pay with haria.” However, even though this is how things were put to me (in Hindi), I later came to realize that this was a somewhat hyper-stylized explanation of this particular customary practice, in which the cultural specificity (i.e., what distinguishes adivasis from others) was isolated for purposes of self-representation. But as I came to understand in the course of my research, the point of such forms of exchange relations is not primarily (or at least not exclusively) remuneration, but rather the validation of the relation itself. Even though such exchange of liquor for labor does at the surface appear like an economic transaction and not like a gift exchange, it is much rather a moral transaction in Maussian terms (Mauss 1990). Contrary to what was usually stated, alcohol is not the only thing that is offered in exchange for labor; in Hatia for example, forms of labor such as the fixing of a

roof in Koylatoli, were paid in cash, as well as concluded with *harĩa*. The transaction of alcohol in such cases was thus obligatory because it formed part of a contract and of a relationship, and not because it was intended to be the equivalence of the labor offered.

Such gifts of alcohol are offered for a wide range of tasks, like building a house, repairing a roof, planting rice seedlings, or other forms of work where help is convenient or necessary. Usually, a household would plan such tasks a few days ahead, so that they would be able to prepare the needed rice beer (which, depending on the season, can take from 3-7 days to ferment). But such transactions can also become necessary spontaneously, in case of an emergency. During one of my visits in Diankel, a calf had fallen into a hole and was unable to get out by itself – it was a big hole, about two meters wide and two meters deep, which someone had probably dug out with the intention of building a well. The owner of the calf came running as I was sitting in front of Sagar's house with his son and a neighbor, and we all went with him to help the terrified bovine out of the hole. It took us maybe 15 minutes of strategizing, quite a bit of physical effort, and a long pole along which we finally pushed and lifted the animal out of the hole, to solve the crisis. Shortly after we had returned to the village I was called over to the house of the calf's owner, who had obtained *harĩa* from a neighbor, and who was thus fulfilling his obligation in exchange for the help we had provided.

Interestingly, the obligation to participate in this type of exchange relation seems to overrule other forms of obligation, such as the commitment to temperance required in certain Christian congregations: The only occasions for which the mother of a friend of

mine from Diankel prepares haṛia are when she has to offer it in exchange for labor provided from fellow villagers. As a pious Lutheran she is strictly opposed to drinking and would otherwise not participate in any forms of sociality where alcohol is used, nor in any of the religious celebrations described above.

That the exchange of liquor for labor is not primarily a form of remuneration, but rather a validation of the relationship between the involved parties became evident to me one day when every able-bodied adult of Jilingsereng, as well as a number of villagers from Diankel, were digging a small canal next to the Karo river (for the micro-hydroelectric dam they were intent on building, as described in chapter two). After a day of intense and hard manual labor, where trees and bushes had to be cut, boulders were moved out of the way, and a canal one meter wide and deep was dug for a length of approximately one kilometer, all the villagers sat down and shared the haṛia which had been prepared for the occasion. The rice for this haṛia had been contributed by all the households collectively, that is, the people who had done the work were also providing the haṛia. It would therefore make less sense to think of the haṛia as a form of remuneration for work, but rather as a validation of the collectivity: the villagers had worked together, and after that they were drinking together. The rice beer thus formed part of an obligation, which, as Jane Guyer shows, entails mutuality, rather than reciprocity (2012).

In the context of adivasi marriages in Jharkhand, various transactions of rice beer can take place that accompany the initiation of relationships (between the bride's side and the groom's side), or the fulfilling of obligations inherent in already existing relationships

(between one of the marriage partners' families and their relatives and co-villagers respectively). Even though great variation exists in the precise ways that marriages are celebrated, the adivasi marriages I attended were preceded by a visit of the bride's side with the groom's family (which usually means: a trip to another village), and later on, a visit of the groom's side with the bride's family. The purpose of the initial visit, as I was explained, is for the bride's family to see the family and the village to which they will *give* their daughter (who would not be present during this visit), in order to approve of the future alliance¹³¹. The bride's family will be hosted with rice beer as well as with a meal. During the visit of the groom's side with the bride's family, an engagement ceremony is held, which consists of the ritual passing of a vessel filled with water between the future bride and the future groom, who are both standing next to their closest friends (of the same sex), who will simultaneously also pass a vessel filled with water to the person standing opposite them. This ceremony, known as *lotha pani* is preceded with a mock negotiation of a bride price. After these two steps – which mark the successful closing of a contract between the two families – rice beer will be distributed, and a meal will be served.

Wedding ceremonies take place at the bride's parental home, and are followed by celebrations the next day at the groom's house (which can last for several days). At weddings I attended in the city, the hosting family had usually prepared some rice beer for these celebrations, but most of the drinking took place with store bought liquor –

131 Nowadays, negotiations have usually preceded this initial visit and the bride's family will already be familiar with the circumstances in the groom's family and village. Nevertheless, the custom is upheld and the initiation of relations between the two families is officially marked with this initial visit.

angrezi (meaning *English*), as distilled liquors such as whisky, rum, or vodka are called – much of which was contributed by guests¹³². In the rural areas, the guests (which consist of fellow villagers and relatives) all arrived with some rice and lentils to contribute to the meal, as well as with rice beer – each household was carrying one *haṛia*, meaning, one large vessel (with a capacity of 10-15 liters) containing fermented rice. At one wedding I attended near Chaibasa, a building had been set aside as storage, and someone was keeping books, listing precisely which family from what village was contributing how much *haṛia*.

These various steps before the marriage as well as the wedding celebrations are all observed by both Christian adivasis as well as by Sarnas. But in the case of certain Christian denominations the rice beer will be missing. This is the case in particular with Lutherans and Pentecostals, but also to a certain extent with Anglicans, while Catholics on the other hand have little reservations against drinking. This variability is an expression of the moral reservations against drinking that abound in the respective Christian communities, which I will briefly discuss in the next section. While rice beer is thus not a necessary condition for celebrating a wedding and for forming marriage alliances between families, where it is used it is not simply served as a pleasurable beverage, but much rather as a gift, indicating the initiation or the continuation of a relationship with mutual obligations. The most obvious manifestations of this I observed during celebrations at the houses of grooms, on the day after the respective weddings.

132 A particular burden to contribute liquor at such occasions is on people who are or were with the army, as members of the armed forces are entitled to monthly rations of liquor at reduced rates.

Here, rice beer was served by the newlywed wife to the guests, i.e., to her new affinal kin as well as her new co-villagers. With this offering of rice beer, a relationship was established, and with accepting the rice beer, the relationship was acknowledged.

There are various other occasions throughout the year, or throughout the life cycle, at which rice beer or other forms of alcohol are offered either to spirits and ancestors, or to guests (or to both spirits and guests) – the births of children and funerals, for example, or baptisms (of Catholics) and ear piercing ceremonies (for Sarnas), to name just a few. Furthermore, visitors are treated to *hařia*, or – if available – to other forms of alcohol. There will of course always be people attending such celebrations, or visitors, who do not drink alcohol – even though the denominational distinctions as well as personal preferences frequently prevent an individual to be present at the time and place where alcohol would be served. On those occasions during my fieldwork when it nevertheless happened, the person being offered the rice beer accepted it, returning the greeting “*johar*”, which the person (mostly, but not always a girl or a woman) serving had offered along with the rice beer. After a little while – when someone else present had emptied her or his *dubba* or leaf cup – the teetotaler would pour his serving of rice beer into the *dubba* or leaf cup of that other person. While I have not much data to thoroughly substantiate this, it appears as if this would indicate that receiving a gift of rice beer is an obligation.

According to Mauss' theory of the gift (Mauss 1990 (1925)), transactions of gifts imply three obligations: gifts must be offered, gifts offered must be received, and gifts received

must be reciprocated. As I am approaching the transactions of rice beer discussed here as obligations in Mauss' sense, having illustrated both the obligation to offer gifts of rice beer as well as the obligation to receive them, the question might arise as to how – if at all – these gifts are reciprocated (or if either Mauss' model would not apply to the case I am discussing – or, on the other hand – my case would be a challenge to Mauss' theory). In response to such a concern, I would like to offer the following two points:

On one hand, it is certainly possible to think of such gifts of rice beer as gifts that will be returned. A visitor who is offered rice beer at the house of a friend or a relative in a different village is quite likely to receive, one day, someone from the host's family in his own home, and would then equally offer rice beer, or some *mahua* liquor in the cold season, maybe even some *angrezi*. Similarly, someone who accepts rice beer as a guest at a wedding (or who brings a gift of fermented rice to the wedding) might one day host a wedding her- or himself, and would then have the opportunity to return the gift of rice beer (or to accept the returned gift of fermented rice). An important aspect of *obligations* is, that they are committed, as Jane Guyer points out, to an indeterminate, contingent temporality, that is, unlike debt or transactions that are regulated by law, the reciprocity inherent in obligations is labile rather than liable to strict calendrical time. On the other hand, following a further point Guyer makes, namely, that what is at stake with gift is mutuality, rather than reciprocity, I would argue that it would be wrong to assume that alcohol/rice beer is only offered in exchange relationships. The obligation might lie in the relationship itself, rather than in a strict reciprocal exchange (Guyer 2012).

Le Souci de Soi(f)

Various social actors in Jharkhand voice criticism of adivasi alcohol use and claim to aim at reforming adivasi drinking practices. At the end of the second chapter, for example, I mentioned the *Sarna Prarthna Sabha*, the Sarna prayer meeting I attended, where speaker after speaker reiterated that alcohol was harmful, that there was no cultural or religious justification for alcohol use in adivasi communities, and that hence, alcohol should be avoided. In the previous chapter, I mentioned Maoist efforts to enforce prohibition, as well as the initiative of several churches in Ranchi to build a women-based movement to “eradicate drunkenness”. This *Nasha Vimuktikaran Andolan* was initiated with a procession on the state capital's Main Road, where banners and slogans carried messages such as “quit drinking, protect [your] land” (नशा पनि छोडो - जामीन बचओ) or “quit drinking, save [your] family” (नशा पनि छोडो - परीवार बचओ). In evaluating behaviors and habits and by pronouncing specific ones as bad and harmful for individual and collective adivasi bodies and selves, such efforts at curbing adivasi drinking all entail moral criticisms, and are aimed at promoting moral reforms of adivasi communities.

Some authors have identified such moral criticisms as alien influences, as something introduced to adivasi communities from the outside (cf. Devalle 1992; Shah 2006a). It is quite plausible that the genealogy of the contemporary language of moderation and/or temperance in Jharkhand can be traced back to early Christian missionaries and the profound impact which temperance movements had across the world at the time (second half of the 19th century). However, I was unable, in the context of the research for this

dissertation, to conduct extensive archival investigations to trace how and when such forms of moral criticism emerged in Jharkhand, or when and how the “problematization” – to employ Foucault's terminology (1990:10) - of adivasi drinking began. However, even if a genealogy of the problematization of adivasi drinking practices was available that would point towards specific outside influences as origins of the moral criticisms entailed in adivasi initiatives to curb or eradicate adivasi alcohol use (such as the movement of the *Jharkhand Mukti Morcha* in the 1970s (cf. Devalle 1992), or the current efforts of Maoists (cf. Shah 2006), as well as various Sarna and Church-based endeavors) I would nevertheless find it problematic to dismiss certain forms of criticism as inauthentic or alien to adivasi communities. For ultimately, a distinction between authentic moralities and outside influences would imply a coherent adivasi subject firmly rooted in a fixed, bounded cultural substrate (almost like a culture grown on a petri dish). And while Christian, Hindutva, and Maoist moralities might have been introduced to adivasi communities from the outside, adivasi modernity has incorporated such influences into its contemporary ethical registers. It therefore seems more useful to me to approach the contradictory or even conflicting moral relationships adivasis have to alcohol as a complex constellation of obligations, rather than to assume certain notions of authentic adivasi morality. I will therefore try to lay out this complex and contradictory constellation of obligations in the following by describing deliberations over whether and how alcohol can or should be consumed by adivasis in Jharkhand. What is clear, in any case, is that such contradictions do not only manifest as tensions between different individuals – that is, interpersonally, but also intrapersonally – in that individual adivasis may be morally conflicted and continuously (re)negotiate contradictory obligations with

regard to alcohol.

Drinking as Ethical Practice

The relationships people referred to as addicts have to the substances they use must not necessarily be seen as exclusively destructive. Building on Michel Foucault's notion of the *care of the self*, which is often used (in particular in anthropology) to explain processes of ethical and aesthetic self-making (of individuals and/or collectives) oriented towards some form of improvement (e.g. Mahmood 2005), I am trying to think about drinking as an ethical practice, that is, as a process of choices (although not always deliberate ones), even if it is a process bound to destroy a physical or social body.

Soma

Soma Munda for example, the leader of the Koel-Karo Jan Sangathan (whom I already mentioned in previous chapters), is somebody with an ambivalent or even contradictory relationship to alcohol. He is known to be quite partial to the occasional bowl of rice beer – and any form of alcohol, for that matter. In the days of the *andolan* – the resistance movement against the dam – adivasi rights-activists and anti-dam campaigners from outside the Koel-Karo region – often failed to take him seriously as the leader of the local movement because he had the reputation of being a drunkard.¹³³ And the concern about his fondness for liquor is not limited to outsiders – even in his village I heard critical voices who were concerned about Soma's drinking, in particular, because he was a person

¹³³ Kaushik Ghosh reports how he encountered this reputation of Soma Munda well before he actually met him. But Ghosh also describes how Soma would on occasion strategically seek drunkenness in order to evade the efforts of state representatives to negotiate the acquisition of land (Ghosh 2006b).

of authority, and because his bad example – for example, drinking at the roadside on market days – was unbecoming to someone in his position. However, even though it is not uncommon for adivasis in Jharkhand to begin drinking already as children, Soma had been a teetotaler for a considerable part of his life. Having spent much of his early years away from Jharkhand while serving in the Indian Army for 15 years, he was abstinent when he returned to his native village Jilingsereng after retiring from the military. However, after having been selected as *munda* – as head of the traditional village council, and elected as *mukhiya* - as headman of the *panchayat*, the state's official body of local governance – he soon realized that his abstinence caused an uncomfortable distance between himself and his fellow villagers. Not only were there various social occasions in which he participated as a villager, as a neighbor, and as a local authority, during which *harā* would be served, but he would also have to preside, in his role as headman, over meetings of the village council to resolve conflicts – which would have to be concluded with the sharing of rice beer. He gradually felt too much like a stranger in the very social environment in which he was playing a prominent role, and began to participate in the sharing of rice beer. His transition from a teetotaler to someone who clearly, and not too rarely, enjoys to drink, was aided also by his leaving the Lutheran church (which was at least partially related to him marrying a second time after his first marriage had only resulted in the birth of daughters).

The first proper conversation I had with Soma was on the occasion of Sarhul in 2007. My parents and my sister were visiting me in Ranchi at the time, and we drove out to Jilingsereng in order to see the celebrations. Upon our arrival there, we joined a group of

30-40 villagers who moved – as described above – singing, dancing, drumming, and drinking, from house to house. Soon we arrived at Soma's house, where the crowd congregated in the courtyard (and the dancing continued). A slightly disheveled Soma soon emerged (he had obviously been taking a nap), and his wife brought a handful of sal leaves to fold cups, and an earthen pot with fermented rice – which would have to be mixed with water and carefully squeezed and strained to prepare haria. This task usually takes a good 15-20 minutes, and while one of the villagers sat down to take care of it, others folded and – using tiny twigs – stitched the leaves into cups. Meanwhile Soma was chatting with us, giving explanations about Sarhul, answering questions my parents asked, and asking questions in return, while I translated between Hindi and German. Even though I did not yet know him well at the time (it was still early in my fieldwork), I began to sense a slight discomfort in Soma as we sat there and conversed. He had noticed how my sister was curiously watching the preparation of the rice beer, never having seen it before and trying to figure out what was happening. After a little while, Soma's wife came out of the house, carrying a tray with seven cups of tea. Soma turned to me, nodding his head in the direction of the haria and said, “this is bad stuff. The people here drink it, but I have asked my wife to prepare some tea for you.” I was a bit disappointed to hear this because I had been looking forward to the rice beer – the weather was hot, and we had been traveling for most of the day; I was craving haria, as I knew how refreshing it would be. But it began to dawn on me in that moment that our presence might actually be rather discomfoting to Soma (as well as to other villagers), for we were going to witness the drinking and the drunken dancing which figure so centrally in stigmatizing representational discourses that render adivasis not just as essential others,

but as primitive others – whereby the quality of primitivity is construed not simply as a function of the drunkenness, but exacerbated by the fact that crude forms of alcohol are used, such as rice beer, brewed in tribal homes with the help of wild roots and herbs from the forest. I therefore needed to make it clear to Soma, that we were not visiting on the occasion of Sarhul simply to witness an exotic spectacle, and that we by no means condoned moralizing ideas about haṛia as a dangerous and/or primitive beverage. We wanted to participate in the celebrations.

I thus responded: “Why? I am sure this is excellent haṛia. It was prepared in your house after all, so it must be of indubitable quality. If everybody else here can drink it, we can drink it too. Why would it be bad for us? We would definitely want to share some.” “Are you sure?” Soma asked me, and I added that it would be a shame for my parents to have come such a long way and on such a special occasion – after all, it was Sarhul – only to miss out on haṛia. Soma's face began to lighten up when he realized that we were not only not repulsed by the presence of haṛia, but even willing to partake, and he laughed. “O.k., well, if that is the case, then you should try it.” The tension I had sensed in him disappeared.

He had clearly been troubled before, because he had anticipated an embarrassing situation, well aware that most outsiders – including many middle class adivasis from the city – would consider haṛia to be a primitive and dangerous substance, and not only refuse to drink it, but furthermore look down upon the villagers who indulge in it. The prospect of us visitors witnessing his fellow Mundas enjoying this crude beverage out of

simple cups folded from leaves, as well as their increasing inebriation, was uncomfortable to Soma (and other villagers). Our presence as passive observers would have implied the presence of a moralizing criticism, but in participating we could convey that we did not condone such moral judgements. Until that moment, we had somehow stood in the way of the villagers' collective indulgence and due celebration. It was thus a relief to everybody that we were willing to share the rice beer prepared for the occasion. Several women eagerly (and with much laughter) tried to teach my parents and my sister how to drink out of leave cups without spilling most of the liquid, and afterwards pulled us away to dance with them.

Almost a year later, I again brought visitors to Soma – two journalists from Europe, who had taken an interest in Jharkhand. We met the headman in a courtyard behind a neighbor's house, where he was sitting and chatting. As soon as he saw us, he turned to the women who were weaving grass mats further in the back of the courtyard and said something to them in Mundari. By that time, I had picked up enough of the language to understand that he asked them to fetch some haṛia. The protocols of hospitality dictate that guests are welcomed with rice beer (or mahua, on cold days), and Soma knew by then that I was partial to it. Furthermore he probably welcomed our arrival as an excuse (or an opportunity) to have a drink himself. However, on ordinary days like this, not every family would have fermented rice at home ready to prepare haṛia. One of the women therefore needed to go and try to find a neighbor who had some haṛia ready to prepare, and who was willing to sell it. It therefore took a good 45 minutes to an hour until the haṛia was finally mixed and strained and ready to drink. The journalists had

meanwhile engaged Soma in an interview, while I was translating, and the conversation had long turned to questions of alcohol. Soma, sitting with his back towards the women preparing the haṛia, was enthusiastically elaborating on the potential for harm in drinking, and on the damage alcohol causes in adivasi communities at-large. He had obviously completely forgotten about having ordered rice beer and – unlike me and the two journalists – was also not noticing that it was being prepared. When one of the women finally came over and handed us the haṛia ready to drink, Soma, embarrassed, tried to send her away. She told him, however, that he had ask for it, and I reassured him, that we would be honored to partake.

There was nothing disingenuous in Soma's elaborations on the harms of drinking. While he himself had embraced haṛia as an inherent part of the social and spiritual life of his people – as an obligation to the relations he chose to maintain -, he is well aware of the reputation haṛia has as a primitive beverage, and is therefore concerned about the impressions visitors might take away from the community he is in charge of. While Soma has clearly developed a fondness for drinking – so much so, that other villagers occasionally voice concerns – he is also attuned to the critical voices about the harms of alcohol in adivasi societies, is taking such critical perspectives seriously, and is concerned about the harms of alcohol. Soma's relationship to drinking, however, is only contradictory at the surface. In his efforts to be a responsible leader, it makes as much sense for him to be concerned about the dangers associated with excessive alcohol consumption, as it is important to maintain relations involving alcohol. While he is able to appreciate the pleasures of drinking, he is equally able, for example, to think critically

about the role of rice beer in spiritual and social contexts per se, and about where to draw lines between an acceptable and an excessive presence of alcohol.

Mani

Mani is an adivasi lawyer. His grandfather had converted to Christianity and left his ancestral village to study in missionary schools, and to work as a bureaucrat in the civil administration – a career very typical for the educated adivasi elite, especially in the first few decades after India's independence (Nehru's vision of an integrated nation, for which he coined the phrase *anekta me ekta*, unity is found in diversity). The grandfather never returned to his village, and purchased a plot of land outside the town of Hazaribagh, where he built a house. My friend Mani, however, did not grow up in the new family home of Hazaribagh. His parents were both bureaucrats and had to shift houses every few years, as the demands of their work for the civil administration required them to frequently move to a different part of the state of Bihar. Mani and his brother were thus sent to a boarding school in the mountains of Darjeeling, where they lived through a happy and privileged childhood and youth. Both later continued their education at Delhi University, where Mani studied to become a lawyer. His upbringing, both with his parents and at the boarding school had been Anglican, but during his time as a university student he had a re-awakening as a born-again Christian. He gave up all vice so familiar to his peers – girls, smoking, drinking – and committed all his spare time to studying the bible with like-minded friends.

After Delhi University he continued his legal education and his bible studies at JNU and

later found a job with the Jesuit-run Indian Social Institute. His task there was to unionize the thousands of adivasi girls from his ancestral Chotanagpur, who were working as domestic laborers in Delhi - often under appalling conditions. After his awakening as a Christian it was this work which triggered his political consciousness: the exposure to the plight of the young women made him aware of his adivasi heritage, and he began meeting with other elite adivasis from Jharkhand living in Delhi, who had formed a group concerned with defending the human rights of Adivasis back home. (Jharkhand was not yet a state then). After a few years, Mani decided to move to his ancestral Jharkhand and offered his services as a lawyer to what he now recognized as his own people.

Not long after he had moved to Ranchi and began working both as an advocate at the high court and as a human rights activist, Mani began drinking again. It was not what in the language of certain expert discourses would be called “problem drinking”, but for someone who had given up alcohol as a consequence of his Christian conviction, his decision to give up giving up is noteworthy nevertheless. The decision to incorporate alcohol back into his life was motivated by the realization that alcohol forms a crucial part of adivasi sociality (and ritual life). “Our people had always been drinking” he would later tell me repeatedly, and “this is simply part of who we are”. He thus embraced this aspect of his adivasi heritage particularly because he recognized it as part of his adivasi heritage. While he distanced himself from the pietist stance towards alcohol that he had submitted to in the process of his Christian re-awakening as a student in Delhi, he never felt that he had to compromise on his faith. It was possible for him to accommodate his drinking as an adivasi with his faith as a born-again Christian because he recognized the moral critique of drinking that missionaries had advocated as incongruent with the ethos

of so many adivasis. For Mani, taking up drinking was simply a part of being who he is.

Jeffrey

Jeffrey had grown up in Ranchi, the state capital of Jharkhand. Both in terms of his everyday interactions, as well as with regard to his aspirations, he is far removed from the bucolic clichés about rural life and the dependence on nature (river, forest, land) that guide public and administrative discourses and representations of adivasi life. However, Jeffrey is rather typical for his demographic (young urban adivasi) because he has no job, because he drinks, and also because he is a Christian (coming from a family with very firm Catholic convictions). What distinguishes him, however, is the fact that his family is fairly affluent (his mother runs an English speaking nursery school and they own property, and even though he is unemployed he is equipped with all kinds of gadgets such as a motorbike, a cell phone, and a personal computer with internet connection; he also made it clear repeatedly that he had visited Europe before and that he would have no difficulties affording to travel to Switzerland with me). The financial concerns that preoccupied him when I conducted interviews with him seemed to be limited to finding ways of extracting money from his mother. Another aspect that distinguished Jeffrey from the growing population of urban, unemployed alcoholics is the fact that he received the very best education locally available, and that he has had consecutive opportunities to embark on careers in engineering, hotel management, and banking. He lives alone with his mother of 84 years. His father had died of a cirrhosis of the liver approximately ten

years ago, while Jeffrey was in Delhi at a School of Hotel Management. Jeffrey had been admitted - several times - in the de-addiction unit of a psychiatric hospital in Ranchi. He had completed three treatment cycles of 45 days, but relapsed every time, and has since resisted to be admitted again (or ended his stays prematurely by running away). Jeffrey still drinks, heavily, and I only ever saw him sober once – even if we met early in morning, he was usually too drunk to speak coherently. Jeffrey says about himself “I am a chronic alcoholic”.

Jeffrey is a man who has sex with men. A friend of mine, who is a childhood friend of Jeffrey's, and who first introduced us (knowing that I was working on adivasis and alcohol), told me that Jeffrey's drinking is related to his sexuality: When Jeffrey was a student at the engineering school in Ranchi he was raped. The loss of his innocence, according to this narrative, resulted in his desire for repeated homoerotic satisfaction, which Jeffrey finds by way of supplying liquor to young men who sleep with him. It never seemed appropriate for me to confront Jeffrey with this story – but it is not very important for my argument here whether he would have confirmed it or not. Much rather, I understand the explanation of Jeffrey's homoerotic desires by means of a rape narrative as a symptom of an environment where same sex relations cannot be accepted, and where the only way to make sense of them is by rendering them as the result of profound transgressions against the laws of god, nature, and society.

Jeffrey doesn't have any ambition to sober up – if he is still alive he is still drinking, and he knows quite well that his body will not survive his thirst. The de-addiction treatments

that he had been admitted to repeatedly were guided towards ending Jeffrey's relationship with alcohol and intoxication, and the people who sent him there – sometimes forcefully – meant well and wanted him to survive. Having had to replace the relationships he needs with new relationships and new needs, there is more at stake for him in life than in surviving.

Conclusion: conflicting obligations

I have discussed in this chapter various relationships between humans and non-humans that are constituted by and constitutive of specific religious or spiritual obligations, and alcohol – rice beer – forms an important aspect of these obligations. But in addition to this realm of the religious or the spiritual, the social world is also permeated by alcoholic obligations: important moments in the trajectory of a life, such child births, weddings, and funerals involve the offering and receiving of gifts of rice beer or various forms of liquor, and labor is exchanged for rice beer, to name just a few of the most prominent and obvious ways alcohol is present in the lives of adivasis.

However, I would like to remain cautious not to overdetermine such “cultural” reasons for adivasi alcohol use. Even if one offers a few drops of libation to ancestors before beginning to drink, oftentimes people will sit down to have a *dubba*, for example at the line bazaar in Koylatoli, or on the way home from the weekly market, just for the pure pleasure of drinking (as well as the physical relief provided by the ingestion of carbohydrates). And then there are people like Mani, who – from his perspective as a

Christian “by conviction” - does not recognize an obligations towards spirits and or ancestors. Offering libations to ancestors (in order to affirm relationships to them) is completely out of the question for him. This does not mean, of course, that drinking for Mani is completely devoid of any significance – or obligation. Allowing alcohol back into his life was for him a way of affirming a relationship to himself, as an adivasi, and thus also an effort of allowing to be related to, as an adivasi. But most importantly, drinking is an ethical act for Mani, as it is a way of positioning himself towards (or at a distance from) various moralizing projects that stigmatize adivasis based on criticisms of their drinking practices. I will elaborate below, in discussing Soma's ethical drinking, the significance of taking a moral stance against moralizing projects by participating in drinking.

For Soma, drinking is an ethical practice is because it is – or at least it has been – a question of self-formation. Upon his return from military service, Soma found himself unable to relate to the social environment in which he now played such an important role – as village headman, and head of the panchayat, and as a leader of the *andolan*. He told me that it felt increasingly odd to him to be present at occasions where people would drink together – because he would be present as the head of the community, but not be a part of it. The ethical choices he had made as a consequence of his getting baptized and joining the Lutheran Church in his youth now seemed to stand in the way of his assuming the responsibilities he had been handed, as a community leader. The experience of being at a remove from the community was particularly stark when he had to arbitrate conflicts, since once a conflict was resolved, the arbitrations had to be concluded by the sharing of

rice beer. But Soma, who would have directed the arbitrations, would then de facto remove himself from the set of relations he had just helped to reaffirm. Not drinking was increasingly becoming a problem for Soma, and for his credibility as a community leader – if not for the community, then certainly for himself. At some point, he began to reconsidered the ethical commitment to sobriety that he had made as a Lutheran. The moral obligations to the relations in and with the community needed to be weighed against the obligations to morality, which his belonging to the Lutheran Church implied.

Kaushik Ghosh, who has led much more extensive conversations with Soma Munda than myself (and over a much longer period), discusses Soma's deliberations with regard to drinking against the background of various forms of criticism of the role of alcohol in the lives of adivasis (“a broad consensus between brahmanical, Marxist, colonial state, missionary, nationalist and activist discourses”, 2006: 74), which all pivot around understandings of alcohol as a destructive force for adivasi communities:

“Through an unexpected displacement of activist common sense about alcohol, drinking and leadership, Soma was actually narrating to me a logic whereby through his refusal to drink he had refused the community itself and thus proved himself to be an inappropriate leader. Rather than a “lack of leadership,” the drinking of rice beer ensured that he could become a respected voice of leadership. To be a leader was to also drink with others and thus belong to the community and not act like one is outside of it. In the case of adivasis, this outside is not an innocent zone. It is the zone from which powerful visions emanate that have consistently produced the adivasis as primitives who are in the need of control, coercion and reform. Thus it is not surprising that to be such a leader – who is seen to be reproducing this logic of hierarchy by taking a public and principled stance against the drinking of rice beer – is actually to run the risk of not being one in the first place (Ghosh 2006b:75).”

I understand this “outside”, this “zone from which powerful visions emanate” as a moralizing perspective, and the “powerful visions” - the logic of subjectivation – as a moral logic. For in construing drinking (as well as sexuality) as the fulcrum of justifications for interventions, domination, and reform, the emphasis of the justification lies – if not on rules for proper (moral) conduct – then certainly on criticisms of improper behavior. This is why Soma's initial choice to refrain from drinking placed him not simply outside his community, but it located him squarely in the zone from which the moral logic originates, which identifies adivasi life as primitive, and hence, in need of subjection and reform. I would not go as far as to claim that every adivasi who abstains from drinking automatically – and even unwittingly – places drinking adivasis (and the communities at large) under moral suspicion, but for someone like Soma, who had been away from his community for many years, the choice not to drink could not be separated from the moralizing projects that target adivasi communities. Soma's deliberations over the responsibility of whether or not to drink are thus on a much larger scale similar to the choices I made when drinking with adivasis, as discussed in the introductory chapter, and again above when discussing the visits of my parents and the journalists. On one hand, choosing abstinence, i.e., choosing not to participate in adivasi forms of drinking, is always already a moral judgement – especially for someone coming from the outside. And choosing to partake, on the other hand, is thus not only a moral statement, but furthermore an ethical act, as one involves oneself in the obligations of relatedness that are constituted by exchanging and imbibing adivasi forms of alcohol.

For Jeffrey, drinking is an ethical practice at a very different level. There is nothing at stake for him in being an adivasi, or in being part of a community. As a matter of fact, the communities he is a part of – his social environment, his kin, his tribe, his fellow Catholics – are largely responsible for the pain he tries to manage by drinking. Nevertheless, his drinking is ethical because it is ultimately also a response to – as well as a rejection of – moral injunctions, in that he refuses to be tamed and domesticated to suppress his sexuality, and to rehabilitate himself as an alcoholic. The interventions he is repeatedly subjected to – being admitted to a psychiatric hospital for rehab, and the laments of his helpless mother – all aim at reforming or redeeming Jeffrey as a morally deviant body (the drunkard, the homosexual). And he escapes such interventions by the means of ethical work on his body: in remaining in an almost perpetual state of inebriation, and by thus making virtually any obligation – except his obligations towards alcohol and drunkenness – impossible.

The Foucaultian formulation *souci de soi* is usually translated as *care of the self*, whereby *souci* would correspond with *care*. But the more common French meaning of *souci* is rather *worry*¹³⁴ and this might apply quite well to the cases I discussed here, because drinking, while embraced as what I described above as ethical practices, is not so much – or certainly not exclusively – a question of *caring* for the self, in the sense of devising techniques of cultivating the self, but rather, an expression of worrying about the self (and the techniques applied on it: is drinking acceptable or not?). For Mani, Soma, and to

134 I thank Heinz Käuffeler for attuning me to this somewhat incomplete translational convention. The multiple possibilities of translating *souci* are discussed also in Fillion (1998).

some extent also for Jeffrey, drinking is not a solipsistic practice, but a deeply social one. It addresses questions about their relations to others, and it mediates their relationship to the world, which is a contrast to the established thinking about addiction/alcoholism, where the dependent self is thought of as trapped by her or his habit, as having lost control.

Conclusion

I began this dissertation with the stereotype of the drunken adivasi, which one of the police officers invoked, who had been involved in the massacre in the Koel-Karo region in 2001, in which 10 adivasis were killed. This stereotypical image reappeared in various iterations throughout the chapters of this dissertation: the “inborn propensity” of tribals for drinking in an early ethnographic account (Roy 1912), or the lacking “freedom of choice” of “aboriginals”, who, “as a whole are a race of drunkards” and do “not use alcohol like [...] civilized person[s]”, as a government report stated in 1939 (Symington 1950). It was similarly present in the statement of the excise officer I interviewed, who said that adivasis were prone to drinking, and prone to ruin themselves financially by drinking, or in the slogans chanted at a procession of Church groups united in an a *Nasha Vimuktikaran Andolan (Campaign for the Eradication of Drunkenness)*.

By tracing flows of alcohol through local economies, religious practices, and social relations among adivasis in Jharkhand, and in documenting the regulation of alcohol (and adivasis) through law and various moral projects, I tried, in this dissertation, to develop a nuanced and multilayered perspective on the role of alcohol in the lives of contemporary adivasis in Jharkhand. My aim was thereby not to focus on alcohol as a cultural marker or as a public health problem, but to probe various aspects of the ways in which it is implicated in the constitution of modern adivasi subjectivities. This approach allowed me to, on one hand, not take the category of the adivasi (or the *tribal*) for granted (as an identity, for example), nor to assume, on the other hand, the relationships between

adivasis and alcohol as given (as given in any variation of the clichéd representations of either adivasis as drunkards, or of adivasis as joy-loving, noble savages).

As stated in the introduction, I decided to focus my research on Jharkhand's capital Ranchi and its surroundings, because the continued placing of the tribal subject in rural settings by contemporary social science research (or any means of representation of adivasi lives, for that matter) seemed anachronistic to me. Conducting my fieldwork, I moved back and forth between the rural Koel-Karo region and Ranchi (where I worked both in the basti of Koylatoli, as well as in a more nomadic manner, throughout the city) – because I wanted to document the presence of alcohol throughout the landscapes adivasis live in. My dissertation is therefore also an attempt to deconstruct the urban/rural divide, which so significantly cuts across social science research (and especially ethnography) in India. By drawing together urban adivasi elites like Mani, Gaurav, and Jeffrey, alongside Birbal or Gautam, who lead precarious lives at the outskirts of the city, or Soma, a subsistence farmer from Jilingsereng, in the same overall account on the multiple and contradictory roles of alcohol in the lives of adivasis, I tried to convey a perspective on contemporary adivasi subjectivities that is not trapped by this divide between the rural and the urban. Nevertheless, this dissertation contains many distinctions between particularities at my rural and urban fieldsites respectively. For example, I point towards differences in the ways a religious occasion like *Sarhul* is celebrated in the urban context of Hatia, as compared to celebrations in Jilingsereng or Diankel (in the fifth chapter). The third chapter is even organized around the contrast between the two settings. And I discuss the divergent political subjectivities of an

aspiring bureaucrat like Gaurav, and those of a rural community leader like Soma (in the second chapter). The former is city-based and formulates his demands in terms of job guarantees for adivasis, or the presence of Scheduled Tribes in administrative structures of the state. The latter's political priorities are oriented towards safeguarding land ownership, which for him is not simply property, or subsistence, but the basis for both the physical, as well as the spiritual survival of the people in his community.

However, I interpret the divergences between Soma and Gaurav not as a consequence of their differing geographical situations, nor on the basis of distinctions between urban elites and rural masses, but against the background of Kaushik Ghosh's distinctions between incorporative and exclusive governmentalities (which are oriented towards either including essential tribal otherness, or excluding it from dominant Hindu society; see second chapter). This allows me to discuss such different individuals, their political subjectivities, as well as their relationships to alcohol (fifth chapter), alongside each other without dismissing either of them as inauthentic or anachronistic.

Alcohol plays highly contradictory roles in the lives of adivasis. It is in many ways as debilitating or even death dealing as it can be life affirming. It can be as destructive as it is constructive. On one hand, various social actors (Christian Churches, Sarna reformists, Maoists, etc.) target adivasi drinking practices (and the ways they are implicated in forms of sociality, religion, and local economies) with stigmatizing moral criticisms. On the other hand, customary forms of exchange of alcohol are involved in maintaining social relations, or in fulfilling vital obligations of adivasis towards spirits, ancestors, and

deities. Alcohol can on one side be a reason for financial ruin or physical decay, but on the other side, many adivasi families depend on the production and/or sale of alcohol as indispensable elements of their livelihood.

To account for this range of contradictions, I proposed to conceptualize the relations between adivasis and alcohol in terms of obligations. Not only does the notion of obligation – “a no man’s land between choice and determination (Povinelli in Povinelli and DiFruscia 2012:84)” - avoid the fixed (or fixing) and imperative compulsion which is characteristic of concepts like alcoholism, addiction, or dependency. But thinking about the use of alcohol in terms of obligations also allowed me to relate the moral aspects of the relationships involving the use of alcohol that adivasis maintain – no matter whether such obligations are towards sobriety or inviting inebriety. For the same person (adivasi/drinker) or the same behavior (drinking/circulating alcohol) can be interpreted (even simultaneously) through a wide range of contingent but highly different lenses. The following (most probably incomplete) list, for example, indicates the various roles of alcohol that I have noted in the course of my endeavor to understand the complex and contradictory ways in which alcohol is present in the lives of adivasis in Jharkhand:

- alcohol as source of life (creation/procreation)
- alcohol as livelihood
- alcohol as a way to be alive
- alcohol as a means to die
- alcohol as a criterion to distinguish tribes from castes (adivasis from non-adivasis)
- alcohol as a stereotype and as an ethnic marker
- alcohol as inborn propensity

- alcohol as commodity
- alcohol as source of revenue
- alcohol as a cultural good
- drinking as cultural practice
- alcohol as crime
- alcohol to conclude a contract
- alcohol/drinking as research method
- alcohol as a condition for interaction, a basis of mutual respect
- alcohol/drinking as a strategy
- drinking as a way to belong
- alcohol as a means to imbibe/consume relations
- alcohol as relief from pressure/alcohol as solution to problems
- alcohol as a source of problems
- alcohol/drinking as a collective problem (genealogical)
- alcohol as a collective/genealogical problem: parallel to other indigenous peoples
- alcohol as a means of control
- alcohol as a means of exploitation
- alcohol as relation
- alcohol as one dependency in a range of dependencies
- alcohol/drinking as harm
- alcohol as problematization
- alcohol as social obligation
- alcohol as moral obligation (giving alcohol, but also abstaining from it)
- alcohol as a moral concern
- alcohol as ethical substance
- drinking as ethical practice/technique of the self
- alcohol as basis of sociality
- kinds of alcohol as status distinctions

- alcohol as a means to sexuality
- alcohol as gift
- alcohol as the gift of life; as a gift to the dead
- alcohol as a substance that can spoil/rot
- alcohol as libation (offering to spirits and ancestors)
- alcohol as a means to maintain relations to ancestors/bongas
- alcohol as remuneration (or not)
- alcohol as a thing exchanged
- alcohol as a way to convey thanks
- alcohol as affirmation of collectivity
- alcohol to reaffirm social relations

Approaching relationships between adivasis and alcohol in terms of obligations thus situates these relationships in a larger context of relationality, leaving room to explore them alongside other relations. For example, apart from the obligations emerging from relationships to alcohol, and the obligations (involving alcohol) implied in relationships to others, alcohol can also be implicated in the obligations of adivasis towards themselves or their households in terms of providing an income or a livelihood. As discussed in chapter three, many households in the urban setting of Koylatoli depend on the illicit production and/or sale of customary forms of alcohol for their survival (as jobs are not available). And in the rural context of the Koel-Karo region, many families – while making their livelihood as subsistence farmers – sell mahua flowers, as well as mahua liquor and rice beer, to earn cash on market days. Through obligations to provide for oneself or one's household, customary forms of alcohol thus become commodities, and the needier a particular local context is in terms of cash, the more ubiquitously this

commodity may become available.

The notion of obligation allows the conceptualization of relations between adivasis and alcohol in multiple layers, as obligation can be the nature of a relationship (i.e., relationships can be obligations), but obligations can also be implied by relationships, or vice versa (i.e., relationships can produce – or be produced by – obligations). An example for the first case – in which a relationship takes the form of an obligation – would be Jeffrey from the last chapter, whose relationship to alcohol is obligatory. Here, the notion of obligation refers to the kind of relationship which concepts like addiction or alcoholism try to capture, where individuals are unable or unwilling to function without the help of alcohol or other substances. The second scenario, describing the implication of alcohol in other relationships, occurs for example when adivasis maintain relations to others – persons, spirits, deities, ancestors – that involve the obligation to offer (and thus to receive) alcohol. For example the case of Soma, who realized that he could not ignore – especially due to his role as a community leader – the obligation to participate in forms of exchange involving alcohol; as long as he did not fulfill this obligation, he remained at a remove from the very social environment, in which he had assumed an authoritative position.

In moralizing discourses – such as those picked up by the church groups involved in the *Nasha Vimuktikaran Andolan*, or the interventions of Maoists (chapter four) – obligations to alcohol (as in Jeffrey's case) are represented as a pathology, i.e., as alcoholism, while obligations to relationships (as in Soma's case) are interpreted as

cultural practices. But even though these diverging explanations exist, the two are collapsed, and the former is interpreted in terms of the latter (as in: Jeffrey had a high risk of becoming an alcoholic because he is an adivasi), and vice versa (Soma is a drunkard because the frequent cultural use of alcohol has made him one).

I argue that this collapsing of various obligations (or various forms of alcohol use) in representative discourses occurs because adivasis have been marked (as I discuss in chapters two and four), in and through such discourses – as specific kinds of populations – the *essential otherness* of incorporative and exclusive governmentalities (according to the model proposed by Kaushik Ghosh). And the contemporary incarnation of this essential otherness arrives at both its essentialness and its otherness because of the ways Indian modernity discursively distinguishes *autological subjects* from *genealogical society* (in Elizabeth Povinelli's terminology, which is explained in chapter one). Adivasis are identified with the latter, and this is why Jeffrey's drinking registers as cultural, even though his drinking pattern is identified by his friends, family, and doctors as a pathology residing within his individual body. His drinking therefore materializes as a habit formed on the cultural and genetic substrate of genealogical society. And it may be the same logic which led the Jharkhand Secretary of Health, when I asked him about his department's activities with regard to adivasis and alcohol, to state that he was the wrong person to talk to: “Alcohol is the responsibility of the Excise Department, and adivasis fall under the purview of the Welfare Department.”

The point of departure for understandings of *addiction* are relationships between users

and the substances. Addiction studies – broadly speaking – try to understand “the nature” of such relationships, their causes and consequences, etcetera. But the object of such pursuits of knowledge is fundamentally transformed in the process of pursuit – something categorically changes if one no longer thinks in terms of *relationships*, but if one begins to think in terms of *addiction*. It is not just that the character of the relationship changes, say – to speak with Canguilhem (1966) – that a normal relationship is distinguished from a pathological one. Rather, the phenomenon of a relationship between a user and a substance is displaced by the diagnostic of addiction, and this transformation is not epistemological, but ontological.

References

Aaron, Sushil J.

2007 *Contrarian Lives: Christians and Contemporary Protest in Jharkhand*. Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Abraham, Joseph

1995 Impact of Prohibition on State Excise: Study of Four Southern States. *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(48): 3051–3053.

Alderete, Ethel (Wara)

1999 *The Health of Indigenous Peoples*. WHO, WHO/SDE/HSD/99.1. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Appadurai, Arjun

1993 Number in the Colonial Imagination. *In Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* Pp. 314–339. Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press.

ArcelorMittal

2009 *Bonds_20092014.pdf* (application/pdf Object).
http://www.arcelormittal.com/rls/data/pages/652//Bonds_20092014.pdf, accessed September 19, 2009.

Asad, Talal

1973 Introduction. *In Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* Pp. 9–18. New York: Humanities Press.

Bal, Hartosh Singh

2011 Spare Us the Gandhian Halo. *OPEN Magazine*.
<http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/voices/spare-us-the-gandhian-halo>, accessed February 15, 2013.

Balagopalan, Sarada, Kaushik Ghosh, and Megnath

2001 Massacres of Adivasis: A Preliminary Report. *Economic and Political Weekly* 36(9): 717–721.

Banerjee, Prathama

2006 *Politics of Time. “Primitives” and History-writing in a Colonial Society*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Banerjee, Sumanta

2009 Reflections of a One-time Maoist Activist. *Dialectical Anthropology* 33(3): 253–

269.

Bara, Joseph

2007 Colonialism, Christianity and the Tribes of Chhotanagpur in East India, 1845–1890. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 30(2): 195 – 222.

Bates, Crispin

1995a “Lost Innocents and the Loss of Innocence”: Interpreting Adivasi Movements in South Asia. *In Indigenous Peoples of Asia. Monograph and Occasional Paper Series. Ann Arbor Mich.: The Association for Asian Studies, Inc.*

1995b Race, Caste and Tribe in Central India: The Early Origins of Indian Anthropometry. *In The Concept of Race in South Asia. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.*

Baviskar, Amita

1995 *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley. Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.,*

2005 Indian Indigeneities: Adivasi Engagements with Hindu Nationalism in India. *In Unpublished Paper Written for the Conference on “Indigenous Experience Today”. Wenner-Gren Foundation, March 19-24.2205.*

2006 The Politics of Being “Indigenous”. *In Indigeneity in India. Bengt G. Karlsson and Tanka B. Subba, eds. Pp. 33–49. London: Kegan Paul.*

Baxi, Upendra

1992 “The State’s Emissary’: The Place of Law in Subaltern Studies. *In Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds. Pp. 247–264. Delhi: Oxford University Press.*

Begrich, Roger, and Shalini Randeria

2012 Dalit Critiques of Hinduism. *In Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism Pp. 650–662. Leiden: Brill.*

Benjamin, Walter

1968 Theses on the Philosophy of History. *In Illuminations. Hannah Arendt, ed. Harry Zohn, tran. Pp. 253–264. New York: Schocken Books.*

Béteille, André

1960 Question of Definition. *Seminar* 12: 15–18.

1986 The Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India. *Journal of European Sociology* 27: 297–318.

1991 *Society and Politics in India : Essays in a Comparative Perspective. Delhi: Oxford University Press.*

1998 The Idea of Indigenous People. *Current Anthropology* 39(2): 6.

Bhatia, Bela

- 2001 Resistance and Repression. *Frontline*.
<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1805/18050430.htm>.
- 2005 The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(15): 1536–1549.
- 2011 Judging the Judgment. *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(30): 14–16.
- Biswas, Rudra
- 2011 Koel-Karo Project on Revival Path. *The Telegraph*, July 12.
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110712/jsp/jharkhand/story_14228628.jsp#, accessed March 12, 2013.
- 2012 Industry Plan on HEC Land. *The Telegraph*, February 6.
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120206/jsp/frontpage/story_15097327.jsp, accessed September 29, 2013.
- Bowen, John R.
- 2000 Should We Have a Universal Concept of “Indigenous Peoples” Rights?: Ethnicity and Essentialism in the Twenty-First Century. *Anthropology Today* 16(4): 12–16.
- Briggs, John
- 1852 Two Lectures on the Aboriginal Races of India, as Distinguished from the Sanscrit or Hindu Races. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 13: 275–309.
- Bryant, Edwin
- 2001 *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture : the Indo-Aryan Migration Debate*. Oxford [England] ; New York: Oxford University Press.
<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0604/99086274-d.html>.
- Canguilhem, Georges
- 1966 *The Normal and the Pathological*. New York: Zone Books.
- Chand, Tek
- 1964a Report of the Study Team on Prohibition, vol.1. Delhi: Planning Commission, Govt. of India.
- 1964b Report of the Study Team on Prohibition, vol.2. Delhi: Planning Commission, Govt. of India.
- 1972 *Liquor Menace in India*. New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation; Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Charsley, Simon
- 1996 ‘Untouchable’: What Is in a Name? *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2(1): 1–23.
- 1998 Sanskritization: The Career of an Anthropological Theory. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 32(2): 527–549.

Chatterjee, Partha

1993 *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton Studies in Culture/power/history. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

2004a *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. University seminars/Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures. New York: Columbia University Press.

2011 *Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy*. Columbia University Press.

Chatterjee, Piya

2003a *A Time for Tea : Women, Labor, and Post/colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation*. New Delhi: Zubaan.

2003b *An Empire of Drink: Gender, Labor and the Historical Economies of Alcohol*. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16(2): 183–208.

Chaudhuri, Kalyan

2002 *Jharkhand's Crisis*. *Frontline*, August 3.

<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1916/19160380.htm>.

Chhibber, Manish

2011 *Centre to Declare More Districts Naxal-hit*. *Indian Express*, July 5.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/story-print/812671/>, accessed August 4, 2011.

Cohn, Bernard S.

1984 *The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia*. *Folk* 26: 25–49.

Correspondent, Staff

2010 *Adivasis Are Not Hindus: Munda*. *The Hindu*, February 12.

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/02/12/stories/2010021260080300.htm>, accessed January 17, 2013.

Courtwright, David T.

2001 *Forces of Habit : Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Das, Veena

2003 *Introduction: Social Sciences and the Publics*. *In The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology* Pp. 1–29. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2004 *The Signature of the State: The Paradox of Illegibility*. *In Anthropology in the Margins of the State* Pp. 225–252. School of American Research Advances Seminar Series. Oxford: James Currey.

2011 *State, Citizenship, and the Urban Poor*. *Citizenship Studies* 15(3-4): 319–333.

Dasgupta, Sangeeta

2004 The Journey of an Anthropologist in Chhotanagpur. *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 41(2): 165 –198.

Dave, Naisargi Nitin

2012 *Queer Activism in India: a Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Derrida, Jacques

1993 The Rhetoric of Drugs. An Interview. Trans. by Michael Israel. Michael Israel, tran. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 5(1): 1–25.

Devalle, Susana B. C.

1992 *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand*. New Delhi; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Dhavan, Rajeev

2008 India's Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA): The Return of POTA & TADA. *International South Asia Forum (INSAF)*.

<http://www.insafbulletin.net/archives/459>, accessed August 3, 2011.

Dirks, Nicholas B.

2001 *Castes of Mind Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Dube, S.

2004 *Stitches on Time: Colonial Textures and Postcolonial Tangles*. Duke University Press.

Elwin, Verrier

1939 *The Baiga*. London: J. Murray.

1941 *Loss of Nerve: A Comparative Study of the Contact of Peoples in the Aboriginal Areas of Hte Bastar State and the Central Provinces of India*. Bombay.

1958 *Leaves from the Jungle; Life in a Gond Village*, vol.2d. London,: Oxford University Press.

1964 *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin, an Autobiography*. New York,: Oxford University Press.

EPW, Editorial

2010 Caste Census: The Road Ahead. *Economic & Political Weekly* 45(34).

Van Exem, A. s.j.

1982 *The Religious System of the Munda Tribe. An Essay in Religious Anthropology*. St. Augustin: Haus Völker und Kulturen.

Fahey, David M, and Padma Manian

2005 Poverty and Purification: The Politics of Gandhi's Campaign for Prohibition. *The Historian* 67: 489–506.

Fassin, Didier

2012 Introduction: Toward a Critical Moral Anthropology. *In A Companion to Moral Anthropology*. Didier Fassin, ed. Pp. 1–17. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fernandes, Walter

1998 Jharkhand or Vananchal-Where Are the Tribals. *Economic and Political Weekly*. http://www.epw.in/commentary/jharkhand-or-vananchal-where-are-tribals.html?ip_login_no_cache=51814e0d51973ddbddd0cfa3101fcd05, accessed April 8, 2013.

Foucault, Michel

1990 *The Use of Pleasure*. New York: Vintage Books.

1991 Governmentality. *In The Foucault Effect*. Graham Burchell and Colin Gordon, eds. Pp. 87–104. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Froerer, Peggy

2007 *Religious Division and Social Conflict. The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in Rural India*. New Delhi: Social Science Press.

Fuller, C.J., and John Harriss

2001 For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State. *In The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*. Véronique Bénéï and C. J. Fuller, eds. Pp. 1–67. London: Hurst & Co.

Gaikwad, Rahi

2009 Naxalism the Greatest Internal Threat: Manmohan. *The Hindu*, October 12. <http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/12/stories/2009101257690100.htm>, accessed July 28, 2011.

Gandhi, M.K.

1952 *Drink, Drugs, and Gambling*, vol.1st. Bharatan Kumarappa, ed. Ahmedabad,: Navajivan Pub. House.

Ganguly, P.G.

1969 Separatism in the Indian Polity: a Case Study. *In Anthropology and Archaeology; Essays in Commemoration of Verrier Elwin, 1902-64* Pp. 58–107.

Geertz, Clifford

1973 *Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight*. *In The Interpretation of Cultures* Pp. 412–456. New York: Basic Books.

Ghosh, Kaushik

1999a A Market for Aboriginality: Primitivism and Race Classification in the Indentured

Labour Market in Colonial India. *In* Subaltern Studies X. Writings on South Asian History and Society Pp. 8–48. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2006a Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenusness, Locality, and the Transnational Sphere in Jharkhand, India. *Cultural Anthropology* 21(4): 501–534.

2006b The Modernity of Primitive India. Adivasi Ethnicity in Jharkhand and the Formation of a National Modern. Doctoral Dissertation, Princeton.

Ghurye, G. S.

1963 The Scheduled Tribes, vol.3d. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

Gilbert, Marc Jason

2007 Empire and Excise: Drugs and Drink Revenue and the Fate of States in South Asia. *In* *Drugs and Empires. Essays in Modern Imperialism and Intoxication, c. 1500-c.1930* Pp. 116–141. Palgrave Macmillan.

Goodfellow, Aaron D.

forthc. Pedagogies of the Clinic: Learning To Live (Again and Again).

2008 Pharmaceutical Intimacy: Sex, Death, and Methamphetamine. *Home Cultures* 5(3): 271–300.

Gordon, Colin

1991 Governmental Rationality: An Introduction. *In* *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentalities*. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. Pp. 1–51. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Government of India

1996 The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act No.40 of 1996. PESA 1996.

Gray, Dennis, and Sherry Saggars, eds.

2002 Indigenous Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Issues: Research from the National Drug Research Institute. Perth: National Drug Research Institute. Curtin University of Technology. <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/pdf/publications/M38.pdf#page=41>, accessed December 1, 2012.

Grierson, George Abraham

1967 Linguistic Survey of India. first published 1903-1928. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Guha, Ramachandra

1999 *Savaging the Civilized : Verrier Elwin, His Tribals, and India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2007 Adivasis, Naxalites and Indian Democracy. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(32): 3305–3312.

Guha, Ramachandra, Harivansh, Farah Naqvi, et al.

2006 Salwa Judum: War in the Heart of India: Excerpts from the Report by the Independent Citizens Initiative. *Social Scientist* 34(7/8): 47–61.

Guha, Ranajit

1983 *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1987 Chandra's Death. *In Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ranajit Guha, ed. Pp. 135–65. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Gupta, Akhil, and Aradhana Sharma

2006 Globalization and Postcolonial States. *Current Anthropology* 47(2): 277–307.

Guyer, Jane I.

1993 “Toiling Ingenuity”: Food Regulation in Britain and Nigeria. *American Ethnologist* 20(4): 797–817.

2012 Obligation, Binding, Debt and Responsibility: Provocations About Temporality from Two New Sources. *Social Anthropology* 20(4): 491–501.

Hardiman, David

1984 Adivasi Assertion in South Gujarat: The Devi Movement of 1922-23. *In Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ranajit Guha, ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1985 From Custom to Crime: The Politics of Drinking in South Gujarat. *In Subaltern Studies. Writings in South Asian History and Society*. Ranajit Guha, ed. Pp. 165–228. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

1987a The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India. Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.

Human Rights Features

2004 The Reincarnation of POTA. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Ordinance Is POTA's Second Coming. *Human Rights Features*(106). <http://www.hrdc.net/sahrdc/hrfeatures/HRF106.htm>, accessed August 3, 2011.

Human Rights Watch

2010 Back to the Future. India's 2008 Counterterrorism Laws. 1-56432-667-5. New York: Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/07/28/back-future>, accessed August 3, 2011.

Hunter, William Wilson

1877 *A Statistical Account of Bengal.*, vol.17. London: Trübner & co.

IPE Global Pvt. Ltd.

2013 Jharkhand Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Tribal Development Plan).

Jharkhand Police

2009 Official Website of Jharkhand Police. Jharkhand Police. A Force to Reckon With. <http://jharkhandpolice.gov.in/STF.html>, accessed August 4, 2011.

John Hoffmann, and Arthur Van Emelen

1990 Encyclopaedia Mundarica. <First ed. ca. 1924, 1st repr.>. New Delhi: Gyan.

Karlsson, Bengt G.

2003 Anthropology and the “Indigenous Slot”: Claims to and Debates About Indigenous Peoples’ Status in India. *Critique of Anthropology* 23(4): 403–423.

Karsenti, Bruno

2012 Durkheim and the Moral Fact. *In A Companion to Moral Anthropology*. Didier Fassin, ed. Pp. 21–36. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Keane, Helen

2005 Ethics of the Body: Postconventional Challenges. *In Addiction and the Bioethics of Difference*. Margrit Shildrick and Roxanne Mykitiuk, eds. Pp. 91–112. MIT Press.

Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, and Margaret M. Lock

1997 Social Suffering. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kumar, Vinay

2011a Chhattisgarh School Churns Out Cops Trained in Jungle Warfare. *The Hindu*, April 23: 16.

2011b Implementation of IAP Scheme in 60 Districts in Full Swing. *The Hindu*, June 27: 13.

Kuper, Adam

2003 The Return of the Native. *Current Anthropology* 44(3): 389–402.

Langer, Avalok

2011 Red Flag in the Red Corridor. Army Camp Proposal Rattles Maoists. *Tehelka - India’s Independent Weekly News Magazine*, February 19.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main48.asp?filename=Ne190211Red.asp#, accessed August 4, 2011.

Legal Sutra

2011 The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act And Amendments. Law students’ knowledge base. Legal Sutra. <http://legalsutra.org/1605/the-unlawful-activities-prevention-act-and-amendments/>, accessed August 3, 2011.

Liang, Lan, Frank Chaloupka, Mark Nichter, and Richard Clayton

2003 Prices, Policies and Youth Smoking, May 2001. *Addiction* 98(s 1): 105–122.

Mahmood, Saba

2005 *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Mahurkar, Uday

2012 Time for a Malt March in Gujarat. Gujarat's Outdated Alcohol Prohibition Policy Leaves Negative Impact on Tourism. *India Today*, February 24.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/gujarat-outdated-alcohol-prohibition-policy-negative-impact/1/175159.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

Mauss, Marcel

1990 *Die Gabe: Form und Funktion des Austauschs in archaischen Gesellschaften*. Eva Moldenhauer, tran. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Middleton, C. Townsend

2011a Across the Interface of State Ethnography: Rethinking Ethnology and Its Subjects in Multicultural India. *American Ethnologist* 38(2): 249–266.

2011b Ethno-Logics. Paradigms of Modern Identity. *In Modern Makeovers. Handbook of Modern South Asia*. Saurabh Dube, ed. Pp. 201–213. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ministry of Home Affairs (Government of India)

2010 Naxal Management Division. Naxal Management Division.

http://mha.nic.in/uniquepage.asp?Id_Pk=540, accessed August 2, 2011.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs

N.d. Definition. <http://tribal.nic.in/index3.asp?subsublinkid=309&langid=1>, accessed May 13, 2013.

Munda, Ram Dayal

2000 *Adi-dharam, Religious Beliefs of the Adivasis of India: An Outline of Religious Reconstruction with Special Reference to the Jharkhand Region*. Sarini and Birsa.

Panjiar, Rohan

2010 The Tragedy of Prohibition. *Indian Express*, March 26.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/the-tragedy-of-prohibition/490493/0>, accessed February 14, 2013.

Parajuli, Pramod

1996 Ecological Ethnicity in the Making. Developmentalist Hegemonies and Emergent Identities in India. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 3(1-2): 15–59.

Parry, Jonathan P.

1986 The Gift, the Indian Gift and the “Indian Gift.” *Man* 21(3). New Series: 453–473.

1999 Two Cheers for the Reservation. *In Institutions and Inequalities. Essays in Honour of Andre Beteille*. Ramachandra Guha and Jonathan P. Parry, eds. Pp. 128–169. New

Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2003 Nehru's Dream and the Village "Waiting Room": Long-distance Labour Migrants to a Central Indian Steel Town. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 37(1-2): 217–249.

Patel, Girish

2011 The Punch of Liquor Lies in Prohibition by Gujarat Govt. DNA, December 15. http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/report_the-punch-of-liquor-lies-in-prohibition-by-gujarat-govt_1626224, accessed February 14, 2013.

Patil, Bal

1976 Prohibition: Genesis, Diagnosis & Prognosis. Sulekha Creative Blog. http://creative.sulekha.com/prohibition-genesis-diagnosis-prognosis_410214_blog, accessed February 3, 2013.

Pels, Peter

1999 The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigenes: Orientalism, Anglicism, and the Emergence of an Ethnology of India. *In Colonial Subjects. Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology*. Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink, eds. Pp. 82–116. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

People's March

2004 The Communist Party of India (Maoist) — Born in India. People's March. Voice of the Indian Revolution, December. <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/archives/2004/nov-dec2k4/Born%20in%20India.htm>, accessed August 8, 2011.

People's March, Ganapathy, and Kishan

2004 Joint Interview of the General Secretaries of the Erstwhile CPI (ML)(PW) & the MCCI on the Occasion of the Merger of the Two Parties and the Formation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). People's March. Voice of the Indian Revolution, December. <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/archives/2004/nov-dec2k4/interview.htm>, accessed August 8, 2011.

People's Union for Democratic Rights (India)

2006 When the State Makes War on Its Own People: a Report on Violation of People's Rights During the Salwa Judum Campaign in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh. People's Union for Democratic Rights. <http://www.pudr.org/content/when-state-makes-war-its-own-people-violation-peoples-rights-during-salwa-judum>.

Pioneer News Service

2008 Drinking Still Taboo for Girls in Ranchi. *The Pioneer*, March 8.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A.

2002 *The Cunning of Recognition : Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

2006 *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2011 *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A., and Kim Turcot DiFruscia

2012 A Conversation with Elizabeth A. Povinelli. *Trans-Scripts* 2: 76–90.

Prasad, Raekha

2009 Alcohol Use on the Rise in India. *The Lancet* 373(9657): 17–18.

Prohibition Enquiry Committee, India

1955 Report of the Prohibition Enquiry Committee, 1954-55. Delhi: Manager of Publications.

Randeria, Shalini

2003 Cunning States and Unaccountable International Institutions: Legal Plurality, Social Movements and Rights of Local Communities to Common Property Resources. *European Journal of Sociology* 44(1): 34.

Ravi, Salman

2004 Tribal Welfare or Poll Pursuit - Tribes at Crossroads. *The Telegraph*, December 15. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1041215/asp/jharkhand/story_4128053.asp, accessed April 16, 2013.

Risley, Herbert Hope

1981 *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, vol.1. first publ. 1891. Calcutta: Firma Mukhopadhyay.

Robbins, Joel

2012 On Becoming Ethical Subjects: Freedom, Constraint, and the Anthropology of Morality by Joel Robbins « *Anthropology of This Century*. *Anthropology of This Century*(5). <http://aotcpres.com/articles/ethical-subjects-freedom-constraint-anthropology-morality/>, accessed August 7, 2013.

Roy, Amit

2003 Second Phase of Jharkhand Movement. *In* *The Jharkhand Movement. Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India*. Ram Dayal Munda and Sanjay Bosu Mullick, eds. Pp. 73–77. IWGIA Document, 108. Copenhagen and Chaibasa: IWGIA and BIRSA.

Roy, Sarat Chandra

1912 *The Mundas and Their Country*. Calcutta: Jogendra Nath Sarkar.

1961 The Administrative History and Land Tenures of the Ranchi-District Under British Rule. *Man in India* 41(4): 276–323.

1999 *Oraon Religion and Customs*. New Delhi: Gyan.

Sachar, Rajinder, Sanjay Parikh, Vinod Raina, Sudha Bhardwaj, and Chittaranjan Singh
2002 An Independent Enquiry into the Police Firing at Tapkara and Resistance to the Koel-Karo Project, Jharkhand. Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights. iptindia.org, accessed February 22, 2012.

Saldanha, Indra Munshi

1995 On Drinking and "Drunkenness": History of Liquor in Colonial India. *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(37): 2323–2331.

Samarendra, Padmanabh

2011 Census in Colonial India and the Birth of Caste. *Economic & Political Weekly*.

Sanhati

2011 Interview with Rahul Pandita on the Maoist Movement in India at Sanhati. Sanhati. Fighting Neoliberalism in Bengal and Beyond. <http://sanhati.com/tweet/3881/>, accessed August 9, 2011.

Savyasaachi

1998 Tribal Forest-dwellers and Self-rule: The Constituent Assembly Debates on the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

School of Economics & Sociology, University of Bombay

1953 Report of the Study on the Socio-Economic Effects of Prohibition (rural). Bombay: Government Central Press.

Sema, J.H.K.

2006 Anjan Kumar Vs Union Of India & Ors on 14 February, 2006.

Sengupta, Nirmal

1980 Class and Tribe in Jharkhand. *Economic and Political Weekly* 15(14): 664–671.

Sethi, Aman

2011 A Minister Versus Maoists in Bid for Tribal Hearts and Minds. *The Hindu*, July 25. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2292577.ece?css=print>, accessed July 27, 2011.

Shah, Alpa

2006a Alcoholics Anonymous: The Maoist Movement in Jharkhand, India. *Modern Asian Studies*: 1–23.

2006b The Labour of Love: Seasonal Migration from Jharkhand to the Brick Kilns of Other States in India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 40(1): 91–118.

2007 The Dark Side of Indigeneity?: Indigenous People, Rights and Development in India. *History Compass* 5(6): 1806–1832.

2010 In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and

- Insurgency in Jharkhand, India. Duke University Press.
 2011 *India Burning: The Maoist Revolution. In A Companion to the Anthropology of India.* Isabelle Clark-Decès, ed. Pp. 332–351. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sharma, Jayeeta
 2009 “Lazy” Natives, Coolie Labour, and the Assam Tea Industry. *Modern Asian Studies* 43(06): 1287–1324.
 2011 *Empire’s Garden : Assam and the Making of India.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sharma, Mukul
 2011 *The Making of an Authority: Anna Hazare in Ralegan Siddhi.* Kafiya.
<http://kafiya.org/2011/04/14/the-making-of-an-authority-anna-hazare-in-ralegan-siddhi/>,
 accessed February 15, 2013.
- Singh, K. S.
 1993 “The Problem” in Marginalised Tribals. *Seminar* 412: 12–18.
- Sinha, Gunjan Pradhan
 2006 Govt Asks Defaulting PSUs to Pay up or Sell Land. *Economic Times*, The (Bombay, India), July 21.
http://docs.newsbank.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/s/InfoWeb/agddocs/AWNB/1130261F0FAEFBF0/0D0CB535F3149F6A?s_lang, accessed October 9, 2012.
- Skaria, Ajay
 1997 Shades of Wildness. Tribes, Caste, and Gender in Western India. *Journal of Asian Studies* 56(3): 726–745.
 1999 *Hybrid Histories : Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India.* Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty
 1985 *Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography. In Subaltern Studies. Writings in South Asian History and Society* Pp. 330–363. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
 1988 *Can the Subaltern Speak? Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture:* 271–313.
- Srinivas, Mysore Narasimhachar
 1965 *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India.* Repr. Bombay: Asia publishing house.
 1966 *Social Change in Modern India. The Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lectures, 1963.* Berkeley,: University of California Press.
- Srivastava, Niranjana Prasad, and Bihari Prasad
 2006 *Impact of the New Excise Policy of the State and Ways and Means of Boosting Revenue in the Medium Term.* Ranchi: Government of Jharkhand, Fiscal Policy Analysis Cell (FPAC).

Sundar, Nandini

1997 *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar, 1854-1996*. Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.

1999 *The Indian Census, Identity and Inequality*. In *Institutions and Inequalities. Essays in Honor of André Béteille*. Ramachandra Guha and Jonathan P. Parry, eds. Pp. 100–127. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2000 *Caste as Census Category: Implications for Sociology*. *Current Sociology* 48, No 3: 111–126 (16 pages).

2005a *Laws, Policies and Practices in Jharkhand*. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(41): 4459–4462.

2005b “Custom” and “Democracy” in Jharkhand. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(41): 4430–4434.

2006a *Adivasi Vs. Vanvasi: The Politics of Conversion in Central India*. In *Assertive Religious Identities: India and Europe*. Satish Saberwal and Mushirul Hasan, eds.

2006b *Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum*. *Economic and Political Weekly* 41(29): 3187–3192.

2009 *Framing the Political Imagination. Custom, Democracy, and Citizenship*. In *Legal Grounds. Natural Resources, Identity, and the Law in Jharkhand* Pp. 189–215. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2010a *Pleading for Justice*. Seminar(607). http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/607/607_nandini_sundar.htm, accessed August 4, 2011.

2010b *The Trophies of Operation Green Hunt. When Rape Is Routine and There’s Paucity of Condemning Voices*. *Outlook*, July 5.

Symington, D.

1950 *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Bombay Presidency*. Bombay: Government Central Press.

Tete, S.J. Peter

1986 *A Missionary Social Worker in India: J.B. Hoffman, The Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act and the Catholic Co-operatives 1893-1928*. Ranchi: Satya Bharathi.

Thomson, Sir James

1907 *Report of the Indian Excise Committee, 1905-06. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty*. Madras: Printed by the Supt., Govt. Press.

Trautmann, Thomas R.

1997 *Aryans and British India*. Berkeley, Calif. <etc.>: University of California Press.

TRIFED, (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited)

N.d. *BIHAR (Munda)*. *Tribes India*. http://tribesindia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=104&lang=en, accessed May 18, 2013.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph

1991 Anthropology and the Savage Slot. The Poetics and Politics of Otherness. *In* Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present Pp. 17–44. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt

1993 *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Venkatesan, J.

2010 Salwa Judum Is Illegal, Says Supreme Court. *The Hindu*, July 5. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2161246.ece?homepage=true&css=print>, accessed August 4, 2011.

Xaxa, Virginius

1999a Tribes as Indigenous People of India. *Economic and Political Weekly* 34(51): 3589–3596.

1999b Transformation of Tribes in India: Terms of Discourse. *Economic and Political Weekly* 34(24): 1519 (6 pages).

2003 Tribes in India. *In* *The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Anthropology in India* Pp. 374–408. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2005 Politics of Language, Religion and Identity: Tribes in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(13). <http://epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2005&leaf=03&filename=8447&filetype=html>.

Yadav, Anumeha

2013 Jharkhand Special Police Officers in a Spiral of Violence of Retribution. *The Hindu*, May 19. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/jharkhand-special-police-officers-in-a-spiral-of-violence-of-retribution/article4728568.ece>, accessed May 19, 2013.

Yadav, Kumkum

2003 Tribals in Indian Narratives. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

Curriculum Vitae

Roger Begrich was born in Basel, Switzerland and raised in nearby Rheinfelden, Aargau. He went to school in Rheinfelden, and later in Muttenz, Baselland. He studied Ethnology at the University of Basel, where he obtained a Licentiatuſ Philosophiae degree. After working as a research assistant in the Department for Cultural Epidemiology at the Swiss Tropical Institute in Basel, he began graduate studies in Anthropology at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, U.S.A. He also received doctoral training in Population and Family Health Sciences at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and studied Hindi at the Landour Language School in Mussoorie, India. He has taught at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore as well as at the University of Zurich in Switzerland.