"India fighting with itself"

Discourses on the Naxalite movement in Indian news media

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Eräs Intian lähihistorian merkittävimmistä selkkauksista on ollut jatkuva konflikti maoistikapinallisten ja Intian valtion välillä. Maoistiliike syntyi 1960-luvun lopulla Länsi-Bengalin osavaltiossa ja sai nimensä Naxalbari-kylässä tapahtuneiden väkivaltaisuuksien myötä. Nykyään naksaliitit vaikuttaa lähinnä Intian köyhimmissä osavaltioissa, varsinkin hyvin metsäisillä alueilla, jotka ovat intialaisten alkuperäiskansojen asuttamia. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tutkia tätä konfliktia intialaisen uutismedian representaatioiden kautta. Miten naksaliitteja kuvataan maan suurimmassa englanninkielisessä sanomalehdessä? Minkälaisia diskursseja heihin kytkeytyy? Toisekseen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on myös tutkia ja esitellä naksaliittiliikettä, sen koostumusta, ideologiaa ja siihen vaikuttavia yhteiskunnallisia ongelmia, kuten eriarvoisuutta, poliisin korruptiota ja alkuperäiskansojen maaoikeuskysymyksiä.

Tutkimusaineisto koostui 115 *Times of India* -sanomalehden kirjoituksesta vuosilta 2010-2012, joista suurin osa oli uutisia ja murto-osa mielipidekirjoituksia. Tutkimusmetodina käytin diskurssianalyysiä. Diskurssit ymmärretään kulttuurintutkimuksen piirissä kielen tapana tuottaa sosiaalista todellisuutta. Toisin sanoen se, miten naksaliiteista kirjoitetaan määrittää sitä, miten heidät ymmärretään ja mitä merkityksiä naksaliittien kategoriaan liitetään. Kriittinen diskurssianalyysi liittää diskurssit niitä ympäröivään yhteiskuntaan ja sen valtasuhteisiin.

Aineiston diskursseista syntyy kuva naksaliiteista, jotka ovat alueidensa taloudellista kehitystä vastaan, ovelia ja irrallaan perinteisestä intialaisesta perheinstituutiosta. Naksaliittejä ei kuitenkaan kuvata yksinkertaisesti vihollisina, kuten useita muita kapinallis- ja terrostiryhmiä kuvataan mediassa, vaan aineistosta löytyi myös vahva pelastusdiskurssi, jossa naksaliitti voi liittyessään takaisin valtavirtaan saada anteeksi aiemmin tekemänsä teot. Diskurssien taustalla on vahva kansallismielinen ajattelu, joka kuitenkin katsoo naksaliitit osaksi Intiaa, ja käsitys kehityksen taloudellisesta luonteesta, joka taas liittyy vahvasti intialaisen nykypolitiikan talousliberalistisiin pyrkimyksiin. Naksaliitit ovat ikään kuin jatkuva muistutus Intian köyhimmän väestönosan ongelmista, mutta samaan aikaan heidän vallankumouksellisista toimintavoistaan johtuvat konfliktit ovat enemmän esillä uutisissa kuin köyhien huonot olot ja vähäiset vaihtoehdot.

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

One of the most important upheavals in recent Indian history is the conflict between the Indian state and the Maoist rebels known as Naxalites. The movement began in late 1960's in the state of West Bengal, in the village of Naxalbari. Nowadays Naxalites operate in many of the most impoverished Indian states, especially those that are heavily forested and populated by indigenous peoples, referred to as adivasi. The purpose of this study was to research the conflict through representations in India's native English news media. How are Naxalites portrayed in India's biggest English national newspaper? What kind of discourses stem from these representations? The secondary focus of this study was to research and present the Naxalite movement as a whole, its composition, its ideology and the issues connected to it, such as economic inequality, police corruption and indigenous land rights.

The field of research is composed of 115 articles and opinion pieces from Times of India, from years 2010 to 2012. Discourse analysis was used as the research method. Discourses in cultural anthropology and sociological studies are understood as the way language constructs a social reality about a certain topic. In other words, the way that Naxalites are represented in writing defines how they are understood and what kind of meanings is attached to the category of Naxalites. Critical Discourse Analysis, which is also used in this study, connects discourses to the society that surrounds them and the power relations within that society.

The discourses in my corpus form a picture of Naxalites that is not wholly negative but does contain many negative aspects. They are portrayed as being against the economic development of their areas, cunning and detached from the traditional family institutions of Indian society. Naxalites are not represented as enemies like other rebel and terrorist groups in media often are. Instead one can also find a redemption discourse, where a Naxalite can be forgiven for their previous actions by re-joining mainstream society. Underpinning the discourses there is a strong nationalist ideology, which still considers the Naxalite movement as a part of India. Ideas about economic development, related to the modern Indian politics and economic liberalism is also an important context. Naxalites can be seen as a continuing reminder of the problems of the poorest in India, but at the same their their revolutionary means and the conflict that results are more covered in the news than the conditions of the country's rural poor.

Asiasanat – Keywords India, naxalites, extremist left-wing, Maoism, discourse, discourse analysis, rebellion, insurgency
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1. Introduction

Background and the objectives of this study

The Naxalite insurgency is happening in the second most populous country in the world (1.2 billion people according to Census 2011 data), where over a third of the population is categorised as poor. There are significant regional differences in economic equality, with the poorest regions typically being rural and urban centres being generally better off. Economic liberalisation from the 1990's onwards has transformed India into an emerging economy, but this has not made life better for the poorer parts of the population. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 22-44.)

I first came across Naxalites (left-wing extremists adhering to the ideology of Maoism) in Indian films, where they were portrayed as heroes as well as villains, and sometimes as something in-between[1]. I was fascinated and wanted to know more; in all my years of reading about India and learning about its extremes, I had apparently missed this significant armed conflict happening within the country's borders. Because of the violent and uncertain nature of the conflict, I could not study it in close engagement with the people involved. When even Indian researchers with a fluency in local languages experienced a rather suspicious welcome among Naxalites (Chitralekha 2012, 29, 42), it seemed rather impossible for me to seek contacts to gather traditional, anthropological data through the method of ethnography. Therefore I had to find another method to look at the Naxalites, something that I could examine from afar that still felt relevant. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the Naxalite movement as a whole, and see it as a part of its cultural and social context.

When doing preliminary research, I ran into an essay by author and left-wing political activist Arundhati Roy in Outlook India, titled, *Walking With The Comrades* (Roy 2010 [online]), which it sparked a lot of controversy. In the essay, Roy sympathised with not just the cause but also the actions of the Maoists[2], after spending time with them in the Dandakaranya forest in the state of Chhattisgarh. The highly romanticised manner in which Roy portrays the tribal Maoists,

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1   To give a few examples, for a villainous portrayal, see *Red Alert* (2010, dir. Ananth Narayan Mahadevan). For a heroic portrayal, see *Chakravyuh* (2012, dir. Prakash Jha) or *Thalappavu* (2008, dir. Madhupal). For a portrayal that falls somewhere between the two, there is *Ko* (2011, dir. K.V Anand).
2   In the Indian context, the term Maoist is regularly used to refer to Naxalites.

overlooking or even justifying their violent means while directing all of her criticism towards policies of the Indian state, caused a lot of backlash. Critics saw Roy's rose-tinted view of Naxalites as being wholly irresponsible, given their violent actions and their objective to overthrow the state. The debate rose out of this very positive portrayal of the Naxalites, which caused me to think about the way this group was being portrayed.

This means that representation of Naxalites in the media matters. In a complicated, armed conflict where the state is fighting an insurgency within its own borders, representations are closely related to views on how to solve the conflict. Hence I want to find out the following: *how are Naxalites represented in the Indian media*? To answer this question, I will analyse the representations in articles from Times of India, over the span of three years, from 2010 to 2012. In order to do this as comprehensively as possible, I will also provide a general overview of the Naxalite movement, so that readers can understand the proper context to the media discourses on it.

Having found the question I wanted to answer, the method of discourse analysis seemed perfect fit for the research. Discourse is the use of language in a context and as something that constructs a social reality. A discourse represents agents in a certain manner, and typically contains an ideology of some kind. (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009, 23-25.) Therefore the objective in discourse analysis is to analyse the text in relation to the conventions and power relations existing in society. The relationship between the texts and the society is dialectical, so they are both shaped by one another, and subsequently end up shaping each other. (Fairclough 1997, 50-51.)

In an anthropological or ethnological sense, the media is the 'field' in which my fieldwork occurs. Even though the study draws from varied non-anthropological fields (e.g. linguistics, sociology, political science), discourse analysis is a great tool for examining media as its tied to its cultural and societal context. This field of discourses is where most people, both in and outside India, are likely to encounter Naxalites, unless they live in the areas where the conflict occurs, or specifically set out to study it. Thus understanding it better provides more clarity to how the on-the-ground reality is perceived and communicated to a larger audience. Because the anthropological view of mass media sees it as a cultural system of social construction (Coman 2005, 46), discourse analysis makes for a great tool to analyse this system, which is at once local and global.

In Roy's essay, the Naxalites represent long-awaited saviours - they are fighting for the historically marginalised people in forested areas (often termed *adivasi*[3]). The two groups become one and the same in the essay - discourse about *adivasi* is discourse about Naxalites. The Indian central government, on the other hand, represents an oppressive evil, single-mindedly focusing on economic progress at the cost of *adivasi* lives and welfare. Roy also flips the discourse about Gandhism (most often seen as defined by its non-violence) on its head, by arguing that the Naxalites, despite their violent actions, are "more Gandhian than any Gandhian" for their devotion to advancing social justice for *adivasis*. Therefore the violence is very much justified. (Roy 2010 [online].)

I'm interested in seeing how media representation of Naxalites defines them, and also how it defines their enemy (the central government, security force members, or anybody who opposes them). This categorisation forms an important part of the discourse about Naxalites. Terms used to describe them also portray a certain discursive viewpoint (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009, 71) – are they called terrorists, activists or extremists? Left-wing extremism seems to be the term favoured by state officials (Pillai 2010 and Ministry of Home Affairs: Naxal Management Division [online]) but extremism can imply that peaceful discussions are no longer seen as a way to resolve differences – extremists have accepted violence as their method (Chitralekha 2012, 14-15).

It matters how Naxalites are discussed, because ultimately the discourses affect public policy and through that, the lives of the people affected by the Naxalite movement. When the conflict between the state and an insurgency can even be called war, and it's happening on in the world's largest democracy, it's clear that the Naxalite conflict has significance on a global scale as well. Insurgencies aren't unique to India, either: stateless warfare takes place in many countries, whether it's rebellious groups, terrorist groups or separatists (Brooker 2010). So what does this particular insurgency mean in its context?

In a way, the discourses about Naxalites are also discourses about India itself. Naxalites offer an opposing view on the economic optimism about India as an emerging economy, exemplified by the

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3   The word is Hindi for 'tribal'. I use this local term despite awareness of the term's implications in English. In other contexts, where the word 'tribal' has been used to other marginalised groups and further de-humanise them and label their culture as 'primitive' and lesser, it is obviously not a term I would use. I don't know whether this is the case with the Indian local word as I couldn't find much written on the subject.

2004 election's Bharata Janata Party slogan "India Shining". Discourses frame the conflict as they offer both interpretations on why Naxalites exist and potential solutions (which will be discussed in the 3rd chapter of this study). Naxalites can be seen as unlawful rebels or terrorists, whose protest has nothing constructive to say about where India needs to be as a country (Pillai 2010, 6) or as disillusioned people who turn to violent means because mainstream society has failed them (Dixit 2010, 33-34). The conflict is constantly discursively framed and re-framed in texts about the Naxalite movement, be they studies, opinion pieces or news reports. This is why my chosen method should be a fruitful one in understanding not only the conflict but also the culture and society surrounding it.

This study is situated in the fields of political anthropology and media anthropology, even if the method used is not conventionally one used in these fields, nor in ethnology. Political anthropology has long been concerned with the exploitation and oppression of the indigenous peoples by the state, which is an issue relevant to the Naxalite conflict as well. (Lewellen 2003, 111-113.) Media anthropology, on the other hand, has traditionally looked at the way media is consumed and produced by people, mostly outside "the West". Media has been studied as means of cultural production, what it means for cultural identities and how it forms cultural narratives (tying to folklore studies), as well as cultural resistance. (Coman & Rothenbuler 2005.)

Both fields are expansive, but for the focus and question of this study it made sense to also draw from fields such as sociology, linguistics and political science. Anthropological studies in media are often focused on what media means for the people and the culture surrounding it, whereas the focus of this study is more interested in how media reflects the greater ideas produced in a particular cultural and political environment (that is, the Naxalite conflict in current day India). It's taking a larger, macro-focus to gain perspective on a multitude of localised conflicts.

The title of this study comes from an opinion piece published in Times of India on September 15th, 2011 by Ajay Vaishnav, in which he argues that then-Home Minister Chidambaram was right in his estimation that Naxalism is a bigger problem to India as a nation than cross-border terrorism, precisely because the insurgency has its roots in economic inequality and dispossession of the rural poor (TOI 15/09/2011). This view is rather common, as is the idea that India is fighting with itself, or even at war with itself, when it comes to the Naxalite conflict. The journalist Sudeep

Chakravarti, in his acclaimed book on the Naxalites, talks about the India full of economic optimism with aspirations of becoming a major world superpower, and the India of deep poverty, malnourishment and poor sanitation, and how these two Indias are at odds with one another, and "often at war with each other", referring specifically to the Naxalite movement (Chakravarti 2008, 5-8). This further speaks to the idea that not only is this a conflict of a fringe group against the government – the Naxalites represent something bigger than themselves in the public conversation, and subsequently the conflict they engage in represents ideas about what India is, or where it is headed. Therefore it's important to see what kind of meaning is given to the Naxalite conflict in one of the biggest shapers of public conversation: the media.

Reflections on the standpoint of the researcher

In qualitative research and discourse analysis, the researcher's self has a big impact on the study, from the way that data is selected to the way it's interpreted and analysed. Researching a different culture from my own has made me think throughout my research so far. There are things about Indian culture that I suspect might forever escape a non-native researcher's full understanding, such as intricacies of caste division. Even if I have a pretty good base knowledge about Indian society, political system and history, there remains ta distance to the culture that I can never achieve as a non-native researcher. On the other hand, as an outsider I may pay closer attention to things that are self-evident in the eyes of native researchers, and thus gain an even deeper knowledge.

In a conflict which aims at an evolution to overthrow what the insurgents see as an oppressive, unfair state, one really begins to look critically at both sides. India is perceived as among the most corrupt countries in the world[4], and the security forces, such as the police, are generally distrusted (Human Rights Watch 2009, 6). Roy (2010 [online]) even goes so far as claiming that the state only looks out for the Hindu Brahmin[5] elites – leaving aside the other groups, whether they're Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus of lower castes, to fight for their own rights and then have their movements repressed by the state. On the other hand, as Mukherji (2012) warns, it can be short-sighted to sympathise with rebels engaged in violence, because of the unjust or condemnable actions of the state in retaliation.

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4   Corruption Perception Index 2011 gives India a score of 3.1 on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is very corrupt and 10 is not corrupt at all. (Accessed February 13th, 2013. <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/results>.)
5   Brahmin is the highest *varna*, or caste.

Social scientist Chitralekha defines her own position as sympathising with the young Naxalites she met during her fieldwork as people, rather than ideologically, since she saw them having very little options in life other than joining the violent movement (2012, xviii). Lacking this kind of personal engagement with anybody affected by the conflict because of my chosen method, I doubt I'll be inclined to sympathise with the Naxalites. Giri's critique of the Indian democratic, dissident left and their soft approach to Naxalites (2009) was another cause for reflection. I condone violence as little as I condone state repression of different views in a democracy, and thus my position is that I understand both sides to an extent but remain critical of them as well.

In a politically charged question, such as the Naxalite movement and the current, on-going insurgency they're engaged in, it seems apparent that trying to stay relatively neutral in research can be difficult. Most researchers looking at these issues, so far as I've understood their positions, are critical of both the Indian state and its actions against the insurgency, as well as the Naxalites' violent behaviour that purports to represent the *adivasi* interest, but seems to do little to better the *adivasis*' living conditions. At the same time, a lot of them have a very defined take on how to solve the conflict, or what the state should do to decrease violence in these areas (I will cover these, as well as prior research on the topic, in chapter three). Therefore it was clear to me that not only could I witness discursive viewpoints on the Naxalites in my data, but also in some of the background literature (I will elaborate on these discourses in chapter 3). The reader should keep this in mind when reading both this study and some of the sources in it.

India: context to the conflict

As previously stated, it's important to understand the cultural and societal context of the Naxalite movement and the conflict it is currently engaged in. India is a highly populous country, where economic disparity has only increased as result of economic liberalisation from the 1990's onwards. In other words, India's much-discussed economic growth is not reaching vast amounts of its population. India is also a nation of enormous linguistic variety (with tens of official languages spoken) and religious variation. Tied to the main religion, Hinduism (which could also be understood as a set of religious practises, rather than a uniform religion) is the issue of castes, a complicated system of hierarchical categories, related to ideas of ritual pureness, where the higher

castes are seen as ritually pure, whereas the casteless are not. While caste discrimination has been officially outlawed, they still impact Indian society, particularly in terms of marriage practises (inter-caste marriages remain rare). Approximately 29% of the population are high caste Hindus, 29% lower caste Hindus, and 24% *dalit* (casteless) or *adivasi* (tribal people). The other religions are Islam (13%), Christianity (2%), Sikhism (2%) and other (1%, includes religions such as Buddhism, Jainism etc)[6]. Generally the Indian state is seen as secular in its tolerance of all these different religions, and religious syncretism is seen as a feature of Indian culture. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 22-44.)

An important political force of recent history has been the rise of Hindu nationalism (or Hindu extremism), *Hindutva*, which has a tendency to view both the Muslim rulers of India's past as well as the current Muslim minority as harmful influences on Indian society. The political party that represents this force is called *Bharata Janatiya Party*, or BJP. Hindutva considers India a fundamentally Hindu state (they include Jainism and Sikhism as parts of Hinduism) and has included conversion in their view of the religion, which was previously thought impossible as one could only be born Hindu, not convert to it. Hindu nationalism has been a very militant point of view, and clashes between Hindus and Muslims in the South Asian context are typically termed "communal violence". Examples of such violence are the 2002 riots in the state of Gujarat, following the alleged burning of a train filled with Hindu pilgrims, and the destruction of the Babri mosque, allegedly built on the birth place of Hindu god Ram, in 1992. This in turn sparked attacks in 1993 by Muslim extremists in Mumbai. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 37, 92-96.)

Many Hindutva politicians are the ones most adamant in bringing an end to the Naxalite movement by militarist means. In his study on the *Salwa Judum* militia in the state of Chhattisgarh, peace and conflict researcher Jason Miklian (2009, 457) points out that Hindu fundamentalists in the political movement are successfully using the conflict for political gain, and that the conflict has been "polarised along the Red vs Saffron (Naxal vs Hindu fundamentalist) lines". Both sides are extremist and are trying to shape India into their own image (Naxalites seek to do it by revolution, while Hindutva gains power through politics, protests and at times, exacerbating communal tensions).

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6   The statistics on religious affiliations are based on the Indian Census data from 2001. Religion was not included in the 2011 census, so it seems like this data is the most recent on the topic.

India is a democratic republic and is administrated mainly on two levels. There is the central governmental level (often termed Centre), which includes the prime minister as the head of state and the government[7], and the president (whose position is largely ceremonial). The centre is responsible for foreign affairs, the defence, the railways and corporation taxes. The next level of administration are the states, who have their own legislative assemblies and their own state governments, headed by a chief minister. The state governments have power to legislate on agricultural taxation, local government, general law and order, as well as public healthcare. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 22.) These two levels of administration can, at times, be disconnected in terms of policy, which impacts how the Naxalite conflict is handled on the ground.

Colonisation by the British empire, from the 16th century to the 1947 independence, has impacted India enormously. In terms of Naxalism, two factors of the colonialist history are very important. The way in which the colonial British central government was designed to control and repress any possible dissidents has impacted the occasionally totalitarian and authoritarian ways in which the central Indian state and particularly the police has responded to movements against the state, particularly in the late 1970's and early 1980's (including Naxalites and the Sikh separatist movement). The second important factor has been the way that colonialism altered the *zamindar* (landowner) system. Under Muslim rule, the system had worked so that *zamindars* would negotiate with the farmers about the portion of crop yield which the farmers would pay them. This made sure that the farmers could pay a smaller share if their yield was bad on a given year. The Brits changed the system so that the *zamindars* now owned the land, sharing their profit with the British, and the farmers had to pay taxes to the British, regardless of the crop yield on any given year. This meant many of them began to farm new crops for the international market (such as cotton or indigo), and often were in debt to pay the taxes. Essentially the farmer was worse off than before, and, unsurprisingly perhaps, this lead to famine under the British rule. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 39, 27-28, 30.) The continued inequality and exploitation of farmers built into this system allowed Naxalites to label both the landowners and the state forces defending the *zamindari* class as "class enemies" that the movement sought – and still seeks – to overthrow.

Political and police corruption are partial reasons for the general lack of trust people in India might feel towards the state. In addition, many Indian politicians themselves have a criminal background.

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7   In recent history, India is most often ruled by a coalition of parties, rather than just one party. The current central government coalition is formed by the Congress Party and other centre-left parties and is termed the United Progressive Alliance or UPA.

Naxalites often gain ground best in tribal, jungle areas where the central institutions of the state haven't held much power – therefore the state in these areas can be understood as weak. The wide-spread corruption and maltreatment by the police can turn people to sympathise with the Naxalites as an anti-state operation, or even take up arms against the state themselves. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 99, 81-83; on police corruption, see Human Rights Watch 2009.)

In summary, the many types of inequality affecting India's citizens are a reality that underscores the Naxalite conflict. The state and the political establishment can be seen as corrupt, criminal, ineffective and oppressive occasionally in the way it responds to dissidence. At the same time, the fact remains that India is a democracy, where freedom of speech is a maintained value. The lack of state governance in some parts of the country has made it easier for Naxalites to 'liberate' these areas. Therefore it can be said that for all its successes in establishing a singular nation out of varied religious, linguistic and ethnic groups, the Indian state's nation-building has failed insofar as it hasn't reached all corners of the vast land.

Insurgency and terrorism

For the most part, I refer to the conflict between Naxalites and the Indian state as just that: a conflict. Other times, I will call it an insurgency, which it could also be called, though this label carries a very specific definition. Political scientist Idean Salehyan defines an insurgency as a strategy that a group uses to bargain with the government when other political tactics have failed. In the bargaining process, both the group and the government or regime threaten the other with violence. The state can use violent means to silence this dissent, or give in to some or all of the rebel group's demands. Sometimes those demands will include removal of the current regime or government, and the establishment of a new one, composed of the rebels. (Salehyan 2009, 19.)

So how are insurgencies born? Salehyan references a number of different theories, most of which centre around the idea that insurgencies are an outcome of social inequality in some form or another. This social inequality impacts the gap between the group's aspirations and current

opportunities, which makes the group feel aggrieved. Greed to loot available resources may also be another motivational factor, but generally Salehyan thinks that besides motivation (grievances, greed, inequality), an insurgency requires opportunity. Rough terrain, lack of government reach into some areas or simply a weak state provide an opportunity for a rebel movement to enter into bargaining with the government. (Salehyan 2009, 20-22.)

The state might be unwilling to bargain and wish to move militarily to silence dissent, when it doesn't see the rebel actors as credible or powerful. Therefore, merely entering a position to bargain with the state does not guarantee that the rebel group will win any kinds of concessions. In order to do that, they must mobilise in greater numbers to gain an advantage in the negotiation. (Salehyan 2009, 24, 37.) In chapter 4 I will cover how people view the Naxalites' general motivations for joining the movement, and in chapter 5 we can see some of these motivations and opportunities discussed in my data.

An insurgency that has escalated to an armed conflict has enormous impact on civilian lives. Media and communication scholar Clemencia Rodríquez, who studied the local media in resistance to armed conflict in Colombia, lists some of these effects on civilian communities: rule of law replaced with use of force, corruption and bribery increase, recruitment of children into armed groups, continued threat of violence restricts civilians' freedoms and mobility, armed groups making informants and supporters out of civilians erodes social bonds and solidarity. Generally, the people, who live among these conflicts, will be forced to live in constant terror and possibly choose sides. (Rodríguez 2011, 2-3.) It seems like all of these things apply to the conflict between the Naxalites and the Indian state.

Political scientist Paul Brooker presents the modernisation of stateless warfare as having three phases of modernisation: nationalist (characterised by bandit-like war against a foreign state, often separatist in nature), maoist (with increased military activities, shifting to semistate warfare) and the new techniques and technology phase (where instead of a shift to semistate warfare, new strategies of propaganda, provocation and pressure are used to intensify the movement). I will categorise the Naxalite movement based on his categorisation and definitions, based on my own findings in the background literature on the movement. The Naxalite movement is a *revolutionary* type of insurgency, whose main mode of insurgency is *guerrilla*. It seems to be in the second phase of modernisation, which Brooker calls 'maoist' (not due to ideology, but because Mao wrote

extensively about shifting from guerrilla warfare to a semistate army which could defeat the state army in a civil war). (Brooker 2010, 17, 20-21, 27.)

The targets of the Naxalite movement are rarely civilian or political leaders, but rather military, police or economic targets, which defines them as guerrilla, as opposed to terrorist (I will later discuss the contested nature of the term terrorist). The Naxalites, adhering to Maoist ideology (more about Naxalite ideology in chapter 4) , appear to also follow Mao's writings on strategy. They follow the maoist-model insurgency strategy – trying to capture rural areas to create a regular army that would be able to defeat the state army. Brooker points out that historically maoist-model insurgencies have also required foreign allies or the help of urban fronts. The Naxalite movement seems to make use of both. (Brooker 2010, 37, 51-52, 71.)

Terrorism

I refrain from using the label 'terrorist' when it comes to Naxalites, their movement or their actions. The more I studied academic writing on terrorism, the more confusing and multi-faceted the term seemed. Carruthers points out that many analysts consider 'terrorism' such a contested term that it can't be understood as neutral, even in the analytical, academic context. 'Terrorist' is often an inherently negative term; it implies that an agent's use of violence is illegitimate, wrong and targets innocent lives. (Carruthers 2011, 175-176.)

Sociologist and political scientist Charles Tilly offers a fairly neutral, working definition of terrorism. He considers terrorism as being often defined too generally to encompass various types of groups and agents in different parts of the globe, even though they do not form a coherent class of actors or a separate type of politics. Terror is a strategy, he argues, which can be defined as "asymmetrical deployment of threats and violence against enemies, using means that fall outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating some current regime". Groups engaging in wider conflicts may use this strategy intermittently but the strategy of terror rarely defines them as a group. Tilly also connects terror as a strategy to government-backed or government-employed "specialists in coercion", such as armies, police or militias. Therefore terror can be used both by the government as well as against the government – it is, essentially, *a strategy of intimidation*. (Tilly 2004, 5-6, 8-9.)

Therefore, terror is a strategy that the Naxalites may or may not intermittently use, but the label 'terrorist' defines agents through the use of this strategy and paints them in an extremely negative light. The use of the term is a tactic of *othering* – a nationalist who commits an act of terror to strike fear in the perceived oppressor is rarely labelled a terrorist in history books, but a foreign agent doing similar actions may well receive the label. When it comes to media, the reader is not invited to agree with the motivations or the actions of a terrorist, but to condemn them.

The label 'terrorist' has historically been attached to various terrorist scares. As an example of how one group was labelled as 'terrorist' and another group glorified by doing the same actions, Carruthers describes some of the early 20th century films by D.W. Griffith. In them, anarchists pose a threat, while the Ku Klux Klan – a group that also uses various terror tactics – are the heroes. Carruthers points out how the "elastic discourse of terrorism" normalises one form of violence while pathologizing others. (Carruthers 2011, 178-180.)

Even a very shallow reading of the articles that compose my field reveals that Naxalites aren't consistently labeled as terrorists, and considering Tilly's definition of terrorism (2004), or the fact that the categorisation used by Brooker (2010) mainly considers groups that attack civil targets as terrorist, it would be inaccurate and unnecessarily discursively 'labeling' to call the Naxalites terrorist.

2. Discourse as theory and method of analysis

Times of India as a field of discourse

Early on I decided that I would take advantage of India's native English media as a field to examine discourses in. To make sure that the medium I was selecting was widely consumed by Indian readership and an international audience, I chose *Times of India*. It also made sense to use something that was in a language I was fluent in, and therefore didn't have to strenuously translate before analysing.

Times of India is the largest English daily newspaper in India as well as the sixth largest newspaper overall in terms of circulation, around 7.6 million copies sold daily (Indian Readership Survey 2012 [online]). Their online readership is also significant, as Times of India website ranks as the top domestic online news source for Indians (ComScore Press Release 2013 [online]). Times of India should be considered the giant in the field of Indian media – not only is it number one in its language, it also belongs to the biggest media conglomerate in the country, The Times Group (also known as Bennet, Coleman and Co. Ltd.). The current owners of the conglomerate, Samir Jain and his family, took over Times of India in 1986, when the paper was in decline. His approach, to treat the paper much like any other product sold by the family business, seemed to pay off. (Kohli-Khandekar 2010, xxiv.) Times of India, alongside other major mainstream Indian media entities, has been critisised for containing a very corporate, neo-liberal capitalist bias (Chaudhuri 2010, 70-75), but insofar as leaning towards any particular political party is concerned, the paper is generally considered even-handed.

I began gathering data from *Times of India* (henceforth TOI) in November 2012, and quickly realised that the amount of news articles and opinion pieces about Naxalites was overwhelming. I wanted my field to encompass a couple of years, so I chose the time span from beginning of 2010 to the end of the year 2012. According to Ministry of Home Affairs statistics (i.e. the official statistics provided by the Indian government), 2010 was the year the violence in the conflict reached its

current apex (1,005 deaths in 2,213 incidents). Both the numbers of incidents and deaths have come down in 2011 and 2012. (Ministry of Home Affairs: Naxal Management Division [online].) I felt that the span of these three years would provide a good indication of the variety of discourses about the Naxalites, as well as indication on how the media representation of them develops as incidents and violence decrease.

At first I considered gathering only news articles that specifically discussed Naxalites at length, but even this outline of the material resulted in too much to properly analyse it all. Eventually I decided to only include opinion pieces, editorials and longer reports, which tended to include quotes from people involved in the conflict (on both sides). As such, the amount of material would be reasonable, but would also provide with a representative sample of how Naxalites are discussed in Indian English-language media. In the end the corpus of texts included 115 articles. I saved the articles in December 2012, January 2013 and March 2013 as MHT (MIME HTML) web archive files, which preserve the layout of the page and the formatting of the text. Of course, the fact these articles were accessed online means they are formatted differently from the physical, print editions.

Figure 1: Breakdown of data collected from Times of India online, number of articles (by year and type).

	2010	2011	2012
Report	34	30	32
Opinion or editorial	5	7	4
Total	39	37	36

There weren't many images in the articles chosen. *Times of India*'s online layout style favours very small pictures accompanying articles, if there are any pictures at all. Because of this, it didn't seem very important to view the small, few images as a significant part of the corpus and to analyse them. If the print versions of the articles included any big images, they were not included in the online versions Sometimes there would be a little video clip window as the 'picture' accompanying an article, but almost without exception, these video clips had been long removed from the site and would not play, leaving them out of the realm of analysis, too.

An estimated four percent of Indians know English, nearly all of them speaking it as a second or third language. Nevertheless, given the population size, this gives English media a huge audience. (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 33.) According to linguist Ravinder Gargesh, English serves as a link language between Indian people from different regions as well and has a prominent role in the prestigious fields of education, science and technology. English is particularly the language of education, and it is the preferred language for education in many families. Due to historical opposition to Hindi as the nation's first language (by non-Hindi speakers), English has been the "Associate Official Language" of the Indian state since 1967. (Gargesh 2006, 90-94, 101.) As well as being an official language on the federal level and in the courts, English is also a language for an elite class of people who have had a decent amount of English education. One should also note that there is no single media outlet in India that would have an audience among all sectors of society and all parts of India. The linguistic variety in India is enormous, and on top of all, over a quarter of the population remains illiterate[8].

Indian English has a few notable key features, mostly in terms of lexis and occasional influences from native Indian languages, such as Hindi. As I've been interested in India, its society, culture and politics for a while, I'm fairly familiar with the differences between English use in India and in other countries. As such, I'm equipped to understand Indian English and analyse it without any huge misunderstandings. (For more on Indian English, see Gargesh 2006 or Pingali 2009.)

Any representation that appears in *Times of India* is to a limited group, albeit a very large one. In a way, they are representations by the elite for the elite – which is not to say that TOI completely excludes voices of the marginalised (such as the *adivasi*), rather just that the language typically makes sure that both the journalists and the audience come from a rather elite section of Indian society; English-speaking (and thus often educated in English, either in India or abroad), literate and often urban. On the other hand, considering I saved all of my data from the TOI website, the readership of these materials can be understood as global: composed of Indians and non-Indian English speakers living in India, or Indian people abroad as well as non-Indians who are interested in the country's current news.

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8   According to Indian Census 2011 data the overall literacy rate was 74.4% (accessed online on February 17th 2013 at <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/census_info_2011.html>).

Discourse as theory, discourse analysis as method

Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) describe discourse analysis as a complete package of theory and method, which includes some philosophical underpinnings regarding the socially constructive role of language in society. Since theory underpins the method, it feels artificial to separate the two in this study. In this chapter, I will examine discourse as a theoretical concept and explain my own use of discourse analysis as a method. In the next chapter I will go through various theoretical concepts that complement discourse theory as well as my own understanding of the Naxalite movement, and discuss other people's theories on the type of discourse that media offers.

The study of discourse began in linguistics, but has since expanded as a method used in many disciplines, from education to cultural anthropology. As the field itself is so varied, so are the definitions for what researchers mean by 'discourse'. Any functional event of communication where people are actively using language to interact could be defined as discourse (van Dijk 1997, 2). As stated previously, in this study, discourse works as a theoretical framework and discourse analysis as a method. At this point, a simple definition for the term should suffice: a discourse is *the use of language to socially construct meaning through repetition* (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009). I see discourse as a way that many texts become a story, but also how different 'stories' within those texts are contrasted with one another.

As a theoretical framework, the concept of discourse sees language as very tied to its social meaning. Language use reflects social realities, but is also involved in producing and reproducing them – in a sense, it's in dialogue with society (Richardson 2007, 10). Language in discourse analysis is understood as creating a social reality. Analysing the conventions of language use reveals the way that this social reality is constructed. Therefore, a discourse is an established practise of giving something meaning through the way it is discussed. (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009, 27, 23.) In other words, it's a way to represent the world and make sense of it (McKee 2003, 123). Discourse is language-in-action; it's language tied to societal, historical and cultural continuation (Blommaert 2005, 2-3).

Philosopher and psychologist Michel Foucault was one of the first to examine and develop the concept of discourse (Foucault 1979). To Foucault, discourses aren't just composed of language but

also thought and behaviour. Discourses are filters for accepted knowledge, and learning them through social institutions (such as education) produces status and power in society. Other significant institutions that circulate and rely on discourses are politics, scientific research, governmental and medical institutions. Discourses aren't just produced by these institutions, but they also help maintain them and their status. Hence, Foucault thought that discourses would try to prohibit any thought or knowledge that sought to disturb this status quo. (Thiesmeyer 2003, 5.) When studying an insurgency against the state, it's clear that this function of discourse becomes very important, and indeed this is a criticism that is often levied at the way media discourse doesn't question those in power enough.

Discourse, according to Foucault, is something that is constantly producing something else; it's producing a certain perspective on the world and also constituting 'a regime of truth' – what is considered true and truthful (Mills 1997, 17-18.) They form one part in a network of relations of power and influence, and through discourse analysis the analyst can begin to examine how these relations are re-produced. Foucault's objective for this method is to find patterns and hierarchies in texts, which position people within certain roles. (Matheson 2005, 9-10.) Foucault's theory about discourses is particularly important to Critical Discourse Analysis, which I will elaborate on later.

Perhaps one reason as to why discourse analysis has become such a popular method in recent years is because of the various aspects of discourses. Noted proponent of the method Shi-xu lists the main aspects of discourse in his study of cultural representations; I will list the ones I found most important for my own study. First of all, discourses are *functional*, in that they are communicating for a certain purpose. Secondly, discourses are *constructive*, as they present a particular reality. Thirdly, discourses contain content or 'messages' and thus are *informative*. Discourses are always *contextual*, tied to a certain context, in terms of time, place and sometimes an interaction. Fifth, discourses are often *reasoned* – they contain arguing and explaining. Lastly, Shi-xu considers discourses *resource-ful* [sic], because they draw from cultural and societal resources, motifs and themes to make their case in a particular context. (Shi-xu 1997, 31-43.)

I'm interested in finding out how discourses construct social realities about the Naxalites, as well as the functions they might serve. These functions may be political, such as re-affirming the dominant ideologies in a particular context, which is one reason why Critical Discourse Analysis looks at

ideology and hegemony so closely. Essentially, my understanding of discourses is that they tell a story about the world; they try to explain why things are the way they are and provide a narrative that makes sense of a phenomenon in a certain context.

Critical Discourse Analysis

There are many ways to analyse discourses, depending on one's orientation and research objectives. A lot of the reading I did on discourse analysis focused on Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA (e.g. Fairclough 1997, Blommaert 2005, Jorgenson & Phillips 2002). This field of study examines the power relations in discourses and the political nature of language in discourses. It states that discourses reflect problems and hierarchies in society. In particular, CDA pays close attention to issues such as inequality, prejudice and discrimination; issues that deal with power relations in society. Discourses can transform or reproduce those relations, so by linking linguistic analysis to social analysis, CDA attempts to reveal the way these power relations are reflected in texts. (Richardson 2007, 12-13, 26-27.) The analysts understand their own role as being situated in society, and attempt to not just describe discourses, but also explain them in terms of social structure; why is it that this particular society produces these particular discourses (van Dijk 2001, 352-353).

Discourses, according to critical discourse analysis, are both constitutive and constituted. This means they are in a dialectical relationship with the social world; they draw from it, but also re-produce it. Within this dialectical relationship, there is a possibility for social change – for the discourse to change the way that social reality and meaning within in it, is re-produced. Other important aspects of critical discourse analysis are firstly, the way it sees discourses as belonging to very specific social contexts, and that analysis should understand those contexts, and secondly, the way it sees ideology as a part of discourses. The re-production of certain ideologies in discourses are a part of re-producing power relations in society, and inequality in terms of this. (Jorgenson & Phillips 2002.)

In order to tie discourses to the social world that they are related to, CDA examines not just texts,

but *discursive practises*, the production and consumption of a text, and *social practise*, which is the wider social context for the particular text or communicative event. The production and consumption of a text draws on existing discourses and genres to both formulate the text and for the consumer to understand it. The analysis of the social practise, on the other hand, is concerned about the wider implications of the former two (text and discursive practises), especially in terms of whether they re-produce the current order of things, or whether they seem to change it. (Jorgenson & Phillips 2002.)

The previous explanation on the stages of analysis is based on the objectives of CDA. First comes the analysis of the *text*, then the analysis of the *discourse*, and thirdly, the analysis of the wider *context* for that discourse. (Richardson 2007, 42.) This model makes a lot of sense to me, for the way it proceeds from a simple part of analysis to a more complicated whole. As a researcher, I personally see the objectives of CDA as not just examining a particular discourse on its own, and doing so critically, but tying this discourse to all the social and political contexts that are relevant to it.

On the other hand, I also have to understand my own limitations when it comes to using this method. Fairclough (1992) applied his analysis to a very small corpus of texts, whereas Richardson had some data on his side when he looked at British newspaper audiences and their breakdown by paper and by social class (2007, 81). I am looking at a larger corpus of texts and therefore will not be applying such a deep, comprehensive method of analysis. I also do not have reliable breakdowns of Times of India's readership in terms of social class, income, gender or religion, for example, so I can not reliably analyse those factors in terms of discursive practises.

Related to the objectives of CDA is the concept of hegemony. Antonio Gramsci's influential writings on hegemony (e.g. Gramsci 1992) define hegemony as a process through which the dominant classes maintain power and privilege. This does not happen simply through violence and control, but also through ideologically establishing their culture and values as the 'common sense' ones through intellectual and moral leadership. When hegemony succeeds, those oppressed by it consent to the control of the dominant class. CDA builds on this idea to look at the way that discourses reflect dominant interests and ideologies in society, but also how (or whether) they question and subvert them.

3. Related theoretical concepts

Representation

In discourses, *representation* occurs. This is the use of language to construct meaning about things and to say something meaningful about them to other people. Representation is important because things on their own do not convey meaning; instead, meaning is socially constructed. For example, the colour red[9] stands for a variety of things and concepts (such as danger or communism) only within our system of representation. It represents something other than just the visual that we see, because we've constructed it so. (Hall 1997, 15, 17, 25-26.)

The power of representation lies in its ability to build perceptions. A discourse organises meanings in an effective way to create a perspective on a group, phenomenon or an individual. These varied, repeated perspectives form representation. Representations are always tied to contexts and previous representations, and therefore within them, there is always the possibility to represent something in a way that differs from the previous presentations. The representation that confirms previous ones attempts to further establish itself as the dominant representation, while the differing, counter-representations try to gain a prominence in the larger discourse. (Pietikäinen & Mäntylä 2009, 53-59, 62-63.) Representation is essentially a grouping of discourses, all tied together in their power to stand for a particular phenomenon. Therefore, in my attempt to understand how the Naxalites are represented in media, individual discourses are like pieces of a puzzle that form the full picture, the representation.

The choices that come together as representation include not just things that are said, but are not said. In other words, everything that is left out also becomes important when analysing representation. Linguist Norman Fairclough presents a scale of "visibility" that makes up the different aspects of representation in texts: *missing – presumptions – secondary – primary.* Presumptions that the text contains position the reader; the text essentially assumes its reader knows and thinks certain things. (Fairclough 1997, 139-140.) Times of India, for example, may presume its readers are Indian and thus understand certain societal and cultural meanings that are not automatic

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9   See chapter 5 for the way that the colour red is tied to representations of the Naxalites.

knowledge to non-Indian readers.

People who call themselves Naxalites exist in the material world, but what this group means, in the greater scheme of things, is constructed through discourse. Just the term "Naxalite" can be seen as a discursive practise (by Naxalites and others) to tie them to the original Naxalbari incident in 1969 and the movement that sprung out of it, even when many of the people involved today have no actual connection to the movement of the time.

The ideological square

Noted discourse analyst and linguist Teun A. van Dijk has developed a very useful tool for examining the way that ideologies and group representations intersect in discourses. He calls this *the ideological square*. It's essentially a theory about positive representations of Self and negative representations of Other, where people are positioned in a certain light, based on their group. This theory or model (or 'strategy of polarization' as van Dijk puts it) doesn't only work to emphasise the good actions and qualities of the in-group (i.e. Us) but mitigate and downplay any negative actions and qualities of the members of that in-group. Conversely, the out-group (i.e. Them) will have their negative actions and qualities emphasised, and their positive actions or qualities mitigated. (van Dijk 1998, 25, 33.)

I want to use this 'ideological square' because it is very often seen in the media when reporting wars and other conflicts and this is what Naxalites are engaged in with the Indian state. How *Times of India* positions the Naxalites in terms of how we're supposed to see ourselves in relation to them becomes very important to their representation. However, the situation is not necessarily as simple as a foreign invasion (like the recent American wars abroad, where the media coverage strongly reflected this ideological square in its positioning of the Afghanis and Iraqis as the Other, and the US troops as the Self) or even a civil war that divides a country. The Indian state is engaged in conflict with its own citizens, so who is seen as a part of the in-group becomes more complicated. The Naxalites, too, can be seen as "children of the republic" as one headline in an article that's a part of my data (TOI 24/01/2011) labels the members of the Indian security forces.

Silencing: inclusions and exclusions

Silencing happens wherever there is discourse. This phenomenon usually places discourses in their social and political field, as silencing determines what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable. There are many kinds of silencing, including self-silencing by the speaker – silencing can also be coercive, but it doesn't have to be. Silencing is an act, which can be seen as creating social hierarchies – who gets to speak, for whom they get to speak, and whose voice is heard very little or not at all. (Thiesmeyer 2003, 1-2, 5.) All of these things involve choices, and from those choices one can evaluate whose voices are heard in the discourse, and who are left out, or pushed into the background. Related to silencing is the concept of *voice*. In this study I will use the term in a rather straight-forward manner: voice is the speech or perspective of a particular person or institution in a text, whether quoted or referenced within a text (Pietikäinen & Mäntylä 2009, 122-123).

Who is heard in discourses also defines who is considered a reliable and acceptable source for information; it enables some forms of expression and disables others. (Thiesmeyer 2003, 8, 11.) For example, newspaper article might contain the voices of government officials, the police and a politician, but not the voice of an individual who lived through the event the article is reporting on. The discourse doesn't coercively silence that individual, but what the choices made by the journalist does is deprive the greater public of this one voice, that could actively question the knowledge and information provided by the official account of the events, by government sources (see Lambertus 2003 for an example of this).

However, within the act of silencing, there lies the potential for whatever is being silenced, to be said. In other words, silencing doesn't abolish unwanted voices and discourses from the picture altogether – rather, it seeks to "assimilate, filter and replace the unwanted discourse". The power in silencing requires a diversity of discourses; if such a diversity did not exist, silencing wouldn't have to occur. It exists partly just to label the discourses which are deemed unacceptable. For example, the discourse that constitutes a national identity involves the idea of a nation as a unified group of people. This discourse seeks to exclude discourses from those who are not seen as fitting the definition of a unified group. One such example could be a discourse from people who oppose the

current political system or organisation. (Thiesmeyer 2003, 13, 17-18.)

Media may comply with silencing but it may also actively resist it, and attempt to give voice to those traditionally silenced in media discourses. (Thiesmeyer 2003, 20.) Next I will examine media discourse in general, and the discursive practises of journalism that define it.

Media discourse

Mass media is produced in different places and often at different times than it is consumed (Fairclough 1997, 53), which makes it very different from the discourses in inter-personal conversations, for example. Media and journalism researcher Donald Matheson argues that news discourse does not reflect reality as it is, but rather the interests within society and the shared interpretative resources that the people who consume the news have in common. In other words, news discourse makes sense in a certain social context. Analysing news discourse seeks to understand the social bases that the discourse draws from, how it may challenge or re-produce those social bases, as well as examine the discourse's power to convince its audience. (Matheson 2005, 15-17.) In journalism, producing discourse is assigning of sense and reference (Richardson 2007, 24-25), essentially re-contextualising events in a way that makes sense to those reading or viewing the produced report.

Anthropologist Sandra Lambertus notes that news media can often propagate "us against them" messages, which support dominant, mainstream perspectives (against those with less power, or who are not a part of the majority). Their representations of those with power, such as the government or the police, can often strengthen the authority of these institutions. The "us against them" thinking comes into play particularly during conflict situations, in which the the marginal viewpoints rarely get voiced in the media. (Lambertus 2003, 233, 235-236.)

One of the most defining characteristics of media discourse is the idea that media supports dominant interests. This idea was made most famous by Herman and Chomsky as *the propaganda model*, or as it also known, *the manufacturing consent paradigm*. In this model Herman and

Chomsky outline five "filters", which help us understand why the media would propagate the ideologies and beliefs of the powerful in society. The first two of them are related to the corporate structure of media – profit orientation of media companies, and advertising as a primary source of income for the media. The others are the reliance on the statements of those in power, be it political power or economic power, the negative impact of 'flak' (ie criticism from politicians on media statements) and anticommunism as a control mechanism (against anybody who opposes the current order of things). The last one in particular shows that Herman and Chomsky based their model on American mainstream media, though it doesn't necessarily mean this model wouldn't at all apply to other societies and their media. (Cottle 2006, 15-17.)

Media researcher Simon Cottle also outlines other models on how media presents political ideologies and interests. One of them is *the media contest paradigm*, which considers the media as sites of unequal contests between different sides. The government may have an advantage, but their opponent (particularly in conflict situations) can also get their story heard and gain support through news media. The third model, *the media culture paradigm*, sees media as just a part of everyday life, which offers different representations of individuals, groups and ideas. This obviously aligns closely with discourse theory. (Cottle 2006, 20-26.)

This point of view that states that media discourse only propagates the views of the powerful (the rich, the political elite etc.) is not uncommon, but should not be accepted uncritically. Fairclough points out that the relationship between media and those with power in society should be examined on a case-by-case basis, rather than by making simple generalisations (Fairclough 1997, 64). Another view of journalism considers it a mere money-making venture – that newspapers only seek to make the most profit possible. Social scientist and noted proponent of Critical Discourse Analysis, John E. Richardson, takes the view that while journalism needs to make money in order to continue existing, it should be the starting point of analysis, not the conclusion. To him, it's clear that journalism also seeks to give citizens a better understanding of their lives and their position in the world. (Richardson 2007, 6-7.) Matheson also highlights the myriad of difficult choices that journalists make when reporting the news: they seek to make a story interesting to the readership and be true to their sources, all while avoiding accusations of bias or inaccuracies in their articles (Matheson 2005, 29).

I have to concur with both of these observations on the nature of journalism, and the difficulties individual journalists face when reporting events. The journalists, who have produced the data I will later analyse, are hampered by circumstances (limited access to areas where the conflict is taking place, and the people who live there), but appear to do their best in portraying the conflict. Much like the police in the Native Canadian land dispute studied by Lambertus (2003, 238), who eventually decided to cut off the media's access to the protesters' camp for 'security reasons', I suspect that journalists working at *Times of India* have similar restrictions placed on them by the Indian security forces. This will naturally effect portrayals of events and the people involved.

News media in particular is a powerful genre of communication. Journalism influences people's beliefs, shape their opinions, or even has an impact on what things people have opinions on to begin with. (Richardson 2007, 13.) When mainstream media reports on conflict or war, particularly to those not directly affected by the conflict, it has even more power and sway over what its audience thinks about the war. Historian Susan L. Carruthers argues that the media and journalists quite often become proponents of military action, and even play a part in the mobilising effort before the conflict or war begins. This militarist bias can be witnessed both historically and in more recent times, particularly in the mainstream media of the US in regards to the American wars abroad. (Carruthers 2011, 16-17.) Similarly, depictions of global terrorism in the media often construct patriotism and nationalism as an ideal, rousing people to support government action uncritically (Roy & Ross 2011, 298). Readers may consume these texts critically but the power of such discursive viewpoints is their repetition, and their ability to be considered "common sense" through that repetition.

4. Naxalites

The most simple definition of Naxalites is that they are Indian left-wing extremists, adhering to the ideology of Maoism. One could very roughly split research and writings about Naxalites into two categories: research on the original, historical Naxalite movement, begun in the late 1960's in the state of West Bengal, and the current movement that maintains a wide-spread presence in many states and areas of India. While Chitralekha (2010 and 2012) and Shah (2006 and 2009) did their fieldwork among the modern-day Naxalites in the states of Bihar and Jharkand, Ray's study of Naxalite ideology (2012 [1988]) discusses, for the most part, the original movement in West Bengal[10]. There is continuity between these two as well, largely on an organizational level, so even though my own study on the discourses related to Naxalites focuses on the situation of the past couple of years, I will also discuss history to provide a greater context to the current conflict.

For the most part, I will be referring to cities by their current official names (i.e. Kolkata instead of Calcutta), and use the spellings of Hindi words as they appear the texts I'm citing. I will be calling scheduled tribes and castes in Naxalite-affected areas *adivasi* (आदिवासी, Hindi for native, indigenous) as this seems to be the standard in previous research about the areas in question.

History: from a single rebellion to a wide movement

Revolutionary communism against the state in India did not begin with the birth of Naxalism. Agitation by communists was present in the Telangana movement (1946 – 1951). This rebellion focused its ire against the land-owning elite and was helped along by the Communists of the time spreading propaganda against the land-owners. Telangana was named after a region of Andra Pradesh, a state in central India. The objective of the movement was to establish its own state, which would be ruled by a Telugu-speaking majority – this was at a time when the language of Urdu, spoken by the (Muslim) ruler in the state capital Hyderabad, was prioritised. Communist

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10 For more on the historical Naxalite movement, there are many studies that use former Naxalites as informants, (such as M. Roy 2006, Donner 2004 & 2009), or a for a general historical overview, Sumanta Banerjee's work (Banerjee 2009b) is considered an authority.

ideology was not the starting point of the rebellion. The existing land rights disputes people had made them sympathise with the Communist party members, who in turn helped the Telangana movement become more wide-spread and better organized. Eventually this conflict was ended by the army of the newly independent Indian state. (Elliot 1974, 30-33, 38, 40, 43-45.) It should be noted, however, that the issue did not die down, even as the conflict simmered down[11].

In a way, the Telangana movement provided an inspiration for the Naxalite movement, but the political context of the late 1960's is also important. The Indian communist movement was having its discussions throughout the decade about which strategic approach would be best in the Indian society – the revolutionary or the reformist (Harriss 2010, 8). The Communist Party (Marxist) had split from the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1964, influenced by the Sino-Indian War of 1962, but also by the differences of opinion on what stage the revolution was in. CPI(M) was the party dissidents within the CPI would gravitate towards. When the centre-left Indian National Congress (Congress) formed the United Front government alongside CPI(M) in 1967 in West Bengal, the revolutionaries formed an opposition inside the Marxist party. On the day the new Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherjee was sworn in, there were news of the first incident in the village of Naxalbari. (Ray 2012, 75, 78, 85.) The incident began with an *adivasi* boy going to plough his land, when attacked by landlords and their goons. Following this, other *adivasi* people attacked the landlords, sparking further conflict. (Kujur 2008, 2.)

Influencing this chaotic period of Indian history were the food shortages caused by rationing after the Indo-Pakistan border conflict in 1965 - 1966. The rationing stoked up anger among toward both the national government, lead by Indira Gandhi (Congress), and the local West Bengal government. (Ray 2012, 80-85.) The conflict in Naxalbari was a slow, simmering one with the occasional flare-up – eventually, in July 1967, after the death of a policeman and nine *adivasis*, the state government had to formulate a response to the Naxalite problem. Their solution was to speed up land reform, set up distribution committees and tackle the violence with police response. However, the strength of the government itself was questionable, and protests in favour of Naxalbari were increasing in the state capital, Kolkata. (Ray 2012, 87-89.)

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11 The Telangana issue has stayed relevant to this very day, and indeed in late July 2013, it was announced that the state of Andra Pradesh would be split into two, Telangana becoming the 29th state of India. As much of the literature on the Naxalite movement mentions how the original rebellion in Naxalbari was in some ways inspired by the historical Telangana conflict, I felt it was necessary to briefly cover it here, without delving too deep into the complicated political issue that is the current Telangana situation.

The year of 1968 was equally tumultuous. In February, President's Rule (where the president takes a state under federal rule under exceptional circumstances, such as a failure to form a state government or an insurgency) was enforced in West Bengal. Later, in October, some Naxalite leaders were arrested and Naxalites attacked police stations the leaders were held at. Then in 1969, defections from CPI(M) and the release of Naxalite leader Kanu Sayal lead to the formation of a new party aimed to become a true revolutionary party: The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Shortly after its formation, the party had around 17,000 members in seven states. Soon the members of the party clashed with those supporting the United Front government (which was once again in power, following an election earlier that year). Naxalites spreading their ideology in universities radicalised some students and mid-year, a group of students stormed the state's Legislative Assembly. By the end of the year, Naxalites had launched violent campaigns in rural areas and the state was rife with peasant unrest, inter-party violence as well as Naxalite violence. (Ray 2012, 91, 94-95, 97-101.)

In February 1970, the main ideologue of the movement, Charu Mazumdar detailed his plans in what was later titled a "murder manual", essentially directions for how the movement could spread hatred of class enemies (mainly landlords) among the peasantry. This project, "campaign of annihilation", was to launch CPI(M-L) as a revolutionary force, and the escalation of violence eventually resulted in another enforcement of President's Rule in March. This did not quell the revolutionaries and so in May, the annihilation campaign began in Kolkata. The rest of the year was ridden with further violence of all kinds – not just Naxalite killings, but inter-party violence and underworld violence. (Ray 2012, 102-105.)

The year 1971 marked a partial turn – Indira Gandhi won in the national election, and West Bengal's results saw no majority, resulting in an ineffectual state government that was soon put under another Presiden'ts Rule (the third time within three years). However, problems with East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) turned out to be a good thing for the Indira Gandhi government, at least in this instance – China's view on the conflict, which was that India should keep out of it, lead to significant rifts within CPI(M-L). Thus there was considerable disillusionment within the Naxalite ranks. At the same time, the Congress party began organising hoodlums to fight Naxalites, forming resistance groups with significant numbers. With the help of these groups, the Naxalites were soon subdued, and Charu Mazumdar was arrested in 1972. He died only eleven days later, in custody, and though

some raised suspicions that he might have been killed by the police, this seemed to signal the end to the original Naxalite movement. (Ray 2012, 105-108.)

While the movement in West Bengal was not the only centre of militant left-wing activism, it inspired communist groups in the southern state of Kerala and Srikakulam, Andra Pradesh, to ally themselves with the Naxalite cause and even call themselves Naxalites (Ray 2012, 80, 91). Since the movement got its name, and in large part, its objectives from the movement in West Bengal, I didn't consider covering the history of other groups relevant here.

The general consensus is that the movement had ceased most activities by the time prime minister Indira Gandhi imposed a state of Emergency on the whole nation in 1975, which effectively ended the movement and most opposition to her premiership. The Emergency was lifted in 1977. There was subsequently a split in radical left-wing thinking in India – some in the movement began favouring participation in elections and trade unions, while others still saw armed struggle as the way to move forward. By the end of the 80's and throughout the 90's, the groups seeking armed struggle had established militant peasant bases in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastha and Orissa. The activities took place in what would eventually be titled "the red corridor"[12], an area stretching from the north-east (Bihar), across the subcontinent to the south-west (Maharasthra). A turning point in the history of the movement was the coming together of various Naxalite groups to form a single party, Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004. This has re-energised the movement, though their goals remain the same – agrarian revolution through people's war for seizure of power from the state. Current Naxalites also oppose the government's formation of Special Economic Zones[13] and the displacement of *adivasi* (tribal people) for these and other projects, such as mining. (Banerjee 2009a, 255-256 and Harriss 2010, 10-11.)

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12 The idea of a red corridor came out of co-operation with the Nepali left-wing extremists: the goal was to form a corridor of influence from Nepal all the way to central and southern India to move arms faster. (Chitralekha 2012, 58*n*12.)

13 Special Economic Zones are government-approved areas which are exempted from a number of nation-wide laws (mainly taxes) to allow for a freer market economy, economic growth, better export and import capabilities, job opportunities etc. (Special Economic Zones in India, accessed online in March 2nd, 2013. <http://sezindia.nic.in/about-introduction.asp>.)

Ideology: social justice through revolution

Ray portrays the Naxalite ideology as a fundamentally violent one. The main ideologue of the movement, Charu Mazumdar, is perhaps most famous for the following line: "He who has not dipped his hand in the blood of class enemies can hardly be called a communist". Naxalite terrorism seeks to bring out revolution by mobilising the peasants, killing the class enemies (the land-owners), snatching their weapons to form an army and through this process conquering all of India. This was titled 'annihilation', or as Ray interprets, murder. The other existential aspects of the Naxalite ideology were nihilism, a rejection of Marxist revisionism (a revising of certain ideas in Marxism, such as commitment to the revolution) and a hatred of Gandhism for its non-violent nature. Revolution was the crux of Naxalite belief – the scope of enemies grew to define anybody who stood in the way of the revolution as a class enemy. (Ray 2012.)

As examples of current Naxalite ideology, I'll be using party programmes from two groups: Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation and Communist Party of India (Maoist). There are multiple Naxalite parties operating in various parts of India today, and while there are differences in ideology and operational capacity between them, in the general context of left-wing extremism in India, they all fit under the Naxalite umbrella. While it should be noted that Liberation is a party that split from the Marxist-Leninists and later established itself as more of a mainstream party in Bihar, with no significant cadres to carry out revolutionary violence (Chitralekha 2010, 15, 19*n*25 and Harriss 2010, 9), their Party Programme can be seen as an example of the current Naxalite agenda that clearly derives itself from the historical CPI(M-L) party and how a left-wing extremist party remains committed to the central ideas of its predecessor, even after entering mainstream politics.

CPI(M-L) Liberation classifies Indian society as semi-feudal and semi-colonial. This definition is also discussed by Ray, who argues that the reason for this characterization was to paint feudalism as the main problem, and landlords as the main enemy (Ray 2012, 165). The feudal remnants stand in the way of liberating the broad, poor masses and "free and rapid development of productive forces in the country". The only way to turn things around is by revolution with "agrarian revolution as its axis". In its current state, the system is too corrupt and fraught with violence, so the only logical

solution is to undo it all and start over, through the means of revolution. (Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation: General Programme [online].)

The party programme emphasises the social justice aspect of the Naxalite agenda: the sharing of wealth, which in its current form is shared unequally (most of India's prosperity ending up in the hands of a few, not the many) and eradication of the many social inequalities that exist in society (between genders, caste, religions and so on). The ultimate goal is to start a new state, People's Democratic State, which would be based on these values. (Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation: General Programme [online].)

Liberation presents a slightly more moderate wing of Naxalite thought, the press releases and party programme of the banned CPI(Maoist) emphasise the imperialism of India's economic liberalisation (Harriss 2010, 11) and the influence of the United States in globalisation and privatisation. They see this as exploiting and oppressing the vast peasant masses of the country. Ideologically they are committed to "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism". Whereas CPI(M-L) in the early 1970's saw India as being at the same point as China pre-revolution and therefore ripe for revolution, CPI(Maoist) has updated its programme to clearly reflect the current circumstances, erasing the importance of China and its domestic events, which used to split the movement throughout its history. Like CPI(M-L) Liberation, they also strive to form a people's democratic state and the characterisation of India as semi-feudal and semi-colonial continues as well. (Banned Thought: CPI(Maoist) Party Programme [online].)

While Ray (2012) sees little in Naxalite ideology but justification for terrorist violence, the party program of CPI(M-L) Liberation presents a fairly sanitised version that puts the social equality and justice agenda on the forefront. Revolution is mentioned frequently, but the violent means in which this revolution would emerge are not discussed in detail. The CPI(Maoist) party programme is a little more interested in the way that a new state can be formed through taking over the existing, imperialist state. (CPI (M-L) Liberation: General Programme [online] and Banned Thought: CPI(Maoist) Party Programme [online].) Ray questions the agrarian nature of the movement, and concludes that it is the urban intelligentsia that have created the ideological foundation of the movement. There is also a contradiction in their stated goals and their continued commitment to violent terrorism. (Ray 2012, 226.) According to political scientist Nirmalangshu Mukherji, even

the CPI(M-L) co-founder Kanu Sanyal has labelled CPI(Maoist) "in name a communist party but in deed a terrorist party opposed to Marxism" (Mukherji 2012, 15).

In summary, the ideology of the Naxalites sees as overthrowing the current Indian state as the only option to give power back to the people. The view of the India as semi-feudal and semi-colonial has gained another aspect: the imperialism which the Naxalites see in the economic liberalisation and the forces of globalisation as further oppressing the poor peasantry.

Naxalites today: a varied and wide-spread group

It is difficult to make generalizations about the Naxalites as a group, since they are described in most studies as a rather diverse group. There is however some statistical data about the impact of the Naxalite conflict. The overall estimated number of Naxalites varies from source to source. One source puts the number of Naxalites in India at around 18,000 (Tharu 2007, 93), while Chitralekha mentions one grouping having the armed strength of 17,000 in 2003 (Chitralekha 2012, 69). One source, published in 2011, gives an estimate of 10,000 underground and 40,000 over ground cadres in all Naxalite formations in all of India (Singh 2011, 74). This seems like a rather generous estimate, so my best educated guess would be around 20,000 active members – the entire question of who or isn't a Naxalite is a contentious one.

The most significant Naxalite group is Communist Party of India (Maoist), formed in 2004 from two groups: Maoist Community Centre of India and People's War Group. CPI(Maoist) is composed from a political wing and a military wing, as well as a number of front organisations (Chitralekha 2012, 58). The history of various Naxalite groups forming in different states and later joining up is dizzyingly complicated (see timeline in Mukherjee 2012, 12), but suffice to say that it seems like CPI(Maoist) is the biggest and most important Naxalite grouping currently.

Sixteen out of India's 28 states have been affected by left-wing extremist violence and 141 out of 640 districts in 2011 (South-Asian Terrorism Portal: Conflict Map [online]). The most affected states are Jharkand, Chattishgarh and Bihar. The number of deaths as result from conflict between

Naxalites and the police was 3,659 in 2008-2012 – though the official statistics also show a steady yearly decline in both the number of deaths and incidents, such as the drop from 611 deaths in 2011 to 414 deaths in 2012. The statistics also reveal the huge cost of these incidents to civilians, as only 74 of the deaths in 2012 were those considered Naxalites, while 300 were civilians (134 of these 'police informers'), and 144 were security forces. (Ministry of Home Affairs: Naxal Management Division [online].)

The precise composition of the members is more difficult to determine. Naxalites are not themselves an ethnic, linguistic or religious group, though they have many members who might belong to disenfranschised groups, such as the indigenous peoples known as *adivasi*. The span of the movement can range from an intellectual city-dwelling Naxalite sympathiser who is academically educated and reasonably well-off financially, to a poor forest-dwelling, barely educated teenager who is a part of the armed cadre. On-the-ground reality of the movement can be difficult or nearly impossible to get a clear picture of, as Naxalites have mostly thrived in areas which are deeply forested and hard to reach, even if they weren't active battle grounds, which they often are. (Chakravarti 2008.) Depending on who you ask, Naxalites have either hijacked the grievances of adivasis (Mukherji 2012) or are simply aligning themselves with adivasis to help represent those grievances (Roy 2010 [online]).

It is clear that there are women and children involved in Naxalite cadres. While there is indication that the women's role in the movement has been largely gendered – they are there to cook, clean and for the sexual needs of the male cadres – there's also evidence that women are able to rise in the Naxalite ranks and become regiment leaders. Naxalites recruit among school children (ages 12-16) because they do not need much persuasion to join, and are often attracted by the promise of power and status to join the movement. (Chitralekha 2012, 69, 72-73.)

The use of children in the conflict has attracted attention from the international human rights community, as a UN Report on children in armed conflicts notes that Naxalites have been involved in exhorting families for their children to join the cause, as well as recruiting from schools, and even abductions. The Naxalites argued that children are only used as messengers but have admitted that children have also received training in handling lethal and non-lethal weapons. Another way in which children have been affected is the occupation of school buildings by both Naxalite and state

forces, which has also lead to school buildings being destroyed and attacked. (United Nations 2010 [online].)

Ethnographic evidence does not present a very clear picture about the class and caste divisions within the movement. Social science researcher Chitralekha (2012, 11) mentions that most Naxalites she met during her fieldwork were not from poor families, and were most often middle or upper caste. Even though the agenda is to win support among the landless peasants and other marginalised groups, it seems that Naxalites often form bonds with the upper caste elites and well-to-do *adivasis* to establish themselves in new areas (Shah 2006, 301-302). At times the Naxalites would even ally themselves with the upper castes, who they were supposed to be against (Shashi Bhushan Singh 2005 in Harriss 2010, 17-18).

Chitralekha found that despite the general stereotype of extremists as being driven by cause, the majority of Naxalites joined the movement for reasons other than ideology. They joined the movement rather young, in their teens, and were drawn to the movement by factors like recognition in society or *izzat* (इज़्ज़त, reputation/respect in Hindi), and the way that this reputation provided them with a better life. (Chitralekha 2012, 250, 260-266.) Interestingly, the Maoist agenda also brings up the concept of *izzat* in relation to them increasing the dignity of the poor peasantry, who had discriminated against throughout history by the upper caste landlords – the ideology of the Naxalites was to provide the peasantry with the sense of them being equal to those who ruled over them (Banerjee 2009a, 259; see Kunnath 2006 for a personal account from an adivasi Naxalite).

The majority of the people who joined the movement had other options to choose from, and weren't generally uneducated or very poor, but Naxalism was generally seen as the most attractive option when weighed against other options, such as agricultural work or "underemployment" (Chitralekha 2012, 289, 308). In the research of social anthropologist Alpa Shah, factors for joining the Naxalite movement also include the searching of certainty (Shah 2009) and buying protection (Shah 2006), which speaks to the incredibly volatile and uncertain conditions these individuals live in. So the reasons for joining the movement seem to the be largely dependent on the individual considering the personal gains that the movement can provide them with. As the social world in the most Naxalite-affected areas of India can be chaotic and full of uncertainties and lacking in great opportunities for personal advancement, the life of a revolutionary can appear appealing.

Problems related to the conflict

The Naxalite insurgency does not take place in a vacuum, and therefore is constantly impacted by different issues in the areas it takes place. This next section aims to cover these issues and provide further context to the conflict through them. It speaks to the complexity of the conflict, the different factors that seem to spur on the violence and the ways in which alleviating the problems could also work as solutions to the conflict itself.

A lot of the most Naxalite-affected areas are rich in natural minerals. A district-level analysis of Naxalite incidents concluded that violent incidents were more likely to happen in places where mining activities occurred and where large parts of the population were socio-economically excluded (such as scheduled tribes and castes, also known as *adivasis*). The correlation between mining and violent Naxalite incidents was, however, too weak to conclude that mining was a big factor – the Naxalites forming a base among the *adivasi* population was definitely very significant. The researchers suggest that the central Indian government has been too eager to see development in the region purely in terms of mining, without giving too much thought to *adivasi* rights, allowing the Naxalites to try to win over the hearts of the native populations to their own ideology. (Hoelscher, Miklian and Vadlamannati 2012, 143, 156-157.)

From the viewpoint of the Indian government, the problems are therefore twofold: first, they're eager to expand mining activities to mineral-rich lands, which is often *adivasi* land, to drive up economic development, and secondly they want to tamper down the violence between police and Naxalites by increasing police numbers in these areas. If we see further police participation as stepping up the conflict (as does Banerjee 2009a) and if ignoring the social side of development only adds to the problem (as argued by Dixit 2010), then the course of action for the Centre is clear: forget the mining and focus on the people. This solution does not, however, address that mining can and does happen illegally (Hoelscher et al. 2012, 151), or that mining companies can also end up funding the Naxalites to continue their work in Naxalite-dominated areas (as the Essar Steel GM case[14], where an executive of a mining company was arrested for allegedly paying Naxalites

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14 *Times of India* 27/9/2011 Essar GM arrested for paying protection money to Maoists. Accessed February 10th, 2013. <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-27/india/30207551_1_essar-group-essar-funds-dantewada >

protection money). From the Maoist perspective, the profits of mining companies would not better the lives of the *adivasis*, and these companies are only set to exploit the people whose lands they want to mine. On the other hand, Naxalites can also exploit these companies by demanding bribes to fund their own activities, which can lead to increased Naxalite presence in these areas.

Further violent response does often seem to add to the conflict. In 2005, the state government of Chattisgarh, which was a hotbed of Naxalite activity at that point, began secretly funding and arming a counterinsurgency movement named Salwa Judum, composed of local villagers and out-of-state opportunists. The movement was the brainchild of a local Congress Party politician Mahendra Karma, even though in the beginning Salwa Judum was labelled a spontaneous uprising by the villagers against the Naxalites. The definition of a Naxalite was also widened to include almost everybody who stood against the movement, making humanitarian effort and NGO work in the area virtually impossible. (Miklian 2009, 441-443.)

Salwa Judum (meaning 'purification hunt' in the local Gondi language) has been widely labelled a failure that has only lead to further violence, evacuation of villagers to languish in internally displaced persons camps and a chaotic situation in which the state was no longer in control of Salwa Judum, and its members often acted as warlords in their respective areas. Adding to this chaos is the recruitment of locals as Special Police Officers or SPOs by the Central Reserve Police Force, the main force against the Naxalite insurgency in the area. (Miklian 2009, 446-449.)

Mining takes place in these regions, and mining company officials have been caught paying protection money to Salwa Judum, sometimes even as they pay similar money to Naxalites. The movement also forced *adivasis* from their lands so that mining activities can be expanded. As researcher Jason Miklian concludes, it seems that everybody except the *adivasis* benefit from the continued conflict financially, politically or in terms of personal power – the state gets increased financial support from the central government to fund the police force, the politicians get more clout, Salwa Judum members and SPOs gain personal power from the chaotic situation and the mining companies can expand their activities in the areas where villagers have been forcefully vacated from. (Miklian 2009, 455-457, 459.) In 2011, Salwa Judum was announced illegal by the Supreme Court of India[15], although disarming the movement and other SPOs working in the area is

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15 The Hindu 5/7/2011, Salwa Judum is illegal, says Supreme Court . Accessed February 11th, 2013. <
    http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2161246.ece >

easier said than done and will probably be a very long process.

Tribal land rights is often seen as an long ignored, unsolved issue which has allowed the Naxalites to capitalise on the disillusionment of the *adivasi* and other disadvantaged groups. Anthropologist K.B. Saxena, reporting on the findings of a national seminar on tribal land rights with relation to Naxalism, concluded that the government has failed the *adivasi*. The laws passed to help them have not been implemented and loss of land, social discrimination and denial of self-governance all add to the betrayal these people feel. As such, the seminar recommends that the government recognise the land rights of the tribals, prosecute those responsible for acts of violence against the *adivasi*, whether they're Naxalites or security force members, and govern the area with the focus on tribal welfare. (Saxena 2011, 473-476, 482-483.)

Another problem that increases tensions in the affected areas are the failure to respect human rights. Human Rights Watch, an international non-governmental organisation that researches and advocates for human rights, has done two reports that relate to the Naxalite conflict. The first one details the human rights abuses and violent methods of the Indian police force. The report finds the underfunded, overworked police force as having an institutionalised pattern of misbehaviour, which includes extra-judicial killings, torture, arrest on false charges and illegal detention. Corruption is also widespread: whether the police assists or abuses an individual who they encounter, can depend on status, political connections or ability to pay the police a bribe. (Human Rights Watch 2009, 5-6.)

The second report by Human Rights Watch examines the human rights abuses of civil society activists operating in Naxalite-affected areas. State security forces and the police have arrested and tortured activists, who are often locals, on suspicion of being Naxalites or Naxalite-sympathisers – even if the charges are false, many can languish in detention for years (and experience torture by the police during this time). On the other hand, the activists also face abuse and threats from Naxalites, who may accuse them of being police informers. Naxalites may target activists because they work on government-funded development projects. (Human Rights Watch 2012, 2-7.)

In summary, surrounding the Naxalite conflict we can find a number of issues that complicate matters. The state has an economic interest in expanding mining in areas where Naxalites may win

over poor *adivasis*, who have been largely ignored or exploited by the government. Establishing paramilitary forces to tamper the violence in the form of Salwa Judum has only spurred the conflict on, and continued human rights abuses by Naxalites and the police has also worsened the situation, and the lack of trust people have towards state forces and the police.

Proposed solutions and their discursive viewpoints

Political scientist Saroj Giri points out in his commentary that the debate on the Naxalite movement centers around the question of whether it is a law and order problem or a socio-economic problem (Giri 2009, 464). Indeed it seems like these are the main two narratives or discourses about the movement and how to solve the present situation – they tend to have opposing views on both the origins of the conflict and the best solution for it. I will cover these at great length because of their significance to the discourses found in media.

Law-and-order and socio-economic discourses

The law and order narrative emphasises the revolutionary nature of the movement and how it seeks to overthrow the government and the whole democratic state, and how the current failure to contain the situation mostly results from the state's lack of adequate resource allocation. Former Home Secretary Gopal Krishan Pillai presents this viewpoint in his opinion piece to the Journal of Defence Studies (2010), in which he elaborates how the Naxalites do not believe in democracy, or in entering peaceful discussions to compromise with the government. Rabindra Ray also seems to be advocating this viewpoint because he sees violence as essential to the Naxalite ideology and condemns Indian intellectuals and Western academics of sympathizing with a movement that does nothing for the people it claims to represent, the peasantry (Ray 2012, 226). If the Naxalite movement is a law and order problem, then any true grievances that *adivasi* may have, are essentially hijacked by the violent terrorists who have no real social justice aims, but are mostly interested in advancing their own goal, the revolution (Pillai 2010, 3-4).

The most common form of solutions proposed by academics are focused on social justice –

bettering the lives of both the Naxalites and tribals who may join their ranks to decrease the popularity of the movement. Sumanta Banerjee, himself a Naxalite in the early stages of the movement, has a number of suggestions. He sees the increased militarism by the state against Naxalites as stepping up the violence between the two groups – had the Naxalites been left alone, the tribals would have either accepted their presence or rejected them as a failed solution. Both the Naxalites and the state need to compromise and enter into a dialogue with one another. The state needs to stop trying to re-instate the status of the landlords overthrown by Naxalites, and in return the Naxalites need to respect human rights as a part of their process. In summary, violence must cease from both sides. (Banerjee 2009a, 265-268.)

Law scholar Raman Dixit wants to essentially combine the solutions: the socio-economic and the law and order perspectives. He argues that at first, the Indian state saw the Naxalbari uprising as a law and order dilemma, and responded to it as such. However, they never addressed the root cause of the issue, which was dissatisfaction among marginalised groups, and even though some legislation was passed to help the poor peasantry, the laws were never adequately implemented. The state has over-emphasised the law and order approach and therefore should balance the scales now by focusing on delivering social justice: land reform, poverty alleviation and inclusive economic growth. (Dixit 2010, 22, 33-34.) Interestingly, even a retired police officer Prashant Singh (2011, 77) seconds this view: he thinks that the government's treatment of the Naxalite movement as purely law-and-order based has been a failure. Thornton and Thornton (2006, 406-407) also point out the neglect of the Indian state towards its rural poor as the main explanation for the Naxalite movement; this neglect is a crisis that has been simmering for decades and decades.

Chitralekha found during her fieldwork among Bihar and Jharkand Naxalites that for all the myriad of factors that played into people joining the movement, the most significant was the way that the movement had a monopoly on the production of knowledge. There was no significant discourse that ruled out violence as an option, or saw it as immoral when perpetrated against the enemy. She argues that alongside other efforts to develop the Naxalite areas, there has to be an engagement with knowledge and ideology, so that minds can be won over, and the Indian state is not seen as the enemy. (Chitralekha 2012, 309-311.)

Adivasi discourse

Philosopher Nirmalangshu Mukherji's (2012) central thesis is that to conflate the fight for *adivasi* rights with the insurgency by the Naxalites against the state is to ignore the way that Naxalites have taken over the *adivasi* territories and propagandised among the *adivasi* children to increase the size of their troops. This statement is backed up by the etnographic data by Chitralekha, which shows that the first ideological engagement with the movement for many Naxalites, happened at a very young age, as well as a lack of engagement with other ideas in Naxalite areas (Chitralekha 2012, 268, 309-311). The UN has also expressed concern regarding the recruitment of children by the Naxalites, as well as the occupation of schools by security forces on both sides (United Nations 2010 [online]).

In what Mukherji calls "the Maoist discourse", propagated by both Naxalites and some prominent left-wing thinkers in India, the state's oppressive, predatory nature, the unfairness of capitalism and the impoverishment of people is critiqued to conclude with (varying degrees of) sympathy towards the Naxalite programme. On the other side of this issue, there is the statist discourse (roughly equivalent to the 'law and order narrative' I detailed earlier), which critiques the Maoist violence and supports military action against them. (Mukherji 2012, 107.)

Mukherji resists the idea of two camps (the state and the Naxalites) being polar opposites to one another, and that one is either with the state and against the Naxalites or vice versa – though this is an idea that both camps buy into, and actively promote. He sees the Indian state as a very fragile democracy; in the democratic deficit, power is easily transferred into the hands of those who already hold power, such as the mafia and other local fiefdoms. The Naxalites form one of these criminal fiefdoms. (Mukherji 2012, 16-21, 26-32, 44-45.)

According to Mukherji's argument, Naxalites do not desire *adivasi* welfare, but rather are only looking to propagate their beliefs among this group of people and recruit children for their troops. These children, growing up in poor conditions, ofter close to famine, may join the movement just for the promise of a regular meal. For the benefit of these children, or youngsters recruited to the Naxalite armies when they were children, Mukherji suggests that the state give them complete amnesty and release any *adivasi* prisoners who are charged on Maoist-related charges. His solution

to the crisis also includes a ceasefire from the state, withdrawal of paramilitary troops, and establishing a civil society of individuals who the adivasis recognise and trust. (Mukherji 2012, 104, 154, 156-159.)

It appears that Chitralekha and Mukherji are both on the same page when it comes to their stance on the conflict: they sympathise with the predicament a lot of *adivasi* youths find themselves in, with very limited choices and taught mostly Naxalite ideology with no counter-arguments to it. This position is situated somewhere close to the socio-economic discourse, but unlike that discourse, it doesn't see the Naxalites' prolonged war as trying to advance the cause it claims to do – mainly, the welfare of the *adivasi*. The solutions in both discourses are mainly humanitarian, as the state's armed response is seen as mainly heightening the crisis, and costing lives of people who are already at a disadvantage. I call this 'the *adivasi* discourse', according to its focus on this category of people. It highlights the fact that while many *adivasi* may also be Naxalites, they may have joined the movement out of pure necessity, rather than ideological drive, or even have been coerced into joining. In it, the representation of Naxalites is as villainous as in the law and order narrative, but further military involvement by the state is not seen as a good course of action.

Whereas one could criticize the law and order narrative for simplifying the problem and offering very little to the biggest victims of the conflict, the *adivasi*, it's similarly easy to see the flaws in the socio-economic narrative, which tends to ignore the vast amounts of violence by the Naxalites, downplay their ultimate goal being the seizure of power through revolution or even justify some of the violence. It seems to be that both narratives provide some good points – the police force is probably underfunded and understaffed, considering what is demanded of them in the Maoist-affected districts, but the solving the conflict could also be helped by finally addressing some key social inequality problems and land rights issues in these areas. The third discourse, with its focus on the *adivasi* and their terrible position in the conflict, wants to divorce the issues of poverty, neglected land rights and socio-economic hardship from the Naxalite movement. In essence it claims that the Naxalites are not pursuing the welfare of the most marginalised in society as much as they say they are, and their continued perpetuation of war runs counter to their ideals of social justice. Considering that the areas 'liberated' by the Naxalites do not seem to be much better off than those not yet liberated by them, I am personally persuaded most by the *adivasi* discourse.

Policy discourses

The Indian central government is trying to take into account two solutions – a two-pronged approach that addresses both the violence and the underlying issues – but it's questionable how well this has worked. It doesn't seem as if proponents of either approach are happy with the state's tackling of the dilemma. Whether public policy and strategy can ultimately end this conflict or whether it's set to go on indefinitely, it's clear that these discourses impact the way said policy is formulated.

It seems that currently, the law and order approach is largely favoured by the state, as demonstrated by former Home Secretary Pillai (2010, 6) sharing this anecdote:

> *[…] the Marxists who wanted to settle the issue politically called the Maoists for a discussion on the respective strategy for people's development. The Marxists would convince the Maoists that their line is the correct line. After the statement of the Marxists was over, the Maoists' leader said, "Have you finished?" The Marxists said, "Yes," [and the Maoist replied], "Now you listen to my line." The Maoists took out a gun and shot the Marxist representative and said, "Anyone else want to come for political discussions?".*

The under-lying message in this story (whether true or not) seems to be that negotiations with Naxalites, even if desired by the state, are an impossibility.

On the other hand, we could view the Indian state's policy focus on security through the concept of 'securitization', which in studies of international relations refers to a process where something, someone or a particular group is positioned as a security threat, and a threat to the existence of a referent subject, such as the state (Tharu 2007, 85). After securitization is complete, the subject can then do things they normally wouldn't have the right to, in the name of establishing security. Political sociologist Ipshita Basu examines the way that the state's policy depicts the two-pronged approach (security and development) to the Naxalite conflict, and notes: "The securitisation of left wing extremism […] has key implications on development decisionmaking, as it involves the restoration of state legitimacy against an internal enemy, which strikes where the state is weakest – its failure to deliver basic services to correct relative inequality and displacement." (Basu 2011, 376.) Therefore she joins the academic consensus that the Naxalite movement is largely born out of social and economic inequality and displacement, or at least spurred on by these continuing

grievances. When the state hasn't been able to make a positive change in the lives of the worst off in society, it doesn't seem to be that difficult for a revolutionary movement to capture the thoughts of the people.

Basu's study covers three kinds of positions that policy discourse places Naxalites in. The first is Naxalites as terrorists, which is the historically used positioning that the state used to craft its anti-Naxalite policies around. This viewpoint acknowledges the grievances over inequality but not the legitimacy of Naxalites as activists, as it portrays them as merely the internal enemy and justifies the state's monopoly on legitimate violence. It also positions adivasis as victims, and Naxalites as the villains to exploit them, without considering how the victims could have joined the Naxalite cause on their own accord. The adivasi who have joined the movement can be redeemed by rehabilitation to civilian, non-rebellious life, whereas the terrorist Naxalites need to be handled with violent security measures. There is an evident contradiction within this positioning, and Basu points out how development goals become a part of the strategy of containing violence. (Basu 2011, 381-385.)

The second position is that the Naxalite movement works as a parallel regime; it has stepped in to provide the basic services to people in places where the government has not been effective, present or able to provide the necessary governance. In this policy discourse, the Naxalite parallel government is seen as a symptom of the actual government's legitimisation problems. As a solution to this conflict, development becomes an important way to gain back people's trust in the actual regime and illegitimise the Naxalite 'regime'. On the other hand, this policy also sees security solutions as necessary to enter the areas in which the state barely has a presence; therefore development can mean building roads for police and security forces. (Basu 2011, 385-388.)

The third position Basu encounters in policy is one that views Naxalites as political disorder. As such, the Naxalites are seen as political agents that act in ways too radical and violent for the Indian democracy. This policy discourse maintains that the Naxalites' concerns would be better addressed within the people-friendly state and its democratic system. Therefore the solutions to the "Naxalite problem" are also political – trying to further development so that the main issue the movement is concerned with is removed, and trying to bring Naxalites into mainstream politics through peaceful methods, such as discussions. (Basu 2011, 388-389.)

Basu concludes that as much as these different positions tilt the scales between the socio-economic and the law-and-order approaches differently, they're mostly all concerned with re-establishing state legitimacy in areas where it's not present, and the overall survival of the state. The "narrow security lens" will hinder development, and a more focused socio-economic justice focused approach would yield better results. (Basu 2011, 390-391.)

The reason I covered Basu's shrewd reading of policy in such detail is that these policy discourses give depth to the previous three discourses I have described earlier. If Naxalites are viewed as terrorists (law-and-order discourse), then state resources will focus on re-establishing state presence in Naxalite areas, rather than poverty alleviation. In the name of security, the excessive use of force, corruption or general bad behaviour of security forces (such as we saw with Salwa Judum) can deepen the mistrust of people in their government. This discursive point of view tends to emphasise the revolutionary, and anti-state nature of the Naxalite movement, and de-emphasise any legitimate grievances they might have. If the Naxalites are seen as a symptom to a larger problem (socio-economic discourse) – poverty, social inequality and displacement – then development, in whatever form, becomes more important. This discourse can sometimes de-emphasise or even ignore the fact that the movement has stated revolutionary goals to over-throw the state, rather than just gain social justice concessions from the state. Basu's observation that the disillusioned poor and the angry rebel can be the same person, rather than policy sometimes suggests (Basu 2011, 389), was very insightful to me, and even though Mukherji (2012) has a very negative view of the Naxalites taking advantage of the disillusioned poor, going so far as to suggest that many *adivasi* were coerced into joining the movement, his point of view is similar.

It's imperative to understand how the discourses on Naxalites shape not only people's perceptions on the movement but also the policies on how the conflict could be solved. The three main discourses I have discussed here share some viewpoints; they all seem to be in agreement that the Indian state has not historically done well with addressing issues such as rural poverty, land rights or tribal issues. They also agree that the popularity of the Naxalite movement has in part been due to these legitimate grievances against the Indian state. What they essentially disagree on, is the view they take on Naxalites – their actions, their politics and their legitimacy. This is why representation of the Naxalites is so key in discussing policy and solutions, and a large part of what affects this

representation in general, can be found in the media.

5. Analysis

Naxalite views on media

Before I begin discussing the discourses on Naxalites in the media, I shall have a look at the way that Naxalites themselves view media and their own representation. Naturally their point of view will contain the bias that they would wish to be presented in a positive light. In Naxalite materials, such as the press releases issued by the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) over the period of 2010-2012 (Banned Thought: CPI(Maoist) documents [online]), corporate media is seen as a lackey of the corrupt state. From this perspective, Times of India is in the business of spreading lies about them and their cause, and because of this, the representation of them is distorted and negative.

It should be noted that given that most of these English press releases are all penned by the same party spokesman, and share a notedly propagandist, heightened tone, I don't think this is what every single Naxalite thinks about the media. It does, however, give us an interesting glimpse into the types of things that Naxalite materials say about the media, and in some areas where the Naxalites hold a decent amount of power and influence, these views may be propagated without any counter-arguments being considered (e.g. Chitralekha 2012, 309-311).

Under the colourful headline, "*Throw into the dust bin all the vicious propaganda carried on by the ruling classes and corporate media against the Maoist leadership!*", in the press release dated August 19th, 2011, the following quotes illustrate how Naxalites themselves feel about their representation in the Indian English mainstream media:

> *[The government forces] are using psychological warfare as a strategic weapon and vicious propaganda on revolutionary leadership is a key component in this. Media is being used as one of the main instruments in this psy-war. Media persons who represent corporate sector and pseudo intellectuals who are apologists for the ruling classes' ideology are participating actively in this psy-war through foul-mouthed propaganda. [...] Some of the journalists who come under this category are hand in gloves with the intelligence officials and are propagating crap about the Maoist revolutionary movement through corporate*

media houses. The white lie published under the title 'Bitter differences crop up between Maoist PW and MCC factions' in Times of India dated July 17, 2011 is undoubtedly part of this Psy-War. (Banned Thought: CPI(Maoist) documents [online])

I bring up this perspective because it illustrates two things. First, it shows that the Naxalites' distaste for media goes beyond a regular critical view of media (discussed in chapter 2), and that they indeed see it as tool of war against them and their goals. Second, the incendiary language furthers a kind of "with-us-or-against-us" dichotomy. Here is a quote from the press release dated July 17th, 2011, regarding the bomb blasts in Mumbai that took place on July 13th of the same year:

> *Murderous ruling classes and their corporate media are deliberately blaming us so as to depict our Party as a terrorist organization and our just people's movement as terrorist one, and thus to justify their brutal suppression campaign and the Army deployment in the second phase of ongoing Operation Green Hunt — the War On People.* (Banned Thought: CPI(Maoist) documents [online])

Is the depiction of Naxalites in the media truly as monstrous as Naxalites themselves believe? In the next part of the study I will begin analysing the representation of Naxalites.

Labels

What the Naxalites are referred to as, in the data for this study, presents an initial glimpse into the ways in which they are represented. Every label is loaded with meaning, and labels have power to place people into social categories, while expressing a lot of information in a compact manner (Matheson 2005, 24-25). I chose to call the people whose representations I wanted to study further 'Naxalites' as opposed to 'Indian left-wing extremists' or 'Indian Maoists'[16], partially because I was more familiar with the term Naxalite to begin, and partially because I felt like other labels were less specific. No label is, however, neutral. 'Naxalite' connects these people to the Naxalbari insurgency that happened in West Bengal in 1967, even if the people themselves share little in common with the people who began the uprising in said village, or with any of the people who participated in

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16 These are just some examples of alternative terms I could've used. Other choices I could've made were "left-wing insurgents" or "extremist left-wing guerrillas"; all of these terms are loaded with different kinds of implications, and in the end I felt like the most simple, straight-forward choice was to go with the term Naxalite, as it was one I had originally started with.

activities of the CPI(M-L) party in the 1960's to the 1970's. The term Maoist, on the other hand, highlights the ideological background of the movement and their (at least stated) commitment to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

These two labels – Naxalite or Naxal, and Maoist – seemed to be the ones most frequently occurring in the data. One to explain the popularity of the term Naxalite is simply that it was my chosen search term when gathering the data. The frequency of the two labels can be witnessed in the headlines of the articles. Here are a few examples of the headlines (full list of the articles in my data can be found in the appendices):

> *How a tribal boy becomes a dreaded Naxalite* (TOI 12/8/2010)
> *Father shot by Naxals, daughter on police radar for Maoist links* (TOI 3/10/2011)

Maoists searching for next line of leadership (TOI 12/6/2012)

I suspect this may be because the two terms are generally seen as both factual (in the sense that the leadership of Naxalite command uses both terms to refer to themselves) and appropriately neutral for the news report types of articles. Most articles included both terms, however – it was rare that only one or the other would be used exclusively. As such, they were a pair, treated as synonyms. In some ways, I suppose the term Maoist paints Naxalites as an extremist group, though only mildly so – it evokes an image about an ideology that isn't just left-wing or communist, but revolutionary as well.

There wasn't any considerable general trends to be noted about the way Naxalites were referred to, year by year. The same terms cropped up in similar ways in 2010 as they did in 2011 and 2012. One term that I was not expecting to find was the very simple "ultras", I presume derived from "ultra-left" or "ultra-left militants", a term used in as thus:

> *Until now a broad consensus had prevailed between the two major stake-holders -- the*
> *Centre and state governments -- about the threat from the ultra-Left militants.* (TOI
> 20/05/2010)

The capitalisation of the word 'left' gives it a very clear emphasis. In another article (TOI 06/07/2011), the word is again capitalised in the term "ultra-Left violence". Naxalites are called ultras surprisingly more often than they are called extremists, though both terms place an extremist label on them. The word 'ultra' implies excess – that these leftists are far more left than would be the acceptable amount of political left-wing ideology.

Another general trend in the data was a noticeable fondness for alliterative phrases such as "Maoist menace" (used in the headline of TOI 31/08/2012) and "red rebels", as used in this evocative sentence:

> [Superintendent of police in Chandrapur] *Sharma briefed the villagers about the plight of tribals in Gadchiroli due to Naxal menace and cautioned them that the same peril could befall them if they fell prey to the inducements of the red rebels.* (TOI 14/02/2011)

This brief excerpt reveals a lot about the general tone of police and security force figures in the press: Naxalites are a *menace*, the public must not *fall prey* to them, or if they do, they'll be in *peril* and *plight*. I will discuss this at length later on; for now, it's noteworthy how alliterative phrases like 'red rebels' here are tied to a discourse of danger.

The word 'red' is endlessly repeated in the data, sometimes attached to existing terms (such as the red rebels example discussed previously, but also terms like red ultras, the red menace, red Maoists), and occasionally even working as a synonym to the Naxalites on their own:

> *Reds blaze path to progress* (headline in TOI 09/12/2010)

Articles with pictures of the Naxalites (such as Roy 2010) often feature them wearing red or donning a red flag. While the significance and symbolism of a colour can depend on the cultural and societal context[17], in this case I don't think the discursive significance of red has much to do with Indian culture(s). In the Indian context, the red could signal fertility (Hindu brides wear red) or even destruction (red being a symbol for fire and the goddess Durga). In relation to the representation of Naxalites, the local symbolic meanings make little sense, so it seems more likely that the descriptive word is more about the global left-wing movement, certainly blood (harking back to Charu Mazumdar's words as well as the violence of the current conflict) and danger.

One of the more interesting articles was one where Congress politicians were reported as having a debate on what to call the Naxalites, showing discord within the party. This is how the article begins:

> *Congress general secretary Digvijay Singh, who triggered a controversy when he attacked the home minister P Chidambaram for using force to deal with Naxalites, said the Red extremists could not be called enemies of the country.* (TOI 13/05/2010b)

Right away the article highlights not the Naxalites, but the very public disagreement within the

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17 For example, red is the colour of the conservative, right-wing Republican party in the US, and in Europe it's the colour of left-of-centre political parties.

main party of the ruling coalition. Again we see the word 'red' making an appearance. The word choices can be construed as sensationalising, as they make the previous controversy sound more violent than it probably was ('triggered', 'attacked'). The discursive negotiation that Singh is portraying is also interesting – it's not that Naxalites *shouldn't* be called enemies of the country (because it would be wrong to label them as such), but that they *couldn't*. The implication being that the definition simply doesn't factually fit them. Singh goes onto explain that he's not excusing the criminality of Naxalites, but rather the conflation of their actions with cross-border terrorists. Then the article continues:

> *"Can't say enemies. No," the Congress general secretary said, preferring to call the*
> *extremists "misguided ideologues".* (TOI 13/05/2010b)

Why can't Naxalites be called enemies? Perhaps Singh's point reflects the general socio-economic solution discourse – that he can't call Naxalites enemies as to further alienate an already-marginalised group within Indian society, who may have genuine grievances about the way the government has treated them over the years. The context for this article is a larger debate on how the Naxalite conflict should be tackled by government policies, after an incident in April 2010, where 76 members of security forces were killed by Naxalites. The public mood seems to have been understandably against Naxalites at the time, so home minister P Chidambaram was often reported in the news, emphasising the government's resolve in tackling the "Naxalite problem" (TOI 15/04/2010 is one such example). "Misguided ideologues" as Singh's preferred name for Naxalites suggests that the Naxalites may have genuine problems, but have taken the wrong path on how to solve these issues – their methods and ideology is wrong, but they may have points otherwise. After P Chidambaram's strong words, this can be seen portrayed as a "softening" of Congress' official stance on Naxalites.

> *[…] Singh regretted calling Chidambaram "rigid" and "intellectually arrogant", but*
> *welcomed what he called a re-think in the government on the strategy towards Naxalites. "I*
> *am very happy that the prime minister and the home minister have accepted that you can't*
> *send the Army, you can't send the Air Force and we cannot defeat them militarily."* (TOI
> 13/05/2010b)

As I've discussed earlier, these seem to be the two stances which most discourses on Naxalites take place in – either the solution on how this movement and its popularity can be eradicated is a more security-based solution, emphasising police and security forces, or then it's a more development-focused, humanitarian solution that sees "the problem" as mainly a socio-economic one. The article's main focus is on disagreement within the government, and while the headline (Maoists are not terrorists: Digvijay Singh) is probably worded to be as attention-grabbing as possible and could

almost paint Singh as a Naxalite sympathiser, the article also allows him, as a figure of authority, to have the last word:

> *The Congress general secretary [Singh] claimed the PM [prime minister] agreed with him that there had to be a multi-pronged strategy, saying there was a perceptible change in thinking now (on tackling Maoists) with most MPs agreeing with the holistic approach.* (TOI 13/05/2010b)

This again ties back to the earlier ideas about the conflict not being solved solely militarily, but through humanitarian solutions. One could ask – why is this "multi-pronged" strategy (that in this larger debate refers to a strategy that combines better policing and governance of Naxalite areas with development, ie healthcare, education and other measures to improve quality of life) the holistic approach? Why, if the Naxalites are still criminals behaving in criminal manners, is it not possible to defeat them with security-based solutions? Even as the article allows Singh to have the last word, it undermines his statement by the indirect quotation and the verb choice. Singh didn't state, argue or simply say that the prime minister agreed with him – he *claimed* it, suggesting that this assertion was only his and not necessarily factual and proven. This helps ground the article's general point, which is to show that despite some of their claims, the ruling political party seems to not be on the same page when it comes to tackling this crucial domestic issue. Thus the question of what to call the Naxalites gets connected to other discourses: the discourses on what to do about the conflict between the state and Naxalites, and discourses on the current state of the government.

Naxalites as anti-development

It seems that even when Naxalites are seen as horrible terrorists, the basic assumption about the popularity of the movement is that it is born out of terrible social and economic circumstances. Therefore the assertion that Naxalites are bad people and have to be fought against with considerable force has to be defended by those in power. In early 2010, Home Minister P. Chidambaram discussed the necessity of using force to defeat the Naxalites (TOI 12/03/2010):

> *Referring to the offer of talks made by the government to the Maoists recently, he asked, "Why aren't the Maoists making a simple statement that we abjure violence?"*

> *He said in such a situation, it was the legitimate right of the government to use as much force necessary to regain the areas and hoped that once the government regains control in two to three years, it would usher in development.*

The fact that Naxalites have reached out for peace negotiations is quickly brushed aside as Chidambaram points out that Naxalites haven't said they abjure violence. Then he continues to emphasise the legitimacy of the state's use of violence, which is interesting considering that generally it is accepted at face value that the state can use violence legitimately. But what I particularly noticed about this article was this idea that these areas could not be developed in any significant manner until the state had regained control in them. Considering Basu's (2011) observation that when Naxalites are seen as terrorists, the policy focus becomes security-based, this definitely fits into that discourse. Development is secondary to establishing a clear state presence in the areas controlled by Naxalites – and of course, this state presence will be security forces and the police. In journalist Shubhranshu Choudhary's account of briefly living in a Naxalite camp (2006, 69), he notes that the nearest road was five hours away from the camp, because "the police needed roads", and such seclusion meant safety for the Naxalites.

Later on, in the same article:

> *"They (Maoists) have declared a war on the Indian state...They are anti-development. They do not want the poor to be emancipated or become economically free," Chidambaram said, adding civil right groups naively think that naxalites are pro-poor.*

Here is really the essence of the hardline law-and-order discourse and its rhetoric. By explicitly stating that Naxalites are against development and the better conditions for the poor they claim to be standing up for, Chidambaram paints the state as the sole force for the good of the poor people, and also adds to the "us versus them" mentality often found in the law-and-order discourse. The naive civil rights groups may think the Naxalites a pro-poor, but in fact, they are not. The quote also implies a strong faith in the capitalist system – economic freedom would mean emancipation for the poor.

In another article, regarding the state of Chattisgarh abandoning Salwa Judum, the paramilitia ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of India, the anti-development characterisation pops up again:

> *"We have no presence in those pockets as even the revenue survey has never been undertaken there,"* [Chattisgarh chief minister] *Dr Singh admitted. Some 16,000 primitive*

tribals in that area where development process is still a distant dream. The Maoists are totally in control there. (TOI 08/02/2011)

The conflation of Naxalite presence and lack of development is clear. The characterisation of the adivasi population presents them as passive victims, rather than as active subjects, trying to do their best to get ahead in life – it also establishes the common categorisation where a Naxalite is different from an adivasi, even though many Naxalites *are* adivasi. It's also easy to see how the quote obfuscates the demarcation between the statement and opinion of the journalist and that of the chief minister. Is Maoist control of the area a neutral fact stated by the reporter, or a part of Singh's political rhetoric? In the context of the article where Salwa Judum is discussed, it should be noted that Salwa Judum was heavily supported by Raman Singh alongside its founder Mahendra Karma (Miklian 2009), so he is likely to present its dissolution as a bad thing. The discourse here not only positions Naxalites as being against development, or a hindrance to development, but generally makes development a desirable thing, a "dream", albeit a distant one.

In a longer report on Naxalites and their collection of levies (through extortion), Naxalites are once again painted as being against development:

In Orissa, they [the Naxalites] *routinely grab 10% of government money earmarked for development and infrastructure work.* […] *The Naxalites brazenly grab development funds that reach panchayats[18] and NGOs.* (TOI 15/02/2011)

And lest people get the idea that the Naxalites might use the money to help the lives of the poor people they claim to fight for, the report later says:

Much of the extorted money goes in buying arms and ammunition, procuring vehicles, purchasing uniforms and medicines, publicity and propaganda, communication equipment, organizing party meetings, boosting their urban networks and fighting court cases for their jailed comrades.

All of the listed uses for the extorted money relate to the military side of the movement and none of the social justice goals the movement supposedly has. As such, the Naxalites are represented as plain hypocrites.

In an evocatively titled article (*Red mist over Bailadila's mining townships*), the perceived Naxalite

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18 Panchayats probably refers to gram panchayat, a village or small town level form of self-government.

opposition to development is clearly stated:

> *Even local development programmes such as building roads and schools are on the*
> *backburner because the Maoists are opposed to them.* (TOI 11/04/2010)

The article had previously explained at length the various attacks on economic targets by the Naxalites:

> *The Maoists have attacked the twin mining townships, home to an estimated 50,000 people,*
> *several times. In January 2010, two pressure bombs exploded in a pump house, injuring*
> *NMDC* [National Mineral Development Corporation] *workers. The Maoists later destroyed*
> *the pump house. In October 2009, a CISF* [Central Indian Security Force] *vehicle was blown*
> *to bits in the Bacheli mining complex, killing four jawans* [soldier], *including a sub-*
> *inspector. In May 2009, a privately owned pipeline carrying iron ore slurry was blown apart*
> *near Sukma. In January 2009, at least 20 trucks owned by a private contractor were burnt.*

 This gives us a glimpse of the very economy-driven idea of development that most of the articles seem to share. Again, context is important: *Times of India* is after all a part of a huge media conglomerate, and is thus ingrained with some of the values of corporate media. It would make sense that in this environment, the economy-centric view of development is not necessarily questioned – indeed one could even argue that it seems to be the prevailing thought among some of the Indian political elite (BJP's India Shining campaign slogan and the establishment of SEZ's). So if development is driven by economy, and Naxalites are attacking economic targets (in this case, a mine run by National Mineral Development Corporation, a government-owned public enterprise), then Naxalites could be understood as being against development. The word choices in the article are also worth noting: destroyed, blown to bits, blown apart. The Naxalites' taste for destruction is evident, but doesn't seem to happen for any good reason – there is no mention of their motivations, other than the fact they seek to terrorise locals and interrupt development, mainly that they have one:

> *Experts on Left-wing extremism say targeting state infrastructure is one of the primary*
> *objectives of Naxalism.*

These nameless experts aren't given more of a voice to explain the destructive actions, other than to state that it's an objective of Naxalites (or Naxalism, which in this case I interpret to mean the Naxalite ideology in general).

Unlike many articles, in which increased state presence and economic development is taken as a given, in an early 2010 news item, then-Home Minister Chidambaram attempts to explain the connection between the security-focused discourse on development:

> *Later talking about developmental issues, Chidambaram said, "Dantewada has a police station which has only two policemen. When a policeman does not want to go there, how can you expect a teacher or a BDO* [Block Development Officer] *to go there."* (TOI 06/05/2010)

This all falls in line with the policy discourses presented by Basu (2011), most of which are very heavy in their focus on security. This and many other articles tend not to consider the deep mistrust of the police some people may feel over the Indian police force's corruption and mistreatment, or the possibility of developmental projects started without heavy police presence. Chidambaram continues making his case in the same article:

> *"Maoists know development is threat to them, so they demolish schools, 71 schools were blown up in 2009, they mine roads, blow up bridges. Villagers are killed in the name of being informers. In 2009, 211 people were killed on this pretext and 362 infrastructure targeted in 2009. So to say Maoists are pro-development is most naive argument."*

The solution narrative is clear here – the state wants to establish security to drive development, and in essence Naxalites wish to stop them from doing either, even though development could better the lives of those they wish to defend.

Naxalite opposition to development is one of the strongest discourses to be found in my corpus. Indeed, it even cropped up in books about the Naxalites themselves, such as in the arguments of Nirmalangshu Mukherji (2012), who claims that in his search for evidence that Naxalites were trying to better the lives of the adivasi, even in the pro-Naxalite sources there wasn't much to be found. However, unlike some of these academic sources, the media discourse positions the state strongly as the entity that can deliver development to areas that need it. There are rarely any suggestions of the state being ineffective, or untrustworthy, or corrupt. The discourse of Naxalites as anti-development doesn't problematise the economy-centric definition of development, or question the state's role in this economy-centric, security-focused development. In other words, it silences these alternative views of development, prioritising the official state view of development.

If we consider van Dijk's ideological square (as discussed in chapter 3), the audience is mostly asked to identify with the state and its representatives – they represent 'us', and consequently they're portrayed positively here. They are, after all, trying to help the less fortunate by bringing in development. The Naxalites, on the other hand, are merely a destructive force, looking to inconvenience both ordinary people and the economic entities that are seen as essential to development. Even an article that presents the plight of ordinary people, caught between the police and Naxalites, ends up representing the state in this way. The article opens:

> *Residents of Jhumra village are caught between the devil (red Maoists) and deep sea (security personnel).* (TOI 06/02/2011)

The opener takes a phrase (whose meaning is similar to 'between a rock and a hard place') that seems to fit perfectly with the symbolism of the Maoists as red (as the devil is often depicted, too). After a brief description of conflict between the police and the Naxalites, as well as the troubles the villagers are facing, one villager is given a voice:

> *"We spend nights apprehending the attacks of Maoists and remain in fear of men in khakis* [policemen] *in days. The rebels usually came under the cover of darkness and threaten us with dire consequences if we help the police. They punish those villagers who help the cops. On the other hand, the police come with the daybreak and ask for the clues about the rebels,"* a villager said.

The quote demonstrates rather perfectly the impossible situation in a very dramatic way, drawing comparison between the two times of the day (night and day) and the two opposite forces harassing the people in between (the Naxalites and the police). The description is almost poetic, and seems to show that both sides are doing their equal share of harassment of those they're supposed to be helping. It presents a complicated picture of a social reality, in which the villagers are forced to make difficult choices, because staying neutral to the two parties can also prove problematic. However, when the article continues to describe the situation in Jhumra, a picture emerges of police officers just attempting to restore order in the chaos caused by Naxalite attacks:

> *In the first week of January, security personnel gunned down three Maoists in Jaria village of Jhumra. Since then, the Naxalites have been trying to hit back the police to avenge the death of their slain comrades. On Wednesday, police recovered three landmines which they had planted on the roads leading to Jhumra targeting the security men. A few days ago, the Maoists blew up a water tank and a generator room in Jhumra village. The roads connecting Jhumra to Rehawan in the foothill was cut off by the rebels. They set up a*

blockade with boulders and landmines.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the last word in the article is given to a police officer, whose authoritative voice is almost positioned to explain away the views offered earlier by the villager:

> *Bokaro SP* [Superintendent of Police[19]] *Saket Singh said villagers were scared of the Maoists. "Policemen are always there for their safety. The recent incidents in which Maoists blew up water facility in Jhumra and cut off road connectivity have created fear among residents," he said. The blockade on the Jhumra road has been cleared by security personnel.*

So in the end the police are represented as the ones who know better than the villagers themselves, who are merely scared of the Naxalites, and not the police, because the police is here for their security, simple as that. The article closes with this representation of the helpful security forces, with no mention of the earlier unease the villager described in being surrounded by the police and the Naxalites' harassment. Again the Naxalites are merely represented through their destructive actions.

This discourse on the Naxalites largely posits that only the state can bring true development, and the Naxalites are in fact far more concerned with issues other than developing the areas or bettering the lives of the people they wish to recruit. In this, it's related much more to the law-and-order discourse than the other ones. Even though the discourse might point out the socio-economic problems in the areas, it presents Naxalites as mostly destructive to the state's good intentions.

Cunning Naxalites having an advantage over security forces

Many of the areas that Naxalites control (or 'have liberated', to use their own parlance) are deeply forested areas, where the state's central institutions, be it police or schools, may not have had a very

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19 The fondness for letter abbreviations is typical for the news articles, particularly when it comes to rank of police officers, which can be lengthy. I will always mention the full title in square brackets. DGP ie Director General of Police is the highest rank mentioned in the articles, and the head of an Indian state's police force. IGP ie Inspector General of Police is below this rank and in charge of a group of districts within a state. They have a deputy (DIG). The most common rank for police officials in my data is SSP or SP, ie Senior Superintendent of Police or Superintendent of Police, who is in charge of the police in a particular district. The SP here, Saket Singh, was in charge of Jharkand's Bokaro district, which had a lot of mining industry, as well as Naxalite activities. He gets mentioned in other Bokaro-related articles as well.

big presence to begin with. This is brought up in numerous articles as one of the primary reasons the conflict is still going on – the Naxalites, being familiar with the terrain, are presented as having a clear advantage over the security forces. Indeed, in July 2010, TOI published an article that spelled out all the various ways in which the security forces were the underdogs of the situation, despite the fact that they were government forces with legitimacy to use violence, fighting against a group of rebels. The article, titled *Terror struck*, first explains how many more security forces have been killed in the conflict when compared to the number of Naxalites killed, and later on features the following quote:

> *TACTICAL DISADVANTAGE: Naxalites are adept at guerrilla warfare so the security forces need to be trained in this. "It's not just physical training. Mental orientation is just as important to fight the highly motivated Naxalites," says an officer.* (TOI 11/07/2010)

So not only are the police and security forces at a disadvantage in terms of tactics and unfamiliarity with the terrain, they are also mentally not as motivated as the ideologically motivated Naxalites, the quote seems to suggest.

Another article, from late 2012, explores the recently adopted advantaged technology of the police and contains this:

> [Police spokesperson] *Pradhan said, "The advanced technology has given us an upper hand against the Naxalites." Usually the rebels had a better knowledge than the men in uniform on the forest terrain.* (TOI 18/12/2012)

In many ways it seems curious that state forces, who have the legitimacy of the state behind them, legally obtained weapons and trained personnel, would not have the upper hand in combat situations with a revolutionary group. Admittedly, many of the areas dominated by the Naxalites haven't seen much state presence – hence only the locals have knowledge of the areas, and those locals tend to side with the Naxalites.

Only one of the articles pointing out the disadvantage of the state forces gets into the lack of popular support or trust as a factor. Under a headline that conjures up a mental image of lazy police officers - *Naxals rule the roost as cops take it easy* - the article opens:

> *The Naxalites are enjoying unchallenged domination in several interior parts of Gadchiroli district as security forces are once again playing safe.* (TOI 22/06/2011)

Rather than painting the state forces as underdogs due to Naxalite cunning or the police's own tactical disadvantage, the beginning of the article seems to indicate an annoyance of the security forces lack of action. The article continues, detailing the lack of police presence and the increased Naxalite presence, as they visit the villages and hold meetings.

> *"Police would have to come with a huge force combing the jungle from road to river and still could be targeted. Naxals have upper hand in the forests around villages as they enjoy popular support and police know these to be the places where they can never win support. They have traditionally supported Naxals," said the people in a village close to Maharashtra-Andhra Pradesh border.*

There isn't much explanation offered as to why people would be unwilling to trust the police, other than the fact that they have a sporadic presence in the village, whereas Naxalites visit more frequently. On the other hand, this quote seems to also put forward the notion that there isn't much the police can do about it – these people will always support the Naxalites, not the state forces. It's also worth noting how the journalist gives a voice to the villagers here, but it's a singular one – they speak as 'the people', rather than as individuals, yet confusingly talk about other people's support for the Naxalites. Later, a police perspective is offered:

> *"The forces also suffer from lack of motivation as there are no real officers leading from the front with qualities and mastery in jungle warfare. The senior officers come out only when the entire area is sanitized," said a reliable source from police department.*

So in the same article, the police's lack of effort is simultaneously judged as "taking it easy" and excused because they lack the popular support, and the terrain is unfamiliar to them. While there are articles that are critical of various aspects of the security effort against the Naxalites, this is in line with the general discourse on the police and security forces. The reader is asked to sympathise with the plight of the security forces and their various disadvantages. Also worth noting here is the word 'sanitized' – implying that removing Naxalites from an area makes it clean? – and the fact that a police source is explicitly characterised as 'reliable'.

It's worth stating that the ideological square, where positive aspects about "us" (in this case, the state security forces we are asked to sympathise with as readers) would be emphasised and positives about the "them" (in this case Naxalites) would be underplayed, might well apply here. The advantages 'enjoyed' by the Naxalites is not focused on, and instead the plight of the forces and their members is put at the centre of these articles. In this discourse, being at a disadvantage is almost

portrayed as a positive: to be the underdog is not a good place to be, but in a way it's also the heroic position.

The choice to emphasise the disadvantages of the security forces and the state is possibly most clearly demonstrated by the article about the Supreme Court ruling on the paramilitary Salwa Judum movement:

> *The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Chhattisgarh government to disband and disarm 6,500 special police officers (SPOs) engaged in anti-Maoist operations, putting the state which has borne the brunt of ultra-Left violence in a fix on how to deal with the threat.* (TOI 06/07/2011)

So from the beginning of the article, this decision is framed by discussing security-based solutions from the state government's point of view, as opposed to the situation Salwa Judum created, or the problems it caused (such as the internal displacement camps). Even though most experts would conclude that Salwa Judum was not a working solution and only lead to more chaos and violence in the areas it operated in, the beginning of the article posits that the Supreme Court ruling was not the correct one to make. Naxalites are "ultra-Left violence" and a "threat". The article later offers a justification of Salwa Judum that is the most rosy one I've ever encountered:

> *Strapped for manpower in a terrain where the extremists have effectively used numerical edge, familiarity with terrain and guerilla tactics to kill hundreds of security forces, the state has relied on SPOs* [Special Police Officers] *drawn from among local tribals as a complement.*

> *Now, besides having to worry about the depletion in their ranks in the wake of the SC order, the state government also has to worry about providing security to the demobilized SPOs. "It is a major setback for the security forces. The SPOs were eyes and ears for both the police and paramilitary forces. Without them, it would be very difficult to operate in the area," a senior police officer in Raipur said.*

So essentially what the "advantaged Naxalites" discourse does is portray the state and its security forces as victims. Those killed or displaced in the chaotic conflicts between Naxalites and state forces (which include Salwa Judum troops) do not get any mentions in the article. Instead, it is the security forces and those they've armed to aid them who have been inconvenienced by this court

decision. They're forced to worry about the "depletion in their ranks" and face difficulties in continuing their conflict with the Naxalites. Any notions that ending the violence would be the best solution are not spoken of.

A special report about the police in Naxalite-controlled areas, published in August 2011, presents a more well-rounded, human portrait of the struggles by the police officers. The journalist who authored it, Supriya Sharma, seems to have written numerous reports about the on-the-ground reality of people affected by the Naxalite conflict (see Appendix I), most of them with a very human perspective. The article is long, and paints a very harrowing picture of police officers fighting a losing battle in terrible conditions:

> *Fear - of both Maoists and mosquitoes - is a constant companion. While they have been taught to use malaria kits and have testing slides, in an ironical twist there is no serum. Mobile phones are affixed to poles, at carefully chosen locations, locked into positions best suited to catching a stray breeze that might bring fleeting network and the chance of calling home.*

> *But for the policemen nothing is harder than not knowing why they are there. "Sadne ke liye (to rot)," says one. "Marne ke liye (to die)," says another.* (TOI 28/08/2011)

The Naxalites themselves are not present in this article, as it portrays them as the invisible enemy, ready to strike the police officers, who are forced to withstand terrible conditions without any knowledge of why they're there. Their presence is a looming dread in the lives of the police, at this lonely outpost. Longer reports like this one allow for a little variation in the typically positive portrayal of the state in TOI – here, the reader sympathises with the police officers who are only trying to do their jobs, but not aided greatly by their superiors. Indeed, it's not the Maoists but these superiors, in their comfortable positions back in the urban environment, who look like villains by the end of the piece. When the journalist repeats the question from a police officer, about what strategic purpose it serves to have them there, when there are no operations going on, this is the officials' response:

> *Back in Raipur, at the police headquarters, when this question was posed to a senior officer, he said, "None". Another shot back, "If I reveal it to you, how will it remain strategic?"* [Inspector General of Police, Pawan] *Deo reasons, "If we withdraw a camp, what will that signal? Won't it hand over a psychological victory to the Maoists?"*

It is typically these longer articles that allow for more varied portrayals of the issues, particularly from a very humanist perspective, but sadly not every article is researched in such a way. In the above quote, the sympathetic struggling police are in contrast to the responses from their superiors, ranging from flippant to hostile to the journalist asking a simple question. The last response shows that in the eyes of these senior police officials, victory over Naxalites remains the most important thing, and the discomfort and terror felt by the police in this particular outpost is a price worth paying.

A part of this discourse about having advantages over the state forces ties into another discourse about the particularly *cunning* ways of the Naxalites. An article from early 2011, which features a very rare occasion – a statement by a Naxalite spokesperson – explains the clever ways of recruitment by the Naxalites:

> *Paramjeet, a Maoist spokesman of the outfit's madhya zonal committee* [central zonal committee]*, said it was always part of their strategy to get villagers recruited in the police forces. "After all, we also need intelligence inputs and details about police movement. Unless boys from these districts are recruited in the forces, it would be difficult for us to get into the brain of policemen from other districts," he said.*

> *Paramjeet stressed that there are sources already implanted in the forces to pass on tip-offs to the party (read CPI-Maoist) leaders about police tactics. "We are in an open war and if the reactionary forces (read police) are using different tricks against us, our party is not going to sit idle," he claimed.* (TOI 28/01/2011)

Here the Naxalite perspective gets a very rare airing. At first, the article seems to represent Paramjeet as any spokesperson would be, plainly and almost in a way that lends his voice authority. In the second paragraph, however, the agenda of the Naxalites is highlighted – this is a war (according to the Naxalites) and if the police use 'tricks', so will the opposing side. The Naxalite term for the police, "reactionary forces", is used, but simultaneously undermined by the explanation in brackets. Even as the Naxalite is given a voice here, their viewpoint is presented as an oddity. The article goes on to pinpoint the cunning Naxalite strategy of recruiting young people:

> *The confidence also owes allegiance to the fact that senior members of the organisation believe in the theory "catch them young". Inspired by most of the worldwide jihad and insurgent movements where brainwash works better than lucrative sops, Maoists have*

always targeted soft brains to mould them in time to support their ideology.

Molding soft brains by brainwashing them to support the ideology does not present the young recruits as individuals making level-headed choices in life, but rather as passive victims to the Naxalites' nefarious plans. The suggestion that people would join the Naxalite movement for financial benefits ("lucrative sops") is also shot down. The 'jihad' inspiration mention makes sure that Paramjeet does not seem like a representative for an alternative political order, or an advocate for the rights of the disillusioned poor – instead, him and his fellow Naxalites are to be simply condemned and aligned with something generally considered evil[20].

There is sometimes room for contradiction or uncertainty in the narratives told about Naxalites. In an article about a train being derailed in 2010, there are various viewpoints being presented about the recent renouncement of violence by some Naxalite groups, and what this incident means in terms of that.

> *Asked about the apparent contradiction between the Maoist renunciation of innocent killings and the blast on the tracks which could have taken a heavy toll of innocent lives, IG* [Inspector General] *operations KS Divedi said this aspect needs a logical explanation.*

> *Making it clear that the Naxalites have not given up mass and innocent killings on any humanitarian consideration but only to gain public sympathy so essential for their survival, Divedi did not rule out overenthusiasm or some miscalculation on the part of its local activists entrusted with the execution of the track-blowing job.* (TOI 25/03/2010)

So the Naxalites' renunciation is merely a clever ploy to gain public sympathy, but at the same time, this police official does not paint the Naxalites as merely cunning – he recognises the possibility that they could also just have made a mistake. This is a somewhat rare, humanising notion in the discourses about Naxalites – they could do something, not in malice, but in error.

Another example of Naxalite cunning is provided in an article from mid-2012, in an article discussing the recent kidnappings done by the Naxalites:

> *"The violence and killings could be a Maoist pressure tactics for speeding up review of the*

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20 While not engaged with the US 'war on terror', India has had its own troubles with terror attacks by radical Islam movements, such as the Mumbai blasts in 2011 and in 2008.

cases of under-trials, particularly the Maoist cadres whose release the rebels had demanded in exchange of abducted collector", said a senior police official, who was earlier posted in Naxalite affected Bastar region. (TOI 02/06/2012)

In other words, Naxalites are understood as causing trouble for the benefit of their jailed colleagues. Their acts of violence and killings are not just random terror tactics, but serve a more cunning purpose. The kidnapping of the collector[21] was similarly portrayed as a pressure tactic.

The portrayal of Naxalites as cunning, clever and tactically advantaged serves two purposes. First, it portrays the security forces and police as the underdogs of the conflict: the reader is invited to sympathise with their plight and difficulties. At the same time, it offers an explanation as to why the conflict has been on-going for such a long time: the Naxalites are simply too much at an advantage to be beaten at this point. Secondly it portrays the chaotic reality of the conflict in a way that makes it make it sense – if the Naxalites always have a hidden clever tactic behind their actions, then the conflict is not just random acts of violence, sabotage and retaliation, one after another, but has a nefarious logic behind it.

Neither of these discourses emphasise the socio-economic realities that underscore the crisis, or ask very seriously whether further securitization and police presence is helpful, if the police seem to be at such a deep disadvantage. Therefore these discourses seem to be related to the law-and-order discourse. At times the Naxalites are represented a bit as a parallel regime or as political disorder (two of the policy discourses presented by Basu 2011), such as in TOI 22/06/2011, but even in this case, this is presented more as a (condemnable) failure of the police to establish presence in the area.

Naxalites as detached from family

One of the first things that seemed evident to me in my corpus of articles was the juxtaposition of joining the Naxalite movement and being a part of a traditional family unit as being oppositional. This made me consider a group of articles as having an "anti-family" discourse about the Naxalites.

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21 Collector or district collector, in the Indian context, refers to a chief administrative and revenue collector of a district. This is a fairly high level position, which is why the Naxalites kidnapping a collector made many headlines.

However, upon further reading, it seems less that Naxalites are portrayed as being the opposite of traditional families, and more that association with Naxalites makes one detached from their families and the traditional ways families are formed in Indian society. As being a part of a family is considered important and generally positive, this portrays the Naxalites in a somewhat negative light.

This discourse is perhaps best exemplified in the article titled *Man recognizes arrested Naxalite leader as long-lost brother* (TOI 03/03/2012). The report opens:

> *Sadula (Sadanala) Rammohan is still in a state of disbelief. "We are happy to know that he is alive. All these years, we had no clue about his whereabouts. We had no idea whether he was alive or dead," Rammohan says, with a visible relief.*

> *"We watched the news of his arrest on TV. We are relieved," he said over the phone. The man he was referring to is none other than Sadanala Ramakrishna, his elder brother and the head of the Maoist central technical committee arrested two days back in Kolkata.*

Right from the beginning, the story is framed from the perspective of the brother, whose happiness and relief are emphasised. Because of this framing, the story gains an almost feel-good tone. Not only has this Naxalite been captured, but now his non-Naxalite family knows what happened to him. In the next paragraph, Rammohan reveals the extent to which his brother detached himself from the family:

> *"He did not come when our father, Sadula Venkataiah, passed away in 1998. Even[22] at our mother Ramakka's death, in 2005, there was no trace of him. We've had no word from him in the last 28 years," he said.*

The detachment has therefore been long and extends to the parents passing away (which would probably in normal circumstances bring the siblings together as a unit). This does not present Ramakrishna as a very filial son, but it is possible to also find some sympathetic sides to him in the article. Two passages that speculate on his character and motives for joining the Naxalites, seem to suggest that he's motivated by ideals and a desire to change society:

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22 In Indian English, the word 'even' is often used to mean 'too' or 'also'. As a non-native speaker of standard English or Indian English, it can be sometimes hard for me to pinpoint when 'even' is used in this particular way, as so often either the standard English meaning and the Indian English one could easily apply. In this particular quote, however, I think the Indian English definition applies, and Rammohan means that his brother also didn't visit their mother's funeral.

Rammohan said that his brother was idealistic from a youthful age but never did they think that he would end up in the Naxal movement.

[...]

"Ramakrishna was very driven even as a schoolboy. He was mild-mannered but showed great conviction on issues affecting society," recalled Sathaiah. Sathaiah, a former teacher, was a classmate of Ramakrishna's in Warangal.

Thus his decision to join the movement and detach himself from the family unit and regular family life, is seen as acting according to his convictions, despite the fact that this made him join a criminal organisation. In a way, this is an interesting portrayal of a Naxalite's character. On one hand, it was conviction that lead him to join the movement, not opportunism, money or a desire to engage in criminal behaviour. On the other hand, this detached him from his family, leading to worry and not even the tragedy of his parents passing away could pull him back in. Curiously, the article is incredibly silent on the part of Ramakrishna himself, and other than a brief, indirect quote from police officials at the end of the article, the police for once aren't the dominating voices in the article. The focus on the family, and detachment from it, shift the narrative to regular people who knew the Naxalite, albeit before he joined the movement.

A similar narrative is found in *Slain Naxalite is Yellappa of Raichur* (TOI 10/09/2012), in which the family of a Naxalite shot by the police in a gun battle discuss how they haven't seen him in years, and the horror of finding out his fate. In this article, however, it seems that because Yellappa is wanted by the police on a case involving a murder, the family does their best to disassociate themselves from Yellappa and the murder case. This made me wonder if some of this detachment from family units is in actuality a protective tactic, either by the Naxalites or the families, to make sure they themselves do not get harassed by the police because of one family member's association with the Naxalite movement. Of course, this is very speculative, but it's worth keeping in mind the lack of trust in the police, and the often difficult circumstances both the Naxalites and the police put unaffiliated people in. Regardless, it does not change the fact that the discourse about Naxalites being detached from regular families presents them as abnormal because of it.

An article that perhaps displays the abnormality of Naxalites' own family and marital relations is one from late 2010, titled sensationally as *Revealed: Love, sex and marital lives of rebels* (TOI 26/12/2010). It opens:

Documents and books recovered by police from Maoist leaders, who were arrested recently, have able to find [sic] answers to questions related to marriage, love and sexual relationship of the Maoists those [sic] spend most of their time in forests.

This rather sloppily written opening paragraph presents the Naxalites as a mysterious Other, who live in the woods. However, as the article continues, these rules and regulations do not seem that different from those of regular Indian society.

[Superintendent of Police in Bokar, Saket] *Singh said the rule suggests that it is banned for male and female Maoists to solemnize marriage within a year of joining the outfit. And entering in sexual relationship before marriage or keeping an illicit relationship after marriage is strictly prohibited to Maoists.*

Outside of the one-year marriage ban, one could argue that pre-marital sexual relationships are largely taboo in India. Yet the tone of the article presents these as strange practises that are newsworthy, rather than as examples of how Naxalites too operate largely on the same social rules and norms as the rest of Indian society.

If male and female Maoists of the outfit fall in love with each other and want to marry, they have to give written applications to their seniors and only after their permissions they can marry. It is strictly prohibited for male Maoists to propose any woman cadre finding alone or in a lonely place. Those found guilty for this are also punished. If the Maoist men want to propose any girl cadre he can express this to girl but in front of his seniors.

In this paragraph, it seems as if in Naxalite circles, the seniors act as parents, agreeing or disapproving of marriages between the lower-rank cadre members. Unsupervised interaction between men and women seems also to be taboo. The next paragraph explains the secrecy of the marriage ceremonies and marriages in general in the Naxalite movement, and closes with:

It is mandatory for newly wed Maoist couples to take pledge in front of other Maoists and seniors that they will serve, fight and be in the outfit forever. And also always keep the interest of the party above personal relationships.

This is where mainstream society and Naxalites seem to differ. Regularly, weddings and marriages are public, known affairs that legitimise families in the eyes of society. However, the importance of the movement and the party (CPI-Maoist) in the lives of the married couple being emphasised is different, and this difference is emphasised further in the article. The last paragraph lends the whole article a rather dark note, when the police official talks about exploitation of women in the movement:

Singh, expressing his observations, said interrogating Maoist leaders and cadres earlier several times, he came across that male members dominate the rebel outfits. Women Maoists usually suffer torture, molestation and even rape by male members. This was revealed also by many arrested women Maoists. The police also several times have recovered condom packets from their bunkers in jungles. "The women Maoists are very insecured [sic] *in the outfit. It is observed that mostly tribal women join the rebel outfit and were subjected to physical exploitation," said Singh.*

The paragraph presents the women as helpless victims of male exploitation, and the Naxalite men as monsters who torture, molest and rape. This article was written years before India had violent sexual crimes against women become the most important topic of national conversation in late 2012, as result of a horrific gang rape in Delhi. In this light, it's easy to now note the way with which the article posits sexual violence as part of the cruel ways of the Naxalites, as opposed to the wider problem in Indian society. It further highlights the discourse of Naxalites being detached from 'regular' families and entering into the world of different marriages rules and possible sexual exploitation.

Another article from 2012 details the abnormality of Naxalite practises, this time regarding vasectomies and female birth control:

Forced sterilization on lower armed cadres of the PLGA [People's Liberation Guerrilla Army] *have been a practice for years. Maoist leadership reasons that vasectomy keeps male cadres battle-fit in perpetuity and forecloses the option of an alternate family life away from the party fold. Incidentally, though female Maoists are spared surgery as a permanent birth-control measure, they are forced to go on birth-control pills to avoid pregnancy. Past raids on Naxal hideouts have yielded dumps of such birth-control pills.* (TOI 27/10/2012)

The practise is revealed to be a clever tactic to keep the members of the movement loyal to the movement and not tempted away by 'alternate family life', which shows family life as detrimental to the movement's aims. The rest of the article discusses the rehabilitation of surrendered Naxalites, and how the state is looking to help these people by reversing their 'forced' vasectomies. It's also worth mentioning that birth control is not presented as an active choice by the women cadre, but rather a systematic oppressive tactic to stop women from becoming pregnant. This emphasises the normative family model – where women do not, assumably, go on birth control.

Going from being separated from regular family and normal family life to joining mainstream society and starting a family is a discourse that repeats itself in articles about Naxalites surrendering to police. This is always a very positive, upbeat story – the former Naxalites themselves feel good about the decision, talk about how they regret having joined the movement, and the excitement they feel about starting anew.

Consider this quote from an article about a Naxalite surrendering:

> *Manjhi said he had joined the Maoists in 1993. There was no option left for him to survive as the villagers used to tease and torture his family for a piece of land. They are seven brothers and sisters and it was hard to arrange two square meals as they were very poor. That forced him to join the Maoists. And, the journey began with jan adalats and triggering incidents. Manjhi was involved in the murder of Baldev Mishra, dacoity* [banditry] *in Tandwa and various other cases. "Now, I want to return. I have three children and want to live with them peacefully. I will leave the outfit once I come out of jail," Manjhi told mediapersons.* (TOI 14/04/2010)

There's a sympathetic portrayal of the circumstances and difficulties that lead to Manjhi joining the Naxalite movement as a means to survive. The surrender presents an opportunity to redeem oneself and join peaceful mainstream life, the last quote establishes. A Naxalite is portrayed positively when they are a former Naxalite, or a regretful, surrendering Naxalite. Suddenly, within the discourse of gaining new life through surrender, their reasons for joining the movement are listened to and understood.

> *"I did not feel comfortable with them. I want to work like common people. I will settle in a town as soon as I come out of jail," said Ravidas* [another arrested Naxalite]*, adding that though there are many Naxalites, who wanted to return to the mainstream, they did not know how to go about it.*

> [Bokaro Superintendent of Police, Saket] *Singh said police and government would welcome those Naxalites, who wanted to leave the outfit, with open arms.*

The portrayal of Naxalites as a group that one joins when no other options are available, and with whom one doesn't feel comfortable with, comes through here. Ravidas' quote also highlights the fact that many would want to return to 'regular life' but don't know how, with the implication that if

they knew, they would. SP Singh's indirect quote further illustrates this idea that surrender is the best option, and indeed, a few of the other articles (TOI 14/07/2012 and 28/03/2012) mention the fact that surrendered Naxalites' receive monetary compensation for their surrender. The money goes towards helping the former Naxalites in their life after prison sentences, and to help their families while they're serving. In the complexities of slow Indian bureaucracy, of course, the latter of the articles also mentions that this money takes a long time to arrive, in some cases, leading to strife for the former Naxalites and their families. (Notice how the Naxalites' families and marriages come back into the discourse when they have surrendered and thus become the 'good' kind of Naxalites.)

Naxalites as hypocrites

In an evocative personal account by a tribal man who first joined the Naxalites, and later in life became a police officer, there is an attribute assigned to the Naxalites, that pops up every now and then: their hypocrisy.

> The Naxals would say: 'Police comes here, beats you up. We come here, we only ask for dal [lentil stew] and rice. We do not trouble you. We want to capture the area and develop it. We will start jan adalat [people's courts] in the village'. I would wonder how can they develop the area without the government? They soon started collecting money from each home. But no development took place. (TOI 09/10/2010)

The lack of choice for the villagers is portrayed in the article. The Naxalites arrive in the area, promise great things but only deliver extortion of money from the villagers, the very people they're supposed to help. They promise not to trouble the villagers, and then trouble them by collecting money from each home. It's an impossible situation, that shows the immoral, hypocritical ways of the Naxalites, which further undercuts any alternative narrative where they could be the solution to the corruption within the various governmental institutions of India. It states that they are just as corrupt as any government they are against. It's also easy to see the connection to the discourse on development; what is this development and on whose terms does it take place? The Naxalites' point of view is given an airing, their version of lower level autocracy in the form of people's courts is mentioned, but at the same time this version is questioned by the narrator. The government is seen as the method of delivering development, though it's not explicitly stated what kind of development the narrator is discussing here.

The personal touch to the account, however, also portrays the questionable practises by the police, who essentially blackmail the young man through his former reluctant Naxalite links into joining Salwa Judum, the militia designed to fight against the Naxalites:

> *They threatened me. They said either you join us, or show us their* [Naxalites'] *camps. I was stuck. I knew I had to choose. I feared if I went back, the Naxals would label me a police informer and kill me. I decided to join the police.*

The choices in this narrative, including the short, simple sentences (which may only be a result of hasty translation by an interpreter or by the journalist themself), lend the whole narrative a very plain but trustworthy feel. It puts readers into the man's shoes, and asks us what we would've chosen, given these impossible circumstances. The man later describes the current conflict situation:

> *Look at Nepal. One day, the Maoist leaders in India will surrender and enjoy the good life. And who will get killed? Adivasis. We are the* bali ka bakra *(sacrificial goat).*

> *Yes, it is true even the police is killing innocent adivasis. We feel sad. But what to do. The Naxals are always surrounded by a protective layer of people, some carry bows and arrows, others are informers. We need to first eliminate this lot. How else can you win the war? There will be both victory and loss in this war.*

Towards the end of the article, our pessimist narrator seems to have resigned to the fate that the world has set up for him – the leaders on top from both sides will be fine, regardless of the outcome, but the troops on the ground, of which he is a part of, will suffer, and possibly die as result. A lot of the things that discourse analysts often find in Western media they analyse, such as the obfuscation of military killing, seems to not be present in the discourses of TOI. Here, however, we see the word 'eliminate' used about the very same people the narrator understands are his own – the innocent adivasis who were practically forced into joining the Naxalites. He says 'we', meaning the security forces, detaching himself from the category of adivasis. The current conflict is presented as regrettable but as the only option to the Naxalite situation.

Discursive practises

In order to understand what circumstances have lead to the texts being written in the ways that they have been, it's necessary to look at the discursive practises that relate to production and consumption of the texts in my corpus. This part of critical discourse analysis has been critisised as being a methodologically vague. Fairclough, for example, mostly examines interdiscursivity (the

way that discourses interact and influence one another) and intertextuality (the ways that discourses carry over from one text to another) in his analysis of discursive practises. (Fairclough 1997, Jorgensen & Phillips 2002.) I take a different approach to looking at discursive practises, so in this section I will attempt to shed light on important factors surrounding the consumption and production of the texts in my corpus. Some of these issues are very crucial to understanding these processes, while others are less important or less frequently at play.

One of the most important things to consider when it comes to the production of the texts I'm analysing in this study is Indian legislation that relates to unlawful groups. The biggest one of them is the Unlawful Activies (Prevention) Act 1967, sometimes shortened into UAPA. This legislation aims to prevent activities that threaten the sovereignty and integrity of India as a nation, and has thus been used to target various kinds of groups, be it Maoists or Sikh nationalists. It imposes restrictions on freedom of speech, the right to assembly (peacefully or with arms) and the right to form associations and unions. As such, this piece of legislation can be critisised as limiting people's democratic freedoms, but also defended as an important tool for the government to ensure violent groups that threaten India as a nation can be kept in check. (For further discussion on Indian anti-insurgency legislation, see Tharu 2007.)

In many ways UAPA and other anti-insurgency or anti-terrorism legislation makes journalists proceed carefully when covering a revolutionary group, such as the Naxalites. There are cases where people who attempt to engage with the Naxalites to provide amenities (be it schooling or healthcare or other forms of help) have been accused of being Naxalite supporters under this piece of legislation, and thus have got jailed or indefinitely waiting for a court hearing on their case. At times it seems that there doesn't even need to be much engagement with Naxalites to get accused of being a sympathiser[23]. For the journalists trying to cover these issues in an even-handed manner, it can be a tough balancing act. They do not want to be seen as Naxalite sympathisers, because it could lead to very real, very troubling consequences. This furthers the divide between the two sides of the conflict – the journalist, even as they attempt to portray a neutral account of events, can end up siding with the government and security force sources, simply because giving both sides a fair shake would cast suspicions on their own character.

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23 For example Lingaram Kodopi's case, as discussed in TOI 27/06/2010 and TOI 10/09/2011, or Soni Sori's case, covered in TOI 03/10/2011.

An important discursive practise surrounding the way TOI reports on events is its corporate slant. As mentioned previously in chapter 2, while there isn't necessarily a very party political bias to be witnessed in the reporting and editorial writing of Times of India, it is a paper that is run very much like a business, and carries a point of view that is not very critical of big business or corporate India.

Another thing that impacts the coverage of Naxalite news events is the lack of access to these areas. Particularly the deeply forested areas where Naxalites have taken up the adivasi cause, it can be nearly impossible for a journalist to talk to anybody on the ground who is not a part of the security forces, since the adivasis and Naxalites are so secluded in these areas. Another problem is one of language. While native journalists at TOI may have a handle on multiple Indian languages, many adivasi groups have their own language, and thus journalists have to go through a translator to speak to the people involved in the conflict.

When it comes to readers consuming the text, there are some discursive practises one must consider. The selection of the texts that I have in my corpus are of course not necessarily ones that any one reader would read through. Times of India is published all over India, and the printed versions contain a selection of national and local stories – hence, a reader in Mumbai can read about national politics, happening in Delhi, but the Mumbai edition of the paper will have a heavy focus on stories about Mumbai and the surrounding Maharasthra state. Online, of course, such limitations do not exist, and a reader, should they care, can follow the Naxalite conflict and its developments in different states quite easily, using the search function. I'm sure some of the stories here landed on the national news page of many a printed local edition of Times of India, but some of them could have simply been read by locals in states such as Jharkand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar.

It is easy to see why this actually makes individual stories more powerful as sources to re-iterate public discourses about the Naxalites. A reader, unless they take a special interest, is unlikely to read a plethora of stories about the conflict, and instead read one or two as they get featured among national news pages of the paper, or if the conflict is actually a local one. As covered in chapter 2, the readership is likely to be urban and highly educated, as English is not spoken or read fluently by every person in the country, but rather a mere select, literate, educated elite.

Social practise

Social practise is the wider social context in which discourses take place. In critical discourse analysis, this is the final stage of the analysis that attempts to map the social matrix of discourse, and questions about ideology and social change are addressed. Has the usual order of discourse been transformed, thus challenging the power of dominant entities and groups in society, or do the discourses reinforce unequal power relations? What is the ideological content in discourses, and how to they relate to hegemony? (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002.)

In their study on newspaper editorials from India, the US and Scotland that discussed terrorism, critical media researchers Roy and Ross concluded that the media constructed nationalism, the nation standing as one united front, and support for government actions against terrorism as the ideal (Roy & Ross 2011, 298). Political scientist Benedict Anderson also posits that media, in particular newspapers, have an important role in shaping the *imagined community* of a nation that makes readers identify with nationalism. A nation is an imagined community as its members are not in day-to-day contact with one another, but still consider each other linked by this community. They even consider each other linked with historical, long-gone past members of the community, such as ancestors or national heroes. Newspapers not only further reference and appeal to the concepts of nationality and nationhood of its readers, but the consumption of them also forms the 'imagined community' of readers. (Anderson 1991, 6-7, 26, 33-35.) So newspapers, including Times of India, draw from and help shape the idea that there is a nation of India, and its readers are strongly meant to identify with this nationalist concept.

Similarly, the discourses in Times of India posit that the state's security forces are the ones readers should sympathise with as opposed to the "anti-Indian" Naxalites. Even though this nationalist stance is sometimes blurred and acknowledges severe, unjust actions by the police or other security force members, it still maintains that they are the ones fighting the good fight on behalf of India as a whole. The discourses do remember the plight of the ordinary people, often stuck in between the security forces and the Naxalites in the areas affected by the conflict, but at the same time it makes sure that in the end, the state forces are the ones trying to do the right thing, whereas the Naxalites are not.

Consider, for example, an article that is one of the most positive portrayals of the Naxalites in my corpus (TOI 11/10/2010), in which a teacher, under the headline *'Paramilitary forces, not Naxalites, troubled us'*, talks about his problems with the security forces. This narrative is however questioned later on in the same article, by another teacher, who talks about horrifying behaviour by the Naxalites, such as a rape of a teacher, as well as them harassing the school officials for celebrating state holidays, such as Independence Day and Republic Day. The Naxalites' anti-nationalist actions are highlighted, as nationalism is presented as the common sense, hegemonic ideal. The positive account of the Naxalites, which is also critical of the state's actions, is immediately 'balanced' by a narrative that asserts the negatives about the Naxalites. Thus we see also van Dijk's ideological square (van Dijk 1998) at work – the positives about the They (Naxalites) is continuously diminished while the negative is highlighted, while the negatives about Us (state troops) are downplayed.

The second social practise that stood out was the economic view on development, and overall the emphasis in many instances on how economic considerations were a part of people's motivations. Encapsulated succinctly by former Home Minister Chidambaram (TOI 12/03/2010), who states that the Naxalites' "do not want the poor to be emancipated or become economically free", and this marks them as anti-development. Yet what does it mean to be 'economically free' if the poor suffer from basic problems, such as lack of access to healthcare or education? Does development of areas mean developing them for expansion of mining activities and other such big business ventures? The pro-corporate, pro-business bias of Times of India can be witnessed in the coverage of these issues, but at the same time, this may be related to the way Indian politicians at large think. 'India Shining' and all the other similar political slogans has never stood for being wary of expanding capitalism – in fact, quite the opposite. This has been an important part of the prevailing political mood of the country after the economic liberalisation of the 1990's.

Even in the contradictions in the discourses on Naxalite motivations (ie whether people join the movement due to ideology or because they are promised money), it seems like economic considerations are constantly highlighted. Naxalite corruption and extortion makes a frequent appearance (e.g. TOI 18/08/2011, 27/09/2011, 15/02/2011, 13/06/2011, 25/09/2012), whereas police corruption is also discussed, though less frequently. Capitalist greed for personal wealth is definitely promoted as the hegemonic ideal, and as the ground reality that underscores everything about the conflict. It's also increasingly tied into the discourse on development. Consider, for example, this

opening on an article:

> *Naxals had a facade particularly against landlords, treating them as enemies of economic equality. But capitalism and globalization have no such faces where villages and towns are coasting along the development path. That's one of the main reasons why Maoist activities have come down.* (TOI 14/11/2011)

The Naxalites' enemy, the evil landlord, is portrayed as being non-existent in the new heedy reality of Indian capitalist development. There are no perceived problems to this type of development – whole villages and towns are simply "coasting along" on the way to a better, brighter future. All of this despite the fact that India's new-found wealth is largely accumulated by a very small group at the top. They may not be 'class enemies' (Naxalite term for the land-owning class) but they are the reason that this wealth has heavily concentrated around big business and thus only benefited a select few, as oppose to the country as a whole.

Even as the media occasionally discusses the lives of the unaffiliated people in the conflict in a way that seems to honestly portray their experiences, these two ideological factors remain: the nationalist and pro-capitalist. In the post-liberalisation India, capitalism is still seen as a path to progress, even for the nation's most poor and disenfranchised population, and even as the country seems increasingly divided along political, religious and linguistic lines[24], national unity is an important value.

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24 Even the formation of a separate Telangana state is once again making headway in the political discussions and the political process. The Telangana Bill was passed in Lok Sabha in early 2014.

6. Conclusions

One could ask whether the discourses in Times of India were all different discourses or simply aspects of one singular discourse, that positions the Naxalites in quite a negative manner. The word terrorist might not be used, but the implication of Naxalites being the enemy is definitely there: Naxalites are positioned as a threat to India, a menace to both the police and the people who live where the conflicts take place, they are considered prone to violence and not interested in development of the areas they are in. On the other hand, there is also a definite ambivalence to be found. Sometimes Naxalites are understood as a part of India and her people, as opposed to being against it (ostensibly by being against the current government forces and state structures).

As such , the discourses on Naxalites are also discourses about India, its state and its nationhood. India is an enormous country whose political forces wish to project a unified image of one people in one nation. Indians may be varied in terms of economic status, religion, even ethnicity, but they're all Indian – this is the nationalist ideology that the nation was largely founded on. The on-the-ground reality is naturally very different. Many people in India have been left outside its recent economic progress, and been neglected, ignored or treated as a nuisance by their government. Many communities suffer from communal violence, and the conversation about the misogyny and sexism of not just the man on the street, but the officials in police forces and courtrooms, has emerged in the past year (following the horrific gang-rape in Delhi in late 2012). It is these varied inequalities that essentially hold India back, and these are problems simply too big to ignore, especially when they are highlighted by violence. Indeed, these are problems that often leave the pages of newspapers as soon as violence surrounding them dies down momentarily (Chaudhuri 2010, 64).

The Naxalite movement was not simply born out of frustrations of the oppressed and marginalised, as history points to the contrary (Roy 2012). Naxalites are simply forwarding their own ideology through these very legitimate concerns by the adivasi people. The media has a curious part in all this, because while it largely does not critisise the greater order of things (such as the broadening of capitalism, or the fact that development in some areas may mean setting up state presence in the form of the police and mineral mines, not schools and hospitals), it still does not *only* present the

Naxalites as evil people doing evil deeds. The reality of poverty and marginalisation are too big for journalists ignore or brush aside when covering these issues. Thus we see some concessions made. Firstly the lawlessness of the Naxalites is frowned upon, but their surrender and return to the mainstream is a good thing. A Naxalite joining the police forces is also seen as positive.

Secondly, the differentiation between Naxalites and adivasis is clear in the greater discourse. Even though Basu (2011) and Mukherji (2012) both make the point that the categories overlap for numerous reasons, it still seems like the media wants to make a difference between the marginalised adivasi and the cunning Naxalites who further their own goals by capitalising on this marginalised group. Occasionally some sympathy is given to the difficult circumstances some people found themselves in, which lead to them joining the Naxalite movement. However, this is never presented as a choice made due to ideology, but due to necessity (usually of the economic kind). Thirdly, when people are merely suspected of supporting Naxalites, or being Naxalites themselves, the media is again sympathetic to their point of view. The stigma of being a Naxalite is without a doubt a negative one, so the discourse is willing to consider the possibility of there being a false accusation.

Naxalism is presented as bad, but since Naxalites are understood as being Indian, their ideology and criminal actions are the only reasons why they are bad. They are not considered to be inherently bad people, as foreign terrorists in media discourses often are. Naxalites can at any point of their choosing leave the category of "Naxalite" and join the mainstream society – the chance for redemption is always there, the media tells us. This is where one can witness the nationalist discourse, as these 'anti-Indian Indians' re-join the nation and are redeemed. The narrative could just as easily be that these people have fought against their own state, and thus should be locked away for good, and shamed in the public sphere. However, the media discourse allows for a bit more nuance than that. It's at times even recognised that the choice of joining the movement is often done between a rock and a hard place; that there aren't all that many legitimate choices for a career in some of these areas.

A discourse on development is closely tied to the representation of the Naxalites. They are positioned as opposed to development, but the focus of development is more about economic development (such as furthering mining activities in these areas), or conflates this aspect of

'development' with poverty alleviation measures such as education and healthcare. A critical reader is right to ask what kind of development politicians mean in these articles.

Macro-economic matters seem to play a big part in political debate of today's India, but amidst these discussions on economic growth and industry, the corporate-minded media often forgets to look outside the India of increased consumerism and the stock market. There are emerging new conversation-makers, too, however. In late 2013, the very recently formed Aam Aadmi Party (AAP, translated as "The Common Man Party") formed a local government in Delhi. Even though AAP has its critics and doubters, its prominent entry into the mainstream political conversation has meant a new focus on issues that have previously been ignored by the two major political parties, Congress and BJP.

AAP, with its surprising, sudden popularity and entry into the mainstream political discussion through a democratic victory, can be seen as the anti-thesis to the Naxalites' revolutionary, anti-democratic (or at least questionably democratic) aims and violent means. If a democratic, non-violent political movement manages to become the movement and party that the disenfranchised and those who have lost their faith in the Indian democratic process flock to, it may be the beginning of a massive democratic change in Indian politics. It seems as if there is some cause for optimism.

One lengthy treatise on the Naxalite movement (Weil 2011) begins by describing the poverty, the cruel fate and the strife of India's rural poor, and from there continues to assign the Naxalite response to oppression as the sole legitimate one against the corrupt state. I found myself at odds at accounts such as this one, since the underlying issues are heart-breaking and undeniable, but the logical conclusion to me was not a violent revolutionary movement (even if Weil also goes into the Naxalite version of democratic representation that they would implement after gaining power through revolution). After all, India's problem has never been its democracy, but poor governance and corruption embedded in every level of public life.

One of the most surprising conclusions of the analysis was to find that the discourses or narratives on the Naxalite movement discussed in my preliminary readings, such as the law-and-order

discourse, the socio-economic discourse and the adivasi discourse, weren't necessarily to be seen separately in my corpus of articles, nor was one of them extraordinarily dominant. Instead, the narratives mixed together – Naxalites could be seen as violent criminals, exploiting adivasis, but at the same time understood as people who were choosing this wrongheaded path due to bad socio-economic circumstances. Certainly it was easy to see that the law-and-order perspective was voiced by the police or politicians, but there was also a decent amount consideration given to the other viewpoints.

The title of this study is a quote from an opinion piece (TOI 15/09/2011), in which Ajay Vaishnav argues that "nothing poses as formidable a challenge to the idea of India as Naxalism". What is the idea of India? Some on the left would perhaps argue that Hindu nationalism, with its right-wing ideology and conversative ideas, is more oppositional to the idea of India as a secular democracy that promotes the welfare of all of its citizens. Or is the idea of India one that promotes further expansion of capitalism and industry as a way to better the lives of its citizens? Naxalism wants to remake India in its image, that much is true, but this quotation still considers Naxalites as a part of India. Perhaps the continued importance of Naxalites in discourses is just that: Naxalites highlight a problem (the failure of the state to provide welfare for all of India's massive population and the resulting poverty and disillusionment) that is too big to ignore, as unpleasant as the problem may be. If it's a challenge, then it's a challenge for the state to include all of its people into whatever the future has in store.

Discursively, however, Naxalites only highlight the problem – nothing surrounding the discourses about them talks about the solutions. It's almost as if Naxalites keep the problem in headlines, while simultaneously taking the focus off of it. The conflict is a serious issue, but when there is violence, the focus is on restoring law and order (often in places where, as we've learned, state presence was lacking to begin with). Poverty alleviation or education are not really being discussed as much as deaths, the sneakiness of Naxalite tactics or the corruption on both sides of the conflict are.

In the past five years or so, the world has witnessed numerous popular movements rise up against corrupt governments and unjust circumstances, be it in Greece, Egypt or most recently, the Ukraine. Riots and protests are common in today's India, but there has so far not been a big singular protest movement against the biggest problems the country faces, be it poverty or wide-spread corruption.

The Naxalite movement aims for a revolution, and therefore a possibility to rebuild society, but it is also aligned with a very fringe ideology that seems unlikely to ever be popular among the people. Even though there are parts of the Naxalite message (like the unfairness of the current situation) that most people could agree with, it seems highly unlikely that the Naxalite ideology could become the one to potentially start an 'Indian Spring' type of movement.

Possible venues for future research

India is one of the corners of the world where both traditional media (newspapers) and newer forms of media (television, the worldwide web and social media) are gaining popularity. The media can report on societal problems and help make corrupt politicians, executives and civil servants more accountable. As literacy and television ownership increase, the need for better critical media literacy also increases. Discourse analysis is one of the many tools with which researchers can highlight the need for more critical consumption of media, and understand the ways media discourses re-produce social reality and power relations in it.

One of my conclusions about the representation of the Naxalites was that they were presented in a negative, yet ambivalent manner. A Naxalite could easily be presented sympathetically, if they positioned out of the category of Naxalites, and showed willingness to re-join the mainstream. One wonders how the representation of other anti-state or violent groups differs in the Indian media. For example, the representation of Islamist extremist groups or right-wing Hindu nationalist groups would probably be very different.

One could also examine the discourses on left-wing extremists among the writings and discussions of the academic, middle class left-wing "intelligentsia". This conversation was comprehensively begun by Nirmalangshu Mukherji's (2012) thesis. He stated that the left-wing thinkers kowtow to the Naxalites' violence and extremist ideology, just because they feel uncomfortable siding with the Indian state (known for its repressive actions against various groups) on this issue. Mukherji's thoughts were enlightening to me, as they showed how to process the complicated on-the-ground reality, viewing it from the outside, and seeing that the two sides of the issue (social justice-focused discourse and law-and-order discourse) are not the only viewpoints one can take. Approaching the

representation of Naxalites from this point of view would also allow academic researchers to critically view their own community, and the texts produced within it.

Another path to critically examine Indian media would be to view how hegemony is formed. Is it true, as many native left-wing critics would claim, that the media is ruled by the Brahman Hindu perspective? Or is the hegemony formed to benefit the educated English-speaking class, or indeed both of these? Indian social life contains so many a status that all of the intersections of these statuses (regional, linguistic, religious, gender, sexuality, economic class, caste etc) would be a very interesting premise for critical media studies.

While cinema does not reach the entire population, its importance in the Indian social sphere can hardly be denied. India has several regional film industries, where a great number of films are produced, and extensive dubbing practises allow films to made in one language, and enjoyed by audiences who know an entirely different language. Film stars are worshipped as gods, or elected as politicians[25]. Stories and dialogues in films are used as political propaganda, and thanks to low-cost tickets, even poorer, illiterate parts of the populus can enjoy these films. They continue to shape both national and regional identities in India.

In my cursory look at the way Naxalites are portrayed in cinema, I saw some variety. Often Naxalites easily emerge as folk heroes against the corrupt cops, but the picture may also be the exact opposite – the heroic policemen against the terrifying criminals. When journalist Sudeep Chakravarti investigated the Naxalite movement in detail, he found that one film, *Laal Salaam* (Red Salute, Hindi, 2002) by Gaganvihari Borate, was being circulated almost as a recruitment video for the cause (Chakravarti 2008, 326-328). A different chapter altogether are the depictions of the historical beginnings of the Naxalite movement in West Bengal, such as *Pratidwandi* (The Adversary, Bengali, 1970) by Satyajit Ray, or *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa* (The Mother of 1084, Hindi, 1998) by Govind Nihalani. Since films are some of the most popular and widely consumed forms of entertainment and media, they would be very worthy of analysis when it comes to representation of these sorts of groups. Even when fiction does not claim to directly depict reality, it is an important way that discourses are produced, and societal norms are reinforced.

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25 Film stars have played an important part in shaping political history, particularly in the South Indian film industries, such as former film stars MGR and Jayalalithaa ruling the state of Tamil Nadu. For an excellent look at the various political and cultural aspects of Tamil cinema, see Velayutham (ed.) 2008.

As my first encounter with the Naxalite movement was through cinema, it was the portrayals of Naxalites in films both old and new, that made me consider this as a relevant topic for further research. Around the time I began my research, director Prakash Jha released his film *Chakravyuh*[26] (2012), which depicted the Naxalites as ultimately a force for good. The film ran into a bit of a controversy over a song that the Naxalite characters sung, in which the lyrics accuse the big industrialists of India of robbing the common man's pocket. Some of the industrialists mentioned ended up suing the film's producers for defamation, and the film was eventually released with a disclaimer regarding the matter (Times of India 12/10/2012).

Controversies such as this one reveal once again how the discourse on the Naxalites can focus too much on what the movement's existence says about India (ie the focus on poverty and disenchantment of the poor), rather than what kind of India the Naxalites are actually proposing (ie the Maoist ideology and the aim for a violent revolution). Naxalites can too easily get portrayed as the heroes of the poor, just as easily as they may be considered evil terrorists, but the reality could just be that they are both at the same time, or neither, depending entirely on one's point of view.

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26 The title refers to a circle-like military formation depicted in the Mahabharata, and is thus pretty difficult or near-impossible to translate into English.

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Appendix I – List of articles in the corpus

All Times of India news articles and opinion pieces accessed online (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com) in December 2012 and January 2013 and saved as MHT web archive files onto the computer of the researcher.

Author listed, otherwise abbreviations used:

TNN – Times News Network

PTI – Press Trust of India

IANS – Indo-Asian News Service

Format: dd/mm/yyyy

2012 – 36 articles total

1. TOI 20/02/2012 Siva G: AP cops hunting for naxalites accused of terrorising villagers
2. TOI 3/03/2012 G Arun Kumar: Man recognizes arrested Naxalite leader as long-lost brother
3. TOI 14/03/2012 Soumittra S Bose: Social worker ends life on Naxal link rap
4. TOI 20/03/2012a Rakhi Chakrabarty: Power void in Maoists' ranks behind Italians' kidnap?
5. TOI 20/03/2012b Critical point (op-ed)
6. TOI 28/03/2012 Divy Khare: Surrendered Maoist struggles without promised money
7. TOI 06/04/2012 TNN: Have knowledge of Naxals, just inform cops
8. TOI 20/04/2012 Soumittra S Bose: State Reserve Police Force jawan flouted security norm, shot dead by Naxals
9. TOI 24/04/2012 Joseph John: Chhattisgarh's Sukma forests: Lord Ram's exile path is now a Maoist hub
10. TOI 27/04/2012 Subodh Ghildiyal: Arrest or kill: Govt policy on Reds
11. TOI 13/05/2012 Pupul Dutta Prasad: In anti-Naxal war, beware turning state into a destructive power (op)
12. TOI 21/05/2012 Law Kumar Mishra: Topchanchi massacre case: Court acquits 13
13. TOI 02/06/2012 Joseph John: Maoists target police vehicle in Chhattisgarh, 19 injured
14. TOI 10/06/2012 Joseph John: Chhattisgarh : 148 tribal boys from Naxalite areas crack AIEEE
15. TOI 12/06/2012 Caesar Mandal: Maoists searching for next line of leadership

16. TOI 19/06/2012 Alok K N Mishra: Naxalites enjoy, railways pays

17. TOI 28/06/2012 TNN: Cops play development agents in Naxal-hit areas

18. TOI 04/07/2012 Vishwa Mohan: Bijapur anti-Maoist operation was a chance encounter: CRPF

19. TOI 14/07/2012 Vishwa Mohan: Centre hikes cash award for surrendered Maoists by 15 times

20. TOI 31/07/2012 TNN: Rights body highlights woes of civil society activists in Red zone

21. TOI 22/08/2012 Bharti Jain: Reach out to pro-talks Maoist leaders, says Naresh Chandra panel

22. TOI 31/08/2012 Vishwa Mohan: Maoist menace ebbs in West Bengal, Bihar

23. TOI 07/09/2012 Sanjay Ojha: Two steps back (op)

24. TOI 10/09/2012 TNN: Slain Naxalite is Yellappa of Raichur

25. TOI 14/09/2012 Saibal Sen: Mamata model in Maoist fight

26. TOI 19/09/2012 Kelly Kislaya: Former Maoist seeks admission in Ranchi univ, become a prof to become a lecturer

27. TOI 24/09/2012 Sanjay Ojha: All Jharkhand Students' Union invites Maoists to join party

28. TOI 25/09/2012 Kolkata court grants privileges to nine Maoists as political prisoners (op-ed)

29. TOI 26/09/2012 Amaresh Misra: Muslims and maoists: Wallah! Kya baat hai! (op)

30. TOI 17/10/2012 Bharti Jain: Centre against hostage swap deals with Maoists

31. TOI 23/10/2012 Alok K N Mishra: Follow Red diktat in tribal hinterland, or else...

32. TOI 27/10/2012 Bharti Jain: Centre offers vasectomy reversal to willing Red ultras

33. TOI 28/11/2012 TNN: Rebellion changed Rakhi's life, not of her village

34. TOI 08/12/2012 IANS: Doors open for dialogue with Maoists: Jairam Ramesh

35. TOI 18/12/2012 Alok K N Mishra: War against Naxalites goes digital in Jharkhand

36. TOI 29/12/2012 TNN: Women suffer big in India's state vs rebels war

2011 – 37 articles total

1. TOI 24/01/2011 Dhananjay Mahapatra: Securitymen too are children of Republic

2. TOI 28/01/2011 Jaideep Deogharia: Maoists turn headhunters

3. TOI 01/02./2011 Najeeb Jung: The Sound Of Silence (op)

4. TOI 06/02/2011 Divy Khare: Jhumra residents in horns of dilemma

5. TOI 08/02/2011 Ramu Bhagwat: Chhattisgarh abandons 'salva judum'

6. TOI 14/02/2011a Mazhar Ali: State's carrot and stick policy against Naxals continues

7. TOI 14/02/2011b Divy Khare: Love metamorphoses ex-rebels' lives

8. TOI 15/02/2011 TNN: Extortnomics: Maoists raise Rs 2,000 crore every year

9. TOI 17/03/2011 Siva G: Post-Vineel Kidnap: Reds on a mission to win over tribals

10. TOI 20/04/2011 Jaideep Deogharia: Cops get lingo lesson to tackle Maoists

11. TOI 26/04/2011 TNN: SC raps Centre for anti-naxal militias

12. TOI 06/05/2011a Supriya Sharma: Poster war against Chhattisgarh Reds

13. TOI 06/05/2011b Soumittra S Bose & Mazhar Ali: 6 civilians killed, 4 hurt as Naxals blow up jeep

14. TOI 11/05/2011 M N Samdani: Tribal boy's tryst with destiny

15. TOI 12/06/2011 TNN: A tale of teen-turned-Maoist

16. TOI 13/06/2011 Supriya Sharma: Tendu leaves little hope for tribals

17. TOI 14/06/2011 Soumittra S Bose: Naxals targeting Gadchiroli tribals spreads panic

18. TOI 22/06/2011 Soumittra S Bose: Naxals rule the roost as cops take it easy

19. TOI 30/06/2011 Prakash Singh: A need to be fighting fit (op-ed)

20. TOI 03/07/2011 Kashi Prasad: Maoists free 11 abducted villagers

21. TOI 06/07/2011 Dhananjay Mahapatra & Supriya Sharma: SC disbands Salwa Judum, anti-Naxal ops may be hit

22. TOI 08/07/2011 Government: Good servant, bad master (op-ed)

23. TOI 14/07/2011 TNN: A Maoist's surrender for new lease of life

24. TOI 10/08/2011 Alka Panse: Brave commandos wish to soldier on

25. TOI 28/08/2011 Supriya Sharma: Charge of a light and lonely brigade

26. TOI 10/09/2011 TNN: Contentious arrests in Dantewada, contractor claims paying Maoists on behalf of Essar

27. TOI 15/09/2011a He has his priorities wrong (op)

28. TOI 15/09/2011b Ajay Vaishnav: Maoism is the biggest threat (op)

29. TOI 21/09/2011 Divy Khare: Plan panel official's failure to visit Red bastion flayed

30. TOI 27/09/2011 Supriya Sharma: Essar GM arrested for paying protection money to Maoists

31. TOI 03/10/2011 Supriya Sharma: Father shot by Naxals, daughter on police radar for Maoist links

32. TOI 09/10/2011 Anahita Mukherji: Nailed for the truth (op)

33. TOI 12/10/2011 Jaideep Shenoy: Ray of hope for a few Naxal-affected places

34. TOI 02/11/2011 TNN: Gondia, the now N hotspot?

35. TOI 14/11/2011 G Arun Kumar: Red alert

36. TOI 25/11/2011 Vishwa Mohan: Kishanji killed: Maoist-hit states on alert to preempt retaliatory strikes

37. TOI 06/12/2011 Priti Nath Jha: JD(U) man's killing hits life in Muzaffarpur village

2010 - 39 articles total

1. TOI 20/01/2010 Vishwa Mohan: Chidambaram wants Jharkhand to take naxals head-on

2. TOI 17/02/2010 Talking With Guns (op-ed)

3. TOI 20/02/2010 Smriti Singh: 'Kobad had met Prachanda'

4. TOI 24/02/2010 TNN: Fax me truce offer, says Chidambaram; call on 9734695789, replies Kishanji

5. TOI 12/03/2010 PTI: Govt has right to use force to tackle Maoists: Chidambaram

6. TOI 15/03/2010 Sonali Das: Maoist cadres still in villages'

7. TOI 25/03/2010 Abdul Qadir: Police, experts discuss rebels' stance

8. TOI 07/4/2010b TNN: 'Govt strategists have little experience'

9. TOI 11/04/2010 Avijit Ghosh: Red mist over Bailadila's mining townships

10. TOI 12/04/2010 Dhananjay Mahapatra: Where does the buck stop for poverty in Naxal-infested areas? (op)

11. TOI 14/04/2010 TNN: Reds losing ground in Upperghat & Jhumra'

12. TOI 15/04/2010a PTI: Dantewada a wake up call, need for resolve to fight Naxals: Chidambaram

13. TOI 15/04/2010b TNN: Congress in tizzy as Digvijay slams 'rigid, arrogant' PC on Naxal ops

14. TOI 15/04/2010c Agencies: BJP for united fight against Maoists, slams Congress

15. TOI 16/04/2010 TNN: Govt lacks unity on Maoists: Oppn

16. TOI 06/05/2010 PTI: Dantewada operation was thoughtlessly planned: Chidambaram

17. TOI 07/05/2010 Vishwa Mohan & Dwaipayan Ghosh: 'Support Naxals, face punishment'

18. TOI 13/05/2010a TNN: People distrust govt in Naxalite-hit areas: Chidambaram

19. TOI 13/05/2010b TNN: Maoists are not terrorists: Digvijay Singh

20. TOI 19/05/2010a TNN: Jaitley backs offensive against Maoists, but calls Chidambaram an

injured martyr

21. TOI 19/05/2010b TNN: Chidambaram makes fresh offer for talks with Naxals
22. TOI 20/05/2010 TNN: Congress rushes to Chidambaram's defence, targets Raman
23. TOI 21/05/2010 Sanjeev Shivadekar: Mining industry funding Naxal movement, says Patil
24. TOI 18/06/2010 Balancing Act (op-ed)
25. TOI 23/06/2010 Supriya Sharma: Victim of Maoists gets 1L, nothing for cop-hit
26. TOI 27/06/2010 Nandita Sengupta: 'I'm paying the price for saying no'
27. TOI 11/07/2010 Rakhi Chakrabarty: Terror struck (op)
28. TOI 17/07/2010 Chetan Bhagat: The Wrong Diagnosis (op-ed)
29. TOI 25/07/2010 Supriya Sharma: How a 15-yr-old vendor became a 'dead Maoist'
30. TOI 12/08/2010 Kingshuk Nag: How a tribal boy becomes a dreaded Naxalite
31. TOI 14/08/2010 Gautam Adhikari: In Search Of Mao's Coat Rack (op)
32. TOI 15/08/2010 Sandeep Mishra: Dropouts swell Maoist ranks
33. TOI 25/08/2010 Saugata Roy: West Bengal's radical past has ensured soft spot for Naxals
34. TOI 03/09/2010 Gyan Prakash, Faizan Ahmad & Vishwa Mohan: Maoists claim to have killed abducted cop
35. TOI 09/10/2010 Supriya Sharma: Born in Bastar, Trained in Kashmir
36. TOI 11/10/2010 Soumittra S Bose: 'Paramilitary forces, not Naxals, troubled us'
37. TOI 09/11/2010 Law Kumar Mishra: Reds blaze path to progress
38. TOI 19/11/2010 Anil Ashutosh: MLAs cry foul over Maoist' death in custody
39. TOI 26/12/2010 Divy Khare: Revealed: Love, sex and marital lives of rebels