

**Constructing Global Civil Society from Below:
A case study of learning global citizenship in the
Save the Narmada Movement, India**

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Abstract

The thesis examines the informal learning of global citizenship in the course of social struggle within grassroots movements, through an ethnographic case study of the Save the Narmada Movement (NBA). The movement, comprising village communities in India, campaigned with the support of international non-governmental organisations to prevent the construction of a World Bank (WB) financed dam. The study arises in response to a perceived marginalisation of grassroots resistances, especially in developing contexts, within empirical accounts of global civil society (GCS), which is conceptualised as a space where 'global citizens' seek to resist and transform the exigencies of economic globalisation. Interrogating the validity of this exclusion, a Gramscian framework is adopted to examine whether, and in what ways grassroots actors are global citizens, engaged in the transformative politics of GCS.

Analysis of data emerging from NBA suggests that contestation with political structures at the national (Indian government) and global (WB) level is an important source of learning that leads to the construction of a movement's global citizenship. Through a Gramscian dialectical process of strategic action and reflection, the movement developed a critical awareness of the class character of these institutions, leading NBA to connect its local struggle against the dam to wider struggle against 'destructive development and globalisation. This process encouraged a revalorisation of grassroots participants' subjective relationships to the nation-state, leading amongst some, to the rejection of national citizenship in favour of global affiliations. Articulation of global citizenship was based on a counter-hegemonic identification with struggles of the oppressed across the world, rather than a depoliticised 'moral universalism'. However, learning to extend global citizenship to challenging oppression embedded *within* movement communities is constrained in a context where unity against external oppressors is paramount. By examining the learning processes that led NBA to articulate and perform global citizenship in empowering ways, the thesis points to how grassroots movements are constructing GCS, and therefore contests their current marginalisation within GCS perspectives.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAWBADIA – Campaign against World Bank and Destructive International Aid

CPI(ML) – Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)

EDF – Environmental Defense Fund

EDs – Executive Directors

FoEJ – Friends of the Earth, Japan

GCS – Global civil society

HRs – Human Rights

INGOs – International non-governmental organisations

MDB – Multilateral Development Bank

MoEF – Ministry of Environment and Forests

NAC – Narmada Action Committee

NAPM – Nacional Alliance of People’s Movements

NAS – Narmada Asargrasta Samiti

NBA – Narmada Bachao Andolan

NDS – Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti

NGNS – Narmada Ghati Navnirman Samiti

NGOs – Non-governmental organisations

NSM – New social movement

SSP – Sardar Sarovar Project

R&R – Rehabilitation and Resettlement

WB – World Bank

WCD – World Commission on Dams

Glossary of Hindi and Bhilali Words

Andolan – Social movement

Bazaaria – Adivasi term for city/town dwellers

Chooa-choot – Caste practices

Didi - Sister

Gande – Adivasi term for delinquent, untrustworthy

Gayana – Song of creation

Gherao – Protest strategy of surrounding and questioning officials

Mazdoors – Labourers

Maryada – Honour

Muluk – Adivasi term of region/area

Narmada Bachao Andolan – Save the Narmada Movement

Navnirman – Renewal and recreation (term used by NBA to refer to its alternative development initiatives)

Pagal – Mad

Pooja – Worship

Purdah – Social practice of veiling women

Sarkar – Government or authority figure

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*We will fight, we will win, we will learn, we will grow!**

*Slogan of the Save the Narmada Movement

Chapter 1

Introduction

RESEARCH FOCUS

This thesis highlights a perceived paradox in dominant conceptualisations of the transformative space of global politics known as global civil society (GCS), within which the role of grassroots movements in GCS and the pedagogical processes through which this role is realised has not been adequately addressed. This exploration is facilitated through an ethnographic case study of a grassroots movement of tribal and rural communities in India, called the Save the Narmada Movement (NBA) that campaigned with the support of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to prevent the construction of a World Bank-financed dam.

Theorisation on GCS has arisen in response to concerns over the loss of democratic control by national citizens as the globalisation of capitalism challenges the political space of the nation-state and intensifies global inequalities. Within these changing contours of citizenship and politics, GCS has been positioned as a new empowering politics of direct democratic action within which disaffected voices across the world may work together as global citizens to resist, challenge and transform the adverse affects of globalisation. From the Gramscian framework within which this thesis is located, the dynamics of domination, and thus resistance through GCS, are intertwined with cultural, educational processes of consciousness and identity formation and transformation of the oppressed. Paradoxically however, empirical representations of GCS tend to be colonised by accounts of the existence and activities of INGOs, which while largely concentrated in the resource rich West, do not directly represent those most affected by globalisation.

As a point of departure therefore this thesis examines, through a case study of NBA, changes in the political thoughts and actions of marginalised participants of grassroots

movements as they articulate grievances and target institutions beyond the nation-state – in this instance, the World Bank (WB). It focuses on understanding whether, and to what extent local social movements that engage in contestation against supranational institutions perceive themselves to be actors within global civil society, and therefore engaged in educational processes of identity and consciousness transformation that are integral to the construction of global citizenship. By viewing social struggle itself as a site of informal learning, the thesis further seeks to understand if and *how* movements learn to be globally conscious agents of social change *in the process* of transnationalising their local grievances.

Before elaborating on the perceived neglect of local social movements in GCS literature and the manner in which this undermines its normative aims, I feel it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the history and nature of the Save the Narmada Movement through which the conceptual issues developed in this thesis are grounded.

THE SAVE THE NARMADA MOVEMENT

The Save the Narmada Movement or Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) is a mobilisation of village communities in the Narmada Valley which arose in the early 1980s against the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) – a mega-dam planned for construction on the Narmada River. For the communities to be displaced by the dam, the project has come to represent “ecologically and socially destructive” capitalist-led development; and their resistance to this, a search for decentralised, people-centred alternatives. While the dam was partially funded by the WB (and later also the Japanese government), the movement also became part of a much celebrated transnationalised resistance against these forces – igniting the quintessential image of a David and Goliath struggle.

Construction on SSP started in 1985 after Indian authorities received financial assistance from the WB. The dam, with a full height of 138.68 metres, is part of the Narmada Valley Project - one of the largest such projects in the world, consisting of 30 multi-purpose major dams, 135 medium dams and 3000 minor dams. Though SSP, built

at Navgam in Gujarat, has been projected as the lifeline of drought-prone areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan, it spells destruction for hundreds of village communities living along the river whose livelihoods, lands and homes face submergence.

MAPS REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



The Sardar Sarovar Projects Area

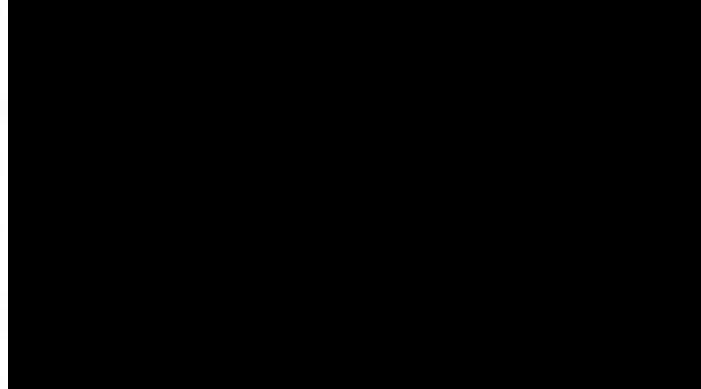
Source: Friends of River Narmada website (www.narmada.org/sardarsarovar.html)

These villages are spread across 3 states – Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra through which the Narmada River travels. While official estimates only recognise 152,000 people occupying the submergence zone as ‘project affected’ and thus entitled to compensation, this leaves out almost 850,000 people who will face displacement due to canal construction, reservoir related tourism, compensatory afforestation and ‘secondary displacement’ (i.e. a total of a million people facing displacement). Of the total 245 villages in the submergence zone 19 are in Gujarat, 33 in Maharashtra and 193

in Madhya Pradesh. Those in Gujarat and Maharashtra are exclusively hill Adivasis – tribal communities that reside in the undulating terrain of the Vindhya and Satpura hills forming part of the Narmada Valley. In Madhya Pradesh flooding will occur in two distinct socio-cultural regions – the fertile plains of Nimar, dominated by Hindu farming communities of various castes, causing displacement of 100,000 people; and the hilly tracts of Vindhyas and Satpuras extending into Madhya Pradesh from where approximately 15,500 hill Adivasis will be displaced (Baviskar, 2004).

Displacement for these traditional, place-rooted communities has drastically life-changing and potentially life-threatening consequences. It is widely known that many rural communities affected by other dam projects have been reduced from land-ownership and self-sufficiency to pauperization and financial uncertainty, suffering the humiliation and dehumanization that this involves (Dhagamwar et al, 1993). Yet the government’s management of resettlement and rehabilitation has been nonchalant at best. Indeed many villages were not even officially informed of their impending submergence. Apart from social disruption, construction of the dam has entailed deforestation and destruction of the River Valley eco-system.

MAPS REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Deforestation in the Narmada Valley

From 1985, Medha Patekar, a community worker began mobilising Adivasi and Nimari communities across the three affected states. Initially only demanding just rehabilitation, the mobilisation became increasingly radical and in 1988 declared

complete opposition to the dam with the slogan – We will not move! The dam will not be built! (*Koi nahin hatega! Baandh nahin banega!*). Since then, participants in the movement have faced severe police repression despite the non-violent nature of their resistance which has involved demonstrations, rallies, public fasts, judicial activism and alliance building with movements and support groups in India.

The movement has simultaneously transnationalised its resistance, challenging the international funders of the project, especially the World Bank. Western environmental INGOs have been particularly instrumental in this aspect of the struggle, lobbying the World Bank and galvanising international public opinion against the dam and the Bank's involvement in it. While the local movement has resisted the dam on the ground and endured human rights violations, INGOs have relayed this to the Bank and wider international community. Indeed this local-global network was so successful that in 1993 the World Bank buckled to intense international pressure and made an unprecedented withdrawal from the project. The role of INGOs in this important victory is widely cited as a clear example of the manner in which global civil society can empower subaltern¹ communities.

However despite this international success and continuing grassroots resistance the Indian government has not reconsidered the project. Funds have been gathered from private investors through issuing of bonds, and it is believed by some that WB loans for wider structural reform of the Indian economy continue to be channelled into the project². Violating human rights and project guidelines for resettlement, dam construction has continued. Many have been forcibly evicted from their homes without resettlement and studies have reported an increased mortality rate at the various

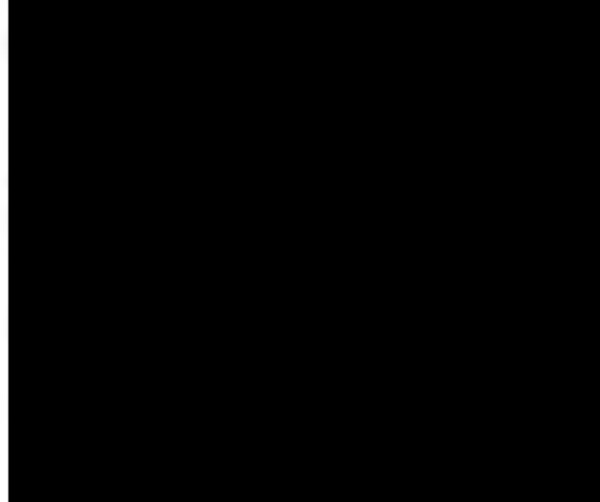
¹ The term 'subaltern' is used by Gramsci to refer to people who are not just "oppressed, although that may be the case, but lacking autonomy, subjected to the influence or hegemony of another social group, [and] not possessing one's own hegemonic position" (Sassoon, 1982). Gramsci primarily uses this term to refer to workers or those who are economically exploited. However within the Subaltern Studies Group of South Asian scholars this term has been used to refer to culturally and politically marginalised groups also. Thus it includes peasants and women, and those of minority sexual orientations, ethnicity, race or religion. Here I refer to subalterns as those who are both economically *and* politically-culturally marginalised.

² Leaders of the NBA and international activists involved in the campaign believe this to be the case though it has not been possible to clearly trace these sources of funding for the project.

rehabilitation sites that do exist (Housing and Land Rights Network, 2003; Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, 2003). Though they have effectively lost their battle for decommissioning the dam, the Andolan has continued action around a reformulated campaign to minimise the height of the dam and thus the displacement and damage caused to the hinterland.

While the movement achieved intermittent success in stalling the project at various points, when I went to the Valley in March 2005 however, for the first round of data collection, the dam was already at the height of 110m. By this stage the mass base of the movement had been severely depleted, with many families preferring to accept compensation. However because the monetary compensation they have received cannot support relocation many of these families continue to live in their original homes. Some Adivasis living in the hills have simply moved to higher ground as the waters gradually rise, though they have lost fertile land of the river embankment, making subsistence harder.

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



The dam has claimed the lands of hill Adivasis first, while the region of Nimar, furthest from the dam site has been safe at the dam height of 110m. In March 2006, however, the Gujarat government announced it would restart construction raising the height to 121m – the final elevation of the concrete wall³.

³ It was with this heart wrenching news that my fieldwork came to an end.

On New Years Eve of 2006 the construction was completed. Protests, though more muted continue, while many thousands of people remain to be compensated and rehabilitated. Though the project has finally been completed by the Indian government, the WB's direct involvement in the project for 8 years means that it is also partly culpable for this end result as well as the human rights abuses and environmental destruction that has accompanied it.

NBA was not able to stop the dam, but in alliance with INGOs it was successful in contesting the supranational institution – the WB. As mentioned earlier, the victory of this INGO alliance has become one of the emblems of global civil society's potential to empower local communities against unaccountable global forces, and is cited in many articles and books concerned with this emerging sphere of trans-border contestation. These accounts have tended to focus on the manner in which INGOs provided the local movement with global visions and democratic channels to reach unaccountable global forces. However the question of what meanings the local movement itself ascribed to their transnational contention and the implications this has for their role within global civil society has not yet been fully addressed or answered. This gap will be further discussed below, where it will become apparent that it reflects deeper currents within GCS literature that threaten to undermine the normative aspirations of GCS.

THE PARADOXICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Conceptually global civil society is understood to be a normative multi-organisational field that raises a radical challenge to regressive aspects of globalisation and the nation-state. As a radical democratic space it is believed to empower those who are marginalised and disenfranchised by globalisation. A crucial supposition is that political action within this space is anchored in universal values and dynamic global identities.

'Global' actors such as global social movements (e.g. the anti-globalisation movement and women's health movement), but predominantly INGOs (e.g. Greenpeace and

Amnesty International) are believed to advance the transformative global visions of GCS, while providing a means through which local discontent against trans-border institutions can be voiced and heard. Explorations of GCS have therefore tended to focus on these actors. As Chandhoke (2002) notes “It is indicative of the power of the non-governmental sector that civil society has come to be identified with NGO activism both in influential tomes on civil society and in policy prescriptions of international institutions today” (p.38). However these actors are predominantly located in the West and their membership is relatively affluent. They therefore do not directly represent those most marginalised by globalisation. Partly echoing this, Chandhoke therefore remarks that “[global] NGOs play a larger-than-life role in global civil society” (p.38). Further, numerous studies also highlight the manner in which the relationship between powerful INGOs and their weaker constituents is often less than democratic and participatory.

This creates a peculiar paradox – while global civil society is envisioned as a space for direct democracy and empowerment, subaltern groups especially in the South (such as those of the Narmada Valley), that arguably face the brunt of negative effects of globalisation, tend to be excluded as agents of change and meaningful participants of GCS. Instead they are reduced to passive victims of globalisation and beneficiaries of the efforts of global actors. In a subtle manner, then, the very people for whom GCS is meant to be an empowering space are positioned outside of this global political field. GCS thus emerges as an elite arena of political action rather than the inclusive, empowering space that it is conceived as.

Though it cannot be denied that local social movements of subaltern groups are examples of direct democracy, their marginalisation within GCS perspectives appears to be based on an assumption that they are locally-bound in terms of vision, scope, and identity (Batliwala, 2002). That is, they do not represent the global visions and identities that underlie GCS. Where global discourses are noted within local social movements they are often argued to be a result of the ‘influence’ of INGOs over these movements or are viewed as their strategic rhetoric to maintain instrumental alliances with powerful

'global' actors (Conklin and Graham, 1995; Bob, 2002). The inference is that underneath superficial global discourses local movements remain entrenched in local identities and political concerns. The extent to which this assumption is valid however needs more in-depth empirical exploration, which has not yet been forthcoming.

As mentioned above, analytical treatments of NBA's transnational politics have also reproduced such characterisations. Though they identify environmentalism as a prevalent global discourse in NBA, it is argued that this global discourse is a strategic device influenced by INGOs supporting the movement (Randeria, 2003). In these accounts the movement is presented as relatively static and analysis draws on what can be construed as superficial readings of movement discourses and practices articulated by movement leaders. Baviskar (2004) provides a more politicised account of the movement as a radical attempt to challenge India's dominant model of development. The analysis however remains situated within the national sphere and does not sufficiently enunciate the transnational dimensions and significance of NBA's politics.

This study hopes to provide fresh insights into the role of local movements such as NBA in global politics by analysing the strategic or transformative significance of global discourses within the NBA through two means. Firstly, it explores the *learning* influences and processes through which NBA's collective identity emerged in order to produce a more contextualised and agency-oriented account of the movement. Secondly, it accesses a deeper level of the movement through accounts of the consciousness, subjective expressions of citizenship and everyday practices of village participants of the movement. Both these aspects of the study are not only new with respect to research on the NBA but also generally in relation to local social movements that have transnationalised their grievances.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Restating the research focus of this thesis succinctly it examines:

If and how are local social movements that transnationalise their grievances engaged in the construction of global citizenship?

The Save the Narmada Movement provides a relevant case study to investigate this overarching question which will be systematically examined through its five interrelated dimensions:

- 1) At the level of the movement's practices– how did political engagements with the state, international community and other global actors such as the WB change through the course of struggle?
- 2) What were the movement discourses relating to grievance formation, targets of protest and alliance construction that accompanied these movement practices – were there global dimensions to these?
- 3) At the level of the participant local communities – whether and in what manner did local participants relate to the movement's practices and discourse of resistance? Was their participation connected to a growing awareness and critical appraisal of their oppression as well as transformation of subjective articulations of identity and citizenship – did this involve a global dimension?
- 4) If transformation in consciousness did occur was this related to a dialectical transformation of oppressive social structures within the communities?
- 5) What were the learning influences, processes and mechanisms through which the dimensions referred to above emerged?

The need to observe the possible emergence of global citizenship at these various levels of the movement leadership and local community is based on a conceptualisation of global citizenship as a political identity constituted through a dialectical relationship between political action and personal transformation. Thus global citizenship relates not only to political practices of contestation with the state and global forces (Qs1-2) but with political consciousness and action at the local/personal level (Qs3-4). Further while the practices, identities and consciousness that constitute global citizenship are viewed as developing gradually through the process of transnationalising grievances, it is

necessary to identify the particular mechanisms and experiences within the context of struggle through which global citizenship is learnt (Q5).

RATIONALE AND ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND RESEARCH FOCUS

The research focus on local social movements in developing contexts and their relationship to global civil society emerges from my political concerns which guided academic explorations of gaps and inconsistencies in the literature.

In recent years critical concern regarding the effects of the global expansion of capitalism, or economic globalisation has been rising. This is evidenced in the burgeoning critical literature on globalisation as well as the rise of movements of those marginalised and exploited by globalisation (Castell, 2004; Anheier et al, 2001a). These movements have increasingly targeted protest against agents of globalisation — multinational corporations, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation. It is argued by some that social inequalities caused by globalisation are transcending national boundaries and oppressing working classes and marginalised social groups world-wide (Castells, 1998). However while national conditions intersect with these processes, it is clear that the negative effects of globalisation have most intensely been experienced by those marginalised within developing nations (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001).

In this context the rise of ultra-fundamentalist movements has been witnessed (Delanty, 2000), and post-modernists within academia and politics have championed a politics of difference and identity in reaction to global forces (Esteva and Prakash, 1998). While the former are clearly regressive; I would argue, along with others commonly located within a Marxist framework, that postmodernist politics are also problematic. The emphasis on difference rather than commonalities in people's oppression has tended to fragment and weaken resistance against global capitalism (Kauffman, 1990; Rikowski and McLaren, 1999). From a Marxist standpoint resistance and transformation of these structures will only be successful if based on a comprehensive understanding of their

global nature. Further the radical agents of such transformation can only be those who are most affected by these forces (Cox, 1999).

Based on this analysis I felt it necessary to focus my research (which is fundamentally about how people are resisting and transforming globalisation) on those most affected by globalisation – invariably people who are already marginalised in developing contexts. I wanted to more fully understand the consciousness and identities emerging amongst these communities as they contested the effects of globalisation within their localities. The question I was interested in examining was whether these people are engaged in a postmodern politics of difference or does the process of struggle spur them to construct connections upon which global identities and a unified struggle to challenge globalisation can develop.

Most movements of poor communities in developing contexts have been led by activists who are outside of the cultural or/and class positions of those they mobilise. This is true of the most celebrated local movements, such as the Zapatistas in Mexico (Watson, 2001, 2002), the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil (Branford and Rocha, 2002), the Chipko movement in India as well as the Narmada Bachao Andolan itself (Sen, 1999; Guadalupe and Rodrigues, 2004). While studies of these movements have focused on discourses and practices of these movements as articulated through their leaders, they have not provided a clear understanding of how marginalised communities themselves are understanding globalisation and their position within it. This is a serious gap which weakens our understanding of how globalisation might be challenged and whether these movements are important forces for progressive, democratic transformation.

The need to examine processes of consciousness and identity formation is particularly relevant to developing theoretical and empirical accounts of GCS. Though global civil society is understood to be a normative political field based on global identities and values, empirical research produced on GCS has overwhelmingly consisted of *quantitative* data on the number and extent of INGOs (Katz, 2006), degree of world-

wide linkage between civil society organisations and occurrences of GCS events such as parallel forums, globally organised protests etc (Pianta and Silva, 2003; Glasius et al, 2006). Other data has referred to quantitative collations of surveys and questionnaires on perceptions, attitudes and values of those participating in these global events (Anheier et al, 2001b; Glasius et al, 2002). Some qualitative research has also been done but this has largely been limited to presenting discourse analysis and political outcomes of INGO campaigns (Padilla, 2003) and global social movements and forums (Glasius and Timms, 2006). More in-depth, qualitative research on the meanings that people ascribe to trans-border action and the identities that emerge from, and provide the basis for such action, is clearly required not only to understand the role and relationship of various actors to global civil society but also the very existence of this normative field of action itself.

ORGANISATION OF THESIS

Chapter 2 delves deeper into theorisations of GCS as well as providing a more detailed overview of empirical studies conducted in this field in order to clearly identify a continuing empirical gap that this thesis seeks to address. It is argued that the focus on global actors such as INGOs and global social movements is concomitant with a neglect of local actors such as local social movements as possibly transformative agents of global civil society and as sites for the enactment of global citizenship. This neglect could threaten to undermine the transformative goals that GCS is perceived to strive towards.

Chapter 3 seeks to develop a theoretical framework for understanding how local social movements might be transformative agents within global civil society by introducing the notion that social movements evolve through learning and are pedagogical sites for the radicalization of consciousness. The contribution of different social movement theories to understanding social movements as learning processes is examined. By dialectically relating social change to learning and conscientisation it is argued that

Gramscian theory provides the most powerful means of understanding social movements as potential agents of the transformative sphere of GCS.

Chapter 4 positions the empirical research of this thesis within the qualitative framework of critical ethnography. It describes how issues of sampling, data collection and ethics were negotiated and executed within the real life settings of the Narmada villages that constitute the movement.

Chapter 5 examines the research context and NBA's location within this. The big dam-building industry in India is contextualised within a development model spurred by modernization and globalization. NBA is positioned within a wider resistance to such development, commonly referred to as the "environmentalism of the poor". A more detailed description of the 'poor' who are the protagonists of the NBA is provided.

Chapter 6 presents an analysis of the discourses and practices of INGOs that were part of the international campaign to secure the withdrawal of the WB from SSP. Though this international campaign is often cited as an important example of GCS in action, I show through an analysis of the discourses and practices of INGOs involved in this campaign that they were not constructing global citizenship. In fact transnational action in support of NBA was galvanized by engaging national identities and politics. This problematises the overwhelming reliance of GCS theorists on INGOs as harbingers of a global community.

Chapters 7-9 present findings and analysis of empirical data on Narmada Bachao Andolan. Chapter 7 presents the movement as engaging in political action on multiple scales – local, national, transnational and global. The learning processes through which this multi-scalar politics emerged is examined. It is argued that NBA's politics of multiple scales was not simply driven by strategic local goals but reflected the movement's emerging counter-hegemonic consciousness against capitalist globalization. The implications of this for dialectically relating the local struggle against the dam to a wider 'global struggle' are examined.

Chapter 8 explores the extent to which the grassroots of the movement have been engaged in the movement's multi-scalar politics and the pedagogical implications of this on participants' consciousness, sense of identity and citizenship within global civil society.

Chapter 9 explores the extent to which NBA's transformative politics at the national and global level was reflected at the local level in efforts to address local forms of oppression based on class, caste and gender. That is, it examines the extent to which the movement was performing global citizenship at the local level.

Chapter 10 summarises and integrates analysis of the various levels of the local movement as well as INGO campaign. As such it re-examines the emerging nature of global civil society and the position of local social movements within this. The original contributions of the thesis are identified as well as areas where further research to facilitate critical understanding are required.

Chapter 2

Globalisation, Global Civil Society and Global Citizenship

INTRODUCTION

This chapter locates the thesis within conceptual contradictions in global civil society studies and an empirical gap arising from this. While GCS is conceived as a radical democratic space for resisting and contesting the oppressive dimensions of globalisation, a substantial body of research suggests that the global actors – primarily INGOs – that constitute this space are ambiguously related to its transformative aims. Thus there appears to be an incongruity between the normative parameters of GCS and the actors identified as manifesting these parameters. The chapter therefore argues for a need to look beyond INGOs, and points to the potential of local social movements that transnationalise their grievances for providing a more dynamic and radical notion of GCS.

The chapter is organised in the following manner. Firstly, key concepts are defined and theorised, namely globalisation, global civil society and global citizenship. Secondly, the global citizens or actors commonly believed to embody global civil society are introduced – notably INGOs. Critical perspectives that raise doubts regarding the transformative potential of INGOs are presented. Following this, local social movements are identified as possible alternative actors within GCS. The final section examines the notion of global citizenship more closely and identifies the forms of global citizenship that I suggest correspond to INGO-focused in contrast to movement-focused forms of GCS.

WHAT IS GLOBALISATION?

Globalisation has become a buzz word prevalently used in politics, media and everyday life of our contemporary world. Yet despite the seeming ubiquity of the phenomenon not only are its forces, forms and consequences *essentially contested* but its very existence too (Hirst, 1997). Amongst those who concede to its reality, disagreements exist on its historical significance and trajectory. Giddens' notion that globalisation emerges from the "inherently globalising" effects of modernity (Giddens, 1990) is challenged by Albrow's theorisation of an epochal shift from the Modern to 'Global Age' (Albrow, 1996). All these debates however can be distilled to one central concern from the perspective of this thesis – the extent to which the nation-state has lost its position as the main structuring force of politics, economics and culture. Below I provide a brief account of the key trends identified by globalists, even though hotly contested by those sceptical of globalisation.

Intellectual deliberation on globalisation emerged from the fields of sociology and geopolitics in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, the term came into usage only recently in the 1960s and 70s (Held and McGrew, 2003). Widely referred to as a condition of 'late modernity', its constitutive features are variously identified as: "time-space compression" whereby social, political and economic interactions are freed from traditional constraints of time and space by instantaneous forms of communication such as the internet (Harvey, 1989); "action at a distance" implying the direct interaction between global conditions and local/personal lives (Giddens, 1994); "accelerating interdependence" where the boundaries between nations are becoming increasingly porous (Ohmae, 1990); the "spatial reorganisation of production, the interpenetration of industries across borders" and the globalised division of labour (Mittelman, 1997); and personal "reflexivity" governed increasingly by a global consciousness (Albrow, 1996).

It is important here to note that though these conditions are often cited as indications of the emergence of the novel process of globalisation, they are not inherently new. It is

not their occurrence, but the “thickening” of their occurrence, that is, the “growing extensity, intensity and velocity” (Held et al, 1999, p16) of the global spread of information, people and capital, in relation to earlier times that distinguishes contemporary globalisation from preceding periods of international relations (Keohane and Nye, 2003). According to Scholte (2003) the analytical and empirical shift that is enabled by this, and which is the distinguishing feature of globalisation, is ‘deterritorialization’ wherein social geography is no longer confined to territorial boundaries of ‘place’/locality and ‘nation’. People instead *increasingly* reside in “the world as a single place – that is a *transworld* space” (p86). However this is not to suggest that deterritorialization is experienced universally. As Held et al (1999) point out – “patterns of stratification mediate access to sites of power, while the consequences of globalisation are unevenly experienced” (p28). Clearly it is not universality that accords globalisation with its global nature but the *potential* to experience deterritorialization.

Globalisation has been described as a two edged process that is on the one hand, driven by regressive forces of capitalism that Falk (1999) describes as “predatory globalisation”, but on the other hand also creates progressive possibilities for its transformation (Kellner, 2002). Amongst others, these progressive aspects take the form of global civil society and global citizenship which I will discuss later. Below however I examine the dimensions of regressive globalisation. Before I proceed it should be noted that unless otherwise qualified, references to ‘globalisation’ from now on refer to regressive globalisation. When specified however the term maybe used to refer to the more general condition of deterritorialisation.

Dimensions of Globalisation

Three dimensions of globalisation are commonly identified – economic, political and cultural. While the globalisation of the market is believed to propel the political and cultural dimensions of globalisation, debates on the veracity of a globalisation thesis have depended heavily on observations and interpretations of economic trends.

Amongst neo-liberal supporters of the phenomenon, globalisation is hailed as a utopian era of economic interdependence within a “borderless world” (Ohmae, 1990; also see Marglin and Schor, 1990). Market competition is championed as a propeller of human progress and liberation, and therefore globalising market processes such as the withdrawal of trade regulations and opening up of national economies to ‘free trade’ across borders is promoted as an ideal (Held et al, 1999). To this end First world nations have established the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations has formed the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Lubbers, 1996). For others, however, globalisation signifies a far more sinister process where free trade exposes vulnerable national economies to more powerful international competitors such as multinational corporations that possess unfair economic advantage. Following the logic of the market, globalisation also entails the “subordination” and diversion of national social welfare expenditure to finance capital meant for global investment (Aguirre, 2001, p3). In developing nations the adoption of neo-liberal policies of ‘free trade’ has led them to produce and export cash crops – a good that they have a comparative advantage in, but which suffers from greater price volatility compared to manufactured goods. This creates an unstable economic basis for these countries. Further the exportation of cash crops has been accompanied by a reduction in food production, increasing the risk of famine⁴. Based on these effects, globalisation is thus understood as a shorthand for the transnational expansion of capitalist power and exploitation and is, as such regressive.

Within the camp of those critical of global capitalism, disagreements have emerged regarding the perceived role of the nation-state within this process. Globalists seek indications of globalisation in the apparent dispersal of finance capital across national boundaries in the form of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as well as the domination of multinational corporations. This perspective is best characterised by Hardt and Negri’s theorisation of

⁴ For example in Niger structural adjustment policies encouraged by the WB were implicated in the emergence of a famine in 2005. Though the country was producing agricultural products for export there was not enough food in the country and prices rose steeply. In a population of 12 million, 3.6 million were unable to afford food and faced starvation (Mousseau and Mittal, 2006). Similar situations have arisen in Ethiopia and Somalia.

Empire – “a decentred and deterritorializing apparatus of rule”, machine-like and driven by the logic of global capitalism that is beyond the control of nation-states (2001, pxiii). Though powerful nations such as the United States may occupy advantageous positions within the ‘apparatus’ Empire is not reducible to them. Globalisation is thus distinguished by a diffusion of North-South divisions, as global capitalism widens the gap between haves and have-nots, not only in developing nations, but affluent countries too. This globalisation of the economic outcomes of capitalism is apparent in the rise of the transnational capitalist class consisting of what Sklair (2000) classifies as owners and controllers of transnational corporations (TNCs) and their local affiliates; globalising bureaucrats and politicians; globalising professionals; and consumerist elites (merchants and media). While the property and shares of these groups become increasingly deterritorialised, together they represent a capitalist class that cuts across national boundaries and divisions of North and South. Their “economic interests...are increasingly globally linked rather than exclusively local and national in origin” (Sklair, 2000, no page numbers).

Others however continue to implicate the nation-state in the exploitative processes of capitalism. Thus McLaren argues that governments presenting ‘globalisation’ as an irresistible force have used it as an “ideological façade” to conceal their agency in the “internationalisation of capitalist relations of production” (Aguirre, 2001, p2, p3). Associated perspectives reveal ‘globalisation’ to be a deceptively neutral term for “neo-imperialism”, under which subordinate Third World countries are treated as reserves for cheap labour or “wage slaves” (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001; Kellner, 1997). Institutions such as the WB and IMF are conceived as agents of neo-imperialist First World countries (Lubbers, 1996) that are forcing developing nations to realign their economies along neo-liberal lines that intersect with the interests of First World countries. Thus loans to developing countries from these financial institutions are made conditional on their acceptance of structural adjustments such as privatisation of public services (e.g. health and education), reduction of welfare expenditure, and the withdrawal of trade barriers.

The cultural effects of global economic restructuring are contradictory. On the one hand, it is argued that local diversity is swamped by the cultural hegemony of the West and replaced with a homogenised global culture and identity (Held et al, 1999). On the other hand, cultural imperialism is believed to evoke strong fundamentalist counter-responses⁵ (Ali, 2002), and the emergence of hybrid, fractured and localised identities⁶ (Appadurai, 2001, Robins, 2003). These two starkly contradictory trends – one towards the global and the other towards the local, however, cohere in bifurcating from national referents of identity and community and thus suggest the declining significance of the nation-state in cultural production (Johnston and Laxer, 2003). Needless to say, sceptics are quick to point to the continuing significance of nationhood and patriotism (Green, 1997).

These economic and cultural trends clearly have political implications for the nation-state. As national governments align themselves with global structures of capitalism the nature of national sovereignty is changing dramatically if not reducing (Castells, 2000; Schirato and Webb, 2003). The increasing influence of international economic organisations such as World Trade Organisation, G-7, WB and IMF, that manage and facilitate economic globalisation, is seen in the convergence of neo-liberal policy formation in countries across the world. Though this may be a sign of the ultimate decline of the nation-state, others argue that the state will continue to act as a “magnetic field” (Burawoy, 2000, p34) that shapes global processes according to national specificities. It is within this context that interest in global civil society as a political adjunct (Chesters, 2004) or even alternative to the state has emerged (Lipschutz, 1992).

DEFINING GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Significant growth of non-governmental activity beyond the national level and the rise of international NGOs (INGO) in the 1950s and 1960s, sparked theorisation and research on ‘global civil society’ (GCS) – an interest that has deepened amidst wider

⁵ For example Hindu fanaticism in India and Islamic fundamentalism globally (Robins, 2003).

⁶ For example assertions of Basque and Scottish identities in Western Europe (Robins, 2003).

debates surrounding globalisation. Based on the rise of these organisations, the concept of global civil society has emerged to refer to a field of active political engagement of “individual and collective citizen initiatives” (Falk, 1998, p100) that are making strategic and ideological linkages beyond national boundaries. While this phenomenon has given rise to highly polarised academic debates, the conceptualisation of global civil society nevertheless remains “fuzzy” (Anheier et al, 2001a, p11). This is partly due to the theoretical genesis of ‘civil society’ from the nation-state framework, within which it is seen as a political counter-check against the exigencies of the state. In the absence of a global state, critics argue that the possibility of global civil society (GCS) is highly circumscribed (Etzioni, 2004) or even untenable (Bowden, 2006). However, as argued above, conditions of globalisation are transnationalising the political sphere as the state increasingly loses sovereignty to sub-national and supra-national forces. Further, globalising technologies such as the internet are providing unprecedented possibilities for social networking across territories. In this context many argue that globalisation provides facilitative grounds for the formation of global civil society (Scholte, 2004). Indeed, the undemocratic effects of globalisation are also *necessitating* the emergence of GCS. Thus as the state’s realignment with global capitalist interests leaves citizens vulnerable to unaccountable external forces, GCS is envisioned as a space that can fill this ‘democratic deficit’ by creating transnational linkages between civil society organisations and people to hold these forces to account (Risse, 2006; Van Rooy, 2004). In this sense GCS is envisioned as a progressive response to the crisis created by regressive aspects of globalisation.

Refining ‘GCS’ – A departure from international relations and transnational civil society perspectives

Aside from a general consensus regarding GCS’s function as a political mechanism for bridging the ‘democratic deficit’, the concept remains rife with conceptual confusion and contradictions regarding its actual form, role, transformative significance and the actors that constitute it. Acknowledging the “contested” nature of this domain Anheier et al (2001a) prefer an ‘objective’ definition by identifying the structural boundaries of

GCS as "...the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks, and individuals located *between* the family, the state, and the market and operating *beyond* the confines of national societies, polities, and economies" (p17). The key feature of this definition is a recognition of the growth of civil society action beyond the nation-state. In doing so it suggests a departure from earlier '**international relations**' perspectives that focused on the nation-state as the primary actor in trans-border politics.

While the above definition shifts the analytical focus of trans-border studies from states to civil society, it however remains silent on the normative nature of such civil society action. For many theorists of GCS this is an inadequate representation of this domain, which they argue is essentially a normative project of "non-governmental networks" having "peaceful and 'civil' effects" (Keane, 2001, p23; also see Taylor, 2002; An-Na'im, 2002). This value-laden sense is also implicit in the application of the concept of GCS to actors engaged in social justice issues, for instance those campaigning for corporate social responsibility (Oliviero and Simmons, 2002), chemical and biological weapons disarmament (Feakes, 2003), and establishment of an International Criminal Court (Glasius, 2002). Though Anheier et al (2001a) include religious fundamentalist and nationalist movements that might coordinate across national boundaries, these authors view such political processes as inimical to the aims of GCS.

In emphasising the politically and morally-charged nature of global civil society these theorists differentiate between GCS and competing '**transnational civil society**' perspectives (see Tarrow, 2005; Keck and Sikknik, 1998). Though both concur on the rise of cross-border civil society action as a departure from the salience of states in 'international relations', they differ in their interpretations of its transformative significance. For advocates of 'transnational' contention trans-border political action are instrumental moves to take strategic advantage of 'political opportunity structures' arising at the transnational level in order to defend concerns that are essentially local and national. While they retain, and are driven by nationally-rooted identities, trans-border solidarity is transient and contingent upon specific objectives (Johnston and

Laxer, 2003; Peterson, 1992). Theorists of an emergent GCS however, suggest that globalised political action is expressive of deeper forces of transformation that are based on, but also facilitate identities and affiliations transcending the state leading to a global consciousness – the creation of an “imagined community” of mankind (Robertson, 1990, p183).

Features of the Normative Project of GCS

The emphasis of GCS theorists on the normative nature of GCS alludes to the potential role it is argued to have in facilitating social transformation, as is evidenced in claims that GCS strives towards “the creation of a better world” (Taylor, 2002, p346) or “alternative world order” (Cox, 1999, p11). There are three particular aspects of the dominant system that GCS theorists commonly believe need to be challenged through the politics of GCS. Firstly, while the creation of a global community is aspired towards, the underlying assumption is that the state is an undesirable form of social and political organisation. It is argued that the nation-state system is based on realist assumptions according to which “relations between states are governed solely by power and that morality plays no part in them” (Carr quoted in Turner, 1998, p27). The role of violence in the formation and perpetuation of states is believed to be closely associated with this (Kaldor, 2003). Of course it is true that, since the origins of the nation-state system, the mechanisms of state power and inter-state relations has extended beyond violence and includes more subtle forms of control such as diplomacy and economic sanctions. GCS theorists however maintain that violence, war and conflict are still integral to the existence of national boundaries. This is apparent from the definition of the state itself as a “human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Weber quoted in Turner, 1998, p28). Given the centrality of war and conflict to the nation-state, GCS theorists therefore do not view the nation-state system as an ideal form of social organisation.

The centralisation of power and violence in the nation-state is linked to its need to manufacture and reinforce exclusionary identities that are docile, uncritical, and loyal to

the state's interests. From a global civil society perspective these identities are problematic not only because they perpetuate the state's oppressive potential, but also because they obscure consciousness of global power structures. National identities therefore fragment resistance against common oppressors of people across the world (Hardt and Negri, 2000).

Secondly, market forces of 'globalisation-from-above' are understood as undemocratic, and oppressive. Within GCS perspectives therefore a need is felt not only to resist these forces, but also to "directly challenge the undemocratic and debilitating practices of neoliberal globalization" (Taylor, 2004, p2). Since these hegemonic forces are organised globally it is argued that effective resistance, and indeed transformation of these will also have to be organised at this level (Cox, 1999). A globally unified civil society is therefore a transformative form of globalisation, or a "globalisation-from-below" that is guided by "world order values" such as the reduction of violence, protection of human rights, environment and social justice (Falk, 1995).

Thirdly, GCS theorists reject representative democracy associated with the nation-state as a form of politics that is not sufficiently empowering and which fashions 'docile bodies' domesticated within the totalitarian project of the state⁷. This form of democracy is thus also an inadequate tool through which citizens can challenge the processes of globalisation that are increasingly enmeshing the state (Scholte, 2004).

In opposition, radical democracy is championed as implicitly and instrumentally connected to the normative dimensions of GCS – active, democratic participation is a value in itself but also a means to achieving the transformative values that represent GCS. It is to reflect this convergence of universal ideals and active participation that Delanty refers to GCS as a form of 'political cosmopolitanism' (Delanty, 2000). Thus the democratic ideals of GCS are "prefigured in its own practice" (Taylor and Naidoo, 2004, p187) and are evident in its organisation as a 'multi-dimensional field' of

⁷ Even workers' movements and anti-colonial struggles, transformed by state structures into political parties, and authoritarian, status quoist regimes have been "tamed" (Kaldor, 2003, p86). For similar reasons Hardt and Negri have referred to sovereignty as a "poisoned gift" (Hardt and Negri, 2001, p133).

'autonomous', 'flat hierarchies' "allowing all who want to participate to do so" (Jordan, 2002, p69).

As a form of radical democracy, global civil society is believed to empower citizens to politicise and connect issues beyond the confines of the national and to actively participate in the process. It is therefore viewed as a necessary political alternative to the state and its structures of government (Lipschutz, 1992). While global civil society provides a space for trans-border action, those acting within this field may be viewed as global citizens. It is to a brief examination of this concept to which I now turn.

DEFINING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Paralleling wider debates between global and state-centric perspectives, the validity of the notion of global citizenship is contested in relation to national citizenship. Global citizenship departs from traditional usage of the term in two interlinked ways. Firstly, 'citizenship' is dislodged from the nation-state as a term which ordinarily describes an individual's social contract with the state. Secondly, given that there is no global state to replace the position of the nation-state, global citizenship diverges from citizenship as a formal legal relationship. From this perspective sceptics that reject the concept of global citizenship by pointing to the absence of a global government raise a moot point (Axtmann, 2002; Zolo, 1997). Institutional cosmopolitans, however validate global citizenship by pointing to 'soft' legal structures such the United Nations and Universal Human Rights Declaration (UHRD) ⁸ as formalising structures of citizenship on a world scale (Beitz, 1999). Yet others point to the increasing impact of various dimensions of globalisation on national sovereignty and the space and relevance for global forms of citizenship within this context (Falk, 2002; Held, 2002).

Different bases for global citizenship give rise to either passive or active forms of this citizenship that respectively relate to whether "we are all world citizens" or only some

⁸ These supranational frameworks are 'soft' because they lack force of sanction and continue to rely on nation-states for their validation.

are “who by their actions or attitudes or self-description have the status of world citizens” (Dower, 2002, p37-38). Passive forms of citizenship emerge from formulations that emphasise everyone’s legitimate claim to universal human rights, as the key to global citizenship (Follesdal, 2002). Their passive nature arises from the fact that they do not require us to be anything more than human in order to be global citizens.

More active forms of global citizenship, resonating with republican formulations, are prevalent amongst those who describe it not as a legal status, but as a process of emergent political engagement with a potential world community, or at least as self-identification with it. Through their actions or attitudes global citizens are involved in creating this community. In this sense global citizenship is a “performative citizenship”. As Albrow (1996) writes “The performative citizen is not acting out of some duty imposed by a statutory body but acts out of conscience and free commitment” (p178). For those ‘performing’ global citizenship this involves acting upon “a wider recognition of their role as individuals living on a single globe” (O’Byrne, 2003, p130) - a conscience that O’Byrne refers to as ‘globality’.

This active or performative sense of global citizenship is apparent in its strongest sense within the context of global civil society, where actors not only identify themselves as global citizens but are engaged in political action to transform globalisation. As Falk (1994) asserts, global citizens in this context are engaged in creating “a ‘country’ to be established in the future in accordance with more idealistic and normatively rich conceptions of political community” (p138-139). Global citizenship as an active identification with the globe has also been explored in other, largely Western spaces such as in ‘global cities’ (Albrow, 1997), diasporas and migrating communities (Delanty, 2000; Appiah, 1998), within the ‘network society’ (Hayden, 2004), and amongst ‘global elite’ who travel across the world (Ong, 1998). The bias towards Western contexts in the search for globality is significant since it is a trend that we will later see repeated in global civil society scholarship also.

So far I have suggested that global civil society and global citizens acting within it are viewed as progressive forces, seeking to challenge regressive aspects of globalisation. However, while GCS is envisioned as a counter-hegemonic project committed to radical democracy on a global scale, below I suggest that the actors commonly identified as global citizens are problematically related to these political ideals. This suggests a disjuncture between the normative dimensions and descriptive parameters of GCS – a disjuncture that threatens to undermine the progressive potential of GCS.

DESCRIPTIVE PARAMETERS OF GCS

Descriptive parameters of GCS here refers to the practices of those actors and processes that appear to, or are conceived as manifesting, or bringing to life the conceptualisations and aspirations of GCS. After highlighting the global actors that are commonly identified as constituting GCS's descriptive parameters, the next section critically questions the extent to which they effectively meet the normative aspirations of GCS.

The Actors who Perform Global Citizenship

Apart from some exceptions most references within the literature are made to 'global' actors such as the following: international non-governmental organisations (INGOS), transnational/global advocacy networks, transnational/global coalitions, transnational/global social movements, and parallel summits. *INGOs* refer to voluntary, non-profit groups that operate at the transnational level and have an international perspective (Anheier et al 2001a). These may be NGOs established in a particular country, such as Survival International – a UK based NGO working on indigenous rights all over the world, or NGOs with voting members in several countries such as Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International. *Transnational advocacy networks* represent a “set of actors linked across country boundaries, bound together by shared values...and common discourses” that exchange knowledge and information through the internet (Khagram et al, 2002, p7). An example of this is the human rights advocacy

networks of international and domestic NGOs that emerged in reaction to human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chilean military after the coup in 1973. Though the network did not co-ordinate strategies and engage in specific campaigns, it facilitated the flow of news from the ground and relayed it across the world. It also provided information on human rights laws to domestic activists fighting against the regime (Hawkins, 2002).

Closer interaction between international actors is involved in *transnational coalitions* that galvanise around a specific issue and coordinate tactics to form transnational campaigns (ibid). This kind of coalition formation was seen amongst NGOs mobilising for violence against women prior to the Vienna Human Rights conference in 1993. It transnationally coordinated tactics such as an international petition drive and a sixteen day campaign of coordinated protests in various countries (Thompson, 2002).

Both these forms of trans-border political action when linked to issues and demands raised by weaker domestic actors such as grassroots movements may form part of the phenomenon which Keck and Sikknik (1998) refer to as the '**boomerang effect**'. This describes a type of international activism in which "non-state actors, faced with repression and blockage at home, seek out state and non-state allies in the international arena, and in some cases are able to bring pressure to bear from above on their government to carry out domestic political change." (Sikknik, 2005, p154).

A higher level of personal commitment, active participation, and transnational linkage is involved in *transnational/global social movements* that engage in protest and disruption. These are thus the rarest form of political action and are defined by Tarrow (2001) as "socially mobilised groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interaction with power holders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor" (p11). Examples of these are ATTAC, (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transaction for the Aid of Citizens) that mobilised activists from several European countries

demanding the introduction of the Tobin Tax⁹ (Kolb, 2005), and the international women's movement that has been pushing for the gendering of human rights discourse, drawing strength from coalitions of women's NGOs like the one described above (Friedman, 1995).

Parallel summits are yet another form of GCS activity, referring to “gatherings of INGOs, other groups, and individuals that generally but not always take place in parallel to important inter-governmental meetings” (Anheier et al, 2001a, p4). They develop critical perspectives on government and corporate policies emerging at inter-governmental summits such as those of the EU, WTO and G7/G8. Perhaps the most celebrated of these is the large activist protests involving 60,000 people belonging to 700 organisations that occurred in Seattle in December 1999 against the WTO. Since then global civil society events are increasingly occurring independently of ‘official summits’, “no longer (only) parallel” to them, for e.g. the worldwide demonstration against the Iraq war in 2003 and World Social Forums, first occurring in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 (Pianta and Silva, 2003).

Clearly the political activity of international actors organising across borders – such as INGOs and global social movements tend to dominate conceptualisations of GCS (Keane, 2003). As Taylor (2004) writes: “In general, the ever-increasing number of international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs) and global social movements...is emphasised to signify the advent of a global civil society” (p1-2). While they act on a global scale they are believed to be primary institutions for the promotion and spread of cosmopolitan identities and values and thus the bastions of GCS (Wapner, 1995; Boli and Thomas, 1997, 1999; Sassen, 2002; Muetzelfeldt and Smith, 2002). Empirical research in this field has overwhelmingly concentrated on the capacity of INGOs, parallel summits and global social movements to connect with the marginalised and

⁹ Tobin Tax has been proposed as a small tax on currency transactions to discourage volatile short-term trading that destabilises country currencies. Though this tax is argued to have positive impacts such as stabilising world financial markets and raising funds for international and domestic development the Tobin Tax has not been implemented by governments.

amplify and channel their voices to exert pressure on centres of power (Pianta and Silva, 2003; Katz, 2006; Edwards and Gaventa, 2001).

Global Actors – Agents of Transformation?

A growing body of critical research, however, is challenging the transformative potential of these global actors. These insights are based on a theoretical rearticulation of GCS as a “contested space of class relations and production” (Johnston and Laxer, 2003, p45), rather than a unitary oppositional “third force” against the excesses of the state and global forces of capitalism suggested by the normative conceptualisations so far discussed. Following a Gramscian perspective on civil society, GCS is the site where resistance to hegemonic forces emerge and coalesce into a ‘war of position’, but it is also a space where hegemony is exercised and normalised (Mayo, 1999; Munck, 2002). Thus global civil society contains within it possibilities for transformation but also domestication. While INGOs and other global actors are often the focus of examinations of the transformative dimensions of GCS, here I argue that their transformative potential is made ambiguous by the position of power that they occupy in relation to the victims of globalisation, often located in the South, who they provide support to. While these asymmetries of power are the products of economic globalisation, they are further reinstated through the nature of the trans-border activities of these actors (Keane, 2001). As elaborated on below, this is apparent in the way in which they are 1) concentrated in the West 2) engaged in depoliticising development activities, and 3) focused on rights as tools of emancipation.

Western concentration

Firstly, reflecting global inequalities in the distribution of power and wealth, INGOs and parallel summits are predominantly situated in the West (Anheier et al, 2001a). This has led many to raise doubts as to the validity of a *global* civil society that is based on these actors and processes, given that their existence is hardly global. Further it is powerful NGOs in the West, with large resources that seem to have easier access and

larger consultative roles in NGO forums linked to international governmental organisations such as the UN (Desforges, 2004). While the economic resources required to travel and participate in NGO meetings, global social movements, parallel summits and World Social Forums excludes the majority of those affected by globalisation in the South, these individuals and organisations are also culturally marginalised not least because the English language tends to dominate communications at such events (McCully, 2001). The asymmetries of power inherent in these processes prevent full participation and thus raise serious questions about the legitimacy of GCS as a project of transformative democracy. Such concerns are further heightened given that INGOs that claim to represent local communities generally do not have internal mechanisms in place for accountability to their local constituencies (Chandhoke, 2002). In fact rather than INGOs projecting the grievances of localities, the imbalance in power between these two actors often leads to the opposite process. In their attempts to gain the support of influential INGOs, local NGOs and movements are often compelled to modify their position in alignment with the perspectives of international organisations (Bob, 2002; de Volo, 2000). Marginalised groups are reduced to resources used by INGOs to provide political legitimacy to their organisation.

Based on these concerns some theorists suggest the need to look away from “centralised” NGO-centred networks (Bennett, 2005) and towards global level social movements that are spaces for more active forms of democratic participation such as the global justice movement (della Porta et al, 2006; Chesters, 2004). However these are also problematic. Involving close-knit social and personal networks across geographical expanses, they are rare. When they do occur their participation is largely derived from Western members that have the resources to travel globally. By default such movements also therefore exclude and avoid serious dialogue with subaltern voices, often in the South (Chandler, 2004)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Partly for this reason, Chandler seems to advocate a return to state-based politics “which force the individual to engage with and account for the views of other members of society”. While the politics of GCS is able to avoid such engagement it is seen to be a symptom of the “unwillingness to engage in political contestation.” (Chandler, 2004, p313).

Development activities and depoliticisation

The second manner in which the transformative potential of INGOs is brought into question relates to their development activities which are implicated in facilitating the process of economic globalisation. As the state loses its capacity to provide welfare services to its citizens, laissez-faire visions of civil society, propounded by institutions such as the WB, view INGOs as mechanisms for delivering social welfare – a trend evident in the growth of non-governmental development activities (Galsius et al, 2006; Lipschutz, 2005). These organisations take on the protective functions of the state and attempt to fill the democratic deficit by acting as a wedge between the government and its citizens. However this fails not only to tackle the state’s non-accountability to its citizens, but also legitimises and increases the state’s non-accountability. In a paradoxical manner INGOs are therefore engaged in perpetuating rather than overcoming the democratic deficit. Further, while INGOs provide short-term respite from the economic destabilisation and marginalisation created in the wake of neo-liberal policies, they diffuse discontent arising from these policies and thus “smooth the path of economic globalisation” (Anheier et al, 2001a, p11). Thus, INGOs involved in development activities depoliticise those adversely impacted by globalisation rather than encourage their critical democratic engagement in questioning global capitalism.

Focus on ‘rights’ as tools for emancipation

Thirdly, the role of global actors in achieving the “transformative democratic purpose” (Taylor and Naidoo, 2004, p187) of GCS is limited by the modality through which they seek to achieve this. Here I refer to the tendency amongst advocates of GCS to view the “globalisation of rights and responsibilities” (Pianta, 2001, p170), or the entrenchment of human rights (HRs) in “treaties” and other formalised structures of governance as the epitome of GCS (Kaldor et al, 2003)¹¹. Though rights are viewed by many as a means

¹¹ This emphasis on a formalised human rights framework within GCS literature is reminiscent of cosmopolitan democratic traditions that espouse a form of legal cosmopolitanism where a world polity is constructed through formalised mechanisms for developing and administering a ‘cosmopolitan

of protecting the individual against oppression and therefore as a “force for change” (Klug, 2000, p10), I suggest that the emphasis of INGOs on rights is problematic for at least two reasons. Firstly, though rights may sometimes represent the product of a process of public dialogue and social struggle, once they are formalised in legal structures they represent what Baker (2002) refers to as a “crystallised configuration of ethical learning” (p939). Political struggle surrounding legalised rights might seek better enforcement of these rights but this action only operates within the parameters already set by the system and does not represent “critical practice” to “*challenge* existing ethical patterning” (ibid, p939). It is therefore not rights by themselves but the dialogue, political contestation and emergent critical awareness involved in arriving at the formulation and enforcement of these rights that reveal radical potential. While the rights-advocacy of INGOs does not adequately involve the participation of the public (as indicated above), a rights-based approach that is reliant on INGOs is unlikely to support critical learning and practice implied in GCS’s aspirations for radical democracy.

Secondly, rights and human rights are by their nature formal entitlements that are primarily legitimised and enforced by states. An emphasis on rights advocacy by INGOs thus reins the ‘alternative’ political space of GCS back into structures of government that are traditionally based on representative democracy (Baker, 2002). While formal rights are by definition ratified by states and international agencies, rights-advocacy is well suited to INGOs that often have access to the decision-making fora of these structures of government. However these processes can happen without the active participation of the public. A rights-framework may thus easily circumvent the need for radical democratic processes. Even those who view the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the most important and revolutionary document of the last millennium” (Klug, 2000, pxv) nevertheless acknowledge that “few individuals will know that public (and some private) authorities have been rendered accountable for their actions where once they were immune to questioning” (ibid, p189). This failure of

democratic law’. Within this citizens at all levels – locally, nationally and globally are involved in enacting and upholding the cosmopolitan democratic law (Held, 1995; McGrew, 2000).

the rights-framework to engage the public itself represents the limitations of its radical potential. Especially for those who are economically and socially marginalised the formal entrenchment of rights has little meaning in and of itself. Such people are likely not to have the resources to claim these rights or even know what their rights are. As Radcliffe et al (2002), quoting an Ecuadorian indigenous leader remark “‘you can’t live on rights alone’, especially when many rights remain on paper” (p3).

The above limitations of ‘global’ entities in achieving the aims of GCS arise largely from their relative position of power in relation to communities adversely impacted by globalisation – often people in the South. This power inequality is implicated in the lack of active, democratic involvement of these people in the ‘progressive’ activities of global actors. Indeed as I have argued above, the actions of these actors can even reinstate processes of globalisation. This raises doubts as to whether these actors really are radical global citizens and whether the normative project of global civil society can be based solely on them. Given this, below I introduce local social movements as possible alternative actors in global civil society.

ALTERNATIVE ACTORS OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

As a number of studies that I will elaborate on later suggest local movements are not only a *means* to achieving fixed political entitlements, but can also be important spaces for agency, critical reflection and radical identities that connect and challenge global and local structures of oppression from ‘below’. Walker (1988) thus sees grassroots movements as potentially “critical social movements [that] are able to engage not only in struggles around specific problems but also in struggles that recognize the emancipatory potential inherent in certain kinds of connections and solidarities” (p3). The strength of local social movements is in their ability to engender the active participation of local communities and thus provide sites for radical democracy. Mobilising place-bound communities, they are also more likely to be accessible to those most marginalised and are thus in a better position to respond to GCS’s normative vision for participatory democracy.

Yet GCS literature seems not to have taken the radical potential of these actors seriously. As Batliwala (2002) notes grassroots movements have tended to be 'stereotyped' as "narrowly focused on local issues" (p393). Falk dismisses the efforts of groups fighting against the loss of traditional livelihoods caused by the construction of dams or nuclear reactors as "localism", and juxtaposes this against the "more relevant...attempts of elements of global civil society" such as INGOs like Greenpeace (Falk, 1998, p104). Delanty (2000) similarly suggests that the radical democratic processes of grassroots movements are based on concerns that "have mostly been subnational, or 'meso', rather than cosmopolitan" (p51) and hence differentiates such political actors from INGOs manifesting GCS. INGOs with transformative visions are contrasted against parochial local communities who passively receive the support of GCS in the form of INGOs. Thus Shaw (1994) proclaims – "The activities of self-conscious globalist organisations, such as human rights, humanitarian and development agencies, make a reality of global civil society by bringing the most exposed victims amongst the world's population into contact with more resourceful groups in the West" (p655). On occasions where an incipient GCS is conceived in terms of locally-rooted processes, its operationalisation, however, remains tied to INGOs. Thus in the concluding chapter of the Global Civil Society Yearbook, Anheier (2001) states – "The data presented here focus on registered INGOs and miss perhaps the most dynamic part of emerging global civil society: locally based yet internationally connected networks of people and activists...[referring to]...social movements, grass roots groups, and loose networks" (p228).

Thus though grassroots processes provide channels for the inclusive and empowering politics that GCS is in search of, they have generally been marginalised by theorists of GCS on the assumption that they reflect reified identities and goals that contradict the globally-expansive politics of GCS. This exclusion however may seriously undermine attempts to mount an effective project of resistance and transformation against the exclusionary processes of globalisation. As Gramsci-inspired academics such as Cox (1999) stress, an effective counter-hegemonic struggle against globalisation can only

succeed if it is based on unified alliances linking local to the global. Local action is thus of central concern for a transformative GCS. I therefore suggest that this exclusion is a descriptive and strategic lacuna that potentially threatens the normative dimensions of a radical global politics. Furthermore it is based on an assumption that has not been sufficiently verified through primary research – an empirical gap that has only served to reinforce this exclusion.

Connecting to this problematic some theorists do refer to grassroots struggles opposing economic globalisation as ‘global citizens’ (Mayo, 2005)¹². However these depictions are largely theoretical impositions of the academic’s own globalist framework rather than empirically derived self-representations of local participants, and thus fail to effectively challenge the putative localism of grassroots processes (for e.g. Mayo, 2005; Kingsnorth, 2003). While Taylor (2002) views GCS as a domain “in which the intrinsic meaning of what is experienced by the actors within this field forms a central part of analysis” (p344), the question of whether local processes are elements of GCS must depend on an empirical investigation of consciousness and identity at this level. Such investigation is especially relevant given the contentious nature of the field of GCS, where counter-perspectives from ‘transnational civil society’ deny the emergence of globalised identities.

A small body of empirically-based literature on local social movements however does explore emergent global consciousness and identities within these movements. However as it will become apparent below, the bias towards attributing globality to the West also tends to be repeated here.

¹² Thus the Landless People’s Movement in Brazil, farmers protesting GM crops in developing countries, and anti-neo-liberalisation struggles in South African shanty towns are all part of a global resistance movement.

Local Social Movements in Trans-border Politics

In Western contexts

A few qualitative studies conducted in Western contexts provide some indication of the emergence of global processes at the local level. Conducting an ethnographic study, Cunningham (2000) documents the “development of a globalized identity that eschewed nationalist affiliations in favour of more universal, humanistic ones” amongst activists of the Sanctuary movement in the USA, who have been helping illegal Mexican immigrants cross the US border (p584). While the efforts of these American activists were initially spurred by a moral responsibility to help the impoverished border-crossers, it soon developed into a broader ideological critique of the unjust political and economic policies of the US. Emergence of inclusive identities was associated with this politicisation (Cunningham, 2000; 2001).

A similar radicalisation of identity was noted amongst female activists involved in the Women’s Peace Camp in Greenham Common from the early 1980s. Protesting against the establishment of a US nuclear base there, the camp was formed by women activists from around Britain aligned with the wider disarmament movement, but also those whose immediate concerns were for the safety of their children and family. In these cases women who initially had “fairly narrow British or western European orientation” developed a global consciousness through the interactions facilitated by the camp with visiting activists from around the world (Roseneil, 1997, p69).

Though these two studies do provide accounts of an evolution from local to globalised identities they are not strictly based on local movements occupied with issues of immediate concern to a place-specific, bounded local community. In a sense the political action described here already involved some level of reflexivity and abstraction from the start. Providing an account of an even more locally-based mobilisation Drury et al (2003) describe the participation of local residents of Wanstead against the construction of the M11 Link Road close to their locality – a development that would

diminish their quality of life. Here again a growing sense of injustice amongst residents underlay the rejection of a previously exclusionary Wanstead identity and the adoption of global affiliations with world-wide struggles against injustice. It is interesting to note that though the studies mentioned all refer to emerging global connections, only Cunningham's studies are explicitly located within GCS. The other two research papers associate with social movement scholarship. Nevertheless what they all commonly indicate is the formation of global civil society processes (globalised identities and consciousness) from within localised contexts of social struggle.

In developing contexts

The research described above provides positive accounts of a dialectical relationship between local and global. However they are all located in the West. In contrast studies following local movements in the Third World have tended to narrate disempowering experiences of local interaction with the global. These depictions have thus failed to challenge common assumptions of a dichotomy between local and global, and in particular, reinforced stereotypes of the localism of Southern movements. These studies can be located within two different frameworks of trans-border politics, described below.

Transnational civil society

A number of studies drawing on Keck and Sikknik's (1998) boomerang model focus on instances when local movements use "political opportunity structures" provided by INGOs to catapult local issues into the international arena in order to pressurise their government. In that these studies emphasise the instrumentality of such alliances for achieving the local goals of these movements, they interpret the trans-border politics of local movements within a transnational civil society perspective. The focus on the instrumental nature of mobilisations tends to depict political demands and interests as natural and pre-given without any sense of transformation of local consciousness in the course of struggle. The global level at the same time is depicted as "double-edged" in

that the power it has over local actors often leads to certain negative consequences for grassroots constituents (Conklin and Graham, 1995, p705). For instance, reliance of the Ogoni movement in Nigeria on support at the global level ruptured their engagement with the state, leading to severe repression nationally (Bob, 2002; Padilla, 2003). The fight of Amazonian Indians against deforestation, while essentially a livelihood issue, was reframed by INGOs as an environmental struggle – a reframing that essentially contradicted Indian economic interests (Conklin and Graham, 1995).

While engagement with the global level has double-edged consequences for local political outcomes, it is believed to produce negative consequences for subjective processes of local identity construction too. Thus de Volo (2000) examining identity construction during the transnationalisation of the struggle of Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs of Matagalpa, Nicaragua during the Contra War, emerges with the familiar narrative of local disempowerment. She finds that mothers of sons, who were killed fighting against US-funded Contras, spurred the international community to take action against the war by emphasising their “helplessness” as “grieving mothers”. Such identity constructions emphasised dependency on the power of the global and reinforced traditional maternal images that prevented the emergence of politicised female voices. These are no doubt important commentaries on the effects of power asymmetries between local and global actors, and suggest caution to those who hail the empowering potential of GCS networks (for e.g. Shaw, 1994; Perreault, 2003). Nevertheless such research, while thin on accounts of local agency to affect change, tend to feed into and reproduce existing assumptions of the static localism of grassroots movements, especially in the South. As we will see in chapter 7, studies on the Save the Narmada Movement have also tended to recreate this narrative.

Postmodern perspectives on transnational networks and the ‘defence of place’

While transnational civil society perspectives present a dichotomy of global-powerful/local-powerless, postmodern perspectives on trans-border politics of local movements in developing contexts tend to invert this dichotomy, presenting the local as

the more empowered site of resistance over global organisation (Esteva and Prakash, 1998). To counter global universalising forces local movements are theorised as engaging in locally-based struggle where “place-based cultural, ecological and economic practices are important sources of alternative visions and strategies for reconstructing local and regional worlds...”(Escobar, 2001, p165). These movements are therefore not trying to transform global structures of oppression but to create spaces where alternative visions can be articulated in a “pluriverse” (Esteva and Prakash, 1998, p116). Indigenous groups in the Ecuadorian Amazon (Perreault, 2003) and black communities of the Pacific rainforest region of Columbia (Escobar, 2001) for instance, engage in an ideological resistance to globalisation through the “defence of place”, culture and identity. Though they may form transnational networks with international organisations or movements in other parts of the world these are efforts to strengthen a “politics of difference”. As Perreault (2003) argues it is the “reification of place” and the particularisation of identities that provides local movements with legitimacy and thus power within national and transnational networks (p83).

Though social movements are analysed as a defence of locality, it is also argued that they have a global dimension and construct “glocalized” identities and communities. However when closely examined these studies fail to provide robust accounts of such glocalisation. The existence of these processes is simply asserted on the basis that movements use transnational networks for the defence of place. Simply engaging in transnational networks, however, does not imply an automatic formation of glocal identities. Forming a “global sense of place” is necessarily a conscious deliberate process that involves critical engagement with the global (Massey quoted in Escobar, 2001, p147). Yet no examples of this process are provided. To the contrary only strategic transient interaction with the global is highlighted. Thus Escobar (2001) states “Even when social movements originate transnational networks these might be *operational strategies* for the defense of place” (italics added, p148) and further that “social actors do not so much seek inclusion into the global network society but its reconfiguration in such a way that their vision of the world may find minimum conditions for their existence” (p168). The concern of these scholars with protecting

cultural diversity is certainly worthy – indeed theorists need to be careful that GCS does not turn in to a homogenising project. However while the engagement of social movements with the global level is presented only as instrumental for defending locality, these studies present a relatively circumscribed relationship of the local with the global – leaving a weaker impression of glocalisation and a stronger one of the local as distinct from the global.

Thus so far I have suggested that while some studies have indicated the formation of global identities and consciousness amongst local movements these tend to be located in Western contexts. In contrast explorations of the trans-border politics of local movements in developing countries appear to reify local communities and isolate their struggle from a wider global struggle.

Local-global dialectic

A few studies however, break from the tendency to dichotomise local and global struggle. They describe processes of transformation and solidarity formation emanating from local communities in developing contexts that are part of a strategic as well as ideological challenge to forces of global capitalism. Watson (2001, 2002) describes the formation of a “critical social movement” amongst the Chiapas in Mexico built on inclusive identities and democratic forms of participation that encourage global solidarity formation. Unlike studies of Third World movements described above, the local is engaged in an empowered dialectical relationship with the global. While the exclusionary forces of neo-liberalism mount a global onslaught, inclusive identities at the local level stand as an ideological critique of these forces but also provide the basis for the formation of a global resistance. Similar processes of enmeshment between the local and global are evident in Parajuli’s (1996) explorations of the emergence of dynamic “ecological ethnicities” amongst Jharkhandi tribals in India who are resisting capitalist driven forest logging, and development projects that are destroying their environment. These accounts of fluid, inclusive identities at the local level provide a useful basis for viewing grassroots processes as a dynamic form of GCS. However they

still do not go far enough. Both are based on an analysis of collective identities and movement discourse as constructed by movement leadership. More substantive narrations of GCS at the local level will need to address the extent to which transformative processes are occurring more deeply within grassroots communities and whether these actors view themselves as global citizens that are part of a wider global struggle.

Having examined the problematic relationship of 'global' actors to the radical democratic aims of GCS, and argued for the need for alternative actors such as local social movements, below I suggest that this might also have implications for the form of global citizenship that action within global civil society might be based on.

MORAL AND POLITICAL FORMS OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN GCS

As discussed above, global civil society provides a space for performative as opposed to passive, legalistic notions of citizenship. Two different forms of performative global citizenship can be identified that either emphasise moral or political foundations for such an identity. Here I argue that these forms of global citizenship are likely to be enacted by different actors, with important implications for the transformative potential of GCS itself.

Moral Universalism and Global Citizenship

Drawing on the cosmopolitan traditions of Socrates and the Stoics some contemporary thinkers appeal to the "moral responsibility" of humans towards each other as the basis for global citizenship (Kung, 2002; Carter 2001; Dower, 2002; Heater, 2002). Global citizens are those who act out of a "commitment to a global ethic" to help those less fortunate (Dower, 2003, p20). Because the basis of such moral action is a belief in the inherent oneness of humanity and thus in the "idea that human beings matter anywhere" (ibid, p20), O'Byrne (2003) refers to this as a moral universalist conception of world citizenship. Such a notion of global citizenship is based on a depoliticised sense of

compassion and humanitarian concern that can inform and coexist alongside national citizenship but does not necessarily supersede it. Thus Immanuel Kant sees moral universalism as providing a moral direction to state and international law but not as superseding these (Kant, c1932).

This notion of global citizenship is prone to elitism, given that only those who have the financial resources and power to help others can be global citizens. Amongst the actors of global civil society, we have seen that INGOs are in such a position of power, and are thus treated as global citizens. In opposition, local communities in the South that do not have resources to help others tend to be viewed as parochial. A moral basis for global citizenship thus tends to emerge from positions of power. Indeed studies suggest that INGOs are especially prone to making appeals to the “moral duty” of affluent people in the West to ‘donate’ to needy people in the South (Smith, 2004; Desforges, 2004). While promoting the view that the world can be transformed if people get better at performing their global duties, INGOs that base their global citizenship on moral universalism tend to obfuscate structural critique of global power and oppression and the need to transform these structures. An INGO-driven global civil society is therefore less likely to be a field for transformative action.

Political Conditions of Globalisation and Global Citizenship

Conditions of globalisation however support a movement away from moral universalism towards a more political basis for global citizenship (O’Byrne, 2003; Waterman, 1998). Globalisation creates *material* conditions that connect people in real and practical ways to others across national boundaries. O’Byrne refers to global citizenship arising from this recognition as “pragmatic” (p18) in that it is not simply a moral ideal but a response to *real* conditions. While political reality is now globalised, citizens acting on the basis of this awareness are acting politically – whether through local or global action.

This form of global citizenship is more inclusive and radical. It is more inclusive in the sense that it can include the actions of local communities whose political actions are based on an awareness of global conditions. It is also more radical because it *challenges* the notion that the national level is the only legitimate form of political organisation and identification. Based on the view that individuals need to respond to forces increasingly beyond the national, a pragmatic global citizenship expresses affiliation to a deterritorialised political class or group that are affected by globalisation in similar ways. For those who are adversely impacted by globalisation this global solidarity can provide the basis for launching combined efforts to transform globalisation. While within the moral camp, global citizenship can be an expression of the transnational duty of national citizens, in the political camp it is the expression of global connections between deterritorialised global citizens. This raises the question of whether those acting on the basis of moral universalism might better be conceived as transnational rather than global citizens – i.e. those whose trans-border actions remain rooted in national affiliations.

While globalisation provides a political basis for global citizenship this is not to suggest that such a concept is simultaneously drained of ethical content. As entities (individuals, organisations, collectivities) acting within the normative dimensions of GCS, global citizens are undoubtedly acting in defence of certain values that are under attack from various aspects of the economic and political dimensions of globalisation (Falk, 1994). Thus while Falk's (2002) "citizen pilgrims" emerge from changes caused by globalisation they are "committed to transformation that is spiritual as well as material, that is premised on the wholeness and equality of the human family..." (p27).

In that political forms of global citizenship involve identification with others commonly affected by globalisation this may provide a more radical, empowering and inclusive form of GCS constructed through joint action to challenge globalisation's regressive dimensions. This would be in contrast to a GCS that is reliant on a few actors who have the power and resources to exercise their moral duty to help others, in a manner that does not in itself necessitate critical enquiry into the structural causes of such

asymmetries of power. What remains to be explored, however, is the extent to which local movements that are adversely impacted by globalisation provide sites for politicised global citizenship. By exploring this question the thesis also raises questions about whether local social movements need to become more prominent within conceptualisations of global civil society.

CONCLUSION

If global civil society is to be understood as a potential space for radical democracy that challenges the exclusions created by globalisation-from-above it will need to address the exclusions inherent within its own conceptualisation. While global actors such as INGOs and global social movements are concentrated in the West, the privileging of these actors within GCS literature becomes an immediately problematic basis for constructing an inclusive and empowering GCS. Within this framework local grassroots movements especially in developing countries are reduced to a position of dependency on more powerful global actors who advocate for them. ‘Global’ actors are viewed as the true global citizens who exercise their moral responsibility to protect those who are vulnerable. This reveals a dichotomisation of the West as global-transformative and the South as local-parochial. Perhaps in reaction to this, postmodern perspectives invert this dichotomy and argue for the local as the paramount and most empowered site of resistance. However, their focus on local politicisation and resistance, though valuable, tends to leave unexplored the empowering dialectic between local empowerment and global struggle that is suggested by thinkers such as Cox (whose Gramscian approach will be further elaborated on in the next chapter).

I have argued that a more robust, dynamic and politicised version of GCS will depend on exploring the transformative processes emanating from local movements of those most affected by the negative consequences of globalisation. This is because such movements are more likely to involve the radical democratic participation of affected people. Exploring how local movements might be important actors of GCS entails moving away from a focus on the institutionalised language of rights advocacy and implementation that is prevalent within INGO-centred models of GCS, and towards an

exploration of critical consciousness and identities of people affected by globalisation. More specifically, it suggests the need for exploring the ways in which marginalised people are involved in constructing more politicised forms of global citizenship based on globally-cognisant action against common forces of oppression.

The current exclusion of locally-based movements in GCS potentially compromises the radical democratic aims of GCS. However whether local movements can rightfully be included within the processes of GCS depends on whether they transcend locally-bound frameworks of contention and construct global, dynamic identities. In the next chapter I examine social movement scholarship and develop an argument to suggest *how* this might happen through a process of *learning in social struggle*.

Chapter 3

Social movements, Counter-hegemonic Resistance and Learning

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I examine theories from social movement scholarship to develop a framework for analysing the role of local social movements within global civil society. Central to establishing whether local movements are part of GCS is the question of whether they are engaged in learning that leads to the politicisation of consciousness and identities articulated by them. This chapter therefore examines social movement theories – which in contrast to GCS literature that presents local movements as static and parochial – provide, to varying degrees, a conceptual basis for understanding how local movements are engaged in political learning in the course of social struggle. The analytical tools developed here will be used later in the thesis to conceptualise and map the extent to which the NBA is an actor within the field of GCS.

This chapter proceeds firstly by defining social movements and identifying the processual nature of their collective identities. Secondly, three theoretical approaches to social movements are discussed – resource mobilisation, new social movement and Gramscian theory, which adopt different positions on the role of social movements on a continuum of social change, from reformism to transformation. It is argued that Gramscian theory, which positions social movements at the radical end of social transformation, most clearly coheres with the aims of GCS. Based on this the next section examines the contributions of Gramscian perspectives to understanding the processes and outcomes of learning in social struggle, while critiquing resource mobilisation and new social movement perspectives in this regard. Finally a Gramscian

framework for analysing social movements as learning processes within global civil society is developed.

DEFINING AND CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Prior to the 1960s social movements were often conceived as anomalies or by-products of tensions in the social order. While American functionalists viewed movements as “crowd behaviour”, causing irrational disruptions to the social equilibrium (Cohen, 1985), Marxists in Europe viewed them as natural, inevitable and unmediated symptoms of class conflict (Canel, 1992). Viewing movements as mechanical, reactive processes, these sociological positions failed to understand social movements as complex, creative entities that needed to be studied in their own right. However the 1960s witnessed a massive upsurge in social movements, the occurrence of which not only defied depictions of social movements as aberrations but also departed from the organisational and functional characteristics of labour struggles. Resource Mobilisation and New Social Movement theories emerged to identify these movements as products of post-industrial societies and sought to identify the complex factors which mediated “transition from social conditions to collective action” (Melucci, 1989, p21). Departing from previous conceptualisations, these theories thus position social movements as active, conscious and deliberate agents of contention.

Contemporary definitions of social movements reflect this new understanding. Della Porta and Diani (1999) refer to them as types of *collective action* forming “informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilise about conflictual issues, through the frequent use of various forms of protest” (p16). Far from being ‘irrational’, movements construct “common purpose” and “social solidarities” (Tarrow, 1998, p177) and are therefore separate from “loosely structured”, one-off protest events, political coalitions and interest groups that are largely instrumental, fleeting forms of collective action. However though this imparts an enduring, integrated character to movements, as informal networks, they are also processual. Collective actors are continually engaged in defining and redefining “shared beliefs”. Their fluidity thus

distinguishes them from more rigid, bureaucratised formations such as political parties, religious sects, NGOs and other forms of single-issue organisations (though interactions and alliances between these and social movements may occur (see Schwartz, 2002). As stable and moving at the same time, social movements can metaphorically be understood as flows, within which the various moments constituting it are connected to both previous and future collective action. Social movements are therefore evolving processes of collective action that are at the same time internally integrated and relatively coherent. This suggests that social movements have collective identities.

Collective Identity

Collective identity is conceptualised as a relatively stable, unifying characteristic of social movements which expresses the symbolic parameters that organise and orient collective action. Thus Taylor and Whittier (1992) refer to it as “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members’ common interests, experiences and solidarity” (p105). Whereas social movements themselves are not readily amenable to empirical study, since they are a relatively amorphous social formation of individuals; the notion of collective identity suggests that this amorphous formation can be distilled and articulated through a self-definition that identifies the essence of the movement. Collective identity in this sense refers to the ideological dimensions of a movement, which according to Melucci (1995) are both manifested in and shaped by such factors as the movements models of leadership and communication and discourses. As the movement’s self-representation, collective identities are composed of two basic processes: the construction of group *boundaries* between the movement community, “us” and opposition, “them”; and *consciousness* of group grievances and structural causes of these (apparent in movement discourse) (Taylor and Whittier, 1995).

It must be noted that the concept of ‘collective identity’ is distinct from the social psychological notion of identity as the ‘self-definition’ of an individual which is expressed through one’s personal attitudes and multiple identifications with various groups (Weigert et al, 1986; Skevington, 1989). Thus one’s identity may arise from

his/her identification with Indian people, teachers and music lovers for instance. While it is clear that all identities are collective or socially derived and legitimised, 'collective identity' as opposed to 'identity' refers here specifically to identities that are "constructed, activated, and sustained only through interaction in social movement communities" (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p172). It is true of course that many referents of identity in our everyday lives have origins in social movements such as the feminist identity or the 'Afro-American' identity which emerged from the 1960s civil rights movements in America. When these identities become dislodged from the context of social struggle, however, and are used to define the self in a less politicised manner, they constitute identities in the psycho-social sense.

In that collective identities are representations of movements, they reflect the evolving nature of movements and are therefore also "processual" constructs, which emerge and change through internal dialogue amongst collective actors and interactions with the political environment (Melucci, 1995). Having conceptualised social movements as social processes with evolving collective identities, below I engage in a more detailed examination of various approaches to social movements and collective identity.

APPROACHES TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

In this section I begin to explore the different ways in which resource mobilisation, new social movement, and Gramscian theory conceptualise social movements and collective identity, and the implications these different approaches have for viewing social movements as agents of social change.

If social change can be understood as a continuum of radicalism from *reformism* as a weaker form of social change, *resistance* occupying an intermediary position, and *transformation* as a stronger form of change, I will show that the various theories referred to above occupy different positions on this continuum. Since GCS perspectives locate themselves on the transformative end of the continuum (see pages 36-38), the focus of this discussion, and of the thesis more generally is on Gramscian theory, which

I argue provides the strongest basis for transformative action. I start however with the less radical end of the continuum.

Resource Mobilisation Theory

Resource mobilisation theories formulate a “purposive model” of social movements and challenge the assumption that social movements are irrational responses to deprivation (Tilly, 1985). Movements are instead rational agents that engage in maximising their benefits or securing the “common interests” of collective participants defined in terms of political or economic goals. Within this model movements do not seek to challenge or alter dominant codes, and thus to seek social change, but rather to either secure their share within the polity or to access and influence centres of decision-making (Canel, 1992). The state as the centre of power is seen to hold the key to protestors’ common interests, and mobilisation is therefore viewed as a process of negotiation and contestation primarily with the state (Crossley, 2002).

The focus of analysis hence is not on why movements emerge but how they achieve their goals efficiently and effectively. Here the concept of *political opportunity structures*, that is central to Tilly’s political process theory, is especially relevant. These are macro-structural factors that enable mobilisation. Thus Tilly (1978) emphasises the political opportunity structures in democratic societies that encourage political contention as opposed to the constraining effects of authoritarian regimes. Zald and McCarthy (1979; 1987) also identify micro-level variables that facilitate mobilisation such as leadership characteristics, organisational structure and resource management. Social movements are thus rational organisations that strategically navigate constraints, maximise political opportunities and mobilise organisational resources to secure “common interests” (Carroll, 1997). Individuals decide to join collective action based on instrumental calculations of the cost and benefits of participation (Ferree, 1992).

Striving for efficiency, it is believed that social movements seek centralisation and bureaucratisation of their organisational structure and operations to mimic businesses (McCarthy and Zald, 1973). In this form, movements are thus part of a ‘social

movement industry' within which 'movement organisations' led by 'movement entrepreneurs' 'compete' for 'resources', 'package' grievances and gain 'selective advantage' (Perrow, 1979). The self-definition of the movement or its **collective identity** is itself constructed from strategic considerations of what identities and discourses have the most currency or 'demand' at any one time. They are thus viewed only as resources or "selective *incentives* motivating participation" (Friedman and McAdam, 1992, p157).

Resource mobilisation theory: Social movements and reform

Though social movements are presented as rational agents, consciously navigating political opportunity structures, these theories do not go far enough in explicating the full complexity and self-reflexive nature of social movements. They present a highly circumscribed form of rationality based on short-term cost and benefit analysis. Movements are reduced to a collection of individuals acting together only if they "expect the private benefits to exceed the costs" (Friedman and McAdam, 1992, p159). Not only does this negate the possibility for rational action to be based on referents other than economic self-interest, such as identity-affirmation (see Ferree, 1992), it also presents movements as fragmented, ad-hoc and opportunistic rather than as collective, deep-rooted efforts for social transformation. Thus, as Carroll (1997) suggests RM theory simply "reflects" rather than challenges "the dominant, technocratic and consumerist consciousness of capitalist society" (p12). While social movements engage with the state to secure short-term, specific gains, they are "reduced to political protest" and regarded as extensions of state-centred mainstream politics (Melucci, 1989, p23). This fails to make the distinction emphasised by della Porta and Diani (1999), between social movements and instrumental interest groups. Resource mobilisation theory thus presents a very weak notion of social change as reformism within which social movements engage in efforts to make the present system more efficient at dispensing resources in a manner that does not attempt to uncover and challenge the asymmetries of power that underlie the system and disempower sections of society in the first place.

New Social Movement Theory

Reacting to the 'political reductionism' of resource mobilisation and the 'economic reductionism' of Marxism, new social movement theories have emerged to celebrate the 'life-style' struggles of the 'new' movements of the 1960s (Melucci, 1989). The students', women's, environmental and peace movements articulate a multiplicity of identities beyond traditional class issues and do so through non-institutionalised forms of political expression (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

Rejecting the centrality of capital and the state within the political economy approach, these theorists follow a Foucauldian conception of power as decentred and constituted at multiple sites. The new conflicts mentioned above are thus explained as emerging from structural transformations characterising post-industrial societies where "material' goods are produced and consumed with the mediation of huge informational and symbolic systems" (Melucci, 1985, p795). As such, the struggle, as Touraine puts it, is for control over *historicity* i.e. is for "social control of the main cultural patterns" which give meaning to social practice (Touraine, 1985, p785). For Habermas (1984-7) new social movements emerge as defensive reactions against the 'colonization of the lifeworld' by the *system* – that is, the intrusion of the market and state (*system*) into the civil society sphere of "relations and communications between members of a societal community" (*lifeworld*) (Hewitt quoted in Carroll, 1997, p20). In a similar manner to Touraine's struggle over historicity, Habermas (1981) sees social movements resisting colonization by seeking to gain control over the "grammar of forms of life" (p33). Thus unlike RM theories which view social movements as echoing capitalist, state-centred systems, new social movements are 'symbolic challenges' (Melucci, 1985) or critiques of the dominant system.

As power seeps into culture, culture is seen as a legitimate site of resistance. The **collective identities** of movements therefore are not simply instrumental to mobilisation as within resource mobilisation perspectives but *are* the movement's resistance. As Melucci suggests the very "*form* of the movement is a message" which in providing an

alternative to dominant codes poses a symbolic challenge to the system (Melucci, 1985, p670). Thus in contrast to the hierarchical organisation of state and trade unions, the collective identity of NSMs are characterised by decentred networks that encourage democratic participation (Melucci, 1992; 1994). As such the collective identity of movements is visible not only through their discourses but their practices as well. The notion of collective identity within NSM theory is similar to what Eyerman and Jamison (1991) refer to as *cognitive praxis*, consisting of the body of knowledge, organisational forms and technologies of protest developed by movements to symbolically resist dominant forces. Just as collective identity represents the movement, a “social movement *is* its cognitive praxis” (ibid, original emphasis, p54).

Reflecting the cultural-ideological nature of social movements, collective identities or cognitive praxis is not confined to the movement space but also mediates the politicisation of personal identities and ‘everyday life’ (Meyer and Whittier, 1994; Whittier, 1995; Martin and McCormack, 1999; Johnston et al, 1994). NSM theory thus presents an expanded notion of politics as culturally articulated. An example of this politicisation of culture could be seen amongst activists and supporters of the Black Power movement in the 1960s who rejected the supremacy of White people by (amongst other things) adopting ‘afro’ hairstyles to affirm their distinct ‘African-American’ identity.

Within some strands of new social movement theory the politicisation of the private sphere is accompanied by a disengagement from politics in the overt sense of direct confrontation with the state and proletarian seizure of state power (Epstein, 1990). Collective action instead takes the form of self-help strategies in ‘social movement networks’ (Melucci, 1985). “Contemporary social movements” as Melucci (1989) explains “have shifted towards a non-political terrain: the need for self-realization in everyday life. In this respect social movements have a conflictual and antagonistic, but not a political orientation, because they challenge the logic of complex systems on cultural grounds.” (p23). NSM-influenced theories in developing contexts also suggest a similar retreat from political contestation (Brass, 1991; 2000). Thus Scott (1985; 1990)

propounds a theory of 'weapons of the weak' as 'everyday forms of peasant resistance'. Replacing revolutionary action, this consists of individual daily self-help strategies such as "foot-dragging...false compliance, feigned ignorance...smuggling..." that allow the poor to surreptitiously manoeuvre around the oppressive power of rural elite without direct confrontation (Scott, 1989, p11). The political action of social movements is thus located in the sphere of civil society rather than of the state (Holst, 2002), or in Habermas's words (1981) in the "seam between system and life-world" (p36).

New social movement theory: Social Movements and resistance

Conceiving of social movements as symbolic resistance to the hegemony, NSM theorists are more attuned to viewing social movements as social change agents than resource mobilisation perspectives are. However social change remains limited within the realm of civil society. Movements engage in resisting the dominant cultural forms by creating "autonomous spaces" within civil society in which alternative cultural practices can be performed (Boggs, 1989, p12). The notion of autonomous spaces in civil society suggests that it is possible to free social spaces from the cultural influence of dominant political forces and thus to initiate cultural change without transforming social structures. Thus the radicalisation of consciousness is not converted into political action to transform structures of oppression. This suggests that NSMs are engaged in a "self-limiting radicalism" that is only culturally contested and articulated (Cohen, 1985, p60). NSMs engage in a politics of cultural diversity of lifestyles and identity that symbolically resist their marginalisation by dominant cultural codes. However, without paying attention to the political and economic structures that sustain marginalisation, the focus of NSM proponents such as Melucci, on the symbolic production of marginalisation leads to a 'cultural reductionism' (Bartholomew and Mayer, 1992). Indeed contrary to the assertions of NSM theory, many observe that movements "do address the state and are profoundly shaped by its actions" in developed (Adams, 1997, p50) and developing countries (Escobar, 1992).

Further, the focus on 'autonomous spaces' and cultural identity detracts from an understanding of the coherent political and economic forces that structure and connect various autonomous spaces. This makes NSMs vulnerable to degenerating into an "anti-politics of identity" and difference (Kauffman, 1990). Solidarity and resistance to social oppression is thus fragmented in a manner that prevents a coherent strategy for social transformation (Wapner, 1989). Below I turn to Gramscian theory, which explicitly intends to provide a theory of social transformation based on cultural *and* political contestation

Gramscian Perspectives

In contrast to new social movement theory which positions Marxism as the conceptual 'other', Gramscian perspectives build on Marxist analysis of capitalism and its economic structures of oppression, but articulate with this an understanding of the cultural and political processes that are implicated in economic oppression. Social struggle is thus directed towards overthrowing structures of oppression through action on the political, economic but also cultural plain. Gramsci talks of these cultural processes in terms of hegemony, consent and consciousness. Before elaborating on these concepts it is necessary to understand the intellectual context within which his theoretical orientation developed.

Antecedents of Gramsci

Gramsci's philosophy of the intimate interactions between the economy, politics and culture are contained in a compilation of texts, known as the *Prison Notebooks* that he wrote while in Mussolini's prison between 1929 and 1935 (Gramsci, 1971). This exposition was a reaction against what he believed to be a misreading of Marx that he referred to as economism. It was also a reaction against purist forms of idealism (Mouffe, 1979).

Economism was the ideology that was prevalent amongst Marxists such as those of the Second International who gained clout in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This ideology provides a highly mechanistic account of the forces of domination and transformation as solely determined by the economic relations of production that constitute the foundations, or *structure* of society in Marx's terminology (Simon, 1982). Economism maintains that contradictions inherent within capitalism are manifested in a conflict between the interests of the capitalist class and the exploited working class. When the oppression of the working class becomes unbearable they will automatically rise to overthrow capitalism. However, by failing to acknowledge the *superstructural* factors of consciousness, politics and culture that interact with the economic structure of society, this approach leads to a passive reliance on the economic contradictions within capitalism to result in its own downfall. It therefore suggests no need for active engagement of the oppressed in their own transformation.

Idealism, the other position that Gramsci argued against, represents the diametric opposite of economism. This can be defined as a "position which emphasizes the role of ideas and moral values in the understanding and explanation of major historical changes" (Bocock, 1986, p48). Ironically, though this position locates the determinant of 'reality' in people and their consciousness, it provides an inadequate basis for agency in that structural forces that act on people are not acknowledged. People are therefore unable to direct action towards social change.

By rejecting economism and idealism, Gramsci embraces Marx's dialectical materialist conception of social reality. According to Marx the economic structures constituted by relations of production represent our material reality. This material reality provides us with experiences that act upon and construct our consciousness. Importantly, however, material reality and consciousness are not in a unidirectional but dialectical, mutually constitutive relationship, and consciousness therefore, also has the potential to reflect and act on social reality. Gramsci seeks to extend the implications of this basic proposition. Though Marx is not unaware of the ideological processes of consciousness, he concentrates, in his critique of political economy, on how capitalist relations of

production are exploitative and explores the manner in which these economic relations themselves condition workers to accept their exploitation (Marx, 1961). Gramsci, on the other hand, examines the complex manner in which workers' or subaltern consciousness is domesticated under capitalist political structures and cultural processes, as well as how it can be transformed to initiate revolutionary action towards transformation of economic structures (Hoffman, 1984). Gramsci's exploration of ideological processes at the superstructural level has been interpreted by some as an abandonment of Marxist politics of class transformation and a move towards cultural resistance in the sense apparent in new social movement theory (Anderson, 1976). Such interpretations however have been hotly contested (Sassoon, 1978; Texier, 1979), and a more in-depth exploration of Gramscian theory below will show its continuance with Marx's dialectical materialism.

Concept of hegemony and consent

Gramsci views the state as playing an important role in maintaining and legitimising capitalist structures. Not only does it reinforce the power of the capitalist class through the force of the army, police and, legal system but it also manufactures popular *consent* for the dominance of this class. This is done through the creation of hegemony - a set of ideas, values and beliefs that serve the interests of the state and capitalist powers by making the ruling order appear as if it is in the best interests of everyone – that is, as a neutral order of commanding and engaging leadership. As Gramsci states:

“It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion. But the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented as the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the 'national' energies.” (1971, p182)

By representing the interests of capital as the interests of all, hegemonic ideology functions as the “glue” which holds the capitalist society together, and lessens possibility of revolt amongst the oppressed (Sassoon, 1982, p14). However for the

hegemony to be convincing, and thus effective, the state must appear to be constantly arbitrating between the interests of all social groups. This requires that the state concede to certain interests of the subordinate group from time to time in order to maintain a “compromise equilibrium” (Gramsci, 1971 p161). Importantly however, Gramsci maintains that the state only grants such economic concessions to the extent that they do not seriously destabilise the power of capital. Thus:

“...though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity.” (ibid, p161)

It is therefore clear that though Gramsci analyses the manner in which the state manufactures ideas that preserve power and legitimacy of a social order, he does not abandon the Marxist view that it is economic structures that “in the last instance” (ibid, p160) determine the power of a social class.

When hegemony is established the constructed alignment of interests of all groups that results from this is referred to as a ‘historic bloc’ (Buci-Glucksmann, 1982). The notion of historic bloc is suggestive of the important role of political and ideological structures in *actively* seeking to interlock with economic structures of capitalism in order to support the dominance of the capitalist class. This differs from mechanistic accounts of Marxism that view political, cultural processes merely as passive reflections of the economic structure of society.

The articulation and dissemination of hegemonic ideology is achieved through institutions of civil society such as the church, school and media. Within Gramsci’s formulation the space of civil society is therefore intertwined with the processes of domination, unlike in NSM theory where it is seen as an autonomous political space (Holst, 2002). Oppressed groups internalise this ideology as their ‘common-sense’ or world-view (Youngman, 1986), and thus hegemonic ideas also inform popular culture (Cirese, 1982). This suggests that the dominance of a hegemonic bloc is deeply embedded in the:

“...spontaneous consent of the masses who must ‘live’ those directives¹³. Modifying their own habits, their own will, their own convictions to conform with those directives and the objectives that they propose to achieve.” (ibid, p266)

The characterisation of people’s consent as ‘spontaneous’ can be understood as a reference to the manner in which hegemonic ideas legitimise the social system in such a manner as to make it appear inevitable and natural and thus a ‘way of life’ that *must* be accepted. Consent for the system therefore generates a fatalistic attitude towards one’s social existence that subverts agency.

Though Gramsci specifically refers to ideas as constituents of the hegemony, it is clear, given his dialectical materialism and acknowledgment of the manner in which hegemony influences culture, that he would also see hegemony articulated through practices (Allman, 1988). This interpretation is supported by Gramsci’s approach to ‘philosophy’ which is explicated in the rhetorical question: “...since all action is political, can one not say that the real philosophy of each man is contained in its entirety in his political action?” (Gramsci, 1971, p326). Althusser is more explicit than Gramsci in referring to practices, though he returns to a Gramscian acknowledgement of ideas and ideology as informing practice. Thus “practices exist in the material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness according to his beliefs” (Althusser, 1971, p159). So far it appears that hegemony stifles any possibility for agency while it determines consciousness and the actions and practices informed by it. Below however I turn to how agency emerges.

Agency in Gramsci

Though the political and ideological structures of the state seek to domesticate consciousness, the state cannot fully conceal the lived reality of economic exploitation. Thus Gramsci conceives of the ‘common-sense’ of the oppressed as consisting of a

¹³ This refers to the “norm of conduct” laid down by ‘legislators’, the most powerful of whom Gramsci identifies as being the State (p266).

contradictory amalgam on the one hand, of hegemonic ideas that legitimise the system, and on the other of everyday, direct experiences of oppression that militate against hegemonic consent and provide the basis for ‘good-sense’ (a state of consciousness involving critical awareness of the nature of one’s oppression). Agency emerges from within these points of disjuncture in the consciousness of the oppressed (Allman, 1988). In suggesting that subaltern consciousness is contradictory Gramsci alludes to how consciousness is not simply determined by social structures but is reflexive in nature. It is thus not just contingent upon social structures but is itself a “creative transforming agent” spurring political action (Boggs, 1976, p30). This reflexivity of consciousness holds the potential to lead towards a more coherent understanding of the nature of the oppressive relations that the subaltern are subjected to, but only if this is developed alongside social action to transform oppressive structures. As we shall see, the role of social movements in strengthening the dialectical interaction between consciousness and radical action is crucial.

Gramscian theory: Social movements and transformation

A theory of hegemony suggests that the overthrow of the capitalist system cannot be achieved simply through revolutionary seizure of apparatuses of state coercion. Social change instead must involve the transformation of consciousness alongside structural change. As such Gramsci advocates for a protracted struggle preceding revolution within the realm of civil society during which movements of the oppressed challenge the ideological processes sustaining their subjugation and articulate a revolutionary counter-hegemonic¹⁴ consciousness. Gramsci refers to this ideological struggle as the war of position. Involving the active and full engagement of all the oppressed, this presents a more radically democratic process of change than revolution led by a few, as in Leninism (Boggs, 1976).

¹⁴ The term counter-hegemony is used widely by Gramsci-inspired academics but is not articulated by Gramsci himself. Gramsci instead employs the term *proletarian hegemony*. However, because this implies one very specific actor of social transformation (i.e. the working class), the more encompassing terminology of counter-hegemony is employed throughout the thesis.

Within the war of position, the development of a counter-hegemonic consciousness must move towards the creation of alliances between not just workers, but other “popular-democratic groupings” (Carroll, 1997, p24). This represents a revolutionary ‘historic bloc’ that ruptures the dominant bloc. These alliances are not only strategically valuable in enhancing the strength of the offensive, but also have an important ideological function. Interaction within alliances allows groups to transcend their own immediate oppression, by developing linkages between themselves and the oppression of others. Uncovering the systemic nature of power is integral to understanding the true nature of domination itself and thus to liberating consciousness to raise structural challenge.

Though Gramsci devotes attention to the development of a radical consciousness through an ideological war of position, he maintains that this cannot be fully achieved unless the war of position is accompanied by political contestation as well. It is within this assertion that Gramsci’s commitment to Marx’s dialectical materialism is clearest. While consciousness is intrinsically connected to material reality, it cannot be fully transformed in isolation of “ongoing political activity” (Boggs, 1976, p30) or what Holst (2002) refers to as **political praxis** to achieve structural change. Consciousness can only be fully transformed if the material structures that condition it are also transformed. The war of position must therefore necessarily be accompanied by political action.

Dialectical materialism implies a very different notion of social change than that provided by NSM theorists who focus on individual and cultural transformation as end-goals of resistance. Within a Gramscian perspective the transformation of consciousness is necessary in order to achieve structural change at the economic and political level, but further, the radicalisation of consciousness is in itself incomplete without structural transformation of the forces that shape consciousness. The corollary of this is that structural transformation can only be complete if it is accompanied by the transformation of oneself also. The “unity of thought and action” (Allman, 2001, p167) that this theory implies leads Gramsci to refer to it as a “philosophy of praxis”, active

within the process of social struggle. Rather than the NSM focus on cultural resistance within the realm of civil society, Gramsci thus moves towards transformation through a dialectic between political and cultural action.

Though Gramsci does not use the concept of *collective identity*, in his discussion of social movements, his treatment of consciousness is akin to this. Thus like collective identity, which encompasses the ideological dimensions that define a movement, consciousness in the Gramscian sense is not simply an individual construct but a social construct that identifies the integral “experiences of a particular ‘collective organism’ (a social stratum or class)” (Boggs, 1976, p63). Further this consciousness is not just present but is *operative* as a “concrete political force” because action is directly related to consciousness (ibid, p63). Thus consciousness is not only deduced from the things that movements say but from the things that they do within the sphere of political contestation. From a Gramscian perspective collective identity is therefore not just the movement’s cognitive praxis, as within NSM theory, but is its cognitive and political praxis together. While this is implicit within Gramsci’s writing, it is especially evident within an Althusserian conception of consciousness as suggested above.

One final point needs to be made with regard to the revolutionary actors identified by Gramsci. Though Gramsci argues for a broadening of the war of position to include popular groupings such as peasants, women, and other democratic forces, these are largely viewed as strategic alliances, that workers as the true revolutionary actors have to form, in order to strengthen their movement against capitalism. This has invited accusations of class essentialism by post-modern theorists. Addressing this, contemporary interpretations of Gramsci are recognising other revolutionary subjects organised around race, gender, ethnicity whose oppression, though intersected by class, is not wholly reducible to this (Allman, 1999; Mayo, 1994). Unlike NSM advocates however, these theorists still see all oppressive processes as intrinsically related and thus while establishing “unity-in-diversity around a shared vision” continue to provide a theory of social transformation (Carroll, 1992, p12).

In summary, Gramsci is not merely concerned with economic and political *reform* as in RM theory, or cultural *resistance* as in NSM theory, but rather in social *transformation* to overthrow underlying structures of oppression. This involves dialectically combining NSM's focus on the politicisation of cultural processes with RM theory's emphasis on political engagement. By conceptualising transformation not as abrupt revolution, but as involving a prolonged period of alliance formation, interaction, and cultural reflection, alongside political action, Gramsci provides a stronger basis for democratic, engaged participation, and thus the promise of a deeper form of change itself.

The goal of transformation is also critical to the project of GCS, and thus Gramsci provides useful conceptual tools for analysing the social processes involved in the formation of a transformative GCS. Gramsci is particularly pertinent to GCS perspectives because he argues against economic determinism, and instead provides space for the role of political intervention towards social change initiated in (though not limited to) the sphere of civil society.

However, while I suggest that RM, NSM and Gramscian theory relate to reformism, resistance and transformation respectively, this is not to suggest that these are discreet or mutually exclusive categories of social change. Though analytically useful, these categories seep into each other since they represent positions on a continuum. As such it is not possible to establish concrete rules for their application to empirical processes and phenomena. The application of these terms to empirical analysis is therefore based on carefully contextualising the empirical data to understand its *relative position* on the social change continuum which in the last instance is based on my analytical discretion. Having explored the three dominant approaches to social movements and collective identity, below I turn to drawing out the implications of these theories for understanding how and what learning processes might be involved in social movements as they engage in social change.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: LEARNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Recognition of the learning processes that social movements engage in has slowly been developing amongst scholars of progressive adult education (Foley, 1999). Foley argues that “learning in such situations is largely *informal* and often incidental – it is tacit, embedded in action and is often not recognised as learning.” (ibid, p3). For greater conceptual clarity regarding what informal learning is it is necessary to elaborate on its constitutive elements i.e. ‘learning’ and ‘informal’. Following Arthur and Davison (2002) “Learning, the development of knowledge, understandings and beliefs is a synthesis of experiences” (p33). Informal forms of learning refer to a specific context and process through which educative experiences are encountered and ‘reflectively’ synthesised by a person (Schugurensky, 2006). Thus informal learning can be distinguished firstly, from formal education which refers to the process of learning within the highly institutionalised structures of official schooling, and secondly, from informal education or training which involves a directive process of learning from a mentor or teacher in non-official contexts such as community centres or even in social movements where such learning can take place in organised training courses (see Novelli, 2004; Parajuli, 1986). In contrast, informal learning “is any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge, or skill that occurs without the presence of externally-imposed curricular criteria” (Livingstone, 2006, p206) As such it is self-directed. However this does not mean that informal learning is always intentionally pursued. As Foley’s quote above suggests informal learning can also be incidental in that it occurs without the learner previously expecting or deciding to learn something from an experience. Most of the learning referred to in the thesis is of this kind.

While discussing learning in informal contexts it is also necessary to examine the notion of pedagogy. Pedagogy is commonly used in the context of formal education, to refer to “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999, p3). However, arising from the very definition of informal learning as self-directed, pedagogy in relation to such learning cannot be understood as a process of intentional, focused instruction by a teacher to the taught.

Instead, pedagogy must be conceived more broadly as experience; or the events, social environments, relationships and interactions that are catalysts for learning. Yet as Arthur and Davison (2002) note, not all experience is necessarily pedagogical or educative – it is reflective engagement with experience that leads to learning. Thus, though one may observe that particular experiences possess pedagogical possibilities, the extent to which they are actually pedagogical can only be determined by whether they cause learning. The more amorphous quality of pedagogy in the context of informal learning is apparent in the use of ‘pedagogy as activism’ by McLaren and Jaramillo (2007) who view the process of activism itself as providing an important means of ‘teaching’ for social change. This approach to pedagogy is also seen within media studies where everyday exposure to media is viewed as a pedagogical medium that shapes the socialisation of people, and is therefore termed ‘media pedagogy’ (Kellner, 1995).

In the context of social movements, educators commonly identify informal learning in the form of two types of cognitive or behavioural change as an outcome of collective action – 1) the acquisition of knowledge and skills relating to technologies of protest (Foley, 1991), and 2) more politicised forms of learning embedded in the radicalisation of consciousness and identities that challenge the dominant social order (Allman, 2001; Gorman, 2007). In this thesis the focus of analysis is on this second form of learning – i.e. the radicalisation of consciousness and identity, which I refer to explicitly as *political learning* (from now onwards, however, this may simply be referred to as learning). To further clarify the meaning of political learning, it can be understood as referring to a process of gradual formation of new ideas and understandings of the social world embodied in one’s consciousness and identity that provide the basis for action to change the world. The first form of learning, i.e. the acquisition of strategic knowledge and skills, on the other hand, is seen as incidental, though facilitative of this wider learning.

The foundations for exploring *political learning* in social movements are laid by social movement theories themselves. In particular the recognition within new social

movement and Gramscian theory of the importance of self or consciousness transformation in social change suggests that political learning is a central process occurring in social movements that are agents of change. Resource mobilisation theory, on the other hand, has been less useful in providing insights into this form of learning, since its focus has largely been on how movements accomplish immediate political-economic goals, without acknowledging their reflexivity regarding systemic conditions and the politicisation of identity and consciousness that is connected to this. As such literature on learning in social struggle tends to be based either on NSM or Gramscian theory (Walter, 2007). As we shall see however, these perspectives differ with regard to the extent to which they connect political learning and self-transformation to political action.

Broadly, two levels of learning in social movements are commonly discussed. Firstly, at the *collective* level, movements are viewed as emerging and developing through learning (Kilgore, 1999; Holford, 1995). Thus the movement's "collective identity is a learning process" (Melucci, 1995, p49) and movements are therefore "carriers of new learning potentials" (Ray, 1993, p81). In this sense, scholars refer to the learning *of* social movements. Secondly, social movements are argued to be "learning sites" or educative spaces where the consciousness and identities of participating *individuals* is politicised (Welton, 1993; Finger, 1989; Spencer, 1995). Here the learning *in* social movements is discussed. At both these levels – the collective and individual – learning is understood as occurring informally.

While NSM and Gramscian theory on social movements have spawned literature on learning in social action, they hold slightly different implications for understanding the nature and processes of this learning¹⁵. Below I go into greater detail regarding these differences. I start by examining NSM inspired perspectives.

¹⁵ Processes and outcomes pertaining to political learning are occasionally referred to as 'educational' within the thesis to signify that learning is involved in these.

New Social Movement Theory

Within a NSM framework, the collective learning constitutive of social movements is embodied in the development of their symbolic resistance to the hegemony (cognitive praxis), visible in the way in which movements' discourses, models of leadership, organisation and cultural practices evolve. This in turn provides a facilitative environment within which individual collective actors also learn how their everyday lives and identities are embedded within relations of power and how they are thus also sites of resistance (Kilgore, 1999; Holford, 1995; Welton, 1993; Klatch, 2002).

While NSM theorists appear to limit their concept of movements to culturally articulated politics within the sphere of civil society, the facilitating forces and dynamics for the informal learning that movements engage in is also largely viewed to emerge from civil society interactions. Thus Eyerman and Jamison (1991) suggest that movements "learn by doing" (p57). However this "doing" is generally limited to "interaction between different groups and organisations" within civil society. Recognition of the learning that can emerge from political contestation with hegemonic structures, and thus of the pedagogical value of such contestation is largely missing. Therefore strategic action or political activity are largely treated as by-products of a movement's collective identity rather than learning opportunities that feed into and alter it, and are hence constitutive of such movements (Reger, 2002, p172-173). Where political struggle is suggested as a learning force this "cognitive praxis is often more strategic than communicative", i.e. leading to the "innovation" of tactics and organisational forms rather than the deeper counter-hegemonic consciousness of the movement (ibid, p58).

From a Gramscian perspective, a focus on interactions within civil society to the exclusion of political struggle does not provide an adequate basis for facilitating a truly transformative learning. For Gramscian thinkers, the radicalisation of identities and consciousness represents transformative learning only if it leads to political praxis to challenge oppressive structures. This is because of the dialectically related nature of

material reality, consciousness and culture, meaning that consciousness cannot completely escape domestication from structural oppression if that reality itself is not transformed. The containment of radicalisation within the sphere of civil society is thus criticised by Gramscian educators as a stunted form of political learning (Holst, 2002). Indeed the fragmented politics of identity that NSM theorists provide a basis for practicing suggests that these movements have not been fully able to identify connections of oppression between various struggles. This emerges from, and only adds to their lack of political action against oppressive structures. The Gramscian critique of NSM perspectives on learning in social movements, and the differences between these approaches will become clearer as I turn to a deeper examination of the work of Gramscian adult educators in this field.

Gramscian Theory

Gramsci has inspired the work of many adult educators striving to understand the connections between learning in social movements and social transformation. Most notable amongst these is Paulo Freire, the Brazilian radical adult educationalist, who theorises and puts into practice the educational implications of Gramsci's work. Freire (1985; 1993) refers to the Gramscian process of the transformation of consciousness as conscientisation which he sees essentially as a form of radical learning initiated and cultivated within social movements. The process of conscientisation involves the development of critical awareness amongst people of the historical context which conditions their consciousness of the world and themselves, and which makes visible the manner in which the social structures that oppress them are legitimised and maintained through their everyday practices and 'domesticated' consciousness. The transition from domesticated to an agentic, conscientised consciousness necessarily demands a greater understanding of the connections between one's own oppression and that of others, and thus the interconnections between structures of domination. It is this pervasive character of oppression that Freire (1993) wishes to warn against when he states "...authentic resolution of the oppressor-oppressed contradiction does not lie in a mere reversal of position, in moving from one pole to the other. Nor does it lie in the

replacement of the former oppressor with new ones who continue to subjugate” (p39). However, while the notion of conscientisation as a comprehensive awareness of the dimensions and dynamics of oppression is important to social transformation, one should be careful not to view it as a transcendental quality akin to spiritual enlightenment that is irreversible and infallible. Instead, as Foley (2001) points out, the “struggle between domination and liberation” is “continually contested, complex, ambiguous and contradictory” (p77).

Unlike NSM-based theorisations which treat the radicalisation of consciousness as the end goal of learning in social movements, Freire views conscientisation as emergent and intrinsically connected to social action. Thus McLaren and da Silva (1993) note: “While it is true that Freire’s work is concerned with self-transformation...it is equally true, if not more so, that it concerns itself with social transformation, assuming as a central referent the reconstruction and reconstitution of the structural arrangements of the existing social order” (p55). Following Gramsci, Freire thus views the educational process of consciousness transformation as dialectically related to social change, such that radical learning is incomplete unless it leads to social action, and social change itself is not achieved unless it involves critical learning to resist the forces that domesticate consciousness (Holst, 2002).

According to Gramscian educators the development of conscientisation within social movements can only be achieved through political contestation in addition to civil society action. Thus Freire refers to the manner in which “dialectically education is not the key to transformation, although *transformation is in itself educational*” (Torres and Freire, 1994, p104, italics added). The process of political action is pedagogical because it involves directly encountering, acting on, and altering the social reality that conditions consciousness and thus leads to a more empowered understanding of this reality and the structures of power it consists of (McLaren, 1994; Allman and Wallis, 1990). The counter-hegemonic consciousness of movements that ultimately informs political praxis, is itself, therefore learnt through reflection on experiences emerging from political praxis.

According to Allman (2001) the struggle for transformation is educative not only in that it creates encounters with structures of oppression but also because it provides movement participants with “abbreviated” or “prefigurative experience of the type of social relations that would lie at the heart of a transformed society” (p170). While critical social movements nurture egalitarian, inclusive relationships amongst participants, and form alliances, they provide an alternative experience to the oppressive social relations of capitalism. The pedagogical value of this is especially clear within a Gramscian conceptualisation of consciousness as dialectically related to material reality. From such a perspective, the opportunity to actively – “sensually and subjectively” – experience liberated social relations, provides the most fecund basis for “deep transformation” of consciousness because it emerges from changes in our objective reality also (ibid, p170).

An emphasis on the dialectic between reflection and action or learning and social struggle lies at the heart of Gramscian theorisations on social transformation. While critical learning and social transformation are mutually constitutive processes, social movements that engage in learning in social struggle are potentially transformative collective actors. In contrast, social movements within resource mobilisation and new social movement theory might be described as engaged in what Freire refers to as “activism” and “verbalism” respectively. Though an admittedly reductive representation, resource mobilisation proposes activism or action without reflection leading to reformism. While on the other hand, new social movement theory provides the basis for verbalism or “blah-blah” without action, leading to cultural resistance within the sphere of civil society (Freire, 1993, p68-69). In the absence of the action-reflection dialectic present within Gramscian theory, both these perspectives fail to provide a coherent theory of social change and learning in social struggle. For this reason the next section hones in on a Gramscian framework for analysing global civil society and radical learning and action involved in it.

Social Movement Theories: Social Change and Models of Political Learning

Social Movement Theories	Goals of Social Movements	Site of Action	Notions of Collective Identity	Political Learning	
				Outcomes	Process
Resource Mobilisation	Reform: Achievement of instrumental goals	Political institutions – primarily the state	Identity as mobilisation resource	—	—
New Social Movement	Resistance: Symbolic challenge – cultural change	Civil society	Cognitive praxis: cultural practices, discourses	Personal / cultural transformation and politicisation of identity	Interaction within civil society rather than political action
Gramscian	Social transformation: Removal of oppressive social structures – political, economic and cultural change	Dialectical action between civil society, political institutions and economy	Consciousness: dialectic between cognitive and political praxis	Transformation of consciousness, and political and economic structures	Dialectic between action and reflection/ dialectic political praxis and consciousness

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE THESIS: GRAMSCIAN THEORY, GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY, AND LEARNING

While adopting a Gramscian lens, this section draws together conceptual issues related to learning in social movements so far developed, and connects them to the project of GCS discussed in chapter 2. Though connections between Gramsci and GCS theorisation have already been indicated at various points so far, here these connections are made explicit. GCS is thus reinterpreted as a counter-hegemonic initiative of radical learning and action against the global hegemony. In addition, the manner in which this provides a conceptual basis for understanding how local social movements might learn to be global citizens within GCS is developed, while also providing a theoretical rationale for the organisation of the thesis.

The Global Hegemony

A Gramscian framework is already being widely used to analyse the hegemony of global capitalism as well as resistance to this in the form of global civil society (Cox, 1993; Gill, 1990; Robinson, 1996). This is often identified as a neo-Gramscian approach to international relations (Budd, 2007). While Gramsci specifically pays attention to the nation-state as the site where capitalism is promoted, managed and entrenched, the neo-Gramscian approach, prominently articulated by Cox (1999), extends the implications of Gramsci's theoretical contributions in the present context of globalisation where the "territorial distinctness of national economies and societies is penetrated by global and transnational forces" (Cox, 1999, p12). Some however argue that the translation of Gramscian notions of hegemony and civil society to the global level is a misuse of terms that are traditionally conceptualised as *organically* linked to the nation-state (Germain and Kenny, 1998). Nevertheless, within a neo-Gramscian approach, the aim is to show the concrete ideological and coercive global forces, which though not concentrated in a single political state at the global level, are operative through institutions such as the WB, IMF and G-7 that interact with nation-states to maintain the global hegemony of capitalism. Cox (1987) refers to this as the 'internationalisation of the state'. Indeed even while arguing for the need to understand the "originality and uniqueness" of the development of capitalism in different countries, Gramsci is also aware that the "perspective is international and cannot be otherwise" if capitalism is to be challenged fully (Gramsci, 1971, p240). In relation to the present study this is made apparent in chapter 5 where I show that the hegemony of global capitalism characterises India's development trajectory and that the big dam industry, which has been ideologically and materially driven by the WB is an aspect of this development.

Global Civil Society and Global Citizenship

If a global hegemony is developing, global civil society is the site where this hegemony is legitimised as well as resisted. As a site of resistance, global civil society may be

conceived of as constituting a Gramscian ‘war of position’ involving the formation of a globally-conscious and united alliance of subaltern movements that seek to uncover their domestication by hegemonic forces and engage in action to transform these structures. The actors within this counter-hegemonic resistance can be viewed as global citizens, who in Gramsci’s terms, are constructing global civil society through this war of position. In that the war of position is a gradual process, as I have indicated earlier, global citizens within global civil society must be involved in critical learning about the transnational processes of domination implicated in their oppression. Global citizens, in other words, are those who actively identify themselves with a global struggle in alliance with other oppressed groups and are occupied in the pedagogical and political processes of transforming the global hegemony. As argued previously, INGOs and ‘global social movements’ have tended to be viewed as the transformative global citizens of this counter-hegemonic struggle, while movements of local, subaltern communities are sidelined. This is problematic from a Gramscian perspective, within which counter-hegemonic struggle can only be led by the subaltern. In chapter 6 therefore I critically examine the extent to which the affluent Western INGOs involved in the international campaign to support NBA enacted radical global citizenship.

Local movements, Trans-border Action and Learning

Having established that global citizenship requires critical learning for global action, here I argue that Gramsci’s framework of dialectical materialism provides a basis for understanding how local movements of subaltern communities can learn to be global citizens through the process of social struggle. In that consciousness is itself conditioned by political structures an emergent understanding of how people are part of a system of global structural oppression necessitates engagement with these structures. For critical learning to occur movements must therefore act beyond the cultural plane of civil society and engage in **political praxis**. The development of counter-hegemonic consciousness is therefore jeopardised by theorists who inhibit the possibility of forming coherent targets of protest, by rendering these obscure in characterisations of

the global hegemony as a “nebuleuse” (Cox, 1992, p27) sphere of decentred and amorphous power (Budd, 2007).

However, while experiences emerging from political praxis can alter understandings of political structures, this might only give rise to revolutionary GCS action, if it is accompanied by dialogue and critical reflection. This involves moving beyond an understanding of institutions merely as **political structures of opportunity or constraint** that enable or inhibit the fulfilment of immediate, instrumental goals, as in resource mobilisation theory. It requires a gradual shift towards realising the hegemonic, class character of institutions, such that the need for their transformation becomes apparent. Borrowing from new social movement theory, a movement’s critical reflections can be understood as its **cognitive praxis**. To reiterate, this refers to the discourses and cultural practices enacted within the sphere of civil society that identify and challenge the oppressive nature of the hegemony. This is connected to another aspect of cognitive praxis – interaction and solidarity formation between subaltern movements across the world. Together these processes constitute the formation of the ideological aspects of the ‘war of position’ involved in GCS. Amongst transformative movements critical learning is achieved through a constant dialogue between these civil society processes and political action, with each leading to the development of the other. In other words, this dialectic between political and cognitive praxis provides the basis for suggesting that local movements have the potential to *learn* to be globally-conscious citizens in the process of targeting transnational political institutions.

A Gramscian framework has unique implications for conceptualising the **collective identity** or consciousness of movements. Within new social movement theory collective identity is simply the cognitive praxis of a movement, i.e., its cultural resistance within civil society. For Gramsci however, cultural resistance in a transformative movement must also be dialectically related to political action. This suggests that the study of collective identity must take into account the movement’s cognitive *and* political praxis. In order to examine the extent to which NBA represents a local struggle that is also dialectically connected to global transformation, chapter 7

therefore examines if and how NBA's collective identity reflects this in its concrete political and cognitive practices, as well as how this collective identity develops through the interaction between learning and political action.

A Gramscian approach to global civil society also stresses that global transformation is not merely about collectively challenging oppressive structures, but just as importantly about politicising and transforming the consciousness of people in their everyday lives. Actors of global civil society therefore must be engaged in this joint process. This suggests the need to explore the extent to which NBA provides the site for the development of critical consciousness amongst village participants of the movement and whether this leads to their self-identification as global citizens (chapter 8).

Related to this, a Gramscian framework also suggests the need to view the transformative processes of global civil society in terms of the extent to which critical consciousness and action on global structures of oppression are dialectically related to action on local forms of oppression too. This provides the basis for chapter 9, where I reflect on whether NBA's wider struggle against the dam is accompanied by changes in caste, class and gender relations within the Narmada communities.

CONCLUSION

Through an exploration of social movement theories that emphasise the processual and self-reflexive nature of social movements, this chapter has sought to develop the conceptual foundations for understanding how these entities have the potential to learn *for* and *through* social change in order to be radical actors in GCS. Firstly it has been argued that these theories can be located on a continuum of positions in relation to conceptualising the forms of social change that movements are engaged in, which from least to most radicalism are represented by – reform at the political level suggested by resource mobilisation theory, to resistance at the cultural level emphasised by new social movement theory, and finally social transformation encompassing political and cultural levels argued by Gramscian perspectives. In turn, these positions on social

change have different implications for the nature and processes of political learning that social movements engage in. Given that social transformation is the ultimate aim of GCS, this chapter has argued for the need to apply a Gramscian framework to conceptualising the pedagogical processes through which social movements participate in GCS.

The dialectic between consciousness and material reality that lies at the centre of Gramscian perspectives suggests firstly that social transformation through global civil society must involve the transformation of subjective processes of consciousness and identity, which can be conceived of in terms of the formation of global citizenship, but also that this must be connected to efforts to overturn objective structures of the global hegemony that influence consciousness. Social movements that are part of GCS must therefore be engaged in learning global citizenship to affect structural change. Secondly, a Gramscian dialectical analysis would suggest that acting upon political structures creates possibilities for critical transformation of consciousness. Social movements involved in political action against global structures are thus possible sites for learning global citizenship. Based on this framework the thesis proceeds to explore whether, and in what ways, the Save the Narmada Movement has engaged in this dialectic between learning and social change, and whether this provides a conceptual basis for viewing local movements like it as active citizens in global civil society.

Chapter 4

Bringing Research to Life: The Methodology and Methods of Fieldwork

INTRODUCTION

As indicated so far, most research on global civil society has focused on the activity of international NGOs. Rarely does the literature delve deeply into an analysis of the local level of global civil society. My research attempts to address this gap by focusing on the lived world of the tribal as well as peasant communities that have been a part of this global network through the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). As such my research combines the case study method with an ethnographic approach. The integration of various methodologies that this represents is a bricolage that is characteristic of much qualitative enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2003).

This chapter provides a description of my intellectual, political and social journey as a researcher into the heart of the field. It illustrates not only how I conducted my research but also how I lived it. The chapter begins with an outline of research aims and questions. Drawing from this I discuss my choice of research methodology. Next I provide a detailed account of the ethnographic process, the data collection strategies used and my role as a researcher within this. I end with an outline of the data analysis process

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The overarching aim of the research is to explore:

If and how are local social movements that transnationalise their grievances engaged in the construction of global citizenship?

Drawing on Gramsci's dialectical formulation of social transformation described in chapter 3, an analysis of the construction of a transformative global citizenship can be viewed as comprising dialectically related dimensions, addressed in the 5 questions below. Firstly, global citizenship consists of a dialectic between collective practices and discourses (Qs 1 and 2), secondly, it involves a dialectical interaction between collective action and perceived identity and citizenship at the individual level (Q3), thirdly, it is constituted through a dialectic between global and local transformative action (Q4), and lastly given the centrality of the dialectic between consciousness and action within Gramscian approaches to social transformation, it is necessary to uncover the learning processes involved in the construction of global citizenship (Q5). The NBA provided a relevant case study to investigate these dimensions:

- 1) At the level of the movement's practices– how did political engagements with the state, international community and other global actors such as the WB change through the course of struggle?
- 2) What were the movement discourses relating to grievance formation, targets of protest and alliance construction that accompanied these movement practices – were there global dimensions to these?
- 3) At the level of the participant local communities – whether and in what manner did local participants relate to the movement's practices and discourse of resistance? Was their participation connected to a growing awareness and critical appraisal of their oppression as well as transformation of subjective articulations of identity and citizenship – did this involve a global dimension?
- 4) If transformation in consciousness did occur was this related to a dialectical transformation of oppressive social structures within the communities?
- 5) What were the learning influences, processes and mechanisms through which the dimensions referred to above emerged?

These research questions relate to issues of community and movement processes that require a depth of analysis that, it was felt, would best be addressed through a case

study integrated with an ethnographic approach. Such depth would not have been achievable through contrived situations of data collection such as formal interviews or questionnaires that tend to be devoid of a lived context. This was especially true considering the lack of literacy amongst the research subjects. Below I turn to identifying and justifying a qualitative ethnographic approach for the empirical study.

A QUALITATIVE LENS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY APPROACH

The positivist tradition emerging from the modernist goal of discovering *the* truth, placed emphasis on quantification and standardisation of the processes of knowledge generation. This gave birth to the methodology of experimentation (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). From the 1920s and 1930s positivism has been increasingly criticised by social scientists that view its essentialising nature as antithetical to the complexities and socially constructed nature of people's behaviour. I share this concern and hence my pursuit for "processes and meanings" has led to a qualitative frame of analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p13).

However despite growing scepticism of positivism, qualitative research itself emerges from the Chicago school's preoccupation with naturalism - a view which suggests that "the aim of social research is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behaviour" (Graddol et al, 1994, p5). The underlying assumption here is a modernist one- that there are truths of human behaviour, and 'laws', albeit socially and culturally embedded ones that can be discovered. Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) definition of qualitative research provides an example of this. They write:

"Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalist approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them." (p2)

While naturalism seems to depart from positivism in the methodology that it considers appropriate for social research, it presents no radical epistemological departure- “They are both committed to the attempt to understand social phenomena as objects existing independently of the researcher” (Hammersley, 1995a, p10). Most qualitative researchers now are influenced by post-structuralist notions of the inextricable relationship between knowledge and power and thus emphasise the “socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p13, also see Flick, 1998, Henn et al, 2006). Resonating with this perspective, in conducting my research, and forming my analysis, I have been constantly conscious of my *specific* relationship to the research and the manner in which this has shaped the end result.

Indeed the debate between positivism and qualitative approaches in academia resonates directly with the lives of my research participants. A qualitative approach has allowed the people of the Narmada Valley to voice their understanding of their victimisation and what they have learnt from it, in resistance to the positivist ideological framework that underlies the hegemonic discourse of the ‘greater common good’ (Roy, 1999) which has been used by the government to literally drown out their voices.

My aim, to do an in-depth exploration of the local manifestations of global civil society, led me to adopt a case study approach. The case, according to Flood (quoted in Stake, 2003) is a “bounded system” (p135). In relation to my study this bounded system is the Save the Narmada Movement and the international NGOs that supported it. This approach allows me to make a holistic, contextualised study of a local social movement’s engagement with the global. Following from Stake’s categorisation of case studies I would suggest that my study is an *instrumental* one that seeks to “provide insights into an issue” rather than simply of *intrinsic* value for which getting a “better understanding of the case” is fundamental (ibid, p135). Here the issues relate to social movements and global civil society. The Save the Narmada Movement is chosen for this purpose because within literature relating to this field it is highly celebrated and repeatedly cited.

While in general the research is a case study of a movement that goes global, my specific research questions relating to the impact the movement has on local communities led me to spend most of my field time in two villages, instead of in the offices of the NBA or those of the international NGOs. All data collected at these other levels was gathered specifically to shed light on the processes occurring at the grassroots level. My overarching interest is not in the concrete exchanges between the local and global level but in the local *perceptions* of these relationships and actions, particularly as they give rise to emergent ambiguities between these different layers of lived reality.

One of the characteristics of the case study approach is that it adopts multiple methods of data collection. While theoretically I could simply have collected data through formal interviews, documents, and random observations within the “bounded system”, I wanted a more in-depth and holistic understanding of the social movement and its mass base. I wanted to observe social processes and practices in order to get closer to an emic understanding of the movement participants. Further, sole reliance on interviews would have seriously limited the extent to which valid data could be gathered, especially since participants were largely illiterate and had difficulty articulating themselves within the ‘unnatural’ confines of the formal interview.

An ethnographic approach which engages with subjects in their own settings allowed me to address the above concerns and achieve the desired level of depth. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) “ethnographic research aims to get an in-depth understanding of how individuals in *different cultures* and *subcultures* make sense of their lived reality” (p230). This is achieved through long periods of immersion in the social context of interest. In that this particular ethnographic enquiry is focused on uncovering the global dimensions of local existence, it responds to Burawoy et al’s (2000) call for ‘global ethnography’ which allows an exploration of the everyday processes that the nebulous ‘global’ is manifested in.

Ethnography, however, owing to its direct roots in the naturalist challenge to positivism, is shot through with the same tensions between realism and subjectivism which are apparent in the qualitative approach (Hammersley, 1992; Travers, 2001). In realist terms the 'superiority' of ethnography lies in the fact that the researcher can observe social life in its natural setting. This eliminates the distorting effects of the research process because "it is able to get closer to social reality than other methods" (Hammersley, 1992, p44). Such a perspective is based on the assumption that the researcher can be value-neutral and 'objective'. Stephen Ball (1990) provides a more subjectivist account of the business of ethnography, describing it as an "art form rather than the product of technical science" (p169). He goes on to write:

"Data are a social construct of the research process itself, not just of the 'natives' under study. Here the researcher has a pivotal role to play. Data are a product of the skills and imagination of the researcher and of the interface between the researcher and the researched...Indeed what is seen and unnoticed, what is and is not recorded, will depend on the interests, questions, and relationships that are brought to bear in a particular scene". (p170).

Here the researcher is pivotal to the data generated. It must be noted, however, that while this perspective does highlight the situatedness of research, it does not amount to relativism, which deconstructs 'reality' to the extent of declaring that there are "no facts other than the actor's subjective experience" (Cameron et al, 1992, p9). A relativist view would suggest that the world 'created' by the ethnographer may be "no more nor less true than others; for instance than the perceptions and interpretations of the people studied" (Hammersley, 1992, p45). My epistemological standpoint has tried to escape the trap of dichotomies produced by the realism-relativism debate. Thus I do not purport to have achieved an 'ideal reproduction' of reality through my study, instead my account, just as any other piece of research is at best a 'selective representation' of social reality. This is where the importance of reflexivity is highlighted by Ball. The practice of reflexivity allows researchers to assess the impact their assumptions, choices and social roles have not only on the research context, but also on their selective representations of that context. I believe that, to the extent possible, this reflexive

process also needs to be communicated to the audience as I have attempted to do at various points in the thesis (for e.g. p23-25, 117-119, 120-121).

I started my research in the valley with an interest in looking at the extent, and ways in which the people might be a part of 'global civil society'- an arena of transnational action that derives its legitimacy from the local people it claims to give voice to. My conviction was that only bottom-up change will lead to the kind of transformation that global civil society claims to be a harbinger of. I was driven by the hope of finding these indicators of social change. Of course the reality that I found was a lot more conflictual, complex and ambiguous. Nevertheless my research is committed to the view that power, oppression and resistance are real. This view departs from relativism, which in its denial of a social reality also negates the existence of structural forces and is thus complicit in maintaining the status quo (Habermas, 1987). Following Foucault, however, I believe that power is not operative simply through class as Marx would assert, but multiple axis such as class, race, gender, and in the Indian context, caste as well.

In my commitment to understanding how oppression is resisted, my research falls within the framework of 'critical ethnography'. Critical ethnographers, inspired by the Frankfurt school seek to "generate knowledge that aims to challenge and transform unequal power relationships" (Henn et al, 2006, p28). From such a stance research is a political activity – one which either legitimises or resists the hegemony (Hammersley, 1995b; Hammersley 1993; Griffiths, 1998). As such no social scientist can take comfort in the belief that knowledge generation is value-neutral. Paulo Freire brings this vividly to light when he remarks: "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral" (Freire, 1985, p122) My acknowledgement and enactment of this responsibility does not suggest a misguided attempt at manipulation of findings towards achieving social change. Rather it has meant that my selective representation of the Narmada struggle is guided by a reflexive and critical concern for issues of social justice. However, though I argue that all research is biased to some degree by the researchers own epistemological prism, I

have prevented this selective representation from turning into a dogmatic representation by staying sensitive to inconsistencies, ruptures and subtleties in the narratives of research participants. Having laid down a critical ethnographic framework for the study, below I provide greater detail regarding the process of collecting data within this framework.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Before venturing out into the field I read extensively about the movement – its national and international campaigns, the academic debates surrounding it, as well as the social, cultural and historical context of its grassroots participants. This gave me some indication of what to expect, but also in some instances led me to untenable pre-figurations as I learnt later in the field. Nevertheless these readings helped me identify key campaigners and NBA activists of interest to my work. The bulk of the fieldwork consisting of an ethnographic study of the movement was conducted in two stages. A third much shorter phase involved collecting qualitative data relating to INGOs involved in the Narmada campaign. Below I describe the kinds of data collected and the process of collecting this data in each of the phases.

Phase 1 – Movement Leaders and Offices

The first stage, starting in March 2005 was carried out over a month and a half. This initial visit to the Narmada Valley provided a chance to assess the feasibility of my research and to introduce myself to the difficult rural terrain in which I would have to work, and which I must admit had been causing me significant anxiety. During this time I visited two NBA offices, one in Madhya Pradesh and the other in Gujarat, to share my research ideas and get feedback, establish contacts with key gatekeepers, and to begin my initiation into the discourse of the movement. These visits helped me to establish that the office in Madhya Pradesh in the small town of Barwani would be my main support base while carrying out my research. This was because of its relative proximity

to villages in comparison to the Gujarat office and also because there were more activists here to assist me.

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It was in this office that I met my main gatekeeper – Asit, an urban activist of the movement, who more than any other activist seemed to be curious and interested in my study. Indeed his keenness greatly facilitated my work as he energetically accompanied me to the various villages under the threat of submergence, introducing me to village leaders and securing their cooperation for my research. During this period I took stock of the breadth of the movement by doing interviews with movement participants at two levels – the level of top leadership – this consisted mainly of urban activists who were working full-time with the movement (5 recorded interviews); and local village leaders – who were entrusted with the task of organising and mobilising their village. At the local level I recorded interviews with male and female leaders in both Nimar in Madhya Pradesh (4 men and 2 women) and the tribal tracts¹⁶ of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat (5 men and 2 women). These interviews were aimed at developing an

¹⁶ Adivasis live in the hills through which the Narmada river flows but also in the Nimar Plains where they either possess small bits of agricultural land or do wage labour. Due to their proximity to the mainstream Hindu culture they have been increasingly integrated into the Hindu caste hierarchy through a process of ‘sanskritisation’, and have thus lost their unique Adivasi identity and culture. Hill Adivasis, however, as Baviskar (2004) argues have been able to maintain their cultural distinctness because of the isolation that the hills have provided from the ‘modern state and caste system’. Please note that when I refer to Adivasis in the thesis I am talking only of hill Adivasis.

understanding of the history of the movement; the demands of the people; participation in the movement and decision making processes; what they had learnt through their struggle about the nature of their oppression; and their understanding and perception of the international support they had received. Asit set up interviews for me which took place at the homes of the interviewees. He was also present during them.

While I would not have gained access to these people without Asit's mediation, his presence posed certain questions regarding the distorting effects this might have on interviewees who may have felt greater pressure to present a positive picture of the movement in front of an activist. In saying this I do not mean that villagers were being coerced into saying things, but rather that they felt less free to present a conflictual picture. Indeed, on one occasion when the interview had finished, the villager turned to Asit and asked him if he had 'done well'. This genuinely dismayed Asit, who replied 'you should say whatever you feel, there is no right or wrong'. Having said this though, villagers may not have chosen to discuss negative aspects that might be damaging for the movement with me –an outsider regardless of Asit's presence.

Arising from my heavy dependence on Asit's guidance, was a concern that this might lead to a one-sided, self-affirming representation of the NBA. Asit was in the position to introduce me to people known to have a positive perception of the NBA and to ignore or conceal those who didn't – in effect he was in the position to steer my research (see Ellen, 1984; and Lockwood, 1992, for discussion of gatekeeper issues). My reservations regarding this were dispelled to a degree however, through the course of my conversations with him, which suggested that he was still self-reflexive about his work despite natural loyalties to the movement. He was open to receiving critical questions and observations – something which I found other activists were less tolerant of. To me he represented an intellectual engaged in *praxis* (Freire, 1973)¹⁷. Indeed he drew me into debates regarding the NBA, pointing me towards tensions and contradictions in the movement's discourse and strategies. His constructive criticality reassured me that I

¹⁷ Freire defines praxis as a process of "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it". (Freire, 1993, p33).

was not being lured into adopting an idealised image of the movement (I never became complacent of this though).

Despite Asit's critical objectivity, it was necessary to take certain measures to mitigate any unintended distorting effects of his involvement as gatekeeper on the data collected and analysed. This was done by triangulating data obtained in his presence and absence to discern consistencies and incoherences as well as encountering and following people's views, attitudes and beliefs across a prolonged span of time. Opportunities for this were afforded in phase 2 of the research described later, when after familiarising myself with the place and people during phase 1, I was able to go back unaccompanied and stay with them.

During phase 1 began making contact with the leader of the movement – Medha Patekar, to interview her. I had also emailed my research proposal to her from London and was keen to discuss any suggestions or reservations she may have regarding the research. As a busy public figure nationally and internationally Medha is compelled to travel widely and frequently. Hence, while she appeared willing to meet me, getting an interview with her was more like chasing a mirage. On a few occasions I made long train journeys to meet her, after being promised an interview, only to return empty handed because she was unable to take time off from genuinely critical matters. This was frustrating and also took time away from other research work that I needed to do. Nevertheless even these occasions provided unplanned sources of data. On one particular occasion I was invited by Medha to Bombay. There she was involved in mobilising a slum-dwellers' rally against the demolition of slums which was part of a larger World Bank funded urban development project. I was told that if I stayed with her for two days she would be able to find time to give me an interview. This hope disintegrated however, when I saw the frenzy with which she and others were preparing for the rally and meetings with government officials. In such a context it would have been inappropriate of me to push for an interview. Instead I busied myself with observing interactions between Medha and other activists and listening to conversations they were having on campaign strategy, or media management for the protest the next

day. I also found myself doing odd jobs around the office – typing up press releases, or letters to government officials, sorting out letters Medha had received and making flags. This participation provided a direct source of data on how these movements operate. The slum-dwellers’ organisation had often taken, as well as received support from the NBA, and on this occasion also, villagers from the Narmada Valley travelled to Bombay to support them. This was an opportunity to see alliance building in action and the extent to which cross-fertilisation of ideas had taken place between the two campaigns. I made recordings of speeches by slum-dwellers and Narmada Valley villagers. After 3 days in Bombay I had gathered rich and insightful data on movement dynamics but, returned to the Narmada Valley without a full interview from Medha Patekar. I finally completed the interview with Medha over 5 separate sessions conducted over a span of a year in 4 separate places across India as well as once in London¹⁸.

During my time in Bombay, I was surprised to be given access to quite confidential information. This gave me an indication of the researcher-activist role that Medha expected me to play – in terms of helping the NBA with office work, but also by extending the NBA’s agenda through my research. Indeed in later conversations with her, she was more explicit about these expectations. This made me somewhat uncomfortable. While as a researcher I had a commitment to supporting the interests of the oppressed, this would also require me to be critical. I explained this to her and was able to gain her full cooperation.

Asit’s assistance in taking me to villages and introducing me to people during this initial visit made it possible to travel around the valley alone on my next fieldtrip. This gave me more independence from the NBA and also meant that I was not diverting crucial human resources away from the movement’s work.

¹⁸ Medha came to London in the beginning of October 2005 to attend an awareness-raising event that a group of supporters had organised here – I was also part of this group.

Phase 2 – Grassroots Communities

The initial phase had helped me get a feel of the expanse of the movement, as well as movement discourse at the top and intermediary level through participant observation and interviews. The second, longer phase was aimed at developing a more nuanced picture of the grassroots level. To achieve this depth I adopted an ethnographic approach, choosing two villages mobilised by the movement to live in for a period of three and a half months each, starting from October 2005.

Sampling

A unique and interesting feature of the movement is the two distinct social groups that it has brought together and galvanised – the Nimaris and the Adivasis (tribals). As earlier mentioned these two groups are ethnically, culturally and religiously different. They also represent opposing class interests – Nimaris regularly employ Adivasis to work on their fields for below minimum wages (Baviskar, 2004). The Adivasi-Nimari constituency of the movement is an important dimension and I felt that my study should represent this. I therefore selected one Nimari and one Adivasi village to study. This would give me an opportunity to explore differences in movement discourse between these two communities and possible changing relationships and perceptions of each other.

I consulted the NBA office in choosing a tribal village suitable for my study. Given that I was now acquainted with the valley through my previous trip, I could actively engage with the activists in this process rather than naively depend on them. I was keen to study a tribal village that had been strongly involved with the Andolan. Most of these villages had already been affected by submergence, and social life in them had been disturbed by partial displacement. This made it difficult to do research there because people were preoccupied with vital matters of building a new life, and were too unsettled to host an outsider. Further I would not be able to get a real sense of village life or social structures because of the depleting population. My search was finally narrowed down to two villages in the state of Madhya Pradesh which were active in the movement but had

not yet been affected by the rising waters. In this sense they were both ‘pristine’ as one activist put it. I had visited both villages on my previous trip and interviewed village leaders and was confident that there was strong collective participation here. However, one of these villages – Kakrana¹⁹ was electrified, and many of its residents possessed televisions and motorbikes. This was not representative of the rest of the hill villages that were still not initiated into these aspects of modernisation. The other issue with Kakrana was that it had also been part of another tribal rights organisation (Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath - Peasant and Workers Consciousness Union (KMCS)). This would have led to an enmeshment of experiences and discourses from two different organisations, creating complications in my analysis. The other village – Bhadal was across the river from Kakrana and required a 30-45 minute boat journey. Though it was not too far from the modernisation that I had tried to escape from Kakrana, the river seemed to effectively cut it off from the ‘luxuries’ of civilisation as we know it. It had also not been mobilised by the KMCS. Bhadal thus became my home for the next three and a half months.

Bhadal is a village of around 30 households. My endeavour was to visit all of these families and to talk to men, women and children. Some of these houses were not accessible however, and so finally I reached only 20. Since Adivasi villages are relatively homogenous, with no caste stratifications and with resources almost equally distributed amongst members, hierarchical stratification was not a consideration in my sampling strategy. I spoke to men and women of all ages but it was considerably more difficult to speak to women, especially younger women who were quite shy. I also spoke to some children but again they were coy and so the conversations were limited.

The Nimari village was also picked after consultation with NBA activists. As mentioned earlier, most Nimari villages have taken compensation and thus are not actively involved now. In other villages support for the NBA is fractured – here tensions between the two factions are so high that some supporters and non-supporters

¹⁹ This was the most accessible of the hill villages in the valley and was normally the embarkation point for travelling down stream by boat to other villages in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Travel to these villages involved boat journeys of upto 10 hours.

have broken all social ties, refusing even to speak to each other. I feared that living in such tenuous conditions and possibly having to face uncooperative participants could jeopardise my research, and so decided to avoid such villages. It may be argued that this compromised a representative sample of the fractured nature of the present support base. However, as I have already explained, my interest is not in the *intrinsic* nature of the movement – if it had been it would have been imperative that I get a representative sample of the movement’s past as well as present condition²⁰. However I was using the NBA as a *context* for understanding learning of people in social struggle. Following from this logic it was more important that I study a village that was committed to struggle. Thus I settled on a village called Pipri which has given undivided and strong support to the movement from the outset. This village consists largely of Yadavs (25 households) – a caste of medium status, as well as one Rajput family (of higher status than Yadavs) and one Brahmin family (a caste at the pinnacle of the caste hierarchy), and a number of Adivasi and Harijan labourers. My aim again was to speak to everyone in the village – men, women and children of all castes. Because I spoke the same language as these people and had a similar cultural background, gaining access to everyone was less difficult than in the tribal village.

I also felt that the study of a village that was under submergence but had not joined the movement would enhance my understanding of the pedagogic impact of the movement on villages mobilised by it. It would allow me to discern differences between movement and non-movement villages in terms of discourse about the government, development and perceptions of identity and citizenship. To do this I had planned to spend two weeks each in a tribal and Nimari village that had never been active with movement. However, after a while it became clear that the tribal villages I was interested in were utterly inaccessible – physically as well as socially (an outsider would not be welcome). So this part of the study had to be dropped. With regard to the Nimari villages, I was able to make arrangements with some Andolan villagers who had personal connections with non-movement villages to make day trips with them to these places. In this way I

²⁰ While a representative sample of the condition of the NBA now would highlight division in the mass base, this would not have been a representative sample 7-10 years ago when practically the whole valley was united under the NBA.

managed to get interviews and make some observations at 4 villages that were under submergence but were not involved in the movement.

Research conditions

As I have mentioned earlier, the physical environment and the facilities available differed between the tribal and Nimari villages I stayed in. I also had to negotiate with cultural and linguistic differences.

Bhadal – The Adivasi village

Just like most other Adivasi villages settled in the hills Bhadal has been largely neglected by the government's basic development projects – no roads to connect it, no electricity, phone lines, running water, ration shops, schools or health clinics etc. Because of the absence of schools for miles around people are largely illiterate. Six years ago NBA opened a school in Bhadal in which the first generation of children are now beginning to read and write.

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Asit arranged for me to stay with a family in Bhadal which has led the village's support of the movement. The large extended family lives in a hut on the edge of a cliff

overlooking the Narmada River. The rest of the village stretches out southwards from this house away from the river. The hut housed around 15 adults and children. There were no separate rooms so I was constantly surrounded by people.

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Kishore, the younger son of my host family, aged around 22 years, was put in charge of introducing me to people in the village and translating during interviews. The Adivasis here speak Bhilali, but Kishore was also fluent in my mother tongue, Hindi, which he had learnt in the course of his involvement with the movement. Because Bhilali shares some similarities with Hindi, within 2 weeks I had begun to understand well enough not to have to ask for translations during interviews. However still not being able to speak Bhilali fluently, Kishore carried on translating my Hindi questions. This arrangement seemed to work very well and I do not feel the process of translation greatly hindered the interview.

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Kishore's house in Bhadal

Bhadal consists of small hamlets spread across vast hilly terrain. Each hamlet, consisting of 3-4 households is built on a plateau on which agricultural land can be ploughed. Since there is no electricity the village wakes and sleeps with the rising and setting of the sun. These conditions defined my days in Bhadal and the way in which my fieldwork was shaped.

I would set out into the village with Kishore by around eight in the morning. To get to the next hamlet to meet and talk to people we would often have to make long treks down and over hills. Because it would take over two hours to get to some houses and walking back in the night over the hilly terrain was dangerous, we would stay overnight there, heading for another hamlet the next day. The immense scatter of the village made it difficult to get a sense of village *life*. But it was obvious that despite the distance

separating people they were a closely knit community – I was always amazed at how people would have up-to-date information about each other’s whereabouts or knowledge of a sick villager living miles across, behind a number of hills.

Since there was no electricity to charge batteries and no shops to get new ones from, I had to buy batteries in bulk before going in to the village and conserve them while there. This meant that I used the tape recorder only for the vital task of recording. Unable to play back tapes (not just because of the scarcity of batteries but also the lack of privacy to do so) prevented me from transcribing or analysing the interviews in the field. To facilitate some analysis I wrote notes of important issues during interviews.

Pipri – The Nimari village

Living conditions in Pipri were closer to what I am familiar with – running water, electricity, mobile phone networks. Shops were also available within a distance of 8km. This made it a physically and emotionally less taxing environment for me to live and work in.

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The spatial parameters contrasted sharply against that of Bhadal. The village was organised around two main lanes along which a total of 30 houses were lined. The village square provided an easily identifiable focal point for village life. In this village it

was easy to *see* a community. In the evenings the square would be alive with men gathering around to chat and women going to the temple to sing and offer prayers.

The matriarch of the family I stayed with here – Shanta bai, was strongly involved in the activities of the Andolan. This family was relatively well-off and had only recently constructed a new concrete house. However, here too I did not get a separate room. Again this hindered my ability to analyse interviews while at the village.

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Nimari people traditionally speak a dialect of Hindi called Nimari. While men are fluent in Hindi, women mostly tend to speak in Nimari. The language posed a slight problem initially, but I quickly got used to it. A translator was not required.

Executing the ethnographic approach

Collecting data was not just about the methods I employed, but crucially, about the *relationships* between me and the people that mediated and defined the data collection techniques.

On arriving at Bhadal, for the first few days I tried to orient myself and establish some kind of a relationship with my hosts. This proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. At the house I was given a charpai (a traditional wooden bed widely used in Indian villages). This became my space and although the house was just one big hall with no divisions I felt an impenetrable wall between the bed and the hub of activity which was going on around me in complete oblivion to my presence²¹. While researchers express concerns about the “reactivity” of subjects to the researcher and the distorting effects of this (Henn et al, 2006; Spradley, 1980), my concern was just the opposite. I was being completely ignored. I am not a sympathiser of the ‘fly on the wall approach’ and I felt the only way I could obtain rich data was through interaction and participation with these people. Not speaking their language, I felt shy about trying to establish contact. Indeed attempts at communicating in Hindi not only failed but would prove counterproductive, when my stuttering, stumbling attempts to say something degenerated into an awkward silence and confusion between us. This only reinforced the fact that I was an outsider. I finally gave up on talking, trying instead to gain eye contact and then flashing the warmest, friendliest smile I could muster despite the desperate loneliness that was increasingly engulfing me. While I had gained *entry* to the village I had not gained *access* (Ball, 1990). In my bid to gain this access I decided to work on establishing rapport with the children – maybe my friendship with them would provide a bridge through which I could reach out to the adults. So I smiled and tried to play with them. But again language got in the way and they would shyly run away. The youngest – a 2yr old toddler was the final nail in the coffin of my attempts to strike up a relationship. She would shriek and start crying the minute I approached her. Her mother would then whisk her away and I would make my embarrassed retreat. This toddler, unlike others bound by norms of social politeness, made the definitive statement that I was not just an outsider but indeed an alien from another planet (I noticed during the time that I spent there that the little girl did not react with such panicked frenzy to people who came to the house from surrounding villages even though for her they were perfect strangers). After this I decided to go with the flow of

²¹ The house consisted of 6 adults and an uncountable number of children. It took me more than a week to get a grip of how everyone was related to each other.

things and gradually after a week I found myself naturally sliding into social exchanges with people. I learnt a few phrases in their own language and this gave us a means through which we could not only communicate but also engage in the most universal indicators of goodwill – laughter.

While this was the beginning of my relationship with the Adivasis of Bhadal it by no means suggested a smooth sailing data collection process from then onwards. Sensitivity and reflexivity were constantly required.

Whenever I went to a house, I was told to sit on the bed. My host would sit on the ground. This established my role as not only the outsider, but the outsider ‘superior’- which was of course the reality of the power dynamics within which we were historically situated. I tried to demonstrate my desire to be their friend rather than superior, by insisting that I sit on the floor with them. They would be alarmed by this violation of norms, and appear uncomfortable. I negotiated this by sitting on the bed initially but once we had started talking I would slowly slide on to the floor. Aside from some initial protest to this, my host would soon relax and resume conversation. Breaking the social practice of sitting on higher ground that represented the divide between us went some way towards establishing a closer relationship that facilitated freer narration during interviews and informal conversations.

In Pipri while the power divide was still present, it was not as stark as it had been in Bhadal and thus establishing social exchange was not as complicated. Indeed people in Pipri demanded to know more about my personal life than those in Bhadal had ventured to ask.

Reducing the power asymmetry of my relationship with the village communities was important not just to facilitate the research but also as a matter of common courtesy – it was important to me that I reciprocate their kindness in letting me into their lives with a basic effort to make them feel comfortable with me. I did this by being attentive, undemanding and trying to blend in with my mannerisms and clothes. However I also

had to balance this effort to blend in with my own sense of comfort – a full imitation of them would have been unnecessary, ingenuine, and ironically, out of place. For example in the tribal village women bathe topless at the bank of the river, regardless of the presence of men. Born as I am into a culture of privacy that gives rise to the closed bathroom, this was wholly unacceptable to me. I preferred to compromise my efforts at assimilation for my own ease of mind. In this case, this also meant leaving all standards of hygiene by the wayside. Every two weeks I would make a day long journey to the nearest town – the town in which the NBA office was situated. Here I would take a long bath. In the meantime, however, not only would I have to endure my sticky, sweaty self, but those around me had to as well. My eccentricity in this respect obviously set me apart from the people, but I explained my behaviour to them and they were accommodating. It is also true however that their lower social status in relation to me meant that they were not in the position to complain. This is in contrast to my experience in the Nimari village where I was explicitly instructed as soon as I arrived to take a bath *and* wash my clothes everyday. I obediently complied with this. Taking a bath here posed no dilemma however, because Nimari houses have private bathrooms and toilets.

Both in the tribal and Nimari context the concept of *interviewing* was strange for people²². I tried to make the process more natural, more like a conversation by not forcing the interview to conform rigidly to my interview schedule. This was important to put people at ease and consequently to encourage them to talk more freely. Sometimes they would start talking without a cue from me. I would let them until it became repetitive and then try to connect what they had said with my specific questions. This meant that the sequence of questions changed dramatically from interview to interview. While there were basic themes that I always tried to touch on, the evolution of the interview questions was largely organic and responsive to emerging issues. During the interview I strove for a ‘joint construction of meaning’ with my interviewee (Mishler, 1986). I would follow on from what was being said, using their

²² Interviews were mostly recorded. People in Pipri were well exposed to the media through the Andolan and were quite familiar with tape recorders. However some people in Bhadal and in the non-movement villages found the tape recorder intimidating. In such cases I made notes instead of a recording.

own language to talk about things. This helped the process of moving from my outsider, etic concepts and assumptions to a native, emic understanding. For example during the first interview in the tribal village I realised that my interviewee did not seem to share the same understanding of *desh* (country) that I did, further she did not know about the existence of the country India, that legally she is a part of. This fascinated me and I spent longer talking to people about this. I also discussed it with Kishore, my translator, which convinced me that the issue wasn't just semantic but conceptual. This revelation rendered some of my pre-planned questions meaningless – for example whether people felt greater affiliation to national over international social movements. It also made me question what they understood by *sarkar* (government). To shed some light on these issues I ended up asking questions that would seem ridiculous to people socialised within the Westphalian system of nation-states, and perhaps bizarre to Adivasis – for example – is the government part of your country? While these interviews were helpful in developing my understanding, I also felt that my questions, constrained as they were by language, did not fully bridge the gap between our different cosmologies. Thus I became more interested in drawing out myths and stories they had about their environment. This shed light on their conception of space and geography through their own idioms, helping me get closer to an emic understanding.

In both Pipri and Bhadal I was subject to what Robben (1995) calls 'rhetorical seduction'. People were constantly building the picture of their victimisation and the morality of their stand, making any attempt on my part to ask critical questions seem unresponsive and callous. In Pipri this made it difficult to broach the sensitive subject of labour exploitation by farmers. However, one day an interview with a farmer gave me a good foothold in to the subject. He happened to talk of Medha's attempts to cajole farmers into improving labour wages²³. After the interview, when talking to other people I would say that I had heard of Medha's efforts to persuade farmers to give better labour wages and would ask them why this was so and what they felt about it.

²³ I also spoke to labourers in the village about their relationship with farmers, something that farmers, understandably, were not very keen on me doing.

Because I brought the subject up through Medha – a trusted and respected figure – my otherwise controversial questions were not perceived as a betrayal.

Apart from interviews, *observations* were also noted. I did not do systematic observation, i.e. observation at a specific place during a specific time. Rather events, interactions, conversations were noted whenever they seemed of interest to the research questions. This might be when overhearing a conversation while in the bathroom, eating dinner or waking in the morning or in the dead of night. In this way I was constantly on call for the imperatives of research. Apart from keeping notes of observations I also kept a *dairy* in which I charted my daily routine and the emotional and intellectual journey of making the strange familiar. In Pipri however, which is part of the same Hindu culture that I have been socialised in, the opposite process was also required – that of making the familiar strange.

Apart from the planned strategy of observations and interviews, data were also gathered *opportunistically*. During the fieldtrip the NBA organised a rally in Delhi and celebrated women's day. While these events had not been in my schedule, I took time off from the villages to follow this. It provided the prospect of witnessing the movement in *movement*. These events also attracted foreign supporters of the movement and so I took this chance to ask them about their perceptions of the movement and the reasons for their support of it. This helped me further develop a picture of the international community's relationship with, and understanding of the movement. Another moment of international support occurred in London, before the second fieldtrip, when a group of young people organised an awareness-raising event for the Narmada struggle. I was also part of the group, but not its initiator. Being involved in the event was a way of giving back to the movement, but also of course an important source of data. Medha accepted an invitation to speak at the event and this provided a rare and precious opportunity to see her operating at the international level. I paid attention to any changes in framing of issues by Medha, descriptions of the situation in the valley and the kind of international support sought by her. When in India I took whatever opportunity I could to speak to concerned journalists, researchers and activists from

other organisations. This enhanced my understanding of the wider landscape of counter-hegemonic resistance in India and NBA's relationship to it.

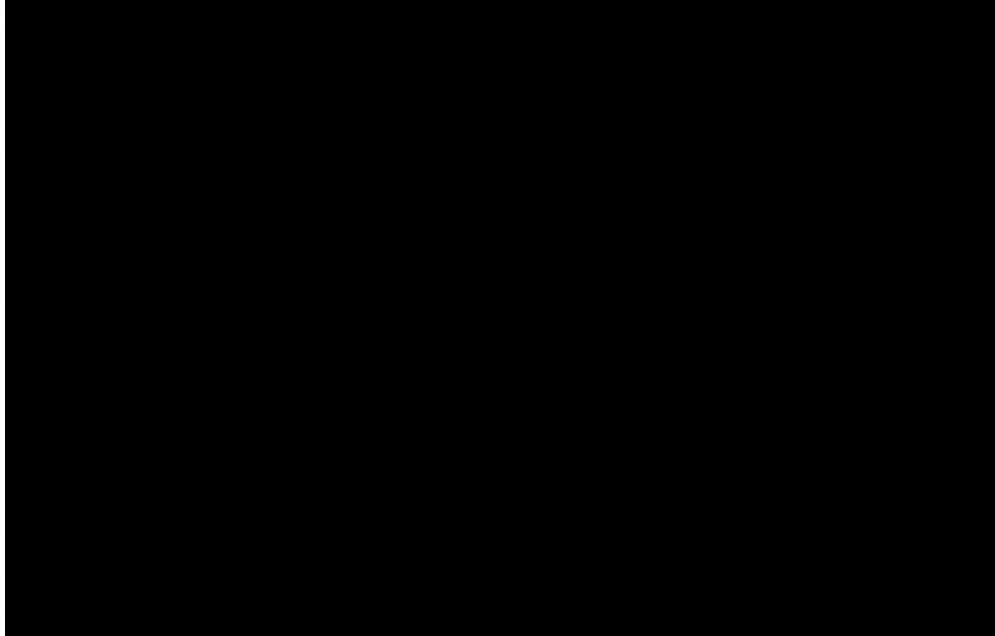
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Protestors at the Ministry of Water Resources in Delhi

Role as researcher

While the positivist tradition makes the researcher invisible through standardisation of procedures and measurements, the qualitative school strives to make the researcher's social and ideological presence as visible as possible. Both approaches emerge from awareness that emergent knowledge is susceptible to the researcher's bias, and thus both see the researcher as a necessary evil. In my research however, I found that my very entrance as an outsider into the field provided a source of live data. My experiences of the cultural, political and social process of being assimilated in the communities I was studying immediately provided critical insights into the questions of identity and citizenship I was exploring. It was evident that the researcher's relationship with subjects is not merely a prism through which data gets inflected but is also an important source of data per se. Indeed my experiences as an 'outsider' revealed certain issues that may not have emerged merely through interviews or observations of village dynamics. Often I would incorporate these new insights into interview questions.

This awareness that my relationship with research participants was not only a channel for collecting data, but presented data in itself, made a process of reflexivity even more pertinent to my research approach. I thus needed to stay constantly and dynamically perceptive of the relationships I developed with research participants and the changing and often unforeseen terms on which they were based. I had entered Bhadal with the notion that I occupied a position of power, based not only on my status as a member of the dominant Hindu society, but further as a member of the Brahmin caste – i.e. the highest caste within that society. Soon, however I realised that the villagers did not position me on this axis. To them the more relevant role was of my being a bazaaria – a city dweller. This is where the seat of power lay, everything else was secondary. The experience of being assigned an unexpected identity was a direct gateway into their worldview. Another revelation was that I was not perceived as an Indian. Indeed the very concept of India did not exist (as already mentioned). Thus my comfort in the knowledge that there was at least one identity plane on which we could stand together was also taken away. I was flung further out – as much an outsider as a white foreigner. My only saving grace in this situation, according to Kishore was that at least I could understand the villagers' language – something that white people couldn't do.

In Pipri a similar reassessment of my social role and relationship took place, as I was positioned and repositioned in contradictory and confusing ways by different people throughout my stay there. It was exasperating and exhausting to keep up with and understand these processes. Without doubt though, this was all a reflection of the political and social context I had entered. Thus while I anticipated my 'superior' status as a Brahmin to be the most significant point of social reference, in reality, I was assigned myriad roles as a possible government agent, an activist, or 'young girl alone'. Of course the implications of these roles for conducting my research also varied and conflicted with each other accordingly. Those who wondered whether I was a spy for the government were obviously nervous around me although they cooperated in talking and giving me an interview. In one interview I was told in a jocular manner, but with undoubtedly earnest intent, that I will be beaten up and thrown out of the village if I am found to be a government agent. Others would be more subtle and ask me whether I

knew why a certain group of official surveyors had come to the village that day. Those who respected my NBA connections and thus positioned me as an activist (despite explaining my research) were very keen to talk about the movement.

While I had expected to be in a position of dominance in relation to the villagers, there were many times in Pipri when I felt like the vulnerable and powerless one. As a 'young girl alone' I was forced to lie that I was engaged. This gave me a more respectable social status. But I was also often mocked for wearing slippers in the village or speaking my pure Hindi. I was seen as the weakling who couldn't eat as much or stand in the heat as long as them. As a young girl I was viewed with disdain for not wearing jewellery²⁴. This was in contrast to other representations of me being an activist who had sacrificed worldly pleasures – like wearing jewellery, to work for the good of the people. In this sense I was viewed with pity and respect.

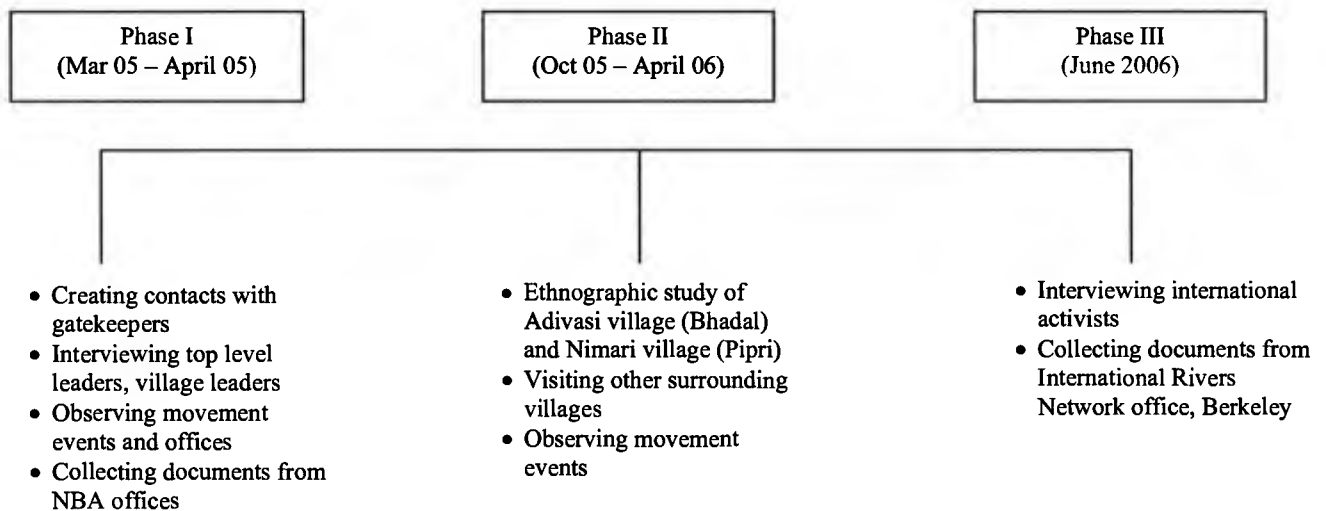
Phase 3 – International NGOs

I focused on the international aspect of the Narmada campaign after returning from India. Through interviews in India as well as examination of literature on the Narmada movement I had identified a few international activists that had played an influential role in the international campaign. While the contribution of American activists seemed to dominate in accounts of the campaign, they were by no means the only players. International NGOs from Japan, UK and across Europe were also heavily involved. However due to constraints of time and money I decided to do in-depth interviews with the American activists, who had been named most frequently in interviews with Indian activists. These were Lori Udall from the Environmental Defense Fund and Patrick McCully from International Rivers Network. Interviews with these individuals were conducted during a day trip to Berkeley, USA in June 2006. I examined the rest of the international campaign through documents produced by participant INGOs of the campaign. Temporally, the collection of these documents spanned all three phases of

²⁴ As a mark of respect to the elders who asked me to wear jewellery I did eventually conform. This also increased their trust in me.

the fieldwork, and were therefore retrieved from NBA offices, an extensive personal collection of another researcher in India, as well as from the International Rivers Network office in Berkeley, California. The documents gathered related to NGOs spanning across the world as well as through time from the initial stirrings of the campaign in 1983 to the current day. The collection included newspaper clippings, official and informal letters, NGO and World Bank memorandums and faxes between domestic and international activists. This data added to the analysis of the evolution of the local movement and its relationship with international NGOs.

Summary of Research Process



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I have already talked of my research commitment to a critical perspective that challenges the hegemony. However during the fieldtrip, the wider goal of social transformation often seemed irrelevant in the face of the immediate despair and poverty of people. I felt guilty for my academic arrogance in giving them the responsibility of shouldering change when they were already reeling under their immediate conditions. Indeed on occasions I was told as much by activists. During these times of self-doubt

however, I would reflect on the question Freire (1993) poses – “Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed?” (p22) and thus for whom is social transformation more important than for the oppressed? (Other academics such as Pearce (1986) have also considered this dilemma).

At times, I have also been faced with a conflict between responsibility towards the people who let me enter their world against the responsibility towards the political project of liberation. Maintaining the wider relevance of my research to the oppressed has often required me to be critical of the people who extended their trust to me. All I have been able to offer them is an analysis that contextualises the shortcomings of the movement within the constraints and demands that it operates under. I have constantly wrestled with these ethical issues during the research. But I must confess that while I have tried to conquer the emotional turmoil they have created through intellectual judgements and rationales, I cannot say that I have always succeeded.

Because of the asymmetry of the power dynamics constituting not only my relationship with research participants, but also that of my gatekeepers with villagers, the process of gaining *informed consent* was a distorted process at best. Though I explained my research to people and did not proceed with interviews unless they consented, villagers often felt *obliged* to concede to activists’ requests to participate in my study and to help me as their ‘guest’. Usually villagers seemed willing to participate. However, there were some people who appeared particularly uncomfortable during the interview process. On these occasions I terminated the interview and either settled for a casual chat or left the house depending on the extent of unease that I experienced between us. In this way, those who were very weary of me were able to raise their protest by being cagey and reticent during the interview. I drew on these as indirect cues to gauge the extent to which I had truly gained consent or was imposing myself.

Associated with the ethical dilemmas of informed consent was the problem of how to ethically treat information arising from eavesdropping. Though I had gained consent from the community to live and do research with them, I still needed to consider

whether this gave me the prerogative to listen in on and record their private conversations when they were unaware, but also even when they were aware that I was within earshot of these conversations. I had been allowed to do research in their community, but did this mean that I could legitimately claim to have consent for using *all* aspects of their daily lives as sources of data? By giving me unfettered access to their community they had compromised a large element of control over what they could consciously consent to within the research. Precisely for this reason it was even more necessary to exercise my own reflexivity and conscientiousness regarding what could be considered public from their point of view, and thus readily available to me, and what was private and therefore beyond the purview of the initial consent I had gained for research. In that research participants could not fully protect their private lives from me, the interpretation of consent for research as unfettered and absolute would have been an abuse of this consent. Judging what 'private' constituted was in itself an ambiguous process. In this I was guided by considerations of the extent to which a person might be embarrassed, angry or nervous if I told them that I had overheard their conversation with someone.

Based on these ethical issues surrounding eavesdropping, I resolved not to directly use any data arising from private conversations between research participants. I did record my observations of these interactions but did not directly quote them in data analysis. Indirectly however, they influenced the data collection and data analysis process. During data collection I would try to ask questions from people based on something I might have overheard, without compromising sources or bringing up the exact topic I had overheard. If the same topic emerged through my conversations with people this would be included as a legitimate source of data.

Early on in the fieldtrip I realised that assurances of *confidentiality and anonymity* were in fact counter-productive in allaying doubts and gaining people's participation. In a cultural context where community is primary and the individual secondary, assurances of confidentiality – a mechanism for protecting the individual against the group was viewed with great suspicion. Thus when I tried to ease one villager's weariness by

reassuring him that his anonymity will be guarded, he responded by becoming even more suspicious, and visibly uncomfortable. The interview had to be stopped immediately and I had to leave. While most standard text books for research methods advise that confidentiality of participants be respected, not just for ethical reasons but also to facilitate disclosure, my experiences point to the culturally specific character of such values and thus the need for researchers to maintain a constant responsiveness to research participants as the best means of maintaining ethical boundaries and also for facilitating research.

Although I refrained from discussing issues of confidentiality with research participants, I consider the protection of their identities to be especially important given the highly polarised context of social contestation that they are situated in. To prevent the possibility of targeted attack on individual participants I therefore use pseudonyms while reporting research findings.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

After completing data collection I entered into a concentrated phase of rigorous data analysis. Analysis followed a number of steps that I moved between in a back and forth rather than strictly sequential manner. These steps are elaborated on below.

Step 1: Transcribing interviews (in total 40 interviews) and reliving the period of data collection in order to reorient myself to the cultural climate within which I had conducted the interviews. Reading notes on observations and documents of the movement.

Step 2: Re-reading the data sets and making cursory observations and comments on the data.

Step 3: Engaging in more focused reading of the data and identifying patterns, contradictions and inconsistencies in these patterns. Creating preliminary themes across the data and tagging raw data with the appropriate themes (e.g. anger towards the

government, development as elite driven, feelings of empowerment or disempowerment within the movement).

Step 4: Making connections between themes in order to develop a more holistic understanding of the individual themes (see appendix – section A for illustration). Triangulating between interviews, observations and movement documents to facilitate interpretation and development of themes.

Step 5: Connecting themes with theory and literature and further refining themes on the basis of this.

Step 6: Selecting data to be included in the write up. Engaging in more organisation and interpretation of data and incorporating this within the narrative of the thesis. Re-analysing data in the light of ideas arising from the process of writing-up.

The process of data analysis was guided by my research questions and my commitment to the values of social justice and transformation of oppression. Thus rather than providing a de-contextualised relativist analysis, I *situate* the narratives of the research participants within the historical, political and social contexts that empower/constrain them and which they *negotiate* with.

Movement discourse is entwined in the narratives of people. Apart from representing their politicisation, at times this also reflected their desire to project a good image of themselves as defined by the movement. This led them to say certain things that conflicted with my observations²⁵. I do not treat these simply as lies divested of meaning. Instead they indicate to me a negotiation and dialogue between their movement persona and historical-cultural identity. But also in that there is an exchange and interaction between these two levels of identity, expressions of oneness with historically separate groups is also suggestive of genuine aspirations. Of course aspirations however do not share a direct relationship with action and outcomes – the relationship is mediated by many other factors. Nevertheless the aspiration in itself is

²⁵ As mentioned earlier, this was part of their ‘seduction’ of me.

significant within a social context where caste divisions are legitimised by religious ideology that manufactures a powerful form of Gramscian *consent* (Gramsci, 1971).

Though I have argued in chapter 3 that the consciousness of the movement can be deduced from the things that movements say as well as what they do, this assertion required a more nuanced treatment during analysis. While the things that NBA did sometimes appeared constant the ideas or ideology behind them could differ over time. These changes were deduced from a process of triangulating and comparing texts and actions at a particular time and over time (see appendix – section B for illustration).

A NOTE ON REFERENCING DATA SOURCES

In order to facilitate reading of data analysis from the different sources of data drawn upon in this bricolaged research, a referencing style has been developed that indicates the type of data being sourced. Within the text, different types of data excerpts are referenced in brackets in the following ways:

Interviews – the name of the interviewee is followed by the day, month and year in which the interview was given, e.g. (Vani, 3/2/05).

Observations in the research field – are referenced as ‘fieldnotes’, followed by the day, month and year in which the entry was noted in the field diary, e.g. (fieldnotes, 3/2/05).

Unpublished documents written by NBA and INGOs (e.g. letters, newsletters, memos, pamphlets etc) – unpublished documents are differentiated from published work with an asterix at the end of the reference. When these documents are written by a prominent member of the organisation the name of the person is provided with the year of the document’s creation, e.g. (Patekar, 1995*). In cases where no specific author is indicated, the name of the organisation is provided. If the document is undated, year of creation has been estimated from the content and indicated with a ‘c’, e.g. (NBA, c1995*). References of unpublished documents when first cited in the text are

accompanied by a footnote that provides additional details of the type and title of the document.

Published interviews and articles of and by activists – are referenced in the same way that other published materials are, i.e. by citing the author and year of publication, e.g. (Patekar, 1995).

Full bibliographic references of published data sources are included in the main bibliography of the thesis. Unpublished materials from NBA and INGOs however are listed in a separate bibliographic list titled ‘Archival material’ that follows the ‘Bibliography’.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to elucidate how a critical ethnographic framework was applied to researching the developing world context within which this thesis is situated. I have argued that all research is political in that it either perpetuates or challenges the status quo. By emphasising the ‘critical’ nature of the empirical study I have declared my politicised commitment to contributing towards a body of knowledge that seeks to strengthen resistance to oppression. This does not mean manipulating data, but being sensitive and drawing attention to aspects of social reality that are oppressive as well as processes of resistance to this. By facilitating transparency regarding how my political orientation has guided data collection and analysis I have brought the situated and subjective nature of all research to the fore. This should enable readers to exercise their own reflexivity while engaging with this particular study. Despite this ‘critical’ commitment however, and precisely because all social contexts and relations are political, the research process itself was predicated on certain power relations, and I as a knowledgeable and well-off researcher reproduced these as I researched my less powerful research participants. However, though these power asymmetries cannot be completely eliminated I adopted various techniques for reducing these. Further reflection on such issues emerged in the form of ethical dilemmas between protection of

the interests of the research against the privacy and welfare of research participants. The chapter further elucidated how practical difficulties arising from doing research in remote, developing world contexts impinged on the research process.

Chapter 5

Contextualising NBA's Politics: 'Destructive Development' versus 'Environmentalism of the Poor'

INTRODUCTION

This chapter situates the rise of the Save the Narmada Movement and its opposition to the Sardar Sarovar dam within the socio-political and economic landscape of India. Independent India's industrialisation is driven by a development hegemony that necessitates increasing linkages between national and global capitalism. India's big-dam industry has been a significant element within this, and attracts large amounts of foreign aid from agencies such as the WB. Though India's leaders claim that development will provide benefits to all, the growth of new social movements in India, however, suggests that many have been dispossessed or left out of this process. NBA can be located within this tension.

In this chapter I explore the manner in which the development hegemony necessitates links between national and global capitalism. I provide a brief overview of the big-dam industry and WB's role within this. I also investigate the impact of dams and development on the people of India. Identifying the environmentalism of the poor as one of the new social movements contesting and attempting to redefine development, I situate the NBA within this and provide a detailed analysis of the critique and alternatives that it provides.

DEVELOPMENT HEGEMONY AND THE STATE²⁶ IN INDIA

Independent India and the Discourse of Development

As India drew closer towards independence, after over 200 years of British rule, a contest for power amongst the leaders of the independence struggle emerged. It would have significant consequences for the political and economic future of India. 'Mahatma' Gandhi had envisioned a post-independence India built on self-sufficient village republics that would employ simple technology, ensuring employment for everyone. Gandhi aspired not only to secure economic independence through this model but to protect the cultural traditions of India, which he believed could be found in their most pristine form in the village community (Baviskar, 2004). However as the Indian National Congress – the political organisation which had led liberation efforts came increasingly under the influence of capitalists, Gandhi and his vision of village republics were sidelined (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). Jawaharlal Nehru openly scoffed at Gandhi's ideas: "It is many years since I read *Hind Swaraj* and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it twenty or more years ago it seemed to me completely unreal...A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment" (quoted in Baviskar, 2004, p21). Meanwhile, B.R Ambedkar, a radical communist, and adamant opponent of the Congress, which according to him, was "a party of the Brahmans and

²⁶ India is a secular, federal parliamentary republic with a multi-party representative democracy. Governance of India rests with two main organs of the Indian state – the executive, headed by the elected head of the government – the Prime Minister; and the legislature, comprised of two chambers of parliament - one consisting of democratically elected, and the other of nominated members. The judiciary is independent of the executive and legislature. The President is the formal head of the state, though his duties are largely ceremonial. The structure, functions and responsibilities of the Indian state are enshrined in the constitution of India which came into force on 26th November 1950. The federal union of India consists of 25 states and 7 union territories. While each state has its own executive, legislature and judiciary, the union territories are administered by the President through an administrator appointed by him. The constitution demarcates the responsibilities of the central and state governments. Parliament (at the central level) has the power to make laws for any part of India's territory. It has exclusive power to legislate on any matter included within the 'Union List' which includes defense, foreign affairs, currency, income tax, railways etc. State legislatures have exclusive rights over items included within the 'State List' such as police, public health, agriculture, sales tax etc. Matters that the central and state legislatures can both legislate over are included within the 'Concurrent List', and include electricity, newspapers, criminal law, price controls etc.

the bourgeoisie” (quoted in Omvedt, 1993, p21), was leading an organised revolt of the lower caste Dalit peasantry. In a country where class and caste stratifications converge, the Dalits formed the class of wage labourers and bonded labourers most oppressed by the landowning Brahmans (ibid). For Ambedkar then the fight was to uncover the exploitative relations of feudalism inherent in the village communities that Gandhi held as sacrosanct as well as the processes of capitalism that drew on these “traditional social structures” that were “used, transformed and accentuated in the process” (ibid, p20).

In the end though, despite the communist revolts, it was the Congress that held sway. And Nehru, inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of progress upon which the British Empire was built, finally took the helm when India gained independence in 1947. Driven by this “colonialist teleology of modernity” (Gandhi, 2003, p482) he firmly placed India on the path of rapid industrialisation. However, Nehru was not insensitive to the gross socio-economic inequalities that characterised Indian society. He thus embarked on a model of ‘state-managed capitalism’ where the paternalistic state would steer “industrialisation, economic production for a world market, and capital savings” to ensure prosperity to its starkly differentiated population (Kamat, 2002, p8). The process was named ‘development’. This discourse of development however presented economic growth as a natural, apolitical process and concealed the global and national relations of capitalist power that it was predicated on (Ferguson, 1999). These relations nevertheless became more apparent as India’s pursuit for development led it to the World Bank soon after gaining independence.

Development, the WB and Globalisation

The industrialisation model of development chosen by India needed substantial capital investment which could not be met by the newly independent country. It thus turned to international financial institutions, primarily the World Bank and later also the IMF. Between 1951-1956, (so called India’s first five year plan of economic development) the WB lent \$120.14 million and by 1961 had invested in 61 irrigation projects, amongst other development schemes essential for industrialisation such as transport,

power generation, railways, ports, and steel plants (Dash, 2000). Modernisation yielded dividends – urban centres as well as parts of rural India now enjoy modern infrastructure such as electricity, piped water, public education, health care and transport (Baviskar, 2004). The WB also provided financial and technical resources for the mechanisation of agricultural production in the 1960s. The process known as the Green revolution greatly boosted crop yields and facilitated India's attainment of self-sufficiency in food by the early 1990s. WB lending to India has now dramatically increased and between 2004-2008 stands at 10246.69 million (lending in volume) (WB, 2008) – a rise of more than 85 times from the 1st five year plan. For many, the strong and continuous lending history is testimony to the fact that “Both the Bank and the country have been wedded to development goals of growth, stability and social justice” (Dash, 2000, p311).

This benevolent picture of mutuality and partnership, however, is contested by many. While requests for foreign aid were initially buttressed by assertions that they were a means to achieving economic 'self-sufficiency', it is argued that foreign aid has “dragged India into the foreign debt trap” (Mehta, 1993, p7). Not only did this necessitate further borrowing but, it also allowed the WB and its sister organisation, the IMF, to dictate measures for economic restructuring of the state's interventionist role. Signs of this could be seen as early as the 1950s when the World Bank provided funds for the privately owned Indian Iron and Steel Company and Tata Iron and Steel Company but declined support to the state-owned sector. To further encourage the private sector the WB suggested and financed the formation of the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India in 1955 to provide financial resources especially foreign exchange to private enterprises. This institution was particularly significant because it allowed the WB for the first time to circumvent the state and deal directly with private companies (Bhambhri, 1980).

These 'modernisation' efforts were further consolidated in 1991 when, following an “acute balance of payment crisis” (Mehta, 1993, p197), India applied for a loan from IMF. The conditionalities attached to this loan were referred to as the 'structural

adjustment package' and came to be embodied in India's New Economic Policy, the three guiding principles of which were liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG). Combined, these economic principles embodied the neo-liberal ideology that equated development with free, competitive and efficient trade, nationally and internationally.

Since the implementation of these policies, the economy of India has undergone significant changes that indicate its increasing globalisation and liberalisation. The ratio of international trade to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) increased from 15.6% in 1990-91 to 20.8% in 1991-2000. Foreign investment has increased from \$103 million in 1990-91 to \$5181 million in 1999-2000. The ratio of foreign investment in India to exports increased from a small 0.6% in 1990-91 to 13.4% in 1999-2000. This suggests that foreign investment in India is generating a greater amount of exports than it previously was. Simple mean tariff has reduced from 79.1% to 32.2% during 1990-91 to 1999-2000 indicating greater import friendliness and commitment to 'free trade'. The number of foreign collaborations with Indian businesses has also increased from 289 in 1991-92 to 1665 in 1997-98 (Bawa, 2003).

The social and economic impacts of LPG policies have been mixed. Amongst the most lauded positive effects has been the rise of GDP growth from 5.6% in the 1980s to an average of 6.8% between 1994-1995 to 1997-1998, reaching 8.4% in 2006-2007 (WB, 2007). This positions India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world (Assaf, 2004). Foodgrain production reached its highest ever levels in 1999-2000, with 209 million tonnes produced (Bawa, 2003).

However many social concerns have been raised in relation to these economic developments. While GDP has risen, this has not been met with a rise in employment, spurring critics to refer to this as 'jobless growth' (Datt, 2003). Withdrawal of the public sector and pursuit of technological efficiency in the private sector is resulting in the loss of jobs. Thus growth rate of employment fell from 2% between 1983 and 1993-1994 to less than 1% during 1993-1994 to 1999-2000. The rise in GDP is largely due to

significant growth of the service sector in India which employs an educated, skilled workforce. As of 2007 this sector accounts for a little over 50% of India's GDP compared to 39% in 1986, while agriculture and industry account for 18% and 29% respectively (CIA, 2008). However while this sector employs educated and skilled workers it cannot provide employment opportunities for the majority of the workforce which is unskilled²⁷. These concerns are reflected in India's low rank on the human development index which stands at 128 out of 177 nations according to the 2008 Human Development Report – a ranking which has not changed significantly since 1991 when India ranked 123/160 (United Nations Development Programme, 2008). Further, following a market logic, an orientation towards profitable export of foodgrains has been promoted, meaning that grains are not reaching starving populations even though production has increased. Thus per capita food grain consumption reduced to 418 grams a day in 2001 from 476 grams in 1990 (Ghosh, 2005).

Critical perspectives thus suggest that development is “creating new demands, largely elitist in nature” (Mehta, 1993, p222) that while guided and funded by WB/IMF has contributed towards serving “neo-colonial” ambitions (Shiva, 1998; Sharma, 1995). Relying on foreign aid for development, the Indian state on the other hand has “virtually no influence over the decision-making process of the twin agencies” and is thus “coerced” into accepting their conditionalities (Dasgupta, 2005, p34). Yet, as Escobar (1992) suggests the discourse of development also provides cultural legitimisation for this coercion by “plac(ing) the Third World in a position of inferiority” (p66) in relation to ‘scientific’ technologies of the West. While the discourse of development is thus normalised, it acts as a cultural and economic imperative for India's inclusion in the global capitalist market (Parajuli, 1991; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992).

While this narrative emphasises the power of global capitalism and India's helplessness and dependency on it, it obscures the fact that capitalist interests within India are also served by liberalisation and globalisation and that the discourse of development that

²⁷ As of 2003 60% of the labour force is employed in agriculture which is considered an unskilled occupation (CIA, 2008).

legitimises this is thus actively promoted too (Bhambhri, 1980; Randeria, 2003). Development is not simply a form of Western cultural imperialism but a discourse that unites hegemonic forces *across* nation-states. 'Big Businesses' have thus grown enormously with the support of foreign aid from the WB, and when the NEP was introduced political support for this was strongest in these quarters (Ghosh, 2005). Even the Bharatiya Janta Party-led coalitional government (1998-2004) that promoted right-wing nationalism, keenly pursued LPG policies that favoured big businesses and global capitalism (ibid). At the same time, while the Green Revolution mentioned earlier has reaped enormous dividends for international fertiliser companies and large-holding 'rich' farmers who already had the financial and cultural resources to take advantage of agricultural technologies, it has resulted in the proletarianisation of a vast number of small-holding farmers whose lands have become non-viable (Shiva, 1991). Generally the widening gap between the upper and lower crust of Indian society, following globalisation, is also suggestive of the mutuality between national and global capitalism. One of the many ways in which the development ideology has facilitated links with global capitalism is through the big-dam industry, to which I now turn.

Dams and Development

Large multi-purpose dam construction, requiring intensive capital investment, is a significant aspect of India's capitalist model of development. Nehru famously projected dams as 'the modern temples of India' that promise to deliver drinking water, irrigation, flood control and electricity to propel industrialisation (Khagram, 2002). Dams also attract significant funding from foreign sources, prominently the WB. They are thus one of the many conduits through which links between national and global capitalism have been established. By the 1990s between eleven and twelve hundred dams were already constructed, with more than 550 awaiting completion. In 1993 alone the World Bank lent India \$8.38 billion for the construction of 104 big dams (ibid).

Though dams are projected as the panacea for a wide range of ills, in reality their impact has been skewed. While feeding water intensive factories and providing

irrigation, they are displacing some of the most vulnerable sections of Indian society, primarily tribals and poor peasants, without adequate prospects for rehabilitation. It is estimated that between the period 1950-1990, out of 164 lakh people that have been displaced by dams in total, 38% (63.21 lakhs) are tribals, of which only 25% have been adequately compensated or rehabilitated (Sangvai, 2002). The distribution of benefits from dams is also very skewed. Reporting on the Hirakud dam, the National Centre for Human Settlements and Environment finds that small landholders representing 66% of the land within the command area are only receiving 24% of the dams irrigation output (ibid). Further, mounting concerns are being expressed internationally as well as within India for the environmental consequences of large-scale projects that cause deforestation, erosion of topsoil, water salination and destruction of wildlife (McCully, 1996).

Not only this, but doubts regarding the very ability of dams to provide substantial benefits have also been raised (McCully, 1996). By 1986, even the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Nehru's grandson) was expressing resignation regarding their usefulness: "We can safely say that no benefit has come to the people... We have poured money out, the people have nothing back: no irrigation, no increase in production, no help in their daily life" (quoted in Khagram, 2004, p60). Some suggest that whatever benefits do accrue from large-scale dams can also be gained from smaller-scale projects that require lower capital investment and cause less displacement and environmental damage. Thus Baviskar (2004) notes that during 1951-85, while large and medium size irrigation projects commanded 64% of the total revenue for irrigation they "irrigated only 30.5 million hectares of land, while minor projects have irrigated 37.4 million hectares!" (p27). Despite the ambiguous benefits of large dams the government and international funding agencies however continue to favour capital-intensive projects.

The role that dams play in capitalist development is perhaps an important reason for their perpetuation. Apart from fulfilling the water needs of industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture they also facilitate a process of 'primitive accumulation' of

resources for capitalist development. This involves the ‘enclosure of commons’²⁸ whereby land, forests and water resources that are communally owned by local people are appropriated by the state and reconstituted into private commodities (Shiva, 2005; Cavanagh and Mander, 2002). Further those displaced by these projects are transformed from landowners into cheap labour to be exploited in urban factories and commercial farms (Prasad, 2004).

Thus far I have suggested that big-dams are an element of the wider hegemonic project of capitalist development. In the next section I look more closely at resistance amongst those who have been adversely impacted by such development.

RESISTANCE TO DEVELOPMENT - NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

Here I conceptualise processes of resistance against the development hegemony as the new social movements of India and explore the political space that was created within Indian politics for their emergence. Following this I take a closer look at the environmental movement in India, within which NBA is often placed.

Conceptualising New Social Movements in India

By the 1980s, academics noted the emergence of political formations in India that did not fit the traditional mould of proletarian politics that articulated their needs through institutionalised parties. Early theorising on these political phenomena was led by a NGO called Lokayan; the most prominent sociologist within this group – Rajni Kothari conceptualised these as ‘non-party political processes’ (Kothari, 1984). The term encompassed a broad range of political activity such as local voluntary organisations known as ‘social action groups’ that were often funded by national and international agencies; new women’s organisations and non-party mass organisations. Even though

²⁸ This was identified by E.P. Thompson (1980) as a key process in the formation of ‘private property’ necessary for the establishment of the foundations of capitalism in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

the concept of non-party political processes attempted to capture the rise in politicised civil society initiatives that moved beyond development work, it did not fully depart from reformist “NGO-generated ideologizations of social movements”²⁹ (Omvedt, 1993, pxv). Grassroots mass mobilisations were thus not included within non-party political processes. However, by the 1990s, intellectual interest began shifting to these grassroots mobilisations, that many argued possessed greater transformatory potential. These movements were identified as the new social movements of India consisting of women, tribals, backward castes and peasants (Amin, 1993; Wignaraja, 1993; Shah, 2004).

The struggles of these actors do not conform to the ‘traditional’ Marxist conceptualisation of exploitation that is epitomised by the oppression of urban and rural proletariat in India, and defined in terms of the extraction of surplus value of their labour in the process of commodity generation by the owners of the means of production (Omvedt, 1993). Instead, the new movements are of those who have been dispossessed or left out of development and are therefore not directly located within ‘traditional’ labour-capital relations of production (Monteiro and Lingam, 1998). Nevertheless the marginalisation of these ‘new’ actors in the development process still raises material concerns, unlike NSMs in the West that are moving towards cultural contestation. In India, NSMs therefore still express some resonance with Marxist analysis of politics and society, albeit in relation to political conflicts that have previously drawn less attention from Indian Marxists. For instance in the case of the ‘new’ environmental movements in India, Baviskar (2004) notes that “The struggle over nature...has an inherent class dimension because nature also provides resources which are the bases of production” (p40). While NSMs continue to articulate a Marxist concern with class relations, Omvedt argues that their newness lies in exploring the multiple other, ‘non-traditional’ arenas of capitalist exploitation as well as resistance. Thus feminist movements are exploring the manner in which capitalism is strengthened

²⁹ Kamat (2002) locates civil society organisations within the present context of neoliberal withdrawal of the state’s welfare role – she writes – “international capitalism, global development institutions and the Indian state have ‘hijacked’ NGOs for the purposes of creating a world market and managing protests of disadvantaged groups” (p24).

by the exploitation of women whose domestic labour in the home is not paid for, and does not involve commodity production, but enables commodity labourers to work, and allows capitalists to pay lower wages to them. Omvedt (2003) therefore asserts that contemporary movements in India “redefine exploitation” and “rethink Marxism”; they ask the question “who is really ‘proletarian’ in the sense of being the most oppressed, and being at the advance point of efforts to change the system of exploitation” (p306). In asking such questions NSMs indicate the various other processes beyond the proletarian takeover of the means of production through which capitalism can and must be challenged. In short, NSMs ‘reinvent revolution’ (ibid).

The newness of these movements can also be understood in terms of the manner in which they are beginning to more directly question the symbolic processes implicated in exploitation (Baviskar, 1995). Their grievances are articulated through a critique of the discursive as well as material forms of oppression inherent in the development paradigm (Monteiro and Lingam, 1998). Thus, they uncover the manner in which development not only subjugates local knowledge and ways of living but also how this is linked to material oppression. For instance lower caste movements have begun to tackle the cultural dimensions of caste ideology that legitimise their economic subordination within the development hegemony, while also asserting their unique cultural identities (Omvedt, 2001).

The emerging concern amongst new social movements to tackle the cultural legitimisations of their exploitation is consistent with a Gramscian analysis of hegemony. Gramscian influences on scholarship in India are therefore increasing but are being applied to contexts removed from that of the new social movements. Most notable amongst these developments is the formation of the *Subaltern Studies* group that is committed to a historical analysis of the struggles and political consciousness of ‘subaltern’ rural ‘peasants’ (encompassing tribals and other agrarian groups) in colonial India (Guha, 1982; 1987). While tending to leave unacknowledged the class divisions in the ‘peasantry’, historians within this tradition emphasise the relative ‘autonomy’ of peasant consciousness from the ‘elite’ hegemony of both the Indian bourgeoisie and

colonial rulers (Arnold, 2000). They therefore provide a representation of the Indian peasantry as possessing unique cultural identities, distinct from the nationalist constructions of identity formulated by the Indian elite during the independence struggle, and also emphasise their resistance to attempts by the colonial order to appropriate their lands. The 'Gramscian' analysis of peasant resistance by subaltern scholars, however, puts greater emphasis on cultural analysis while neglecting the political dialectic of collective struggle that is essential to Gramsci's philosophy of transformation (Brass, 1991). They therefore interpret peasant insurgency in terms of Scott's 'everyday forms of peasant resistance' in the sphere of everyday life (see p67-68) rather than collective mobilisation (Guha, 1989; 2000). Further, the depiction of peasant consciousness as autonomous is contested. Indeed one of the most eminent subaltern scholars, Guha, acknowledges the manner in which peasant identity in colonial India was based on an internalisation of their hegemonic representations. Thus "His [peasant] identity amounted to the sum of his subalternity, in other words, he learnt to recognise himself not by the properties and attributes of his own being but by the diminution, if not negation, of those of his superiors." (Guha, 1983, p18).

Surprisingly the grafting of Gramscian frameworks of analysis onto contemporary struggles in rural India are generally missing despite the growing articulation amongst new social movements of the intersections between material and cultural dimensions of oppression and resistance in post-colonial India. The few attempts at Gramscian analysis that have been made either suggest the contradictory nature of peasant consciousness as displaying elements of consent and resistance (Patnaik, 1987), or as being increasingly absorbed within, and actively consenting to the development hegemony (Chatterjee, n.d). These studies aside, scholarship within a Marxist framework overwhelmingly focuses on structural analysis of class relations amongst the peasantry and their location within capitalist production (Desai, 1986; Breman, 1985; Athreya et al, 1987; Patnaik, 1988). This leaves virtually unexplored the Gramscian interest in the dialectic between structure and consciousness through which a group transforms from a structurally determined 'class-in-itself' to an agential and conscious

‘class-for-itself’³⁰. Having discussed current conceptualisations of NSMs in India and their continuing articulation of class issues, below I briefly explore the origins of NSMs and their role within Indian politics.

The Political Space for NSMs in India

The roots of these post-independence mass mobilisations can be traced to the alternative political visions (described earlier) that Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar had provided people during the independence struggle, despite being sidelined during the formation of the Indian nation (Omvedt,1993). While the failure of development provided the galvanising force for these movements, their resistance discourses are interlaced with the ideologies of these two leaders. Apart from the failure of development however, the inability of traditional party politics to fully address their grievances has further strengthened these alternative processes.

Following independence, the ruling Congress Party was confronted by a communist uprising known as the Naxalite revolt (Banerjee, 1980). The movement, failed to achieve a communist revolution largely because of brutal state repression but also because of internal divisions that weakened its political influence. Although quelled, the revolt was an indication of unresolved contradictions emerging in the development trajectory. Between 1972-1975 discontent against the Congress Party began to rise again, and increasingly took the shape of traditional class politics mobilising agricultural labourers, peasants, workers, and even the frustrated middle class.

New social movements also arrived on the scene although they maintained a back seat at this stage. Amidst this upheaval, a Gandhian Socialist, Jayaprakash Narayan, took the helm, calling upon the existing students’ movement to mobilise a revolt of the low castes and rural poor against the hegemony of the upper-caste elite bureaucrats and

³⁰ Though Omvedt examines the class ideologies of NSMs in India, she does not explicitly refer to Gramsci in her work. She also does not demonstrate the processes through which these ideologies emerged.

landlords. Sensing a 'crisis of legitimacy' at this point the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi seized control by declaring a state of Emergency in 1975 – turning India into a virtual dictatorship. The severe restrictions and abuse of civil and human rights which occurred during this phase crippled the uprising. However, the Emergency was unable to quell the deeply embedded dissatisfaction of the people, and when general elections were held in 1977, after the Emergency lifted, the Congress were defeated in a landslide victory by the Janta Party (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000).

The Janta Party came to power with the promise of a people-centred, progressive agenda. The government encouraged the establishment of NGOs and various other voluntary organisations, which grew rapidly under the patronage of the state. It was in this context that theorising on non-party political processes emerged under the Lokayan group. However it soon became clear that the Janta Party represented "just another episode in the ongoing crisis of the ruling elite" (Omvedt, 1993, p176)), and that non-party processes had been co-opted by its predominantly neoliberal agenda. The failure of the Janta Party to deliver to the rural impoverished, led to the re-election of the Congress Party in 1980. By this time many on the left had become disenchanted with party politics and this served to reinvigorate the new social movements.

During the mid-1980s the Naxalite revolt that had been crushed earlier, resurfaced in the form of Naxalite inspired organisations and movements which supported the work of new social movements viewing them as allies in their cause (Omvedt, 1993). These organisations coalesced under a 'mass political organisation' known as the Indian People's Front in 1983. Functioning as the mass front of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI(ML)), it sought to pose an alternative to the development led agenda of the Congress. However though initially the Front showed a strong propensity for positioning new social movements at the vanguard of alternative politics, towards the end of the 1980s it increasingly came under the influence of the traditional Marxist ideology of the CPI(ML) which looked towards industrial and rural workers as the 'truly' exploited. This resulted in its re-immersion into traditional institutionalised class

politics and concomitantly, the closure of dialogue with new social movements (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000).

New social movements have thus had an uneasy relationship with mainstream politics in general as well as Marxist political parties. This has perhaps strengthened their resolve to chart an alternative to traditional political formations. Environmental movements, to which I now turn, are amongst those which are pursuing this alternative.

Environmentalism in India

Environmental movements in India have inspired international campaigns and sought alliances with powerful environmental NGOs in the West. However the social and economic conditions under which they have emerged differ starkly from the contexts that have produced environmental movements in the West. This difference is reflected in the socio-economic background of Third and First World collective actors as well as their movement objectives. In developed countries thus environmentalism generally mobilises middle and upper class activists fighting against the depletion of biodiversity, industrial pollution and global climate change, without adequately addressing the marginalisation of the poor in development (Adams, 2001). While striving to secure a better quality of life, some argue that such movements tend to project a reformist form of 'sustainable development' (Esteva and Prakash, 1992), which fails to "rock the boat of the capitalist mode of production or technology" (Parajuli, 1996, p29)³¹. Indian environmental movements, on the other hand articulate an 'environmentalism of the poor' that, as we shall see later, contests the very basis of the development paradigm (Prasad, 2004).

The emergence of environmentalism in India is commonly traced to the Chipko movement that arose in the forests surrounding the Himalayan foothills during the

³¹ Reformist sustainable development is evident in the growth of 'market environmentalism' involving the environmental valuation of goods and 'green consumption' as well as 'ecological modernisation' seen in the drive towards technological solutions to 'energy efficiency' (Adams, 2001).

1970s and 80s (Guha, 2000). Comprising of tribals and low-caste peasants it emerged as a response to commercial logging in the area that threatened the forests upon which their very livelihood depended. Adopting a symbolic and highly emotive protest action of physically embracing trees, the campaigners attempted to prevent the logging. From this act they also came to derive their name – ‘chipko’ meaning ‘to hug’ in Hindi. The movement inspired by Gandhian ideals espoused village self-rule as the only way to counter the state’s destructive desire for ‘profit, resin and timber’ that concealed what the movement believed to be the true value of the forests as ‘soil, water and pure air’ (Sethi, 1993). The movement thus connected economic concerns over livelihood with the environment and argued that these could most effectively be protected if village communities have political control of their resources. The movement therefore raised a direct challenge to hegemonic development based on the centralisation of resources. The radical concerns it raised gained international recognition, in a manner unprecedented in independent India, and its ideals continue to form the basic core of present day environmental struggles in India, including the NBA (Dwivedi, 1998).

Apart from forest-based struggles such as the Chipko, environmental struggles encompass traditional fisherman’s movements against over-exploitation of marine resources by massive commercialised trawling³², and movements against development projects involving irrigation and dams³³, mines³⁴, power projects³⁵ and industrial plants³⁶. Within the environmental movement these struggles of the poor have had the strongest presence, however smaller movements against industrial pollution have been led by the urban middle and upper class³⁷ also (Sethi, 1993; Andharia and Sengupta, 1998).

Environmental struggles of the poor against development projects have an ambiguous and somewhat contradictory relationship with Marxism as articulated by leftist political

³² E.g. National Fisherman’s Forum working for traditional fisher folk in Kerala.

³³ E.g. Tehri Bandh Virodh Samiti.

³⁴ E.g. Anti-Bauxite mine movement (Balco Project) in Orissa.

³⁵ E.g. Jan Andolan in Dabhol against Enron.

³⁶ E.g. Organisations of victims of the Union Carbide poisonous gas leak in 1984.

³⁷ E.g. Movement against pollution of Sone River by the Gwalior Rayon Factory.

organisations in India (Prasad, 2004). As I showed earlier, dams (and development projects in general) have facilitated the 'primitive accumulation' of capital and accentuated inequalities in resource distribution. Tribal and peasant movements resisting the appropriation of natural resources for these projects thus resonate with Marxist contestation against capitalism. At the same time however, Marxist political parties notably the CPI(ML), have expressed unease in rejecting development projects altogether. From their perspective large-scale development projects produce the kind of surplus which is required for economic development and which cannot be achieved through the smaller-scale technologies of production available to peasant societies. Science and technology are viewed as playing an essential role in freeing peasants from feudal relations and modernising society. Leftist organisations have thus also historically refrained from supporting the demands of environmental movements for communal rights over local resources and autonomous and decentralised governance (Sethi, 2003). Instead they express the need for transformation of unequal and exploitative relations within rural communities. Marxist political formations, as such, have tended to concentrate on securing fair rehabilitation for oustees of development projects and equitable distribution of their benefits rather than outrightly opposing such development.

The differences between the left and environmental movements, however are not irreconcilable, and should instead be viewed as points of dialogue and debate. After all both these perspectives agree on the undesirability of capitalism. Indeed as Prasad (2004) notes, the CPI(ML)'s position, of late, has been changing towards adopting a more critical stance towards development projects. It is increasingly forming alliances with environmental movements, while recognising their strategic importance in halting the process of primitive accumulation and in providing alternatives to capitalism (which I discuss in further detail later).

The hegemony of capitalist-led development and resistance to this in the form of new social movements, and environmental movements in particular, provides the political

context within which the Narmada Bachao Andolan has emerged. I now turn to a more in-depth exploration of this movement.

NBA AND THE CRITIQUE OF ‘DESTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT’

NBA’s fight against the Sardar Sarovar dam, continuing for over twenty years, is regarded as one of the most important environmental movements in India. For NBA and its supporters this development project epitomises the destructive capacities of capitalist-led development. Here firstly, I introduce the grassroots of the movement, secondly, I provide a brief chronology of NBA’s formation and contestation with the state, thirdly, I analyse NBA’s discourse of resistance and alternatives (cognitive praxis).

People of the Narmada Bachao Andolan

Environmental movements in India, such as the NBA, are principally movements seeking to redefine ‘development’ by those who have been left out or culturally and economically subjugated by the process. The very existence of their economies and cultures is believed to provide a political critique and alternative to the development process. However, the protagonists of movement’s against capitalist development are not a homogeneous group. As I have indicated earlier, in the case of NBA, they consist of two socio-culturally and economically distinct groups (this, I will argue later, highlights the complexities of the development hegemony, as well as efforts to transform it). Supplementing my own observations with that of Baviskar’s (2004), who conducted a more extended ethnographic study in the Narmada Valley, below I provide an account of these two groups – the hill Adivasis and Nimaris.

Hill Adivasis

The enclosed topography of the hills where hill Adivasis of the Narmada Valley reside has to a large extent buttressed these communities from the cultural and social influences of mainstream society (Baviskar, 2004). They have mostly been ignored by state-sponsored modernisation and thus villages do not have roads and electricity. State schools have also been absent, though with the recent establishment of schools owned and run by the movement the first generation of Adivasis are becoming literate.

As such, unlike amongst Adivasis living in the plains of Nimar, here a unique Adivasi identity and lifestyle is palpable. Instead of worshipping a spectrum of Hindu gods they believe in the spiritual powers of the hills, trees, mountains and their ancestral forefathers. *Indal pooja* – a collective ritual worshipping the union of the rain and earth producing crops – is unique to the Adivasis; and the *gayana*, sung during this ritual which is a myth of creation of the world from the Narmada river, is non-existent in Hindu culture. Curiously, as Baviskar also notes, though the Narmada river is accorded such importance in their mythology of creation, Adivasis do not seem to engage in any ritual worship of the Narmada. Indeed the river is traditionally referred to with no more reverence than the Motli Nadi or big river. This contrasts with its veneration in Hindu Nimar as a sacred goddess and mother around which elaborate ceremonies of worship are carried out³⁸. Women in Adivasi societies are given greater freedom as is reflected in festivals such as Bhagoria where women can meet and elope with men of their choice.

³⁸ Adivasis also refer to the river as Naramda *mata* (mother), in the same way that Nimaris do, but as one Adivasi told me this is a relatively new development – perhaps a result of increasing cultural exposure to Nimaris through the movement.

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Adivasi economy is based on pre-capitalist forms of subsistence agriculture that is largely divorced from the market. As Baviskar notes, these communities are characterised by “relatively egalitarian relationships embedded in kinship” such that all families have almost equal access to land (ibid, p92). Adivasis also practice a unique system of “labour-sharing” known as *laah* where members of the village pool together to work on each others fields during crucial periods of the agricultural cycle (p93). Staple crops such as *jowhar* and *bazara* apart from chillies, corn, vegetables and tobacco are all organically grown. Other produce such as fruits, *temru* leaves for wrapping tobacco, *muhda* from which liquor is made, fodder and wood for fuel are collected from the surrounding forests that have so far allowed them to lead relatively self-sufficient lives. Based on their distinctive economic, cultural and religious practices, Baviskar (2004) suggests that adviasis represent tribes rather than low level castes within the Hindu hierarchy. Yet Adivasis have been historically derided by state authorities and the mainstream population who view them as ‘backward Hindus’ or untouchables.

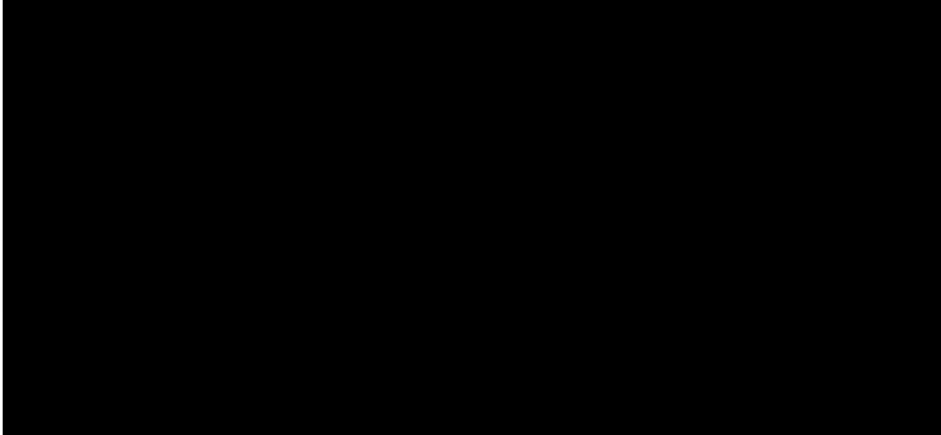
Unlike hill Adivasis, Nimaris have enjoyed some of the benefits of development. Farming in this region was given a real boost in the 1970s with the installation of electric pumps to lift water from the Narmada. Agricultural farmers holding between 5-

Nimar is part of the dominant Hindu society and culture and is substantially more heterogeneous and stratified in terms of caste and class than Adivasi communities. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, though livelihoods are also earned through fishing, sand-quarrying and other trades.

Nimaris

Cultural marginalisation has also legitimised economic subjugation of Adivasis in the process of modernisation. This can be traced to the state's appropriation of the forests to fuel national development – a process involving the 'enclosure of the commons' which had already started under colonial rule (Rahul, n.d.). Consequently, Adivasis have lost their customary rights over land and are recast as "encroachers". While farmers now pay some revenue to legally own land, it is rarely enough to sustain life and is often supplemented with illegally cultivated land called *nevad*. With the impending submergence this has posed fresh problems. While *nevad* is by definition unrecognised by the state, displaced Adivasis are not being compensated for this land which has so far been crucial to bolster their meagre legal holdings.

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



15 acres of land, categorised as middle farmers predominate (Dass and Deulkar, c2002), with some large farmers owning over 15 acres. Both middle and large farmers engage in mechanised farming for commercial trade, and often employ wage labour in order to produce cash crops such as bananas, cotton, papaya, chillies, wheat, and pulses. Villages are connected by highways and farmers own motorcycles and other luxury commodities such as mobile phones and televisions.

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



While Patidar, Yadav, and Rajput castes predominantly own land, agricultural labourers who are employed to work on the fields by farmers tend to be mainly low caste Harijans and Adivasis who occupy a marginal socio-economic status in the village, often below the poverty line. In Nimar participation in the movement is largely derived from farmers rather than labourers. When hill Adivasis occasionally migrate to Nimar for seasonal work they experience the direct oppression of Nimari farmers who generally pay below minimum wages.

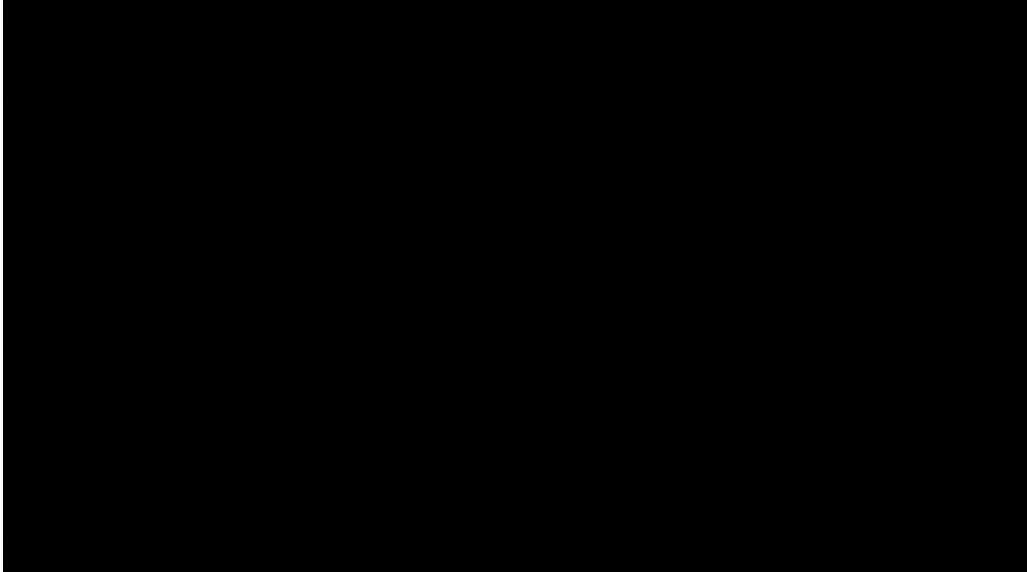
In 1985 when construction on the dam project started in earnest, the government did not have adequate plans in place for rehabilitating the 245 villages that would face

A Chronology of the Struggle

the national level.

Project. In what follows I provide a brief chronology of their resistance to the dam at marginalisation, as a natural progression of their resistance to the Sardar Sarovar formation of alliances with hill Adivasis who are facing similar experiences of and water are diverted to industrial centres. Nimari farmers have thus viewed the farmers here, dams submerge rural homes and land, while all the benefits of electricity though city-dwellers keep cool under fans 24 hours a day. From the perspective of experience frequent power failures that prevent farmers from using irrigation pumps, to keep prices of agricultural produce low in favour of urban elite. Rural areas government fails to subsidise agricultural inputs (like seeds and fertilisers) it continues see as drastically skewed in favour of urban centres of industrialisation. Thus while the feeling of their own exploitation by the state and the development process which they However, despite their relative position of power in Nimar, farmers express a general

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



submergence. By the early 1980s Arch-Vahini, an NGO for Adivasi welfare, was raising these issues amongst tribal villages in Gujarat. However when Medha Patekar, visited the valley in 1985 as a community worker from an NGO called SETU, she soon realised that Arch-Vahini had “not raised the issue of the whole project affected area and nor about the project itself” (Patekar, 5/4/06).

By 1986 she had mobilised tribal areas of Maharashtra under the *Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti* (NDS), solidified links with the already existing tribal organisation *Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath* in M.P. and the *Narmada Asargrasta Samiti* (NAS) in Gujarat, and in 1987 succeeded in reinvigorating the *Narmada Ghati Navnirman Samiti* (NGNS) in Nimar³⁹. Jointly they continued raising issues of rehabilitation, but in 1988 they took a radical turn declaring complete opposition to the dam. At the same time, through linkages established with INGOs, they began to contest the presence of the WB in the project. In 1989 they formed the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) unifying grassroots mobilisations against the dam in the three states as well as supportive national civil society organisations. Arch-Vahini however departed from this coalition preferring to limit their efforts to securing adequate compensation. The formation of NBA signalled its transition from a local struggle for rehabilitation to a nationally and even globally relevant movement against environmentally and socially destructive development. The process through which this happened will be discussed in chapter 7.

While NBA thus far had opposed the dam on the grounds of displacement and environmental issues, in the midst of state repression it also began to investigate the benefits that the government claimed would accrue from the project. Sympathetic scientists and other experts conducted their own investigations through which a body of counter-knowledge emerged that refuted the government’s cost-benefit analysis. Based on these studies, NBA pointed to technical faults in the project’s design and oversights in financial costs and asserted that the poor and drought-stricken regions of Gujarat and

³⁹ Though started in the 1970s by a group of Gandhian activists during the first wave of agitation against the SSP by farmers in the Nimar plains, the organization became defunct when the protests were co-opted by local politicians.

Rajasthan were unlikely to be the beneficiaries of the project as officially declared. Believing that the government would respond more favourably to objections raised in the government's own language of cost-benefit the movement decided to build strategic action on this newly acquired information.

In December 1990, NBA revised its radical no-dam position and organised what was called the Long March to demand a comprehensive review of the project. Thousands of tribal and Nimari protesters marched for six days from Barwani in MP towards the dam site in Gujarat with a view to occupying it. At the Gujarat border however they were stopped by a wall of police and Gujarati civilians who had been mobilised by government officials. In response to the government's refusal to engage with the movement's demand, 2000 protesters stayed at the border for a month in the cold winter, while a group of seven people, including Patekar went on hunger strike. The government did not respond and on the twenty-second day of fasting the movement retreated from the border, symbolically declaring non-cooperation with the state through the slogan – *hamaare goan mein hamaara raj* (Our rule in our villages) (Baviskar, 2004). This protest event was not entirely futile however. The WB buckled under pressure from INGOs, intensified by the hunger strikers, and agreed to launch an independent review of the project. Following the review, the WB withdrew from the project in 1993, vindicating NBA's cause.

The site of resistance during 1991-1996 shifted to the hill villages of Adivasis who began facing submergence. Yearly *satyagrahas* (passive resistance) were held during the monsoons where *samarpit dals* or 'save or drown squads' would threaten to let themselves drown in the rising waters of the river. Fatalities however were averted by police forcibly removing the protestors from the water. Between 1990 and 1994 NBA also made repeated requests for project reviews that were either rejected outright or accepted only to be left unfulfilled. Though by 1993 the World Bank had withdrawn from the project, the government's failure to dialogue with the movement led it to seek redress from the Indian Judiciary in 1994. However, in October 2000 the Supreme Court announced its verdict supporting dam construction.

Following this the movement's space for political manoeuvre greatly reduced and its mass base has dwindled with many taking what ever compensation the government offers. In the meantime the dam's construction continued and by 2000 had reached 90m. The movement has turned its attention from mass mobilisation to more judicial activism to secure better rehabilitation for oustees. Periodically demonstrations are also held, and in 2006 a rally in Barwani, MP was attended by over 5000 people – many of whom having left the movement had returned to protest against dismal conditions at rehabilitation sites.

The discourse of resistance and alternatives that arose from and informed these political encounters is elaborated on below. The analysis is based largely on documents produced by the NBA in the late 80s and early 90s and is supplemented by interviews with movement leaders taken during the research.

NBA's Discourse of Resistance and Alternatives

NBA's opposition to the Sardar Sarovar dam revolves around a critique of development that is socially and environmentally destructive:

“...what we are up against is the prevailing model of development and its accompanying ‘bigger is better’ ideology and consumerist value system, for which these modern projects are the ‘modern temples of progress’...It has only succeeded in creating islands of affluence amidst the large surrounding ocean of poverty and deprivation; and it is rapidly destroying our natural resource base and life-support systems on which depends our very survival as a nation. The so-called ‘development’ it

produces is socially unjust and ecologically unsustainable”
(NBA, c1989-1990, p10*)⁴⁰.

The NBA constructs the environment as the resource base upon which the people derive their livelihood. This is not dissimilar to statist approaches to the environment which have also viewed forests, land and water as resources to fuel development. The difference however lies in NBA’s concern that capitalist-fuelled development has involved the transfer of ownership of natural resources from the majority of people to the elite minority, the result of which is an “ocean of poverty and deprivation”. Not only has this transfer of ownership caused impoverishment but it has also involved unsustainable use of the environment. That is, capitalist development is inextricably and directly related to environmental destruction – actively, by using natural resources in a non-replenishable manner and passively by taking land away from rural communities, in particular tribals who are dependent on the products of land for their livelihoods and who have thus developed sustainable means of using it. The symbiosis between environment and rural communities and their livelihoods thus constitutes an ‘environmentalism of the poor’ where the struggle against ecologically destructive development is a struggle for the right to life and livelihood⁴¹:

“The bountiful environment – land, forest, water that formed the basis of their sustenance for generations, is being exploited, and through it, they themselves are being exploited” (Patekar, 1989, p19*)⁴².

NBA’s environmentalism of the poor can be viewed as an instance of what Omvedt refers to as the ‘rethinking of Marxism’ and ‘redefining of exploitation’ by NSMs in

⁴⁰ ‘Sardar Sarovar Project - economic, environmental, human disaster’ (pamphlet).

⁴¹ It is perhaps because of the intertwinement of issues of tribal rights with ecology in the environmentalism of the poor that such movements, including the NBA, are arbitrarily referred to by some as environmental and by others as tribal (Pathy, 1998; Prabhu, 1998).

⁴² ‘Statement of Medha Patekar on behalf of Narmada Bachao Andolan concerning a critique of the World Bank financed Sardar Sarovar dam’, presented to the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agricultural Research and Environment, US House of Representatives. More is said about the context in which this presentation was given in chapters 6 and 7.

India. Thus the capitalist exploitation of actors of NBA does not occur in the traditional sense of the extraction of surplus value of wage labour, but through the dispossession of land upon which their livelihoods are dependent (Whitehead, 2003). In that these actors are resisting the appropriation of land for capitalist accumulation and development, they can be conceived as 'reinventing revolution' in Omvedt's terms.

Apart from the broader issue of ownership of resources, NBA have also raised more specifically ecological concerns regarding the impact of the dam on the surrounding environment, including water logging, salination, soil erosion and increased susceptibility to drought and flood. Even these environmental issues however, are an extension of the overall concern over land, its productive capacity and livelihoods which are dependent on these factors. Conservation of biodiversity, on the other hand, which in western movements tend to emphasis conflict between ecology and human welfare, is absent in the NBA. Instead the issue of preservation of nature, is subsumed within an analysis of tribal lifestyle and culture as "naturally conservationist" (Patekar, 20/9/05).

Amongst communities that derive their cultural ethos from their geographical surroundings, displacement not only represents economic dispossession but also cultural erasure. The unique identity of hill Adivasis is especially vulnerable. Their mythology and religion are deeply embedded in the hills and forests which are believed to be endowed with the spiritual powers of their ancestors. Knowledge of local medicinal herbs has already severely diminished as the forests that they lived in have been stripped bare by commercial logging. Large-scale development such as SSP therefore also jeopardises the cultural survival of these communities.

While the capitalist model of development represents "a centralization" of processes and products that are "undemocratic, unsustainable and unjust" (Patekar, 26/2/06), the NBA has presented the subsistence economies of rural communities as a basis for more egalitarian and democratic political alternatives:

“The new model of development will be based on sustainable and equitable utilization of natural resources, avoiding human and environmental exploitation, promoting an egalitarian distribution of resources, with full democratic participation in decision-making. Such development will be based on the ‘real’ needs of the people...”(NBA, 1989, p9*)⁴³.

Whereas the dominant model of development economically dispossesses poor communities and therefore disenfranchises them from political participation in their own development, an alternative development model based on subsistence economies provides a concrete basis for politically empowering village communities. Within this model power is decentralised and distributed across village communities that are collectively involved in taking decisions regarding the management of their resources.

The NBA’s articulation of a ‘new model of development’ is part of the movement’s efforts to take “social control over the main cultural patterns” (Touraine, 1985, p785) of society by engaging in a normative reframing of development rather than an outright rejection of it. For the state however this has been tantamount to anti-development fanaticism – a western led conspiracy to keep India backward. What is interesting however is that while new social movement theories refer to the process of reinterpretation of norms and social meaning as postmodern way-of-life struggles, the NBA’s ‘new model of development’ is based not simply on a postmodern preoccupation with diversity and lifestyles but on modernist concerns of basic needs and “egalitarian distribution of resources” (in extract above). Where the NBA departs from the old social movement framework is in their treatment of culture as not simply a product of the economic sphere but as a factor in the formation of economic relations. Thus “non-consumerist lifestyles and decentralized democratic participation” (Patekar, 13/4/05) between village units are essential for securing the ‘real’, read basic needs of the people. Though the ‘bigger is better’ ideology critiqued by the Andolan depends on science and technology, this does not lead to an “anti-modern” rejection of these tools

⁴³ ‘We want development not destruction’ (pamphlet).

as Prasad (2004, p14) has suggested. Instead NBA have championed the “appropriate utilisation of scientific knowledge and technology” to achieve the modernist goals of equality (NBA, 1999, p3*)⁴⁴.

As should be clear by now, NBA’s environmental concerns, as of other movements more broadly subsumed within the “environmentalism of the poor”, are largely by-products of the primary concern over land and livelihood that are under threat from capitalist development. The environmental label, as Guha (1988) suggests, has thus been a “cloth” draped over peasant movements by “sympathetic intellectuals” (p2579). Though NBA is not averse to this environmental image – indeed it helped the movement gain much needed media and civil society attention as we shall see later – it is not a portrayal that those within the movement self-consciously identify with. For instance Medha Patekar (20/9/05) herself describes the movement as an “alternative development model” and even central activists of the international campaign who represented environmental NGOs refer to it as a “social justice movement” or a “movement for land rights and human rights”⁴⁵.

However that the exclusions of development and the alternatives provided by movements such as NBA are not as absolute as is sometimes suggested, is evident from the differential socio-cultural and economic status of the grassroots constituents in NBA’s ‘alternative development movement’. While the rural, and in particular tribal societies of the Narmada Valley are championed as alternatives to the development hegemony, in reality they occupy somewhat contradictory positions in relation to capitalist development and the environment. Ironically, in Adivasi societies the process of development itself has caused changes in their cultural and economic practices, which now conflict with the environmental credentials bestowed on them by NBA leaders. State-sponsored logging, accelerated by the impending submergence, has led to the severe depletion of the forest and the quality of the soil, making life that much more

⁴⁴ ‘True development through ‘Narmada’ – Policy and strategy: One tapa, one vow’. Statement by Medha Patekar and her colleagues, during the Narmada Satyagraha, 1999.

⁴⁵ Interviews with Patrick McCully of International Rivers Network (USA) and Lori Udall of Environmental Defense Fund (USA) respectively, 20/6/06.

difficult. Crop yields have reduced and livestock have been dying as fodder becomes less available. In response to these hardships, some Adivasis have recently turned to cash crop such as cotton to sell in the market, and high-yielding hybrid varieties of staple crops such as *jowhar* that require the use of pesticides (fieldnotes, 19/11/05). The reduced fertility of soil generally and the submergence of prime land at the riverbanks has led to an increase in *nevad*, involving the clearance of forested areas for cultivation. Whereas earlier the percentage of deforestation due to *nevad* was minute and easily replenishable, in the present context of massive commercial logging it has become a less sustainable practice (Baviskar, 2004). In this context, some critics therefore charge the movement with eco-romanticism for failing to acknowledge the forces that are altering Adivasi relationships to the environment and thus also for reifying and idealising these communities (Baviskar, 1995; 1997; Omvedt, 1999).

The position of Nimari society to alternative development and the environment is even more contentious. While Nimaris have been dispossessed and exploited they have also been beneficiaries and exploiters in the process. Their commercial farming practices are a product of the hegemonic development model. While they employ hybrid seeds, large amounts of water, fertilisers, pesticides and other chemicals these farming methods are also hardly environmentally ideal. They thus contradict the alternatives that tribal society is believed to provide. Nimaris have also been the direct exploiters of Adivasis who when migrating to Nimar for work are employed as agricultural labourers for below minimum wages. Clearly there are apparent contradictions in this alliance that are indicative of the complexity of capitalist development itself.

Amongst Marxist commentators in India the formation of cross-class alliances within movements such as NBA have been viewed sceptically as encouraging populist tendencies to obfuscate issues of class oppression and struggle (Brass, 1994; 1997). However the very complexity of capitalist development renders such criticisms, which are based on an absolutist approach to class relations and categories, difficult to sustain at the practical level of political struggle. Instead there is a need to appreciate the relative, shifting and complex nature of class categories as well as the evolving and

agential quality of class consciousness which can lead to changes in class relations. Thus while the farmers of Nimar might be construed as exploiters and capitalist producers in relation to hill Adivasis, both these protagonists still occupy much lower rungs in the chain of capitalist production compared to the more powerful state and WB. As such movements like NBA continue to be part of a wider effort to problematise capitalist development and its relationship to the environment.

CONCLUSION

The development paradigm in India provides a link between national capitalism and globalisation which has proceeded from WB and IMF funding of development towards structural adjustment on neo-liberal lines. Not only national but global forces are thus implicated in the hegemonic process of development that is destabilising and impoverishing communities such as those of the Narmada Valley. In this context, dams that are hailed as integral to 'development' are uprooting communities that depend on land and forests for livelihood, and destroying and transferring environmental resources to the capitalist elite. Reacting to these processes, movements such as NBA can be located within a wider environmentalism of the poor that points to the convergence of environmental and class issues within the context of India. While the hegemonic development model economically exploits those who depend on the environment, it is also a tool of cultural subjugation, silencing other perspectives on development. Cultural lifestyles of rural, but especially tribal societies that live off the land provide a model of development based on democratic, decentralised, equitable distribution of resources that is supported by the appropriate use of environmentally-friendly technology. As such the environmentalism of the poor can also be understood as an alternative development movement. However this is not to suggest that development and the alternative development movement represents an easy binary of class interests and positions. In the case of NBA, the cultural and economic relationship between Nimaris and Adivasis has historically been of subjugation. Yet within the national/global development hegemony, the joint marginalisation of communities such as these is leading to their positioning as 'subalterns', necessitating the formation of counter-hegemonic alliances between them. In chapter 7 I will examine how NBA

developed this counter-hegemonic resistance across local, national and global scales of contention. However in the next chapter I focus on the manner in which international NGOs, galvanising in support of NBA, raised a focused challenge against the international financiers of the Sardar Sarovar Project, i.e. the World Bank and the Japanese government.

Chapter 6

International NGOs in the Narmada Campaign

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the strong network of international NGOs that supported NBA in its campaign against the Sardar Sarovar Dam. In collaboration with NBA, this network was instrumental in projecting the movement's grievances to an international audience and successfully challenging the involvement of global funders in the project. As such the international Narmada campaign is widely hailed by INGO activists (Rich, 1991) and academics as an instance of global civil society in action and an example of the changing contours of politics from state-centric international relations to global governance (Carter, 2001; Khonder, 2001). Others such as Khagram (2004), are reluctant to commit to the notion of global civil society but nevertheless view the International Narmada campaign as part of the growing phenomenon of transnational struggles that operate within a 'world society'. The Narmada transnational coalition is perceived to be part of 'global governance', lending to the process of "globalizing norms" and thus also to the construction of "acceptable identities and behaviours of actors across the world" (ibid, p15).

Accounts of the international Narmada campaign have already been given in great detail in countless books and articles. However, what this chapter provides is a reinterpretation of the international campaign, questioning perspectives that view it as an example of global civil society and thus as a harbinger of global citizenship. Through an analysis of the discourse and strategies employed by the international campaigners, it is argued that international NGOs behaved more like actors within their own national polities rather than a common global civil society, and drew upon notions of national citizenship rather than global affiliation to mobilise public opinion. This brings into

question the strong reliance within GCS literature on INGOs as the trustees of the transformative, global visions of GCS.

This chapter uses scholarly descriptions of the international efforts and first hand data to provide an account of the Narmada campaign. First hand data includes interviews with key activists involved in the campaign at the international level; documents such as correspondence between international activists, movement leaders, national and international supporters and governments of various countries as well as the World Bank; memos from the World Bank; and press releases and memos from involved international NGOs

At the outset, it must be noted that there was more than one international lobbying effort regarding the Sardar Sarovar Dam, that while overlapping in some part, broadly occurred in consecutive time spans (Sen, 1999). These two campaigns were aligned to different local movement actors with differing positions regarding the dam. The first international campaign spearheaded by Oxfam in partnership with a local NGO called Arch-Vahini, adopted a 'moderate' position, calling simply for more progressive resettlement policies rather than outright cancellation of the dam. This chapter focuses on the second international campaign which associated its self with the Narmada Bachao Andolan and supported the movement's no-dam position. It is this international network which is commonly referred to in literature on the Narmada struggle.

The chapter begins with a historical account of the international Narmada protest, and highlights the material successes of the campaign. Following this a deeper examination of the campaign's discourses and strategies, is engaged in to address whether and to what extent the international campaign was a phenomena of global significance as is often implied.

THE INTERNATIONAL NARMADA CAMPAIGN: A CHRONOLOGY

While the Narmada campaign is often subsumed within the general field of international or global environmental activism (Guadalupe and Rodrigues, 2004), it is the

involvement of global funders in the project that created interest and sustained the engagement of international NGOs in the campaign. In 1985 the World Bank approved a loan of \$450 million for the project. Though this was a small percentage of the investment actually required for the dam, its significance lay in the “stamp of credibility” it provided to the dam (Udall, 1993). Having gained the approval of the WB, the Indian government was able to secure the involvement of the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) of Japan to fund turbines manufactured by the Sumitomo and Hitachi corporations. The Canadian International Development Agency conducted environmental impact assessments and the Overseas Development Agency (UK) was enlisted to conduct downstream impact studies (Khagram, 2004).

The First International Campaign: The Oxfam-Arch Vahini Alliance

Oxfam was the first international NGO to get involved in the project and its efforts formed the first of the two main rounds of international lobbying mentioned earlier. Oxfam was keen to expand its field of action to include issues relating to economic and social injustice resulting from large development projects. In 1982 John Clark of Oxfam took a trip to the valley and was alarmed by the shortcomings in provisions of resettlement and rehabilitation of oustees of the project (Sen, 1999; Khagram, 2004). Clark established links with a Gujarat based organisation called Arch-Vahini which was already mobilising Adivasis to be displaced by the project in Gujarat. To enhance its leverage with the WB, Oxfam also sought the support of other international actors such as Survival International and The Ecologist, both in UK (Khagram, 2004).

Pressure from this alliance through letters and meetings with Executive Directors of the Bank as well as public letter-writing campaigns forced the Bank to reassess its rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) practices regarding the SSP to bring them closer to the Bank’s own policy guidelines as well as “human rights norms on resettlement and indigenous/tribal peoples” (Khagram, 2004, p94). Important advances were made in terms of securing oustees’ rights to land-based resettlement over monetary compensation regardless of the possession of valid land titles. However, though the

Oxfam alliance had managed to get the World Bank and Indian authorities to sign a loan agreement based on the obligation to ensure just rehabilitation, Oxfam soon started to get reports from Arch-Vahini that the Gujarat Government was attempting to override this obligation through the Supreme Court. Further pressure by the transnational coalition was applied on the WB to make the governments of the three states (Gujarat, MP and Maharashtra) involved in the project align their resettlement policies with those established in the loan agreement. Responding to this grudgingly, the governments made incremental changes that brought their resettlement policies closer towards WB standards (Khagram, 2004). Thus this transnational alliance was able to make important gains in terms of policy reform regarding resettlement, however it did not at any point seek to challenge the legitimacy of the dam itself. The efforts of Oxfam continued for some time in parallel with, but also at times in interaction with that of the second international coalition that emerged to contest the dam.

The Second International Campaign: The NBA-Environmental NGOs Alliance

By 1985 Medha Patekar had mobilised tribal oustees in Maharashtra under the Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti (NDS). The second round of trans-border action established closer ties with Patekar and her organisation which later became the Narmada Bachao Andolan. This local-global alliance gradually began to take a more radical position than that of the Oxfam and Arch-Vahini and asserted that the Indian authorities would never be able to resettle the oustees according to the guidelines. On this basis they declared opposition to the dam (more will be said about this in chapter 7).

The international coalition that emerged to support the anti-dam movement of NBA, consisted of activists and organisations that had been engaged for some years in a campaign to seek reform of multilateral development banks (MDB). This campaign was guided by the conviction that large-scale projects financed by multilateral development banks had a large role to play in the ecological destruction occurring in the South. The coalition also criticised the “chronic failure to involve and consult with local people and the inaccessibility of its project and sector information” (Udall, 1993, p203). The efforts

of the MDB reform campaign pushed the WB to adopt better environmental safeguards. In 1984 the Bank committed itself to assessing environmental factors before signing loan agreements and even forbade its involvement in projects that would lead to significant or irrevocable environmental damage (Payne and O'Bannon, 1994).

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) was one of the international NGOs that were part of this coalition. In 1986 Bruce Rich of EDF went to the Narmada Valley with a view to showcasing the project as an example of destructive MDB led development. He established contact with Medha Patekar. Later, Lori Udall who was working along with Rich at EDF took the forefront in organising the Narmada campaign. In the initial years the international campaign sought to raise issues regarding the neglect of social and environmental problems, with the Bank's staff. However this proved ineffective. Reflecting on this Udall later wrote:

“...since Bank staff who make a decision about continuing a project despite loan violations are the same people with a vested interest in the project, and since careers are rewarded inside the Bank for pushing projects forward and not for project quality, the continuation of a project is usually guaranteed if the task manager or the director of the Operations Department supports the project” (Udall, 1993, p205).

In 1987 Udall invited Medha Patekar to Washington to attend an annual general meeting held by the World Bank with international NGOs. This meeting allowed Medha to widen her international contacts. It also gave international NGOs the chance to strengthen their own networks with each other.

The meeting led to a change in the strategy of the international campaign. Instead of targeting the Bank staff, international NGOs turned to the Board of Executive Directors. The coalition was successful in gaining their attention. This was a significant development given that Executive Directors need to give their approval for all the policies and projects initiated by the Bank. Paul Arlman, the Executive Director of Netherlands took the lead in engaging with the voices of concern raised by the INGOs

as well as the growing resistance in India. He organised a series of meetings with the Bank's staff and Executive Director's of various other Northern countries including India and established regular correspondence with Medha Patekar. This was the first time in the history of the Bank that Executive Directors had taken such an active interest in a project and the first time that they had started demanding access to information from the Bank's staff. As a result of the various channels of communication that they established with the movement and INGOs, and those that they prised open within the Bank, opinion began to crystallise amongst Northern Executive Directors that huge failures and violations of Bank policy were occurring in the Valley (Sen, 1999). Following mounting tensions within the Bank, a mission was appointed in April 1989 to reassess the progress made by the state governments in terms of resettlement and rehabilitation. The team, headed by Scudder, came out with a damning report which far from pointing to progress in R&R, instead clearly stated that "there has been a very serious deterioration" (Scudder quoted in Udall, 1993, p210). Based on this assessment he recommended "either permanent or temporary termination of World Bank disbursements" (ibid). However, yet again the WB failed to take decisive action.

At the same time that pressure was being applied directly on the WB, the EDF and other Washington based NGOs were raising the issue of the Sardar Sarovar Project within the US Congress which allocates American taxes to the WB. Since USA is the largest donor, NGOs perceived this to be an effective strategy for holding the Bank in check. In October 1989 Udall of EDF arranged for Medha Patekar and Girish Patel, a human rights lawyer, to give testimony to a US Congressional Subcommittee on the Project. Medha Patekar's testimony not only referred to the violations of the Bank's policies but made a critique of the social, environmental and economic consequences of the dam as well as suggesting alternative solutions. Her testimony proved to be a galvanising force for the international campaign. Many members of the Congress wrote letters to President Conable of the World Bank urging for the suspension or cancellation of the dam. Congressman James Scheuer held a meeting with members of Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) from around the world to discuss the Narmada issue and to subsequently raise questions regarding it in their own countries (Udall, 1993).

Discussion on the Narmada project at the GLOBE meeting was of special relevance to the Japanese Diet members attending it because Japan was financing the dam's turbines. The meeting alerted the Japanese legislators to the growing concern regarding the project. By that time Friends of the Earth Japan (FoEJ) had also been following the developments in the Valley and was keen to incorporate the SSP within the MDB reform campaign that it had been part of since 1986. FoEJ made contact with the Narmada Bachao Andolan through Lori Udall and planned a research trip to the Valley. On returning they organised the first ever 'International Narmada Symposium' in Tokyo. The symposium was a huge success, with activists from India, Japan and international NGOs, parliamentarians, lawyers, journalists and scholars in attendance. Japanese and other INGOs continued to apply pressure on the Japanese government and in May 1990, a month after the symposium, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that it was revoking funds for the project in light of opposition from oustees, and failures in planning for the environment and rehabilitation.

This was the international network's first major success that further strengthened the linkages between various NGOs. With the Japanese government out of the project, the international coalition focused more intensely on the WB. The network that till now had been a loose association of NGOs, began to coordinate a lot more closely, with a group of 15-20 NGOs from USA and other European countries forming the core. This core group called its self the Narmada Action Committee (NAC) and was in charge of coordinating with the movement, relaying information from the local to a wider international audience via the internet and fax, and forming strategies for international action. The group included the Environmental Defense Fund (USA), International Rivers Network (USA), Probe International (Canada), The Ecologist (UK), Survival International (UK), Friends of the Earth (Japan), and Bread for the World (Germany) amongst others.

Between December 1990 and January 1991 the Long March took place in India. Medha and other protesters began fasting to put pressure on the government to halt dam construction and comprehensively review the project. As the hunger-strike went on,

international efforts to get the World Bank to concede to a review were pursued with greater vigour. Discussions with Executive Directors were held and public awareness regarding the situation was raised through press releases from international NGOs. After 21 days of fasting, on January 27th 1991, the bank agreed to organise an independent review of the project (Udall, 1993).

In order to maximise pressure for the establishment of the independent review and ensure that it is taken seriously by the Bank, European activists organised a tour for Shripad Dharamdikary and Kisan Mehta, activists of NBA. The tour which took place between April and May 1991 was aimed at securing public support for the movement as well as encouraging members of parliament to raise the Narmada issue with the Bank. I will go into more details regarding this later.

Though NBA and supporting INGOs were concerned regarding the level of autonomy the WB review would have from the Bank, they decided to cooperate with the reviewing committee led by Bradford Morse and provided them with invaluable data as well as physical access to villages facing submergence. In June 1992 the report published by the Morse committee (Independent Review of the Sardar Sarovar Project, 1992) vindicated the movement's stand. It recommended that the Bank should "step back" (p356) from the project given the failure to adequately consider environmental impacts and the improbability of achieving rehabilitation of all the displaced. The report even suggested that the project would fail to deliver expected benefits due to flaws in its hydrological design. Further it was warned that continuing construction would be "impossible except as a result of unacceptable means" (p356) in a context where local opposition was strong and unrelenting.

Ignoring these strongly-worded recommendations, the WB continued funding the project for at least another six months, during which time certain benchmarks for rehabilitation were set. Scrambling to achieve these targets the Indian government began forcibly evicting villagers; the breaches in human rights that ensued were closely monitored and reported by international activists. As the six month period came to an

end it was clear that authorities were far from the proposed benchmarks. Amidst international outcry and pressure from WB executive directors the Bank withdrew from the project on 30th March 1993.

From the historical account of the international Narmada campaign it is evident that it played a major role, along with local resistance, in making the global lender retreat from the project. Its collaboration with activists of the movement was crucial in this process, who were able to provide international activists with updated information of violations of Bank policies and human rights occurring on the ground. Armed with this information activists lobbied with the Bank's Executive Directors and Northern parliaments who held influence over the Bank as shareholders. Apart from achieving the immediate goal of forcing the WB to withdraw from the project, the campaign was a catalyst for other institutional changes within the Bank as well as changes in the wider governance of the big dam building regime. As Khagram (2004) notes the campaign "compelled the World Bank to constitute the *first ever* independent review of a Bank-supported project under implementation" (p195) which "set the precedent for such initiatives in the future" (p125) and paved the way for the formation of a permanent Independent Review Panel, assigned with the responsibility of assessing the environmental and social impacts of every World Bank development project. For these reasons Khagram suggests that the coalition "played an especially *crucial role* in the formation of a transnational anti-dam network, and the establishment of an *unprecedented* World Commission on Dams [WCD]" (italics added, p138). The WCD is a multi-stake holder process involving global financial institutions, civil society organisations and affected people, the goal of which is to review the development effectiveness of large dams, assess alternatives to these as well as develop guidelines for the monitoring and decommissioning of dams. In fact, Khagram goes to the extent of arguing that the Narmada campaigns were so influential that they contributed significantly to the global decline of the big dam industry. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to engage with his analysis in depth, I will suggest that activists who were actually engaged in this process are less certain of its transformative effects. Given that the dam continued to be built after the WB withdrew, some international and

local activists suspect that the campaign only drove the Bank to conceal its funding of the project. In an interview Udall admitted:

“...we really thought that the dam would be stopped after the World Bank withdrew, and it should have. There is a whole train of thought that the Bank is funding it through the structural loans so World Bank money is going to it anyway, but we can't track it” (Udall, 20/6/06).

Patekar, who is still actively contesting other WB funded development projects in India, goes even further in rejecting suggestions that the WB has been reformed:

“...the World Bank is still continuing with big dams and now it has become aggressive - some time after the WCD report, till then it was lying low key on the large dams, doubtful about things, now they are very aggressive.” (Medha, 26/2/06).

Thus, though international action was successful in terms of forcing the WB to withdraw from Sardar Sarovar, the extent to which the Narmada campaign has resulted in any significant global transformations in the hegemony of big dam ideology and the structures of global finance is still a matter of debate.

Having outlined the trajectory of the international Narmada campaign and its material successes, the next section turns to exploring the extent to which this represents an instance of global civil society.

THE INTERNATIONAL NARMADA CAMPAIGN: AN INSTANCE OF GCS?

As shown in chapter 2, INGOs are commonly viewed as important actors within GCS. In particular, attention has been given to INGOs involved in the Narmada campaign as exemplars of this field of global politics. In this section these characterisations of the

campaign are briefly presented, following which the campaign's discourses and strategies are critically dissected in order to examine the extent to which the meanings it gave to international activism and the identities it constructed – local, national or global, cohere with its depiction as an instance of GCS.

The Narmada Campaign as GCS

Theorists of global civil society are not only interested in its “objective structural” manifestations but just as importantly in its “subjective ideological dimensions” (Taylor, 2004). The emergence of global discourse, identities and citizenship are thus viewed as integral constituents as well as constructions of global civil society. In the emergence of these subjective processes international NGOs are normally given prime responsibility. Thus, according to Munck (2004) “INGOs certainly have the cosmopolitan grand vision to build GCS” (p19).

In terms of the Narmada coalition of INGOs the ‘objective’ dimensions of GCS are believed to be present in its ability to engage in transnational networking that transcended state-centric politics. This is viewed as a particularly important instance of GCS in that the network achieved important milestones in the global anti-dam resistance, such as contributing to the “emergence of novel forms of global governance like WCD” (Khagram, 2004, p207), as described above. The intersection of these objective dimensions with the ‘subjective ideological’ concern for global environmental protection adds to arguments for viewing the Narmada campaign as a representation of GCS.

According to Carter (2001) “groups that campaign for a better environment can be seen as a quintessential expression of global civil society and world citizenship” because “environmental issues naturally tend to cross state boundaries” (p93). In this sense Carter proclaims that social movements such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan and international organisations such as Friends of the Earth which engage in ‘green activism’ constitute actors of global civil society and are agents of global citizenship

(also see Guadalupe and Rodrigues, 2004; Breitmeier and Rittberger, 1998). Apart from academics, international activists who have written articles about the Narmada contestation after their involvement in it, suggest that the campaign cohered around certain global visions. In 1993, after withdrawing from active engagement in the struggle, Lori Udall wrote “Partnerships and alliances have been forged among NGOs in the World Bank’s member countries that have a common vision of sustainable development that is decentralized, socially just, and environmentally sound” (p203). Bruce Rich of EDF, who was one of the first international campaigners to take up the Narmada issue, later declared “No longer at risk is just a river valley here, and a forest there, but cumulatively the biosphere itself...a global civil society is trying to emerge in the throes of struggles like Narmada” (1991, p105). Apart from these focused treatments of the campaign, countless other articles mention the Narmada INGO coalition as a powerful example of the globalisation of concerns for the environment, human rights and democratic participation, and thus as an example of GCS (Chandhoke, 2002; Katz, 2006; Khonder, 2001).

Discourses and Strategies in the International Narmada Campaign: Contradicting GCS?

While the above representations of the Narmada campaign *claim* that it was a global phenomenon, in this section I take a closer look at documents prepared by and for the campaign to examine whether these claims actually bear testimony in the discourses and strategies adopted by INGOs to mobilise support for the Narmada struggle. The critical analysis of the international campaign is structured around three dimensions: the campaign’s use of environmental discourse, its political strategies in relation to the campaign against the WB, and its use of ‘global’ human rights as a political strategy.

Global ecology or local environment?

The international Narmada campaign’s credentials as part of global civil society are tied, as mentioned earlier, to an assertion of its role in ecological protection. The bio-

sphere is believed necessarily to be a global phenomenon and thus political action surrounding it is expected to crystallise global identities and citizenship. In the case of the Narmada campaign however I argue that this assumption of the globality of the environment is not met. This calls into question the extent to which its environmental discourse provides grounds for the formation of global identities and citizenship, and by extension therefore its characterisation as a phenomenon of global civil society.

Of the hundreds of documents dated between 1982-1994 that were collected and analysed, only two make specific reference to the environment as a global construct and the Narmada struggle as a common global struggle for the environment. In a letter written to the President of the World Bank, 'citizens of Sweden' express their concern over the 'environmental situation in India'. They write:

“The global ecological crisis has reached such magnitude that resolving the crisis requires the active participation of the whole world community...the nature of environmental problems which we face today proves that in our interdependent world very often the sources as well as the consequences of ecological depletion do not respect any national boundaries. Managing the natural resources that we are given is our common future” (Citizens of Sweden, 1989*).

In this text while the environment creates a cause of common concern with the people of the Narmada Valley it is not in itself a sufficient condition for the creation of a 'whole world community'. It is the unique interdependence of the world in which we find ourselves today that has led to the 'nature of the environment' being such that 'ecological depletion does not respect any national boundaries'. Thus it is the *emerging interdependence* in the modern age that is the crux of a world community which transcends national boundaries. A similar sentiment is expressed in the second letter written by an Australian activist who, referring to the Narmada Projects, writes: "...our land and all that depends on it is dying" (1989). In talking of the Narmada Valley as the

destruction of 'our land' she also is drawing on a notion of interdependence between people across countries.

However, such invocations of a common struggle based on notions of interdependence and 'our land' are starkly missing from the rest of the hundreds of documents that were analysed. In contrast to references to the destruction of the global and interdependent environment seen in these two documents, the Narmada project is far more frequently referred to as "hurting the poor and *their* environment" (Probe International, 1992*)⁴⁶ rather than that of a global 'our' environment. In this framing environmental damage is understood as a local rather than global issue. In fact these localised constructions of environmental issues are more accurately seen as concerns relating to livelihood and land rights. According to Survival International:

"Tribal people live in very close contact with their environment. Their livelihoods are therefore totally dependent on the lands that they have lived on for generations" (Survival International, 1991*)⁴⁷.

International support then is garnered not out of a sense of global struggle to protect the common environment but rather out of a sense of duty towards weaker sections of people. This is how Friends of the Earth Japan present the problem of the Narmada Valley:

"The Japanese people are informed that it would be tribal people (Adivasi) who would be affected the most by the project, in other words those people who are at the bottom of Indian society and among the poorest citizens whose lives depend heavily upon local natural resources and *their* surrounding environment. Could Japan support this destructive project that

⁴⁶ 'Position paper on International Development Aid (IDA)'.

⁴⁷ 'Narmada environmentalists make emergency visit to UK' (Press release) 1st May 1991.

will sacrifice the weakest and poorest in Indian society and damage their natural life support system? Should Japanese companies profit from such projects while lending a hand to the destruction? These are the basic questions that Japanese citizens were confronted with” (FoEJ, 1991*)⁴⁸.

Absent here, is the presentation of a radicalised global identity as the *human* collectivity that mobilises for a *common* cause. Rather it is separate national identities that are evoked – where the *Japanese* people are confronted with the moral obligation to support the poorest sections of *Indian* society and *their* environment. Further, Japanese companies, rather than global forces, are highlighted as causing the deterioration of the ‘natural life support system’ of the Adivasis. This puts added moral onus on the Japanese citizens who have democratic responsibility for their national politics and economy and are thus implicated in the destruction of the Valley if they fail to act.

FoEJ thus construct a one way relationship of dependency of the people of the Narmada Valley on the citizens of Japan to act morally to save them and their environment. Missing is a sense of interdependence and common cause between the people of these two places that Taylor (2004) argues is crucial to a notion of global civil society and global citizenship: “In transformative terms, global civil society seeks to reclaim democracy and reconfigure power by generating a sense of global citizenship within which there is increasing awareness of how social issues – near or far – that were once differentially focused and geographically bounded are actually interpenetrated and interdependent” (p9).

That global environmentalism was not a guiding framework of action for the international campaign is evident from the fact that even activists of pivotal environmental INGOs reject such as categorisations of the movement. As McCully of International Rivers Network reveals:

⁴⁸ ‘Destruction in the name of development: The World Bank and the Narmada Valley Development Project in India- Loans for what and for whom?’ (Report), *Second Narmada International Symposium*, May, 1991.

“...it would be pigeon-holed as an environmental movement but we would never sell it like that...we always talked about displacement, resettlement and the necessity of the dam.”
(McCully, 20/6/06).

So far, it has been shown that the international Narmada campaign was not motivated by global concerns for the environment, contrary to scholarly as well as popular depictions. References to the environment were generally constructed in bounded, isolated terms as having localised significance for the people who gain their livelihood from it. Following from this it is argued that the Narmada contestation did not produce global identities based on a common ecological concern.

Campaign against the WB – INGOs and the discourse of national taxpayers

The absence of global identity and citizenship formation in the INGO campaign is also evident in their strategic campaign against the WB, which I will show, was largely structured around national politics and relied on evoking the humanitarian responsibility of national citizens towards the Narmada people.

For INGOs involved in the campaign the destruction occurring in the Narmada Valley was seen as directly related to the World Bank’s neglect of its own procedures and violations of its laws rather than simply the responsibility of the Indian government. This made it the primary target for the international campaign against the Sardar Sarovar dam. A report written by EDF highlighting its concerns regarding the Bank’s involvement, states:

“...there has been negligence in resettlement and rehabilitation planning and implementation...and no serious consideration of alternatives or consultation with local NGOs. These factors have led to mounting opposition to the project, now in its sixth year,

amongst international NGOs as well as constant protest in India” (EDF, 1991*)⁴⁹.

As has already been mentioned, opposition to the World Bank was strategically structured around putting pressure on the Board of Executive Directors. In order to understand the manner in which the campaign evolved it is important to know that the twenty-four Executive Directors of the Bank are directed to vote on Bank policies and projects by the finance ministry of the shareholder country they represent. Since Northern countries are the largest shareholders with correspondingly greater influence over the Bank, the international campaign concentrated on lobbying the Executive Directors of these countries. This led to a campaign structure that focused primarily on national politics where international NGOs behaved like national civil society actors applying pressure on their respective governments and creating national public opinion against the dam and the World Bank. The various state-bound Narmada campaigns were led and organised by, what the activists referred to as ‘nodal NGOs’ in each country which took the responsibility for planning action and enlisting the support of other NGOs in the same country. Here is a plan of strategy prepared by Lori Udall in USA in June 1992, around the time when the Morse report was released:

“Following are the points of action we are taking here and ask you to take as the leader of the Narmada Campaign in your country...1) Please initiate an immediate letter writing campaign. Letters are critical from NGOs and the general public in your country, to your relevant government agencies, parliaments and directly to the WB...3) Please meet with your parliament members and finance ministries and ask them to write letters to the EDs and to Preston (President of WB)” (EDF, 1992*)⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ ‘Environmental, social, and economic concerns related to the World Bank-financed Sardar Sarovar dam and power-project and Sardar Sarovar water delivery and drainage project’.

⁵⁰ ‘Release of Report of SSP Independent Review Team’, Memorandum from EDF (June 21st).

It cannot be denied however that these national campaigns were indeed coordinating and cooperating across borders by sharing information and pursuing common campaign goals. What is argued though is that these campaigns did not create or espouse global identities and affiliations, rather they depended on evoking national frames to encourage action over the Indian dam.

While NGOs held their government responsible for World Bank's lending operations, governments responded to this by disapproving of the project on the basis that it did not meet *national goals* of development aid. For example in a letter to the President of the World Bank, Swedish members of Parliament state:

“Sweden’s development assistance has five fundamental aims: economic growth, economic and social equalization, economic and political independence, a democratic development model and environmental care. Being a member of the World Bank, Sweden shares the responsibility for how Bank funds are spent...we are, however, uncertain as to whether the Sardar Sarovar Project...meets the aims of Swedish Development assistance...We therefore appeal to you to halt further disbursements for the Sardar Sarovar and not to approve any new loans” (‘Swedish members of Parliament’, 1991*).

Financing of the project is thus treated as a national issue relating to Swedish development assistance rather than essentially global funding by the World Bank.

The national framework which structured the campaign was substantiated at the level of public discourse generated by international NGOs. Citizens, whose taxes went towards development aid and World Bank shares, had the right as well as responsibility to question their government regarding the use to which their taxes were put. Thus the UK-based NGO – The Ecologist, invokes the ‘British taxpayers’ to hold their government to account:

“Write to your MP expressing outrage that British taxpayers funded the Narmada dam and studies against the local people’s wishes...Stop the government using our money to harm the poor and the environment of the Third World” (Ecologist, c1994*)⁵¹.

Even when challenging the World Bank, the public’s political claim over the bank is established through their status as national taxpayers. A letter to the Executive Directors from ‘students and staff at the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Karlsruhe, Germany’ states:

“Continued support for the Sardar Sarovar Project in its present state is totally unjustified, and so is continued public support for the Bank if it is blithely to continue using taxpayer’s money to fund it” (1993*).

As taxpayers whose money funds the Bank, they have a moral responsibility to ensure that the Bank’s development projects are justified:

“What right has the Bank, *what right have we whose money is being used*, to disperse families, to break up village communities, to deprive people for their friends and relations?” (ibid, original emphasis).

Here the concerns of German citizens for the project and the Bank’s involvement in it stems from humanitarian concerns regarding the well-being of those affected by the project. The moral responsibility of people towards the displaced is based not on their status simply as global humans but as national taxpayers.

Letters from citizens of other countries convey similar standpoints:

⁵¹ ‘Unhappy Birthday World Bank’ (pamphlet).

“As American taxpayers, we do not wish our tax dollars to be used for so-called “development” projects which submerge villages, uproot cultures, pauperize indigenous peoples and destroy long-standing agricultural eco-systems” (‘American citizens’, 1990*)⁵².

Or here Canadian citizens writing to Executive Directors even threaten to withdraw funding from the Bank:

“...if the World Bank conducts its affairs in ways that are abhorrent to the Canadian public we will have to withdraw our membership” (‘Canadian citizens’, 1991*).

From all these letters, it is clear, firstly, that support for the people of the Valley stems from humanitarian concerns directed towards a localised, bounded community rather than emerging from global issues of interdependency that could draw First World citizens into a common struggle with the people of the Valley. Secondly, national identities are primarily evoked while raising opposition to the Bank. Supporting the Bank’s immoral involvement in the project is viewed as counter to the essence of their national ethos and values – thus “As American citizens” the dam cannot be supported, just as the World Bank has conducted its affairs “in ways that are abhorrent to the Canadian public”. An essential American or Canadian political nature is constructed which cannot support the unjust manner in which the Bank has behaved. By opposing the Bank and supporting the people of the Valley, citizens are performing their national citizenship, where humanitarian concern is viewed as part of their national responsibilities.

⁵² Letter to Executive Director of USA and Senior Vice President of the Bank, from ‘American citizens’ (April 21st 1990).

The campaign for the withdrawal of the WB from the project was therefore structured around the state-centric politics of national taxpayers. ‘International’ NGOs behaved more like national rather than global civil society actors, concentrating on mobilising public opinion and lobbying governments and Executive Directors of their own countries.

Human rights and the Indian state

The prominence of national processes in the politics of INGOs of the Narmada campaign can also be seen in the way in which they were unable to organise political action to prevent human rights abuses in the valley, even though these abuses were rhetorically denounced. Human rights are viewed to be an important ideological and legal mechanism that provides the basis for the alternative politics of GCS by challenging national sovereignty (Chapter 2). The inability of INGOs to mobilise against human rights abuses calls into question the extent to which they were constructing GCS.

The impotence of INGOs in mobilising global structures of governance of the UN to challenge national sovereignty in order to protect human rights became visible very early on in the campaign. In 1986 the UK-based INGO – Survival International wrote a petition regarding the abuse of HRs in the valley, to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva – a United Nations organ for the promotion of HRs of tribal and indigenous communities. ILO followed this up with a letter to the Indian government. This intervention however was met with resistance by the Indian authorities who brushed it aside with “fake” assurances of the state’s respect for human rights. ILO failed to pursue the issue and quietly surrendered. For Medha Patekar this made the “limitations of the UN organisations clear to us” (20/9/05). The international campaign subsequent to this remained cautious of encroaching on the Indian state’s jurisdiction. As Patekar suggested in an interview, foreign attempts to hold the government accountable to human rights violations would have been “counterproductive”, only fuelling government allegations that the NBA was a Western

led attempt to sabotage India's development. Accusations of HRs violations were thus directed towards the WB rather than Indian government. Indeed once the World Bank withdrew from the project international activists were left without a "hook" with which to latch on to the Project (Udall, 20/6/06). While human rights abuses by the state increased after the World Bank withdrew and continue till today, international human rights activists have been left powerless to confront the Indian state. Indeed active international support for the movement reduced drastically after the WB withdrew even though the issues around which the campaign mobilised remain unresolved. The privileging of national sovereignty of India over the human rights of local communities in the international Narmada campaign again throws into question claims that the INGO campaign represents an emergent global civil society and an alternative to the nation-state system.

CONCLUSION

A basic assumption underpinning theorisations of GCS is that it is a form of global governance that provides an alternative to state-centric politics. INGOs are viewed to be the primary enactors of this alternative politics, performing global action and promoting global identities. This is contradicted by analysis presented here from one of the most celebrated instances of GCS – the International Narmada campaign of INGOs. In the case of this campaign, while contestation was co-ordinated across national boundaries, I have argued that it did not fully transcend the state system to create deterritorialised global forms of action, discourse and identity. This is evident firstly, in the localisation and territorialisation of 'environmentalism' as a concern for the livelihoods of local people, secondly, in efforts to awaken the moral conscience of 'national citizens and taxpayers' in the West against the WB's destructive development policies, and finally, in the failure of the international network to uphold human rights as a legitimate concern over and above India's national sovereignty.

By calling for national taxpayers in the West to protect defenceless local communities and 'their environment', the international campaign failed to represent the Narmada

issue as a global struggle. Rather than construct an equal partnership between the people of the Narmada valley and Western public in a global struggle (whether against global capitalism represented by the WB or for environmental justice), the campaign tended to promote a depoliticised discourse of the moral virtue of INGOs and the international community to act on behalf of dependent and disempowered local communities. This was not conducive to the formation of politicised global citizenship.

This chapter thus opens-up debate regarding the constituents of GCS, where consensus otherwise prevails regarding the role of INGOs in promoting global citizenship and global struggle. Though the Narmada campaign coordinated political action across national boundaries, it did so on the basis of national identities. It was therefore at best constructing a transnational citizenship but not a de-territorialised global citizenship which is based on the recognition of common global objectives. Indeed, dependency of local communities on the moral conscience of INGOs, rather than equal participation in common struggle, is made a more probable basis for an alliance between these two actors because of the power (in terms of economic and cultural resources) that INGOs tend to have over grassroots movements. This thus calls into question the ability of INGOs to lead the development of radicalised global citizenship. From this point of departure, the following chapters turn to a more detailed discussion of the grassroots movement of NBA as a potential site of global citizenship and the pedagogical process of social struggle that facilitates this.

Chapter 7

NBA's Collective Identity – Political and Cognitive Praxis at the Local, National and Global Scales

INTRODUCTION

While analysing NBA's collective identity as a struggle of local, national or global relevance, from the perspective of the movement, this chapter explores the possibility of instantiating GCS in and through NBA. In doing so it attempts to counter the perceived marginalisation of local movements in GCS literature. Drawing on the Gramscian interpretative framework developed in chapter 3, it examines how the collective identity of the movement at various scales – local, national and global, evolved through a dialectical interaction between the political and cognitive praxis, or action and reflection components of the movement's collective identity. This dialectical interaction is viewed as an educative process, with the learning emerging from this encompassed in and constituting the movement's collective identity. In order to answer whether the movement is a collective actor within GCS, the chapter examines the possible forms in which the movement's collective identity reflects learning of connections between local struggle and national and global scales of transformation.

The chapter begins by identifying analytical problems in current understandings of NBA's collective identity and multiple scales of action. Before turning to address these, the Gramscian notion of collective identity that informs analysis is revisited and connected to the notion of scale and scale frames. The next section explores the movement's construction of the scale of struggle from local, national, transnational to global. At each scale the interactions between the political and cognitive praxis of the movement is explored to understand the learning processes that led to the extension of scale of action and collective identity. Finally these processes of political-cognitive

praxis and learning are brought together to understand the evolution of NBA's collective identity.

ANALYTICAL PROBLEMS IN CURRENT THEORISATIONS OF NBA

As I suggested in chapter 2, theoretical representations of political alliances between local social movements and international NGOs are dominated by Keck and Sikknik's boomerang model of transnationalisation. Within this, weak local movements are often portrayed as adopting global identities and discourses as *tactical mechanisms* for drawing support from powerful NGOs to defend local claims. Earlier I showed how this creates and reinforces a dichotomy between local as parochial and global as transformative.

Studies on NBA's efforts to transnationalise its resistance also tend to feed into this trend (Gandhi, 2003). Thus the NBA's 'liberation consciousness' of environmentalism and destructive development, i.e. the global dimensions of NBA's collective identity are analysed by Dwivedi (1998) as simply a "constructed strategic predisposition" that is "selectively drawn upon" when addressing its global constituency (p161-162). It is also suggested by many that environmental discourse was not only selectively deployed at the transnational level but came to dominate the movement's collective identity (Guadalupe and Rodrigues, 2004; Randeria, 2003). Thus "after aligning itself with some of the world's most prominent environmental organisations, the NDS/NGNS had *steered sharply* towards environmentalism" (Sen, 1999, p357, italics added). These analytical conclusions of global determinancy are drawn even when descriptive accounts in the same article point to national sources of environmentalism. Whitehead (2005) even suggests that NBA's alliance with INGOs led to a distortion and neglect of local demands – "Mobilization came to be focused on an anti-dam policy that conformed to a western environmental discourse that had international legitimacy, while the issues of compensation became secondary" (p17). These accounts imply that the presence of global discourses within NBA appeared through emulating or mechanically transplanting discourses of INGOs.

Associated with accusations of undue international influence on NBA is the criticism that it retreated from engagement with national political institutions. For instance, Randeria (2003) notes “The vocabulary of the movement as much as the timing of local action was often determined by demands of the global arena and transnational constituency building instead of seeking to work through regional and national political institutions” (p315).

Such accounts are problematic in at least four ways. Firstly, they create a model of unmediated local to global linkage that removes the local movement and its grievances from the national context of power and struggle. Secondly, discourse is simply seen as a mobilisation resource, which misses its relevance as a process of critical reflection and articulation of politicised positions. Thirdly, local mobilisations and their demands are treated as static. Consequently they fail to see the construction of collective identity of local movements as an ongoing and dynamic process of learning through engagement with national and global power structures. Fourthly, various scales – local, national and global are seen as separate and distinct. This fails to identify the enmeshment of national and local level processes in the transnationalisation of grievances.

In terms of the first of these shortcomings, namely the obfuscation of the national dimensions of NBA’s politics, it should be clear by now (and will become clearer in the course of this chapter) that the movement engaged with national political institutions (chapter 5) in parallel with international institutions (chapter 6). Thus the suggestion that the movement’s politics represented a shifting upwards of resistance from national to transnational simply ignores the manner in which the campaign against the WB was carried on alongside and was bolstered by an equally strong campaign targeting the Indian state. Indeed this politics of multiple levels is already acknowledged by some observers (Dwivedi, 1998; Bose, 2004).

However beyond concrete engagements with political institutions, movements are also continuously engaged in subjective processes of interpreting political institutions and

constructing grievances. These processes have not been fully acknowledged in the case of NBA, and this failure underlies the last three problems in current studies on NBA highlighted above, which together lead to simplistic and mechanistic accounts of NBA's development. In order to avoid such mechanistic accounts there is a need to explore the manner in which a movement's political actions both lead to and are shaped by the subjective aspects of its collective identity. Below I elaborate on the conceptualisation of collective identity guiding this chapter and its relationship to the notion of political scales and scale frames.

DEFINING COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, SCALE AND SCALE FRAMES

The collective identity of a movement is the "enduring self-definition that a group constructs in the process of collective action" (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p165). This self-definition is apparent according to Melucci (1985) in the structural 'form' of the movement. Thus the "form of a movement is a message" (p801). Collective identity is therefore a symbolic property emergent from the practices of the movement such that "their practices...are their self-definition" (Castells, 2004, p73). In this chapter I identify NBA's collective identity in terms of political and cognitive practices or praxis. Political praxis involves engagement with political structures and refers specifically to movement tactics which are strategic responses to these structures. Cognitive praxis pertains to discursive and physical practices within the sphere of civil society and is identifiable in two forms – firstly in terms of collective action frames that refer to "sets of beliefs that justify and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns" (Kurtz, 2003, p894). These discursive frameworks for action construct the movement's grievances and assign meaning to political structures in a manner that guides and substantiates strategic action. Secondly, cognitive praxis is evident in the self-constituting practices of a movement. These practices express the movement's cognitive praxis, for instance through the formation of ideological (rather than strategic) alliances and self-help strategies. The political and cognitive praxis of the movement represents the doing and thinking of the movement's collective identity and together constitute the nature of the movement's 'us' in opposition to the opponent 'them'. As we shall see, the

political and cognitive praxis of a movement exist in dialectical interaction with each other leading to a process of learning that is embodied in the movement's collective identity.

The notion of collective identity suggests that the actions and grievances of a movement are not inevitable and pre-existing, but are reflexively constructed by the movement. An important part of developing and constructing actions and grievances involves determining the political scale at which they should be exercised.

The concept of scale is used to analytically structure space, i.e. to create boundaries. However as Marston (2000) emphasises scale is not an 'ontologically given category', but is itself socially constructed - "scale is not necessarily a preordained hierarchical framework for ordering the world – local, regional, national and global. It is instead a contingent outcome of the tensions that exist between structural forces and the practices of human agents" (p220). In this sense the creation of scales is a political *process* (Brenner, 1997), which provides a "*mode* of understanding the world" (Perreault, 2003, p64) rather than a fixed, unchanging frame of reference. The constructed nature of scales is evident from their relational quality in that a scale is identifiable only when juxtaposed against other scales.

The construction of the scale of protest is driven by the formation of scale frames that are a form of collective action frames that discursively construct the scale at which blame is attributed and grievances identified. Scale frames are thus the "the discursive practices that construct meaning (and actionable) linkages between the scale at which a social problem is experienced and the scale(s) at which it could be politically addressed or resolved" (Kurtz, 2003, p894). Scale frames therefore determine which political institutions are targeted, at what scale and in what manner. These subjective frameworks can be seen as part of the cognitive praxis of the movement which themselves are a product of learning arising from a movement's political praxis. The scale at which a movement constructs and contests its struggle is therefore reflective of the movement's collective identity. The significance of these processes and their

interconnections will become clearer as I go on to examine the manner in which NBA's collective identity evolved and was constructed at various political scales.

Before this however one final point must be made. Collective identity represents the "shared definition" (Taylor and Whittier, 1995, p172) of a movement. The following investigation of collective identity therefore focuses on the public, consensual image of the movement rather than internal differences and tensions. Analysis is therefore based on observations and interviews of people and media through which this image is projected – urban activists, leader figures, documents, newsletters and press releases of the NBA.

PROCESSES IN NBA'S MULTISCALAR POLITICS AND THE EVOLUTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

In this section I explore the evolution of NBA's collective identity as a local struggle to one of national and global relevance. I examine how the expansion of the movement's political scale of contestation was based on a process of learning emerging from a dialectical interaction between the movement's political and cognitive praxis.

The Local Scale Frame and Collective Identity

The first three years of NBA's struggle against the SSP, from 1985-1988, were, I argue, conducted at the local scale of contestation, in that mobilisations during this time were organised solely around the demand for adequate rehabilitation. Since this demand was only of material relevance to those immediately affected by the dam, the movement at this stage was 'localised'. Of course this local scale of contestation is only apparent in juxtaposition against the other scales at which the movement's political struggle later developed (as will be described soon). The local as is referred to here, therefore, was not a pre-existing, concrete entity. Indeed its spatial contours evolved between 1985 and 1988. While Medha Patekar first started mobilising tribal villages in Maharashtra, gradually also Gujarat, and eventually Adivasi and Nimari villages in Madhya Pradesh, the 'local' grassroots mass base of the movement developed from families in different villages and states, to encompass 'people of the Narmada Valley'. Though the local was

clearly not a pre-existing 'thing', the localness of the political struggle at this stage is nevertheless visible in the bounded relevance of political demands for rehabilitation to those directly affected by the project.

The *political praxis* of the movement at this stage, thus involved petitioning local authorities, the state and national governments to meet these demands. Patekar also sought to form linkages with sympathetic national civil society organisations which were viewed as 'opportunity structures'⁵³ that could increase pressure on the government to respond to local demands for rehabilitation:

“Actually in the beginning I thought, gosh...how will we reach the district officials, state officials and the government, how will we put pressure on them working from such an interior place...That's why I came up with the model of support groups...The first support group we formed was in Dhargaon tehsil in Maharashtra, then we formed one in Dhulia in 1986.”
(Patekar, 26/2/06).

The linkage of the grassroots struggle to national civil society clearly had an important strategic function. It also led to an interaction between the actors who would come to play a large role in the development of the normative aspects of the NBA's collective identity, as we shall see later.

At this stage, however, the *cognitive praxis* of the movement was governed by a local scale frame that assumed and targeted a localised failure in the government's duty to deliver provisions. This framing of grievances did not explicitly challenge the state's legitimisation of the dam as necessary for national progress. Neither did it rebuke calls for the displaced to 'sacrifice' for this cause as dam authorities such as S.C. Varma (former chairman of the Narmada Valley Development Agency) here urges them to do:

“Because the land occupied by the family is required for a development project which holds the promise of progress and

⁵³ This concept is taken from resource mobilisation theory (see p64).

prosperity for the country and people in general. The family getting displaced thus makes a sacrifice so that others may live in happiness and be economically better off.” (Quoted in Baviskar, 2004, p223).

The movement’s acceptance of the project as a whole also did not raise any challenges to arguments in support of the dam that were based on the assertion that ‘backward’ Adivasis would also benefit from displacement by being brought into the mainstream society and economy (Baviskar, 1995).

As such, NBA apparently conceded to the hegemonic image of the state as neutral arbitrator of ‘development for all’ and protector of citizens’ rights and well-being. In a document outlining the ‘Role of Voluntary Organization in Rehabilitation’ Patekar states:

“In the welfare state that India is, with the State responsible both for the macro-planning and execution of the projects concerned as also welfare of all sections of the disadvantaged (who include the oustees), the government is rightly held responsible as the main actor in this regard. The compulsory nature of relocation makes it much more obligatory for the State [to provide rehabilitation] (Patekar, c1985, p4*).

Patekar’s characterisation of relocation as ‘compulsory’ suggests that the necessity of development projects for the national interest was not questioned and that the displacement of people for this purpose was considered legitimate. Patekar further evokes the image of the state as impartial promoter of universal development by emphasising the state’s role in protecting the ‘welfare of all sections of the disadvantaged’ in the development process.

The displacement of local communities was thus not connected to a systemic critique of the development model. As such a local scale of contestation was constructed that bore no relevance to those beyond the locality and therefore did not necessitate mobilisation

beyond this bounded area. This scale frame was expressed in self-constituting practices of the movement such as holding meetings and demonstrations in which people came to view themselves as *visthapit* or 'displaced people', initially of various villages, and slowly of the Narmada Valley.

From the political and cognitive praxis of the movement at this stage it can be suggested that the *collective identity* of the movement was that of a localised struggle in which the local communities to be immediately displaced by the Sardar Sarovar dam constituted the movement community. NBA's collective identity did not remain as such however. From 1988 onwards it began to develop at a national scale as we shall see below.

The National Scale Frame and Collective Identity

In August 1988 NBA's *political praxis* underwent a transition. The movement ceased simply demanding rehabilitation and stopped cooperating with the state authorities. This signalled a political opposition to the state's development policies that culminated in the declaration of complete opposition to the dam. Underlying this declaration was a qualitatively different collective action frame that operated at the national scale. While I will elaborate on the content of this national framing later, here it is necessary to draw attention to how this framing emerged. Essentially this process was based on learning from movement experiences arising out of the movement's political praxis at the local level involving firstly, direct engagement with the state to deliver local provisions and secondly, the formation of linkages with national civil society organisations to facilitate this engagement. Through these experiences the movement learnt that the state's hegemonic image as protector of human rights and neutral arbitrator of competing interests could not be upheld. This shift in understanding led to changes in the movement's political and cognitive praxis that transformed NBA's scale frame of political contestation from local to national.

Examining the first dimension of NBA's political praxis, the movement's interactions with government institutions and personnel had a pedagogical impact in that it enabled the movement to *directly encounter and experience* the state in a way that conflicted

with its hegemonic image, and thus played an important role in NBA's reassessment of the state. This process of learning occurred gradually and started with movement leaders' efforts to gather information regarding rehabilitation plans from the three state governments involved in the project – information that shockingly oustees had not yet been given. Apart from obtaining and analysing policy documents and rehabilitation blueprints, activists also held public meetings in which they questioned local officials in front of oustees. They also initiated collective searches and examination of resettlement land identified by the governments. From this it became apparent that there were serious shortcomings in the arrangements for resettlement made by the three state governments, ultimate responsibility for which fell with the central government. These concerns are raised in an NBA document dated around 1988:

“...the most preliminary information regarding the number of villages and families affected, the extent of the areas which is going to be sub-merged, the number of hamlets likely to be displaced either because they will be surrounded by water or for other reasons is not available from the states till today, leave aside the detailed plan for rehabilitation” (NBA, c1988, p4*)⁵⁴.

The mobilisation, however responded to this situation by “continu[ing] to pursue a process of dialogue” (Patekar, 1993, p159). Activists in consultation with oustees formulated a list of thirty-six demands mostly relating to the form of rehabilitation required by oustees as well as the need for more information on existing and future government plans for rehabilitation. These demands were presented to the government accompanied by a mass rally of oustees in 1986. The government's response to this, according to the movement, however was the formulation of more “paper policies and paper provisions” (NBA, c1988, p5*) that did not materialise on the ground.

Reflecting the movement's original acceptance of the state's hegemonic image of neutrality, movement leaders often understood the government's inadequate planning of

⁵⁴ ‘Sardar Sarovar on the Narmada: Why do we oppose?’ (pamphlet).

rehabilitation in non-politicised terms, as “mistakes” (Patekar, c1987a, p2*)⁵⁵, “lack of coordination” (ibid) and “bureaucratic failures and insensitiveness” (Patekar, c1985, p2*), rather than as an indication of the state’s class character. However this assessment started to slowly change – though unevenly, in that activists persisted in expecting the state to perform its hegemonic function and thus deliver entitlements to oustees, while at the same time increasingly voicing a more critical view of the state’s unresponsiveness as suggestive of “vested interests” (Patekar, c1985, p4*) and lack of political will. As recounted by Patekar:

“We have been betrayed many times by the state. They have broken the promises they made to us...After having dialogue, questioning, getting information and saying you have to show us full rehabilitation, finally we got tired of saying this and we realised that they will not do these things, there is no political will, they are not capable of giving full rehabilitation” (Patekar, 26/2/06).

Patekar’s expression of ‘broken promises’ and ‘betrayal’ highlights the fact that the movement had clear expectations that the government would support its cause. At the same time it suggests an emerging recognition of the fallacy of these expectations. The crystallisation of this shift in the movement’s perception of the state is even more apparent in the way in which a new reason is attributed to the government’s failure to respond – i.e. a lack of “political will” that reformulates the state as a politicised and biased agent of development (the presence of ‘vested interests’ that is implied by this will be elaborated on below). That this shifting perception involves learning, is evident from the manner in which it is “realised” through a process of “dialogue and questioning” of the state. An emergent criticality towards the state also led activists to question the legitimacy of the state’s model of ‘development’ itself:

“Can we describe this displacement of large number of poor people...as ‘Justice’ or ‘development’?” (NBA, c1988, p3*).

⁵⁵ ‘A brief note on the Narmada Dharangrast Samiti’

The government's callousness with regard to rehabilitation of poor people, who need development the most, was thus exposing the fallacy of development as a universal project of economic betterment.

In 1988 one last meeting was organised by activists which was attended by state and central level authorities and 300 project affected people. In this "final dialogue", lasting for six hours, when no concrete solutions to the issue of resettlement were forthcoming, the mass-organisation decided that "we must give two months' time to the government and, then if we do not get the answers, oppose the dam" (Patekar, 1993, p161).

The learning leading upto this ultimatum, and eventually to a national scaling of NBA's grievances (as will be shown below), was a result, as suggested by movement leaders, of "the experience we continued to gain through our interaction with the governments" (NBA, 1991, p6*)⁵⁶. This pedagogical process however was supported by another dimension of the movement's political praxis, to which I now turn, i.e. interactions with national civil society organisations, primarily NGOs.

The strategic linkages that NBA formed with NGOs, as I suggested earlier, facilitated access to the government. It also encouraged deepening and broadening of the awareness that was already emerging through NBA's local experiences with the state, of the systemic and oppressive nature of development. NGOs contributed to this process in a number of ways. Firstly they drew attention to the fact that the plight of SSP oustees was not isolated but had been repeated in relation to other dams in India. Secondly, and most importantly, they helped NBA to widen their critique of SSP itself to include environmental and economic issues apart from rehabilitation. In fact this critique by NGOs had already begun to emerge before grassroots mobilisations arose.

In 1983, following a research trip to the Narmada Valley, the Hindu Nature Club at Delhi University in conjunction with Kalpavriksh, an environmental NGO in Delhi, published a scathing report on the SSP suggesting that the model of development it represented is "not only ecologically non-sustainable, it is also socio-culturally

⁵⁶ 'Response to Arch-Vahini's critique of Narmada Bachao Andolan and anti-dam arguments'.

destructive” (Kalpavriksh, 1985, p285)⁵⁷. This report was widely circulated to NGOs within India as well as internationally. The report was also presented to the recently created Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) who were keen to establish their position as custodians of environmental issues in India. Based on Kalpavriksh’s study they withheld environmental clearance for the project. At the same time investigations by supportive organisations uncovered inaccuracies in the government’s assessment of costs and economic benefits of the project. This served to build a body of counter-knowledge that challenged the very grounds upon which the government legitimised the project – i.e. its importance for the economic and social progress of the nation. Based on technical examinations of project plans, it was also argued that the main benefits of the dam would go to rich farmers and industrial factories in Gujarat rather than the impoverished and drought-stricken region of Kutch and Saurashtra that the project had been proclaimed to serve (NBA, c1988*).

Despite MoEF’s refusal to give official approval to the project, the Indian government proceeded to secure a WB loan for SSP. In 1987 however, MoEF finally gave conditional clearance. Through their contacts with environmental NGOs in India, movement leaders learnt that the clearance was given under intense pressure from the central government and that the Ministry was still concerned about the ecological impact of the project. This further validated the movement’s increasing realisation of the politicised nature of development, which their experiences of demanding rehabilitation had already begun to suggest. It highlighted:

“...the irrationality in government’s decisions related to Sardar Sarovar, [as] a perfect example of the vested interests active in pushing large scale ‘development projects’ without ensuring their justifiability both in economic and social terms, weighing the benefits and costs in the light of ‘equity and justice’” (Patekar, c1987a, p3).

⁵⁷ This is an abridged version of the original report authored by The Environmental Action Group and the Hindu College Nature Club, Delhi University (1993), titled - ‘The Narmada Valley Project – Development or Destruction?’

The depiction of the government as irrational in its bias towards “vested interests” is again suggestive of the change in the movement’s understanding of the state which was previously viewed as a ‘rational’ agent arbitrating justly and fairly between competing interests. The state’s “irrationality” in making decisions regarding development exposes the failure of the dominant model of development as a process based on “equity and justice”, for the ‘public interest’ (NBA, c1988, p11*).

In that NGOs made movement leaders aware of wider environmental and economic critiques of the dam, and showed the ways in which official procedures of the government were “bulldozed” (Patekar, 4/3/05) as in the case of the mandatory environmental clearance, NGOs provided an *indirect* means through which the state was further experienced by NBA.

The movement’s political praxis of engagement with the state and civil society organisations at the local scale thus provided direct and indirect pedagogical experiences of the state that crystallised into an awareness of the “hegemony of the myth of ‘development’” (NBA, 2002, p9*)⁵⁸. In August 1988, this learning culminated in a shift in the movement’s political praxis from demanding rehabilitation to outright opposition to the dam and was articulated through slogans such as:

Vikas niti dhoka hai, dhaka maro mauka hai! (Development politics is a fraud, kick it out, this is the chance!)

Punarvas niti dhoka hai! (The rehabilitation policy is a fraud!)

This tactical change was thus driven as much by an ideological opposition to the state’s development model, as it was by a conviction that the state would never be able to fully rehabilitate the displaced.

The political learning that led to opposition to the dam was condensed within an expanded *cognitive praxis* of the movement, involving a broader ideological critique of development as capitalist-led, non-democratic, environmentally destructive and

⁵⁸ ‘For a true national interest: Save the Namada Valley’ (pamphlet).

exploitative of the poor. In opposition to the hegemony of development the movement formed a counter-hegemonic discourse of the 'environmentalism of the poor'. While I have elaborated on the nature of this discourse in chapter 5, here it is necessary to highlight that this cognitive praxis extended the scale frame of the struggle towards the national level:

“The oustees today have declared their total opposition to the project not only to protect their own properties and interests but also in the interest of the nation; in the interest of real development” (NBA, c1988, p20*).

The local struggle of the displaced for their homes, land, forests and livelihood was recast as a matter of wider national significance, suggesting a dialectical relationship between local concerns of the Narmada people and national interests. This was achieved by conceptualising the local plight of oustees as symptomatic of problems with the hegemonic model of development promoted and executed by the state. NBA is therefore positioned as a struggle for the 'real development' of the nation. By equating tribal and rural people's struggle against displacement in the Narmada Valley with 'national interest' NBA suggests that these people, and the poor people that they represent, are the 'real' India in opposition to the elite few who benefit from the dominant model of development. Thus the movement:

“...became a significant attempt of empowerment of people to face and challenge the mighty state and its design to pauperize, deprive masses while favouring prosperity of a much small stratum of society as is the final result of such development strategy” (NBA, 1991, p1*).

NBA's identification of the Narmada people as members of the 'masses' who are commonly exploited by 'development', provided the discursive basis for uniting various

other oppressed groups across India to formulate a broad-based, and thus counter-hegemonic challenge to the hegemonic model of development.

The movement's challenge to destructive development however, did not just remain at the discursive level but was manifested in its self-constituting practices that consisted of the formation of alliances with other social movements of the poor broadly fighting against destructive development within India. The beginnings of this network were made in September 1989, when the Narmada Bachao Andolan organised the 'National Rally Against Destructive Development' in Harsud. The first of its kind, the rally attracted 50,000-100,000 people who were fighting their own struggles against development beyond the Narmada Valley (Sangvai, 2002). The civil society interaction emerging from this rally finally led to the formation of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) in 1996. The Alliance consists of over 200 environmental, tribal, lower caste, women's and human rights organisations and movements as well as groups such as the National Fisherman's Forum that are striving to achieve:

“people's rights over natural resources, for true internationalism and for a just, sustainable and egalitarian society, with a clear ideology against corporate globalisation, religious fundamentalism and discrimination of any kind” (NAPM, c1996*)⁵⁹.

Though the NAPM is national in organisation it is apparently also committed to an “internationalism” that recognises the dialectical relationship between national and global forms of oppression. More will be said about this later.

For NBA this alliance was different from the partnerships that it had formed with NGOs within a local scale frame. While those linkages had been treated as an important strategic mechanism to support and strengthen the local struggle, the alliances with

⁵⁹ 'National Alliance of People Peoples' Movements' (leaflet).

social movements at the national scale were based on the perception of an ideological and political affinity. These alliances thus served to constitute NBA's struggle as one of national relevance:

“At another level, the NBA has always been relating to the wider struggle. NBA to NAPM, that process does not merely [mean] going to different struggles and then saying, “We support you, and you support us”. It means building a comprehensive ideological position and taking local to national action” (Medha quoted in Bose, 2004, p145).

In that alliance formation is not limited to strategic considerations, and instead attempts to construct a “comprehensive ideological position” that challenges the hegemony, NAPM might be understood as formative steps towards the coalescence of various isolated struggles into a counter-hegemonic ‘bloc’ that is engaged in a Gramscian ‘war of position’. Attempts to further strengthen this revolutionary praxis is evident in proposals by NBA leaders to “have a national struggle from NAPM to NPM – from national alliance of people’s movements to national people’s movements” (Patekar, 26/2/06). Though this would be the next step in the transformative dialectic between action and reflection, leaders of the various movements within NAPM have not yet “felt prepared enough” (ibid) to move in this direction.

By developing a national framing of their local grievances NBA was also expanding its *collective identity* to include not just the displaced of the Narmada Valley but all poor people in India who are fighting against destructive development policies promoted by the state. NBA was thus projecting itself as part of a broader national movement of the ‘environmentalism of the poor’.

This account of the extension of NBA's collective identity from a local to a national scale movement is significant in two ways. Firstly it illustrates the manner in which experiences gained from the movement's political praxis of engaging with the state and

national civil society organisations led to critical awareness of local displacement as a symptom of the inequitable nature of development. A process of learning was therefore involved in extending the movement's scale frame of contestation from local to national, and in the associated formation of NBA's counter-hegemonic alliances at the local level. Secondly, and emerging from the first point, the account of learning processes in NBA's transformation from a local struggle for rehabilitation to a wider struggle against destructive development counter-checks those accounts that attribute NBA's development to a mechanical process of adopting environmental discourses from INGOs.

Though I doubt the extent to which INGOs were involved in determining the environmental aspects of NBA's discourse, the movement's political engagement with INGOs and the WB was instrumental in producing other aspects of the movement's collective identity, to which I now turn.

Transnational Scale Frame and Collective Identity

As I have shown so far, the movement's political interactions with the state led to an emerging awareness of the state's political apathy to the movement's legitimate demands. This encouraged the movement to launch a strategic trans-border campaign, alongside national contestation that targeted the financier of the project – the WB.

The extension of political contestation across national borders is commonly treated as evidence of the formation of global scale frames. However this is based on a misguided conflation of trans-border activity with the global (Tarrow, 2005). As we shall see, NBA did take its struggle beyond the national level, but this did not automatically lead to a global scaling of their grievances. To avoid this conflation, I will highlight the manner in which NBA's international campaign operated at transnational *and* global scales of contention.

Tarrow identifies two forms of ‘transnational’ action in which the state is either directly or indirectly a target of protest – one which he refers to as internalisation where local actors appeal to their governments to prevent global forces impinging on national politics; and externalisation, based on Keck and Sikknik’s Boomerang model, where local actors seek global support to prevent state injustices. As I will show, NBA’s linkage with INGOs and the campaign targeting the WB itself was at least initially based on externalising transnational protest. The political praxis of the movement at the transnational scale thus involved indirectly targeting the Indian government and its management of the project through external agents – the WB and INGOs.

There were two distinct phases at this transnational scale of struggle that roughly coincided with the periods before and after NBA’s declaration of opposition to the dam. The political praxis of externalising protest against the government in these two phases took two different forms and was based on different crystallisations of cognitive praxis. In a manner similar to how NBA evolved from local to national scale frames, the transition from the first to the second phase of the transnational scale of contestation was driven by what the movement was learning about the nature of the WB directly through its engagement with this institution, and indirectly through its interactions with INGOs.

The first phase – WB as political opportunity structure

In the early phase of NBA’s mobilisation, before opposition to the dam was declared, the movement’s *political praxis* targeted the WB as an external ‘opportunity structure’ through which the movement’s demands on the state could be amplified. As the financier of the project, the WB had a significant influence over the government’s management of SSP which under conditions of the Bank’s loan agreement was legally bound to follow certain environmental and rehabilitation guidelines. Taking advantage of this, the movement used the WB as a leverage to coax the government to comply with conditions and prepare studies. While in this period the Indian government was

largely identified as the source of grievances, the presence of the WB in the project was not directly challenged.

By 1986 the movement was receiving attention from INGOs involved in the MDB reform campaign. Medha Patekar was quick to realise their utility in facilitating the movement's access to the WB. For instance in 1987 Medha Patekar wrote to an international activist suggesting ways in which he could ask the WB to intervene in the domestic management of the project:

“...Gujarat are trying their best to seek clearance for S.Sarovar not through fulfilling the rational, technical criteria put forward by the Central Government in India but through political appeals and pressures...WB should shut the power-lobbies within India...by declaring that WB will not release assistance...unless all these preconditional studies/plans are completed...” (Patekar, c1987b*)⁶⁰.

The role of INGOs in the movement's political praxis also involved maintaining the 'boomerang circuit' (Keck and Sikknik, 1998) between the movement, WB and Indian government by relaying information between these parties. While liaising with grassroots leaders, international activists reported government failures in rehabilitation planning and implementation to the Bank. In turn they also provided key insider information to the movement regarding the Bank's reactions to the ground situation. INGOs were thus an important channel through which NBA were able to politically engage with, and experience the WB. By extension they were therefore also integral to NBA's emerging tactical evaluation of the Bank's role in the project. This is not however to suggest that INGOs were the only means through which NBA accessed the WB. Leaders of the movement often wrote letters directly to the institution or would cease opportunities to personally interrogate WB officials when they made occasional trips to India.

⁶⁰ Letter written to Bruce Rich (EDF) from Patekar.

In this phase political praxis at the transnational scale was maintained by a *cognitive praxis* that accepted the WB's hegemonic role in facilitating development as an equitable process of economic betterment. NBA thus relied on the WB's "credentials as a Development Bank for the world's poor" (NBA, c1987*)⁶¹ and appealed to the WB and its staff of "modern, civilized decision-makers" (Patekar, c1988*)⁶² to live up to these credentials by forcing the Indian government to address outstanding issues of rehabilitation and economic and environmental impact assessments that had not yet been adequately addressed in this development project.

The second phase – WB as a political structure of constraint

Towards the end of 1988, the first phase of transnational contestation gave way to the second phase, in which NBA's *political praxis* was revised to a demand for the withdrawal of WB from the project. The Bank's withdrawal, it was argued would throw into question the legitimacy of the project. Further it would lead to the retraction of much needed finances without which "the implementation of the project would not have been possible" (CAWBADIA, 1994, p6*)⁶³.

This change in strategy was an outcome of a process of learning from the movement's direct and indirect political interactions with the WB in the first phase of transnational contestation. These engagements were pedagogically significant in that they enabled the movement to experience the WB and its operations. While these experiences contradicted the movement's cognitive praxis of the institution as a positive political structure for economic betterment, the movement was spurred to reconsider this position.

⁶¹ NBA Memorandum.

⁶² letter from Patekar to Moeen Qureshi, (WB).

⁶³ 'A report of the preparatory meeting of Global Campaign Against World Bank and Destructive International Aid (CAWBADIA)'.

Movement activists first made direct contact with the WB in 1986 when Bank consultant, William Partridge and other WB officials visited the Valley to examine progress on rehabilitation. Patekar made the Bank aware of the government's failures on this front and found Partridge to be particularly "sensitive" (Patekar, 11/3/05) to the concerns raised by her. Though this encounter confirmed the movement's initial appraisal of the WB as a political opportunity structure, subsequent experiences with it were less encouraging:

"We thought that everything we said, and they agreed, would be reflected in their report, which would come to the logical conclusion that the project was not fully planned and all the compensatory plans were not established and so the project could not go on at that pace. But then that never happened. We went on and on with the meetings, and there were many positive responses. We got a lot of information and documents, but we never saw commitments being seriously followed up, or an acknowledgement of the logical conclusion that emerged from the ground reality." (Patekar, 1993, p173).

The view that the WB would 'logically' respond to NBA's concerns suggests that it was perceived to be politically neutral and without class affiliations, reflecting the institutions hegemonic representation as a positive force for social betterment. This image was supported by the global institutions own environmental and social guidelines and procedures for funding development projects. However faith in the Bank's credentials was shaken when activists became aware of its failure to uphold these guidelines in the midst of their flagrant violation on the ground. In addition, activists discovered through investigations of documents received directly from Bank officials and through INGOs, that before giving the loan:

“...the Bank had never gone through the basic issues and had based its assessment mostly on the data provided by the interested party – the government” (NBA, 1991-1992, p15*)⁶⁴.

Even more damagingly it was found that:

“...the Bank signed the credit agreements before the Project was granted the necessary environmental and Planning Commission’s clearance, under the laws of this land” (ibid, p15*).

This emerging understanding of the WB’s inadequacy and carelessness in ensuring that the government conform to its formal standards for rehabilitation and environmental assessment, at the stage of both project planning and construction, led to the second phase of transnational contestation in which this learning was condensed into a new cognitive praxis that supported a demand for the withdrawal of the Bank from the project. This *cognitive praxis* involved greater cognisance of the WB’s negative impact on national processes and therefore also its presence as a political structure of constraint in relation to the movement’s objectives. This still constructed a transnational scale frame, however, in that it was indirectly attempting to target the Indian government and stop the project by removing the “influence of the World Bank [which] would make the project a fait accompli” and lead to a “distorted decision-making process” within national institutions (Patekar, 1993, p173-174).

It must be noted that focusing strategic action on the WB in this way was not simply a natural, evident outcome of the WB’s role as financier of the project. That WB’s culpability for the national situation was constructed by the NBA is evident from the highly polarised debate this strategy gave rise to within NBA’s national support groups. When Medha Patekar went to the US Congressional Subcommittee in 1989 to testify to the “environmental and social problems” caused by the “World Bank financed Sardar Sarovar Dam” (Patekar, 1989*), Ashish Kothari on behalf of three Delhi-based NGOs

⁶⁴ ‘Towards sustainable and just development: The people’s struggle in the Narmada Valley’ (pamphlet).

wrote a letter to members of the Narmada Bachao Andolan expressing their disapproval of Medha Patekar's testimony to the US Congress:

“It seems to us unwise, both as a fundamental principle as well as strategy, to appeal directly to a foreign government or state (or a part of this, such as Congressmen) to intervene in a matter that is primarily internal. The Narmada Project has been conceived, legitimised, and implemented by our own governments, and we feel it is wrong for us to ask for an external agency's influence to seek accountability of Indian institutions” (Kothari, 1989*).

According to this view, only the state can be a legitimate target of protest. The presence of the World Bank in the project was viewed as an autonomous decision of the state which should therefore not be subjected to foreign deliberation.

Leaders of NBA however argued that the Bank's impact on the national level would have to be acknowledged and addressed in order to stop the dam's construction. According to activists, the Bank was providing legitimacy to the project by lending “prestige and tacit approval...to the mighty plan” (NBA, c1988, p14*). It provided a powerful political tool to the government for suppressing national debate regarding the project and was therefore also a perpetuating force in the state's abuse of social and environmental safeguards:

“In fact the continued Bank support to the project is being interpreted as a kind of *carte blanche* by the Indian government to go ahead and do whatever pleases it...This includes large scale social and environmental disruption as well as serious human rights violations” (Dharamadhikary, 1992*)⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Letter to Executive Directors of Bank from Shripad Dharamadhikary – prominent activist of NBA.

The dubious environmental clearance given to the project by the Ministry of Environment in 1987 was seen as directly related to the distorting effects of the World Bank on national decision making processes:

“The state governments, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh now argued that the Bank had appraised the project and had agreed to fund it...MOEF had no business to stall the project. The pressure kept mounting and among other arguments this became the strongest push factor for the MOEF granting an environmental clearance.” (Patekar, c1992, p6*)⁶⁶.

The funder was thus seen as a “main force and main influencer” (Patekar, 4/3/05) behind the decisions of the government. The cognitive praxis of the movement in this phase of transnational contention thus involved a growing recognition of the power of trans-border forces on the state and their role in undermining democratic processes.

Through its political and cognitive praxis of transnational contestation, it can be argued that the movement was constructing its *collective identity* as a national struggle against destructive development that was also beginning to raise critical questions regarding the transnational dimensions of such development. The collective ‘we’ of the movement was thus the same as that constructed within the national scale frame, but with a recognition of the transnational political opponents in addition to the state that represented the movements ‘other’. This could be seen in the adoption of anti-colonial rhetoric:

“...[the] government seems intent on entering all of us into a new era of colonialism. At this moment it is not clear who is running the government, the Congress or the World Bank or the IMF...The movements against Narmada, Suvarnarekha, Tehri, and so many other foreign-funded or foreign-inspired dams in

⁶⁶ Letter to Scott Hemphill, Harvard International Review, from Patekar.

India, were in a sense a precursor to [a] second independence struggle...” (NBA, 1992, p3*)⁶⁷.

Through foreign funded and inspired development projects, the government was viewed to be surrendering political control of India to transnational institutions such as the WB and IMF. Movements such as NBA that were resisting such projects were therefore conceived as part of a ‘second independence struggle’. The trans-border dimensions of NBA’s struggle were strengthened under a global scaling of the movement’s grievances to which I now turn.

The Global Scale Frame and Collective Identity

NBA’s opposition to the Bank had an added dimension that entirely circumvented the national level and thus operated at a global scale. *Political praxis* at this scale continued to involve a demand for the withdrawal of the Bank, but on the basis that it was an “independent party to the project” (Patekar, 26/2/06) and not simply an “influencer” of national politics, as was argued within the transnational scale frame. Accordingly the Bank was not only allowing or condoning the government’s abuse of the environment and human rights but was actively and directly perpetrating these by virtue of financing the dam:

“The Bank has, since its earliest involvement, blatantly violated every guideline, every principle and has been an *equal partner* in the destruction and trauma that is going to be the result of this project. The people’s struggle in the valley...has highlighted continuously the gross violations by the Bank of not only its own policies and principles, but also of all norms of human rights and natural justice” (NBA, 1993, p1*)⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ ‘Narmada: A campaign newsletter’.

⁶⁸ ‘The Project, the struggle: Introduction and latest situation’.

Attached to the position that the World Bank are directly responsible for the dam and its adverse effects was the stance that the Bank was answerable to not just the Indian government with which it had a loan agreement but also directly to the people who were affected by that agreement:

“The Bank has not felt it worthwhile to consult or even inform the oustees of what it planned to do or what ought to be done”
(Dharamadhikary, 1992*).

This position in a fundamental sense challenged the sovereign jurisdiction of the state over its people and added another external actor to this otherwise exclusive relationship. As an ‘independent party’ the WB were *directly* perpetrating human rights abuses and thus deemed to be *directly accountable* to the people of India. This strand of NBA’s campaign was clearly constructing a model of globalised conditions where local-global connections were not simply mediated through the state but were also being formed independently of it.

In 1993, after sustained lobbying of the WB with the active support of international NGOs, the movement was successful in securing the Bank’s withdrawal from the project. The global framing of the WB’s role in the project had important strategic implications in that it allowed NBA to rhetorically continue holding the World Bank to account for social and environmental destruction caused by the dam even after the Bank had withdrawn. As Medha reflects:

“Even during the campaign when the WB was in we questioned the WB as an independent party to the project...So to that extent, one would say that even now that role which the WB played is responsible for the present situation” (Patekar, 26/2/06).

Again, this strategic rhetoric was based on the formulation of a local-global relationship that circumvented the national level in that the WB's responsibility towards the Narmada people was not perceived to be only conditional upon, mediated or shaped by the government's duties towards its citizens. Instead, even though the WB's formal role as lender to the Indian government had ended, movement leaders continued to hold the WB, and not simply the state, to account for the plight of the Narmada people.

NBA's political praxis of holding the WB responsible as an 'independent party to the project' involved challenging a wider context in which its campaign against the WB was condemned by the Indian government as an attack on its sovereignty and where the WB also hid behind the issue of sovereignty to desist the responsibilities that were being thrust upon it by NBA. While asserting the primacy of the Indian government's decisions, the hegemonic discourse of 'political sovereignty' enabled dominant powers to conceal the WB's responsibilities and therefore subvert resistance against it. As such, challenging the WB involved deconstructing this discourse by uncovering its *active* role in facilitating capitalist interests through funding SSP. This critical awareness was again learnt through NBA's experiences of the Bank. Firstly by investigating WB and government documents -

“It became very clear that their decisions were the decisions of a money-lender and that, more or less, this was an irreversible process as is evidenced by their...sending the first reconnaissance mission in 1979 itself and giving \$10 million for the basic planning of the project. This is contrary to the general impression that, oh, the government and its ministries and departments form the project and all the poor little World Bank does is merely lend money” (Patekar, 1993, p174).

This highlighted how the WB was not just passively responding to the government's request for funding of project construction, but instead played a *formative* role in the project by providing financial assistance for project planning. To movement leaders,

this indicated the WB's active pursuit of its economic interests as a moneylender. Perhaps the most important experience leading to this realisation was of the WB's continuing support of an environmentally and socially destructive project:

“In the case of SSP, the WB has been exposed. It has witnessed the flagrant violation in letter and spirit of its own conditions and guidelines...It is doubly guilty of destructive development while trying to present a ‘humane and environmental face’” (NBA, 1990, p3)⁶⁹.

The metaphor of ‘exposure’ suggests that a process of learning had occurred in which the movement realised the Bank's true nature through direct experiences of it. As the institution violated its formal principles in practice, it contradicted the “humane and environmental face” it cultivated, and this led to the movement's reappraisal of the Bank as inhumane and environmentally destructive. In the context of the NBA's broader discourse of ‘environmentalism of the poor’ this appraisal of the Bank equated with a critical awareness of it as an agent of global capitalism. Through its political engagement with the WB, NBA had therefore learnt about the global forces of capitalism implicated in India's ‘development’ trajectory – a systemic dynamic that was otherwise concealed by the hegemonic discourse of ‘sovereignty’.

This counter-hegemonic learning was embodied in an expanded *cognitive praxis* that constructed a global framing of NBA's grievances. This framing extended the opposition to the WB from a tactical manoeuvre to stop the project by removing funding and legitimacy (transnational scale), to a broader struggle against “neo-imperialism in the form of the WB” (NBA, 1993, p1*)⁷⁰ (global scale). As an agent of neo-imperialism, NBA argued that the WB “pushed ahead” projects that were “against the developmental priorities and goals of the nation” (ibid, p1). Instead the Bank:

⁶⁹ ‘News update’ (leaflet).

⁷⁰ ‘Narmada Samachar’, Newsletter.

“...*chooses* to define social and economic changes to the advantage of established market forces of the world and then *calls* it development, *claiming* that this will mitigate all human and natural problems” (Patekar, c1992, p3*, italics added).

The global scale of contestation created by the movement’s cognitive praxis involved emphasising the agency of the trans-border institution in constructing the path of development in India to serve the interests of global capitalism. This is evident in the quote above from the way in which NBA perceives the WB to ‘choose’, ‘call’, and ‘claim’ what development is and will be.

What made this critique truly global in nature was the argument that India is not simply forced into this development trajectory by neo-imperialist forces from outside. Rather, the Indian elite also benefit from development projects and therefore ‘collude’ with these forces:

“...these mega-projects involving huge sums of money and international contracts...offer an ideal field of operation for these vested interests. The various cuts, kick-backs, ‘perks’, spinoffs, political mileage and opportunities for patronage they bring to our politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen are often the decisive inducement for their implementation.” (NBA, c1989-1990, p10*).

Beyond micro-level incentives, alliances between the WB and the Indian elite, who NBA often referred to as ‘rulers’, is also embedded in a shared macro-political agenda of capitalist accumulation that is driven by a:

“...centralised, capital intensive, consumerist, urban oriented polity sustained by continuous drain of resources from the rural

and tribal hinterlands *with the connivance* of multilateral agencies.” (NBA, 1991-1992, p1-2*).

This suggests the existence of a capitalist class whose economic interests cut across national boundaries and who therefore ‘connive’ with each other to facilitate capitalist development. As indicated earlier, the Indian state was also perceived to actively facilitate and align with the interests of the transnational capitalist class, through its promotion of large-scale development projects such as SSP:

“People in the rural and tribal regions are compelled to justify their survival, establish their right to the traditional generations old source of livelihood protect their properties, community life and culture from the encroachers not the colonialist, consumerist societies outside and within their nation state but also the State itself as the wildest and the biggest encroacher” (Patekar, c1991, p1*)⁷¹.

Rather than suggesting the decline of the nation-state in the face of an “irresistible and irreversible globalisation” (Hardt and Negri, 2000), NBA perceived power to lie in multiple sites including the national level where the “cunning state” remains an active agent in transposing (neoliberal economic globalisation) nationally and locally” (Randeria, 2003, p306).

While the movement’s cognitive praxis at the national scale of struggle had already started to politicise development and falsify the hegemonic image of the Indian government as a neutral provider of development, the movement’s cognitive praxis at the global scale added to this a recognition of the role of transnational capitalist forces in ‘development’ and the nexus between these and national capitalism.

⁷¹ Speech given by Patekar while accepting a ‘Right Livelihood Award’.

The counter-hegemonic nature of the movement's cognitive praxis at the global scale is evident in the movement's self-constituting practices that involved the formation of alliances with other social movements across the world, as well as the enactment of *alternative* development practices. As wider counter-hegemonic initiatives against destructive development and neo-imperialism, these practices developed and were strengthened even after the WB retreated from the project in 1993. In fact after 1993 the *transnational* strategic alliances that NBA formed with INGOs to force the WB to withdraw from SSP, gave way to *global* politico-ideological coalitions with trans-border struggles against global capitalism.

For instance, in 1993 activists and supporters of NBA initiated a process called the 'Campaign Against World Bank and Destructive International Aid' (CAWBADIA), envisioned to develop into a global campaign drawing together the experiences and issues raised by movements not only within India but in the Third World as well as grassroots groups in Western countries. The motivation for the global campaign was to raise a systemic, globalised challenge against global enemies:

“The emerging nexus between multilaterals, GATT, transnational corporations and national and global economic elites that is gradually encircling India, are active elsewhere in the Third World. It is this overall context and the fact that the kind of resistance that we witness in India is paralleled all over the world, has impelled some of us to plan a global meeting to more unitedly and more politically launch a coordinated global campaign” (CAWBADIA, 1993*)⁷².

NBA also became involved in other global processes such as the World Commission on Dams mentioned in chapter 6. Leaders of the movement also began developing ties with other social movements against dams in developing countries. In 1997, NBA co-organised the 'First International Meeting of the Struggles of the People Affected by

⁷² 'Campaign against World Bank and Destructive International Aid' (leaflet).

Large Dams', held in Brazil. The Conference culminated in the Declaration of Curitiba, announcing the need for a common struggle against the international financial institutions and global capital that are responsible for centralised and undemocratic development. Global linkages were further strengthened when NBA co-organised and participated in the World Social Forum held in Mumbai in 2004. In that these global alliances articulated a recognition of common political interests, they were beginning to extend to the global scale, the 'war of position' that NBA was already forming at the national scale in alliance with other struggles of the poor within India.

Apart from these global alliances, the movement's self-constituting practices of its global struggle were enacted through the promotion of alternative development practices which provided a lived social and cultural challenge to the globally dominant model of development. This initiative was named by the movement as *Navnirman* or Re-creation and Renewal. It expanded the movement's political struggle to the cultural plane and reconstructed the local as an important site of this struggle.

Opposing the 'bigger is better' ideology of the state, NBA has developed small-scale, eco-friendly technologies of irrigation and electricity production. The greatest achievement in this direction is the construction of a small-scale dam across a rivulet in the Valley in 2002, which generates 300 W of electricity for the surrounding 12 hamlets of Bilgaon village, without causing human displacement or environmental damage⁷³.

The centralised, non-participatory, and marginalising effects of development are also being traced to the prevalent model of schooling. This gave rise to *Jeevanshalas* or 'Life Schools' for Adivasi children based on an "alternative educational paradigm" (NBA, c1996, p1*)⁷⁴. Beginning with two schools in the villages of Chimalkhedhi and Nimgavana in 1992, the schools now operate in 14 different villages, financed by private donations, and funds collected from tribal and Nimari participants in the

⁷³ Unfortunately this project has now been submerged under the rising waters of the Narmada reservoir.

⁷⁴ 'Jeevanshalas: An initiative towards the renewal of tribal social life in Narmada Valley' (pamphlet).

movement⁷⁵. Based on the motto – *Ladai padhai saath saath!* (‘Study and struggle hand in hand!’), these schools not only provide basic education in communities which have never received adequate state schooling but also challenge the alienating, authoritarian pedagogy of the prevalent educational model. In contrast, Jeevanshalas emphasise student-centred, interactive learning. While tribal culture and identity are marginalised and portrayed negatively in official curriculum, Jeevanshalas seek to “provide education that is meaningful and relevant for the Adivasi children” equipping them to “relate to their culture, preserving as well as creatively transforming it” (ibid, p2). Though the framework of the official curriculum is followed, course material is also based on Adivasi mythology and traditional skills relating to forest-living, house-making, and indigenous medicines that strengthen and affirm subjugated knowledges. Further, local languages are used as the medium of instruction and pioneering work has been done to develop textbooks in Pavri, a tribal language.

Though the initiative for Navnirman is reflective of a new social movement concern for symbolic critique of the hegemony, it is not however part of a postmodern struggle for the ‘reclamation of autonomous spaces’, to construct alternative ways of life (Habermas, 1981). Rather than retreating from the state, NBA is constantly seeking to involve the government in the financing and administration of the initiative which is as much an effort to provide basic services neglected by the state as an attempt to develop global alternatives. By drawing the government into this process, Navnirman has become not only a cultural struggle against development but a political and economic attempt to ‘reclaim’ the state from global and national neo-liberal processes that are legitimising the state’s withdrawal from welfare activities. As Medha Patekar explains:

“We must make the government work and not substitute the government as NGOs do. After all, that is what multinational corporations and institutions such as the WB want. If the government disappears these forces will be given free reign over

⁷⁵ Though Jeevanshalas have faced submergence many times, they have continued to function due to the determination of villagers. When school buildings went under rising water, children and parents laboured together to reconstruct them on higher ground.

the people, that's why we need to fight to make the government work for the people" (Patekar, 26/2/06).

The movement's attempts to draw the state into processes of Navnirman are therefore part of a strategic manoeuvre to protect people against global oppressors by using the state as a possible shield and counter-force against these forces. This however has its own problems. While relinquishing the alternative practices of Navnirman to the state, there is a danger that they become co-opted as the hegemonic apparatus of consent and therefore cease to be a marginalised articulation of dissent. Indeed based on this concern some within the movement express reservations about involving the state in Navnirman (fieldnotes, 10/12/05). Nevertheless, regardless of the strategic position that the state may occupy in NBA's practices of Navnirman, the point remains that these alternative development practices are attempts to symbolically challenge a capitalist model of development that NBA perceives to be mandated and promoted by globally networked structures of power. The practices of Navnirman are therefore part of the movement's cognitive praxis at the global scale.

Finally, bringing together the movement's political and cognitive praxis at the global scale, NBA's *collective identity* emerges as "a wider struggle, a global struggle, that we are all part of, a struggle ultimately for a just and sustainable world" (Dharamadhikary, c1992*)⁷⁶. While at the national scale the collective identity of the people of the Narmada Valley was projected in terms of poor people fighting against destructive development policies in India, a global scale frame reworked NBA's collective identity and projected it as a movement of poor people fighting against global forces of destructive development. This identified the political struggle of local communities of the Narmada Valley with that of other subaltern groups across the world.

⁷⁶ Open letter – 'An appeal from thousands of tribals and peasants of the Narmada Valley in India'.

THE NATURE OF NBA'S COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The process presented above of the evolution of NBA's collective identity shows how this was a product of the multiple scales at which NBA politically contested and cognitively constructed its grievances. At each scale of contestation the movement's political praxis was guided by a certain understanding of the nature of political structures. This understanding changed as the movement learnt more about these structures through its strategic engagements with them, suggesting a dialectical interaction between the movement's cognitive and political praxis. As this process of learning in social struggle led to a deeper understanding of the national and global hegemonic forces implicated in their displacement the movement extended the scale of its struggle from local to the national, transnational and global scales. It should be noted however that these various scales of struggle were not mutually exclusive developmental stages where NBA simply shifted its scale of contention upwards from the local scale ultimately to the global scale. Instead these scales coexisted in a dynamic relationship with each other. Thus the movement did not simply cease being a local struggle against displacement as it developed into a national struggle against destructive development; neither did it stop engaging with national institutions as it directed attention towards global forces of neo-imperialism. Rather, the movement's collective identity developed from a local struggle to secure the homes and livelihoods of families and villages in the Narmada Valley to one that dialectically related this local struggle to a national and global struggle against destructive development and neo-imperialism. In constructing this dialectic the local identity of the movement was transformed and politicised such that the locally displaced people of the Valley were also constructed as part of a wider community of subalterns of India and the world. This collective identity reflected the formation of the movement's counter-hegemonic consciousness.

The various elements of the NBA's expanded collective identity and the process of learning (abbreviated) through which this emerged is depicted in the figure below. It shows that NBA's political praxis with the WB and Indian state, facilitated by NGOs, led to learning that was accumulated in the movement's cognitive praxis involving a

discursive critique of the Indian state's 'collusion' with the WB as a 'neo-imperialist' promoter of global capitalism. This learning was then also embodied in practices such as the formation of alliances with other subaltern movements and engagement in alternative development initiatives.

DIAGRAM REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



CONCLUSION

NBA started as a localised movement demanding rehabilitation for those displaced by SSP, but developed into a much broader national and even global movement against 'destructive development' and 'neo-imperialism'. I have shown that this evolution of its collective identity was a result of its reflexive engagement, with political structures – notably the state and its auxiliary institutions, and the WB. Political interactions with these institutions revealed their active promotion of capitalist interests through development projects and the fallacy of their hegemonic representation as neutral agents of 'development for all'. This necessitated a shift from targeting a perceived localised

failure in provision of rehabilitation to raising a systemic challenge to the nationally and globally organised development hegemony, of which their displacement was viewed to be a symptom. This expanded struggle was visible in the movement's opposition to the dam and its formation of national and global alliances with other subaltern movements – a process that is central to the initiation of global civil society as a Gramscian 'war of position'.

NBA's multi-scalar politics, and its constitution of GCS through this, therefore arose from a process of learning wherein an emergent awareness of the Indian state's role in capitalist development, the WB's influential and 'distorting' effects on national decision-making processes, and the active 'collusion' of the WB and Indian state in protecting the interests of global capital over the poor, led respectively to a national, transnational and global scaling of their grievances and politics. This learning was further facilitated by NGOs at the national and international levels that filled geographical and informational gaps between political structures and the movement and thus indirectly provided pedagogical experiences of these structures to feed into NBA's direct political interactions and experiences.

An analysis of NBA's global visions and actions as outcomes of learning from movement experiences, challenges dominant accounts that present these as mechanical emulations of INGOs to strategically secure their support. While I have elaborated elsewhere on how such 'mechanical' accounts imply a duality between static local grievances and global processes, in contrast, an analysis of how systemic connections between the local and global are learnt, suggests that local movement's can construct a dialectic between local struggle and national and global scales of transformation. This is evident in the manner in which NBA changed from a local struggle for rehabilitation to one strategically and ideologically opposed to SSP and destructive development. Further, though movements may extend their struggle beyond the national level this does not necessarily lead to an abandonment of the national level as a site of struggle. Indeed through NBA's experiences of national contestation the state was identified as a

“colluder” in the process of capitalist globalisation, and therefore also as a site of political opportunity and resistance.

That local movements such as NBA evolve in the process of struggle, locating their local grievances within an emergent awareness of wider systemic conditions and developing dialectically related transformative practices at multiple scales, suggests a radical role for local social movements within GCS. They are not simply passive beneficiaries of the work of globally-oriented INGOs but active agents in the construction of a radical GCS. While this chapter has highlighted the movement’s emergent collective persona as an actor in GCS, the next chapter investigates the forms and extent to which the radical learning described here is shared by local people in terms of transformations of consciousness, identity, and subjective notions of citizenship.

Chapter 8

Democratic Participation and Citizenship of the Grassroots

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the pedagogical impact of NBA's multi-scalar politics on the grassroots participants of the movement in terms of transformation of their consciousness and subjective senses of citizenship. An examination of consciousness and identity transformation amongst local communities is particularly relevant for developing a comprehensive picture of local movements as actors in GCS for two reasons. Firstly, since GCS is normatively conceived, the perceptions, feelings and self-representations of actors within GCS are integral to an analysis of this field. Only those who have a global consciousness are actors of GCS. Secondly, a more robust account of GCS as a radical democratic space must also explore whether the transformative processes occurring at the collective level of the movement are actively engaged with by movement participants. As indicated in chapter 2, such in-depth research on global civil society at the level of local participation in developing contexts is generally scant, and in the case of the Save the Narmada Movement virtually non-existent.

The chapter proceeds by examining Adivasi and Nimari experiences of historical marginalisation within Indian democracy prior to the formation of NBA. It then explores how through participation in collective struggle NBA's grassroots encountered, experienced, and politicised their awareness and senses of rights and citizenship in relation to the nation-state. Finally it illustrates how this led to changes in subjective expressions of belonging and citizenship from national to local and global scales.

STATE DOMINATION AND DENIAL OF CITIZENSHIP

Adivasi Experiences

Elsewhere I have drawn attention to the marginalisation of Adivasis and the exploitation of their forest resources in modern India – a historical process that was legally entrenched during British rule and given social credence through the Hindu caste ideology that brands Adivasis as untouchables. Their subordination within the national framework and their settlement in remote hills of western Madhya Pradesh has meant that the tribal communities of this region have largely been left out of the process of modernisation. As a result, prior to the mobilisation of these villages, such people were largely unaware of the transformations occurring in India – from pre-colonial, colonial through to the nationalist state (Baviskar, 2004).

After independence, while Adivasis were bundled into the constitutional rhetoric of ‘We the People of India’ and bestowed with citizenship rights, local officials and forest guards were able to take advantage of the economic and social marginalisation of Adivasis and maintain a feudal form of authority over them. One villager recounts how oppressive practices continued unabated from the pre-colonial through to the post-colonial era:

“The rajas used to come here occasionally to see the village – they would come once a year. But we would have to carry them from village to village on our shoulders...This carried on after independence too. The forest officials used to oppress us a lot also... They used to fine us 3000-4000 rupees for taking wood from the forest or for building houses and ploughing new fields. The police used to oppress us also. Often they would beat us up and put us into jail” (Kishan, 16/4/05).

The criminalisation of customary rights of Adivasis over the forest was not the only way in which local officials and police “*created* an atmosphere of fear” (Kantya, 16/4/05, original emphasis). By making arbitrary and demoralising demands, they

exercised an all pervasive control over the Adivasis. Thus going into town, where the local bureaucrats and police resided was always a harrowing experience, as one villager recounts.

“I used to be very scared when I would pass through the town, before the Andolan. I would stick to the gutter. People would catch hold of me and tell me to carry a pot of water, or to wash clothes. If you didn’t listen to them they would beat you or tie you up. They would call you, and say “you bastard from Bhadal, come here, bring us some hens”. They would write something down and then send me to get hens from my village. When you would come back with the hens they would snatch it from you and give you a kick – don’t come back here again they would say. They made me carry four pots of water once. They would tell me to sweep the floor. Once they kept me at the police station for the whole day without any food” (Vanya’s father, 1/11/05).

If following Fuller and Harriss’s (2001) anthropological approach, the state is analysed not as a structure but as ‘structural effects’ i.e. “as the effect of practices that make state structures appear to exist” (p4), then the state as endower of rights and entitlements to its citizens, did not exist in the local experiences of Adivasis. The local officials and police were understood as the men of the ‘sarkar’, to whom the Adivasis were compelled to pay unquestioning servitude, or to face the dire consequences of non-compliance. While ‘sarkar’ is a Hindi word which translates into ‘government’, in this region the ‘sarkar’ was taken to be the “sahib or the king” (Vanya, 3/11/05). His ubiquitousness and the helplessness of Adivasis in front of him are encapsulated in their metaphorical representation of him as ‘having long arms’. In this way his powers were almost mystified and considered immutable-

“We didn’t know anything else apart from the sarkar – we considered him most important. Whatever the sarkar said was right” (Vanya, 3/11/05).

Amongst those Adivasis who have not been active participants in the Andolan, the state is still alienating and vaguely understood, as is apparent in the manner in which they consider Sardar Sarovar (which is the name of the dam) to be the name of the man who is making the dam, and of that man being the ‘sarkar’. That the sarkar is considered to be a single, all-powerful man, again reveals the absence of a sense of democratic control and voice amongst Adivasis, that in principal is bestowed to citizens of the state as a modern structure of representative government.

It is important to note that while the state did exercise a coercive control over the people in terms of threats of imprisonment and beatings, its oppressive practices were also normalised in the form of Gramscian consent in that Adivasis accepted their oppression without critically questioning its legitimacy. Thus villagers talked of thinking of their village, land and forest as all belonging to the sarkar, and thus of the sarkar’s men as acting in their rightful capacity when they would demand money and goods from them (fieldnotes 14/11/05). This is not to suggest that villagers did not experience this as unfair and oppressive but that they did not view it as illegitimate. Not only this, but Adivasis conceded to their subordination through a process of internalising *bazaarias*⁷⁷ admonishments of their very personhood. Thus villagers believed themselves to be inferior- “We considered ourselves very small, *gande*⁷⁸, uneducated. We thought of ourselves as monkeys, insignificant and mad” (Vanya, 3/11/05). From a Freirean perspective the internalisation of a dehumanised self-representation is a mechanism and result of oppression. So deep was this internalisation that even after participation in the movement I found some Adivasis, (often those whose participation had been minimal) referring to themselves in this way. While asserting that they are ‘mad’ and uneducated,

⁷⁷ This term is used by Adivasis to refer to ‘market people’ or ‘people of the town’, who generally belong to the mainstream Hindu culture, and includes forest guards, officials, and moneylenders.

⁷⁸ Following Amita Baviskar’s translation of this word – “gande can only be roughly translated; it means delinquent, mischievous, untrustworthy” (2004, p191).

they would project themselves as incapable of talking to me even about their personal experiences and perceptions of the Andolan.

The depiction of Adivasis as conceding to their exploitation is contrary to James Scott's (1985) notion of everyday forms of peasant resistance. According to Scott, far from accepting their oppression, the oppressed create 'hidden transcripts', a set of ideas and practices that are developed to express their opposition to the ruler but, for fear of retribution, are kept concealed. These forms of peasant resistance include "foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson and sabotage" (pxvi). I found no accounts of such resistance amongst the Adivasi people. However, it must be added that in my conversations with them it was also evident that while the authority of the sarkar was accepted it was not by any means trusted. The sarkar was not viewed as their paternalistic protector, an image through which the state often attempts to create consent (Hoffman, 1984), and which was perhaps reflected in movement leaders' initial faith that the government would be fair in its consideration of NBA's demands for rehabilitation (chapter 7).

The schism in Adivasis consciousness of the state suggests that the oppressed do possess agency, crippled though it is by the unequal socio-economic relations between oppressor and oppressed. This contradiction in Adivasi consciousness explains how mobilisation of Adivasis in this area was achieved as fast as it was. But it also points to how the process of mobilisation and social struggle provided an experience that transformed participants' consciousness. In taking this view I am responding to the call of Barker (1999), to treat social actors as 'reflexive', "engaging in ways that might change their awareness and evaluation of the social world" (Marshal quoted in *ibid*, p18). I will address this process as it occurred in the mobilisation of the grassroots of NBA shortly.

Nimari Experiences

Before that, I must add the experiences of the Nimaris to the account of the 'anthropology of the Indian state'. Nimar is a very different socio-cultural region of Madhya Pradesh in relation to that of the Adivasis. Relative to the Adivasi region it has

been culturally more integrated within the mainstream national framework and has had more interaction with the *modern* political apparatus and institutional practices of the state. In fact before the Save the Narmada Movement the Nimar had already been politically active against the dam through a series of mobilisations beginning in the 1960s. These campaigns, however, were more closely aligned with party politics, failing to adequately engage the general population and thus petered out soon after leaders of the campaign gained seats of power. However, while Nimaris were more familiar with the democratic system, they too, felt alienated from the bureaucratic set-up and experienced state institutions as unaccountable and all-powerful. People expressed this sense of impotence against the state through the same representation that I had heard in the Adivasi area – that of the state’s ‘arms being long’:

“The government has very long arms, how can we fight against the government, they can do anything with us, they have the police, they will chase us away” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

Thus the police, as the state’s instrument of domination, were much feared by the Nimari people – “we used to see the police as the ‘kings’ – if they said so we could be sent to jail” (Mahadev, 28/1/06). The similarity in narratives of these people, with that of the Adivasis, suggests that even here the state commanded a form of feudal control. However there are differences. In Nimar people were aware of their status as citizens of the state; what they lacked was a sense of agency against the sarkar:

“Before the Andolan, the people used to feel that they cannot fight against the sarkar. The sarkar is the final word, it will do whatever it wants. People used to view the sarkar with respect, they would accept whatever the police inspector and patwari would say.” (Karan, 1/2/06).

What is emphasised here is not that villagers did not know that they had rights but that they did not know how to challenge the ‘final word’ and were unable to ‘fight’ for their rights. An awareness of their status as citizens rather than subjects is also apparent in a

discourse of corruption that was often used when referring to government failures to compensate and rehabilitate people:

“We have to do something about this corruption...we are still not getting the money entitled to us by law, so we are still fighting for that. Government officials keep saying yes, yes but they carry on eating money and doing what they want.” (Nanak bhai, 17/2/06).

The discourse of state corruption points to a sense of ownership over the state as is evident in Nanak's assertion that 'we have to do something' in order to get what is 'entitled to us by law'. Gupta (1995) suggests how this “discourse of corruption...enabl[es] people to construct the state symbolically and to define themselves as citizens”, further “by marking those actions that constitute an infringement of such rights...[it] acts to represent the rights of citizens to themselves” (p389). Thus the unresponsiveness of the state apparatus to the people is viewed not as an inherent characteristic of the state but rather as an aberration. Corruption being that aberration, is viewed as the violation of rights that the state otherwise bestows on its people. Perhaps this is why Nanak does not suggest that the government per say is corrupt but only that 'officials', i.e. individuals in the government are. That the deployment of a discourse of corruption is a characteristic of those who have a sense of citizenship, is apparent from the manner in which Adivasi leaders who have had closer interaction with the state apparatus also accuse state personnel of corruption. This is in contrast to those Adivasis, who while still alienated from the modern state system, understand the state not as a structure but as an authority figure who is directly 'looting' and 'thieving' from people by making a dam that will dispossess them of their land (fieldnotes 30/10/05).

What is apparent from the accounts of both Adivasis and Nimaris is the way in which the state was experienced as an unfettered force in their lives. Neither group experienced their citizenship in terms of an empowering 'social contract' but rather as a bondage which left them devoid of agency. The next section will address how people's

relationship to the state changed over the course of the struggle and how this was related to deeper transformations of consciousness.

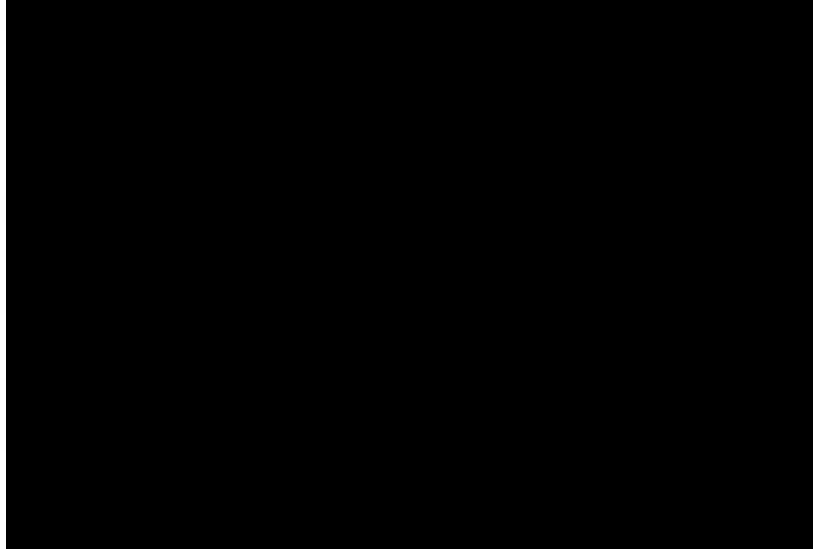
SOCIAL STRUGGLE AND ENCOUNTERING NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP

As mentioned earlier, Gramscian theory emphasises the need to view social actors as ‘reflexive’ agents whose consciousness, while influenced by dominant hegemony is not, however, mechanically determined by it. This suggests the need to identify particular ‘events’ which transform the consciousness of reflexive actors in ways that facilitate collective struggle and change (Barker, 1999). In the previous chapter I described NBA’s collective politics of contestation with national and global structures. For village participants the ‘events’ that were involved in this politics created important learning opportunities that stimulated the transformation of consciousness.

In exploring the catalytic instances that advanced villagers’ sense of citizenship I will focus mainly on the experiences of the Adivasis, adding to this, the narratives of Nimaris where appropriate. I take this approach because, while Nimaris and Adivasis have both struggled together under the banner of the same movement and thus been part of the same protest actions and discursive resistance, Adivasis have had to make a longer journey towards citizenship (as was argued in the previous section). As we shall see this unique journey provides insights into how the ‘politics of scale’ and construction of ‘place’ are integral to the subjective creation of the nation-state.

The protest repertoires adopted by the Andolan have involved amongst others, a strategy called *gherao*, in which villagers and activists surround unsuspecting officials and politicians and demand answers to state failures and violations of rights.

PICTURE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Group of women gherao a policeman⁷⁹

Medha Patekar diligently educated people about their specific rights and entitlements regarding displacement and rehabilitation. Villagers then used this to question and confront officials and police over violations. These confrontations were instrumental in creating awareness amongst people of the government's neglect of their rights as displaced people and thus led to the formation of a sense of grievance against the state:

“We asked many questions but the government carried on the way it was before. So we became convinced that there was no real knowledge about how we will be rehabilitated and that the government doesn't have land to rehabilitate us. We realised that the dam was not for our benefit so why should we die”
(Kishan, 14/4/05).

Direct encounters with the state apparatus also demystified the power of the 'sarkar' and created a feeling of ownership and agency over it:

“Now whatever the sarkar says is not final...It is in the people's hands to make the government bow...We realise this is a

⁷⁹ This is a post-card photo obtained from the NBA office in Barwani.

democracy, the government is nothing, it is ours” (Karan, 1/2/06).

Rama describes a similar sense of empowerment through collective action:

“Before the Andolan the government officials – forest guard, collector, police – we would accept whatever they said as right, whatever they say will have to be done. But now we can question. The Andolan has given us this much courage. Now we have got knowledge of the laws so we can question them on that also.” (2/11/05).

The acquisition of knowledge of rights and the collective mobilisation of the Andolan that gave people the ‘courage’ to assert their rights, subsequently de-reified official power and thus enabled people to question the government. Furthermore, the feeling of empowerment emerging from this sparked a sense of outrage against the state’s unresponsiveness to their demands, which people now knew to be a blatant violation of the state’s ‘social contract’ with them. In the words of Vanya, an Adivasi:

“After independence the state of India says that no one’s rights should be violated. Whether the person is a minister or a poor person the laws are the same for everyone and everyone has equal rights. But then the sarkar makes its decisions regarding our lives sitting far away in Bhopal and Delhi. They don’t even see our real situation or ask us”. (Vanya, 3/11/05).

Vanya’s account constructs a sense of national community and his relationship to it through an assertion of *equality* with its members by virtue of possessing equal rights. At the same time however, this assertion of new found equality now creates a sense of alienation from the state which he experiences as unaccountable to its people. Apart from alienation, the consistent denial of rights also develops into a more abstract sense of injustice against the people:

“When the organisation was formed neither I nor the people were thinking that this is injustice. In the beginning we had placed *demands* [original emphasis] in front of the government, and carried on placing these demands for three years. But then we started to see that we are not getting our demands, then we started the struggle. And as we fought we saw that whatever was being done to us was injustice. So then we started to feel that we are fighting against injustice” (Kantya, 16/4/05).

So far I have demonstrated how the movement was a vehicle through which people were able to begin to understand their citizenship as “a package of rights, duties and obligations...which implies equality, justice and autonomy” (Faulks, 2000, p13). This learning was facilitated by activists who provided grassroots participants with information and knowledge about their formal rights, entitlements and laws. However, most importantly, it was enabled by the manner in which the Andolan created a direct channel for citizens’ engagement with the state, allowing them to deploy and actively experience this knowledge in real terms. For Adivasis especially, this interaction with the state involved a critical change in political consciousness and identity from bonded subjects to empowered and potentially equal citizens. The state’s unresponsiveness, which previously was seen as a statement of its authority, was now reconstructed as a violation of their citizenship, a denial of what is *rightfully* theirs. This radicalised people’s positions regarding the state. They experienced the government’s neglect of their rightful demands as unjust and immoral. The process of radicalisation described here reflects the “dialectical relation between subjective and objective” (Freire, 1993, p33) that makes “real oppression more oppressive still by adding to it the realization of oppression” (unreferenced author quoted in Freire, 1993, p33). For Freire (1993) “Only in this interdependence is an authentic praxis possible” (p33). I therefore turn now to how this action-reflection led again to action, that is, to people’s symbolic as well as concrete responses to this sense of violation.

POLITICISING NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP – RIGHTS AND RADICAL DEMOCRACY

In 1991, after around 6 years of non-violent confrontations with the state, in the form of protest rallies that yielded few dividends, the NBA declared a new slogan heralding the beginning of a new strategy of political action – ‘*hamare gaon me hamara raj*’ – ‘Our rule in our villages!’. The realisation of this involved a strategy of *gaon bandhi* or village closure, in which officials and police were denied access to the village for conducting population and submergence surveys. Kishore, an Adivasi, described a particular instance in which such a strategy was enacted:

“Once, villagers from Bhadal and Khariya Bhadal got news that an official was coming to their village. They got a big drum and went down to the stream from where the official would come. Everyone waited for him. He finally turned up with loads of surveyors and labourers to cut the trees. The villagers vehemently resisted this and fought with the police that had come. I was beaten badly. My mother also fought hard. She hit one of the surveyors and snatched his papers. Villagers from Kakrana also came over to join in the resistance. Finally after a long fight, all the surveyors and police retreated” (fieldnotes, 20/10/05).

Apart from the concrete effects of preventing government surveys in order to hamper the process of dam construction, the declaration of ‘our rule in our village’ had a profound symbolic significance. It communicated to the state, civil society and to the grassroots of the movement itself that the state, in its present form, was not fit to claim jurisdiction over their territory. Having failed to protect citizens’ rights the state had violated the ‘social contract’ and thus could not claim sovereignty over their communities. By declaring *gaon bandhi* the people of the valley were establishing people’s sovereignty - “We have right over our village because the sarkar doesn’t do anything for us” (Vanya, 3/11/05). It is important to note here that the declaration of sovereignty over their villages is not a complete rejection of the people’s relationship

with the state. It is a defence against the state's excesses but at the same time a symbolic protest against the neglect of the state as well as a demand for inclusion. So, on the one hand, many Adivasis as well as Nimaris view the realisation of village self-rule as the removal of the coercive presence of state personnel from their villages:

“The slogan that we gave ‘our rule in our village’ – we realised that slogan. We don't let the patwari, or police come to our village without permission” (Karan, 1/2/06).

On the other hand villagers also see the slogan of ‘our rule in our village’ as a mechanism for increasing the accountability of the state to the people and thus of guaranteeing their rights:

“...the government keeps doing something or the other wrong, The government should consult with us and we will maintain our rule in our village” (Rahadya, 1/11/05).

Further, the fact that people still view the state as having ultimate responsibility for providing facilities such as roads, schools, electricity etc, supports the argument that the slogan of ‘our rule in our villages’ represents a symbolic attempt to reform the state's relationship with the people rather than an outright rejection of the state.

Underlying villagers' assertions of village self rule as a response to the state's historical violation of rights, is the notion that individuals can only protect themselves from the state if they are politically organised. While ‘our rule in our villages’ represents village level organisation, Adivasis and Nimaris both talk of the necessity of extending this organisation to connect villages into a social movement and further to connect their social movement with other movements. The larger the organisation the stronger it will be against the state, it is argued:

“The most important thing I have learnt in the Andolan is to stay together and get organised. The government will never listen to us individually. The more people there are with us the stronger

we will be, that is the only way to make sure that change will happen” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

People’s experience of the state’s unresponsiveness seems to have led to a sense of redundancy of their citizenship as a relationship that binds them as *individuals* to the constitution. Instead citizenship is reframed in terms of a connection with the state through their membership in political collectivities or social movements. This lends to the notion of radical democracy where the “meso realm of social movements...are mobilizing society against the state” (Delanty, 2000, p37) and where the key to citizenship is not simply the rights and duties of individuals, but collective “democratic participation” (ibid). This turn towards radical democracy in the Narmada Valley is being accompanied by a withdrawal from representative democracy, which is visible in party politics as a possible strategy for the movement (fieldnotes, 16/4/06). Instead people’s sense of radical democratic participation is entailed in their frequent assertions of the “need to fight for our rights”, and more generally, to engage in a “life of struggle” (fieldnotes, 2/12/05). According to the Narmada people, rights are not directly bestowed by the state and passively enjoyed by individuals, rather they are politicised entitlements that are mediated and actively constructed by the dynamics of power.

The process of the radicalisation of rights in Narmada communities problematises the manner in which rights appear to be understood as self-contained tools of empowerment within INGO-dominated perspectives on GCS. Though in the formal and legal sense these communities have long been entitled to rights, they were effectively disenfranchised by their historical subordination. Their political entitlements have only become tangible through social mobilisation, which has created a pedagogical context for developing a consciousness of their rights as well as the political power to realise these. Thus while INGOs may campaign for the codification and implementation of rights, it is people’s active participation and mobilisation that has actually enabled them to meaningfully experience these rights.

UNDERSTANDING SCALES

What has been described above is an evolution from the state's pre-modern feudal subordination of people, to their active participation in the modernist project of national citizenship. Of course this presupposes a particular division of space into scales – the national juxtaposed in relation to the local and global. The importance of scales to the modernist project of nationhood was vividly brought to light during my stay in the Adivasi village – Bhadal, when I realised that many of the villagers here had not heard of India. For these individuals their participation in the struggle was not about citizenship but resistance against the 'looting sarkar' that was dispossessing them. There were others however who had been actively involved in the Andolan and through it had learnt of their membership to India. As I will show, this process of encountering the national scale emerged from NBA's engagement in multi-scalar politics which provided Adivasis with concrete and symbolic experiences through which various scales of protest could be constructed in relation to each other.

Many Adivasis, especially the women, have had little interaction with the world beyond their village and forest area. This was brought to the fore by an 80 year old woman – Minthi Hamjya, who when asked whether she thought Medha Patekar was from her country, replied- "Medha came from down below. That's all we know. We only saw her coming up from the banks of the river" (6/10/05). For this woman the boundaries of her world extended only so far as she could see. As such her affiliations could only be based on a non-modern identification with her village rather than "state-bound citizenships of modernity" (O'Byrne, 2003, p13). Indeed before people's increased exposure to the wider world through the Andolan, Adivasis mystified places that were not within their immediate experience:

"People used to think that if a person goes to Dhule he will turn to dust over there and not come back. Once, I went to Jalsindhi for an NBA programme, but then some activists told me to go with them to Dhule for a protest action. I was quite scared about going but I went... When I finally got back home and told my

family that I had come back from Dhule it created a sensation in the whole village. It was as if a miracle had occurred” (fieldnotes, 10/11/05).

Though Adivasis have now become quite comfortable with travelling out of their localities, many Adivasis I spoke to were still unaware of being part of India. Some, however, referred to their country or ‘desh’ as the administrative state within which their village was located.

However for other Adivasis who have been more active in the Andolan, awareness of their citizenship of the nation-state of India, started with the process of venturing out of their localities on protest events to big cities where the seats of national power are located. This in itself however was not enough to provide a sense of national boundedness. Nationhood was also discursively and symbolically created by activists of the NBA, who sought to integrate Adivasis into the national framework. This is reflected in Kishore’s narration of his encounter with ‘India’.

“...I was around 16 at that time. All the activists had come to Jalsindhi to celebrate ‘independence day’. I didn’t know what independence day meant so I asked Yogini, an activist. She told me that India was freed from British rule on this day. She also said that the Adivasis had also fought against the British to get independence for India. When I asked her what India was, she told me that it is my country. She said that they will raise the flag of India to celebrate the day. But when they did the flag raising ceremony, the flag looked really small. I was a bit disappointed by that, I had thought the flag would be really big if it represents our whole country.” (fieldnotes, 23/11/05).

Though these encounters with the national level were important, a more robust understanding of the national scale could only be achieved by understanding it “relationally, that is, with reference, and in relation to, other scales” (Perreault, 2003,

p64). Here experiences of the global level were crucial. Though most villagers do not have knowledge of the specific campaign support INGOs have given the NBA, the solidarity of global civil society with the movement is known to the people in the form of foreign tourists and activists who constantly visit the valley. During my fieldtrip, I was part of many programmes organised by the NBA that involve taking outsiders into the valley to interact with villagers facing displacement. An extract from my field diary describes one of these events:

‘After a 10 hour boat journey down the river we arrived in Jalsindhi around midnight. Villagers were beating drums at the river bank. And in the moonlight I could see a number of outsiders – photographers, journalists and other visitors – some Indian, some foreign. We all walked to the local school...Some visitors stood up and introduced themselves to the gathering of villagers – telling them where they were from and how they had heard of the NBA. An activist from Brazil told people about the destruction caused there by large dams and adds that they never benefit the poor. He declares that the fight of people in the Narmada Valley is the same as that of people in Brazil. While he sits down, an NBA activist translates his message of solidarity into Pavri. The villagers cheer and shout slogans- ‘We are all one!’, ‘We will not move!’ (fieldnotes, 25/3/05).

Events such as these have been instrumental in further developing Adivasis’ understanding of India as a country by constructing it as a unit *relative* to other countries. As Rama told me:

“I travelled, saw and listened and I heard about other countries – England, Japan, America. Then I started to realise that India is a country and that it is our country” (Rama, 2/11/05).

In keeping with the relational characteristic of scales, the construction of the national and global scales has also had implications for Adivasis’ perceptions of place. Thus

Vanya tells me of how the boundaries of place or locality have widened – whereas before the Andolan, Barwani used to be considered part of a different *muluk*⁸⁰ from their village's, with increasing exposure to a wider geographical area, villagers now refer to it as part of the same *muluk*. In contrast however, Bhopal and Delhi, which are further away, continue to be considered different *muluks*.

This relational construction of scale – from local, national to global, provides the basis for the construction of local, national and global *citizenship*. In the next section I turn to examine how people's affiliations and identities across these geographical scales has been reinforced or transformed through the process of social struggle.

SUBJECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP – LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL

The changing relationship between individuals and the state had repercussions for people's subjective expressions of belonging and affiliation to the national polity. Broadly three distinct forms of affiliation could be identified. While many maintained loyalty primarily to the state, others rejected this for regional and even global forms of citizenship. These three types of affiliation were sustained by particular scale frames or discourses regarding the nature of the movement's grievances and the scale at which they were politically relevant. Scale frames thus related to the manner in which the Narmada struggle was discursively connected to the nation and other national movements as well as movements abroad. While there were differences in the scale frames of the three types of citizens, there were also obvious commonalities. I begin by presenting these common discursive framings, while also elaborating on the pedagogical experiences and processes through which they were collectively developed amongst the grassroots.

Common Themes – Corrupt Government, Development and Displacement of the Poor

In a manner similar to how NBA's collective identity emerged, individuals within the movement came to learn about and understand their struggle through an interwoven

⁸⁰ This can only roughly be translated to mean region or area.

process in which grievance frames and movement experiences constantly shaped and re-shaped each other. As indicated earlier, direct confrontations with government officials during *gheroes* were an important pedagogical experience that facilitated people's understanding and construction of their grievances. Namdev, a Nimari, describes this process:

“Whatever questioning or negotiations had to be done with the minister would be done right in front of the people. First Didi⁸¹ asked questions and then later we would also, so we would immediately find out what is going on. The minister had no answers about where they will rehabilitate us. So then everyone would understand the issues – the dull ones and the sharper ones also. We realised that the government is betraying us, and so we have to struggle” (5/2/06).

Through direct interactions with officials, people thus became aware of government failures in rehabilitation. This led to the construction of their displacement as unacceptable and therefore as a point of contestation with the state. The emerging sense of being aggrieved was further articulated through movement slogans which were formed organically as the movement progressed. As Nanak bhai recollects:

“Our slogans tell the whole history of our movement. At each phase we made slogans. Didi made many of them, but some were made by the people themselves when we would go on demonstrations. Someone would say we ‘We will not move from here’ and then another would say ‘The dam cannot be built’, and it would carry on like that.” (20/3/05)

Some key movement slogans created were:

‘Sarkar hamen dubayegi. Jamin nahin depayegi’

⁸¹ Villagers express a sense of affectionate respect for Medha Patekar by referring to her as ‘Didi’ – a term which is commonly used in Indian culture to address and refer to elder sisters.

(The government will drown us. It will not be able to give us land)

'Vikas chahiye, vinash nahin'

(We want development, not destruction)

'Jangal jamin konin se? Amri se, amri se!'

(Whose are the forest and land? Ours, ours!)

These slogans, in condensed form, reflected the developing perceptions and conceptualisations of the struggle amongst grassroots participants. But they also served to circulate, reinforce, and elaborate these constructions collectively. That is, they enabled the shared learning of the movement's cognitive praxis in relation to displacement and 'development'. This function was also performed through speeches given by village men and women during demonstrations where they articulated their concerns and impressions of the struggle to fellow protestors. In turn, the audience, rather than applaud, would affirm and acknowledge speeches with vociferous slogan shouting (fieldnotes, 3/4/05).

Alongside direct engagements with the government, and the production of slogans and speeches that circulated the movement's evolving cognitive praxis, there was another pedagogical process which had an equally profound impact on how the movement was experienced by the grassroots and thus on how their grievances were constructed. This process was of the convergence under NBA of the organisations of the displaced in the three states. Namdev describes the qualitatively different discourse that underlay NBA in relation to that of previously local mobilisations that had occurred in Nimar:

“The Save the Nimar Movement had a limited thinking. They only thought about themselves. Their only slogan was ‘Nimar should be saved’. They didn't even talk of saving the Narmada River. With the Save the Narmada Movement we started talking about saving all the affected people of the Narmada valley – our

slogan was 'save Narmada, save life'. Also we joined other organisations – gas affected in Bhopal, slum dwellers and other dam affected. The thinking was that the affected of the whole world should join together to save humanity, to create a new way of thinking” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

Namdev's account suggests that the discourse of 'affected people' that was used to create the construct of the people of the Narmada Valley was also instrumental in connecting their struggle to other national struggles of 'affected people'. The collective framing of 'affected people' in turn led NBA to show solidarity and jointly protest with other movements, which then, also impacted on how the Narmada people viewed their own struggle. Thus while movement experiences facilitated discursive construction of grievances, discursive framings led to new experiences that served to enhance and develop these framings. For instance Namdev describes the manner in which seeing and interacting with other movements strengthened his conviction of the legitimacy of his own fight:

“When I would go to big cities for demonstrations I would see and talk to all these other people struggling for their issues. I would feel more confident and I would know that we are not alone. It made us feel stronger and it convinced us that our struggle is right.” (5/2/06).

From his point of view, the realisation that “we are not alone” gave people a sense of strategic strength but also validated the 'rightness' of their struggle. What Namdev means specifically by realising that their struggle is 'right' is not immediately clear however. It may refer to the manner in which the Narmada people were able to validate both their own judgement of being aggrieved by the state and their decision to act against this, through an awareness that other people are also facing and reacting to similar concerns. It may also be suggestive of an emerging realisation of the deeper moral 'rightness' of their struggle, in that the existence of other movements implies that their own plight is not isolated and local, but rather of wider social significance. As

attested to by others, exposure to other movements did enhance and broaden people's understanding of their grievances and the nature of the state they were fighting against. Thus, Suraj uses his knowledge of what has happened with people displaced by other dams to support the construction of a grievance frame that views the government as corrupt and as driving forward destructive development:

“We have seen how people from other dams have been treated. They have been left to die by this corrupt government. Poor people will get nothing from these dams. The Indira Sagar dam is made now, people were displaced but the electricity is not going to the farmers, its going to factories. The poor will get poorer and the rich will get richer – that's their policy, this is the politics of development. It is fake development” (24/1/06).

Through his own experiences of the state and those of other displaced people he concludes that the government's development policies work for “businessmen, politicians and capitalists” against the poor who are left destitute. Again, grievance constructions formed and reinforced through broader alliances with other social struggles allow a broader national scaling of the struggle – thus since displacement is happening throughout the country and is not limited to the Narmada Valley, the national policy of development is to blame and thus the state itself, which in collusion with capitalists and industrialists is working not just against the people of the valley, but the poor in general. This broader discourse runs through the narratives of all those I spoke to. In the next section I examine how this discourse is used to reinforce or transform expressions of political and social identification with the Indian nation-state.

Citizens of India - National Well-Being over Global Solidarity

Most of those I spoke to expressed an allegiance with the Indian state. This was despite an overarching feeling of betrayal and distrust of the government – a government, that is spearheading a skewed, ‘fake development’ (Namdev, 5/2/06) that further marginalises the ‘poor’, but strengthens the rich:

“...The government gives the slogan – ‘long live the soldiers, long live the farmers’ – the whole country depends on this. If there are no farmers then the country will starve. We are not getting any of the electricity produced by the dams that have been built, so we have not developed at all and nor has the nation. The government is only benefiting big companies and big people by the dam; poor farmers will only be displaced” (Mahadev, 28/1/06).

While connecting farmers’ displacement to starvation in India, Mahadev clearly situates the threat of the Sardar Sarovar dam in the context of the broader destruction of the nation and blames the government for this, as does Shanta bai:

“Before I used to think – it is our government, if they are drowning us they will resettle us as well, I trusted them. But now our government has sold itself. There used to be a time when India used to be called a golden bird – our country was great. There used to be rivers of milk. I am telling you history. But now the government has sold the rivers and the golden bird has vanished” (Shanta bai, 28/1/06).

Shanta bai seems to view her plight as part of the general and long term decline of the ‘greatness’ of India, and holds the government accountable for this. Nevertheless she articulates a patriotic pride in India, which she glorifies and mythologizes as the ‘golden bird’ that it once was. However Shanta’s sense of nationalism has undergone a transition. Previously her identification with India echoed the hegemonic nationalism, that Lowe and Lloyd (1997) argue “posits a historical continuity between the emergence of a people and the development of the state that represents its political sovereignty” (p8). Thus Shanta viewed the state as an extension, representative, and protector of the people, and hence as “our government”. Now however she feels deeply betrayed by the government, who has ‘sold’ the riches of the nation. She therefore rejects state structures as representative of the people and their aspirations. Her perceived severance

of political structures of the state from the socio-cultural collective of the nation, suggests a nationalism that derives simply from cultural affiliation to the people of the nation rather than an identification with the state also. This cultural form of nationalism is shared by many others in the Narmada valley, who while critical of the state, continue to express a sense of national citizenship.

While their struggle is discursively constructed as one not just for their land and immediate community, but rather for the wider well-being of the nation, the people's fight for their rights against the 'corrupt government' is considered to be an active engagement with their duty as citizens of India.

“Yes, I am from India, I have pride in India, that's why I fight, because I have right over India. If I don't do something for India, who will?” (Shanta, 28/1/06).

Thus their struggle against the government is not in conflict with their sense of affiliation to the Indian nation but rather is precisely because of it. In making this connection between her struggle and her allegiance to India, Shanta is actively performing her national citizenship, as is Bahadur:

“First and foremost I am a citizen of India. That is why I must save my village, if I can't save my village, I will not be able to save my country” (30/3/06).

Since the NBA's struggle is framed in terms of a broader struggle against displacement and destructive development, other national struggles such as those of slum-dwellers fighting eviction, fishermen facing displacement and those affected by the gas disaster in Bhopal are shown support. All these people are 'suffering together' and thus for the people of the valley it is not only one's "duty to support them" but joining hands with other organisations also "increases our strength" against a 'common enemy' – the government. Apart from the moral universalistic discourse of 'duty to support those who are suffering' and instrumental discourse of increasing ones strength against a

common enemy, yet another more politicised discourse is invoked to sustain solidarity with other national movements, as articulated here for instance by Bahadur:

“Our fight is the same, they are fighting for human rights, social betterment and justice and so are we. We are all fighting against the anti-people policies of the government” (Bahadur, 30/3/06).

In this sense alliance-building, is not simply a defensive reaction against ‘suffering’ caused by the state but is a larger political project towards the creation of a better nation. Other national movements are thus perceived to be fighting for the ‘same’ goals as NBA and alliances with them are conceived as efforts to unite oppressed actors in order to challenge and transform the national hegemony, characterised by anti-people policies. These alliances are therefore, not intended to be episodic, instrumental linkages for particularistic interests. They are instead based on recognition of the need for joint action towards long term social change, and can hence be conceptualised in Gramscian terms as counter-hegemonic formations.

However this counter-hegemonic solidarity does not seem to extend to foreign movements as readily as it does to national struggles. Support to foreign movements against dams is extended only so far as it does not conflict with the interests of the nation:

“Our fight is alike. They are displaced and so are we. If they are enemies of our country than that is a different thing. We should not support them then. We are not traitors of our country. Giving support to others is a good thing. If people gain strength from us then I am happy about that” (Bahadur, 30/3/06).

Thus the struggle of foreign movements against dams is ‘alike’ but not the ‘same’ as NBA, though national mobilisations, whether against dams or other things, are. Though Bahadur’s universalistic discourse of justice and human rights provides the basis for solidarity with other national movements, his allegiance to the nation prevents this from providing an ideological bridge for expressing solidarity with foreign movements – he

is “not a traitor”. Ironically this nationalistic discourse echoes that of the Indian government’s which condemns NBA’s alliances with INGOs as anti-national. Apparently Bahadur’s nationalism does not prevent him from engaging in ‘anti-national’ linkages with INGOs when this is a matter of immediate survival. However, his nationalism does create a distinction between national as ‘us’, and supra-national as ‘them’, suggesting that political and economic commonalities of interest between social groups within a nation are more significant and important than any that may exist amongst people across nations. By corollary, Bahadur’s nationalism obfuscates tensions and exploitative relationships amongst class groupings within the nation. As Lowe and Lloyd (1997) note, “nationalism seeks, in the Gramscian sense, to direct popular forces, and thereby gain hegemony over them” (p10). Hence even while the state is colluding with supranational forces to establish global capitalism, as critiqued by NBA, nationalistic affiliation obfuscates the realisation of wider commonalities of political interest across borders, and thus prevents Bahadur from extending support for counter-hegemonic alliances at the global level. When he does extend support to foreign movements it emerges not from a sense of participating in a common political struggle but on the basis of a moral compulsion to do good to others as long as they do not harm the nation. Bahadur is otherwise critical of the policies of the state. But by defending and juxtaposing the nation against the foreign, he is consciously or unconsciously also providing a defence for the hegemonic structures of the state which ultimately exist by establishing political sovereignty from the foreign.

Further the solidarity expressed by foreigners on visits to the valley is seen as arising from a similar moral compulsion to ‘help those who are suffering’ rather than from a common political goal:

“The foreigners come to see what our problems are. They hear that our government is repressing us and they come to help us. They take our news to far off places abroad and bring our struggle to people’s attention”. (Karamchand, 2/2/06).

In turn he believes that NBA should show solidarity with foreign movements because they aid his struggle – “if they help us, we will help them”. Following resource mobilisation theory, the support of foreigners is viewed as a resource to further the NBA’s struggle, and reciprocation of this support is treated as an investment in this resource.

Thus far we have seen that those who expressed an allegiance to the nation-state viewed their struggle as one that is important for the wider progress of the nation. Solidarity and joint protest with other national struggles emerged through a sense of the strategic importance of larger numbers, but also as a wider counter-hegemonic project against the state’s development politics. A discourse of nationalism however, obfuscated the emergence of politicised alliances with other oppressed groups at the global level. When support was extended to foreign movements this was based either on a sense of moral duty towards those who are suffering, or out of an interest in the instrumental value of foreign support.

Local Identities – The Rejection of National Citizenship

For some people the struggle against the government for their rights led to a rejection of their national citizenship, and an adoption of a local or regional identity:

“Our Indian government is making the doors of destruction for us, then how can we say we are people of India, I would say I am a person of the Narmada Valley, I am NBA’s people...for me Medha is more worthy of respect than India the country...if we are part of India then we should also have rights” (Prem, 27/1/06).

Here citizenship and allegiance to the state is not pre-given and immutable. Loyalty must be earned. While those who express a national allegiance, construct their relationship to the state in terms of duties towards the nation, Prem who rejects the state, emphasises formal rights. Once the state has violated these rights, the relationship between people and the state is negated and the state loses its authority to command loyalty. Rejection of Indian citizenship of course implies that identification with the

state did at one point exist, but has now been severed. Thus Ravi uses the metaphor of a mother and child:

“If a mother betrays her child then what is the point of being called her child. So if the government betrays us then what is the point of taking up its citizenship? We are more constrained by the chains of the corrupt Indian government than the British rule” (26/1/06).

Here the redundancy of patriotism is highlighted by the fact that he has been treated worse by his own Indian government than he was by a foreign government.

Though political loyalty is transferred from the nation-state to the local level and even to the NBA, this is not a shift towards an exclusionary identity. Thus solidarity with other movements, national and global, is expressed on the basis of one’s relationship as humans and thus on the defence of humanity. Again this moral universalism expressed in relation to foreign movements lacks a sense of common struggle towards a political goal:

“They are humans, they also have rights. We are not concerned with the Indian government and African government getting together and making business deals, we want to help the people of Africa because they are suffering at the hands of their government” (Prem, 27/1/06).

Prem extends support to the people of Africa against their government because they also have human rights and should not be made to suffer. This is despite the fact that supporting the people of Africa against their government may conflict with the interests of the Indian state which does business deals with Africa. Here unlike the ‘Indian citizens’, Prem extends loyalty to other ‘humans’ across national boundaries, over and above the interests of the Indian state. It is the sovereignty of people over that of the nation-state that is of greater importance. However, this transnational solidarity with ‘humans’ is not underpinned by a feeling of participation in a global struggle against a

global enemy. Thus outsiders are thought to visit the valley in order to simply ‘help’ the people here:

“These people take our grievances forward. Our government doesn’t listen to us, when people come from outside it is a big shame for our government, so it has an effect on them. Our national representatives are making us suffer and doing injustice to us and people from outside are helping us” (Prem, 27/1/06).

Thus far it is apparent that two different rationales for supporting trans-border connections could be found amongst both local and national citizens. For some these connections were *instrumental* to the local-national struggle reflecting transnational civil society perspectives on trans-border politics. For others these connections were based on evoking *humanitarian* concerns. The presence of moral universalism amongst local and national citizens suggests that such discourse is not necessarily sufficient for creating the deterritorialised self-representation of global citizenship. Importantly, neither categories of citizens articulated common *political* interests with subaltern movements abroad.

Global Citizens

For those who reject a solely national referent for political identity in favour for humanity and the world in general, the scale frame adopted by them explicitly “represent[s] their local grievance as part of a global struggle” (Kurtz, 2003, p895). Thus:

“The NBA is fighting to achieve one thing in India and the whole world – there shouldn’t be poverty anywhere, farmers should not suffer...not just farmers but any person” (Sharad, 5/2/06).

Or here again,

“The NBA doesn’t just talk about India it talks about development in general and the right of people to participate in

decision making. The Andolan also talks about alternatives – if we are opposing something we have to give an alternative to it” (Rohit, 23/1/06).

Because the collective action frame of the movement is constructed in global terms, foreign activists are seen as participants in the same struggle as the NBA, rather than benevolent helpers. People from abroad come to support the movement because they too are victims of the same enemies that the NBA is challenging. In an era of globalisation the aggrieved are generally the poor, and the enemy – multinational corporations and governments colluding together to push forward anti-poor policies:

“These days the governments and business people of the powerful countries get together and make policies that affect the whole world and they also exchange money. America gives billions to push forward certain policies. So these governments are getting together to displace poor people. So our [foreign movements and NBA] fight is against a common enemy. This is why I am not concerned with Indian citizenship I feel like a citizen of the world” (Karan, 1/2/06).

When Karan goes on to reject a national political identity and proclaims himself to be a ‘citizen of the world’ he does so through a “universalism that is more than faith or obligation” (Waterman, 1998, p231). He does so, on the basis of a politicised universalism that recognises connections between localities affected by the reality of global conditions. While becoming aware of the global system of oppression that is impacting on his life he perceives a sense of affiliation and common cause with other poor people who are being impacted in the same way not only within the nation but around the world. He therefore identifies global rather than national citizenship as being more relevant to his life experiences. In that Karan’s global citizenship is a realist response to political circumstances it represents what O’Byrne (2003) describes as a ‘pragmatic’ form of citizenship. Since a pragmatic global citizenship is predicated on identifying and emphasising the common political and economic interests of citizens

across nations, it supports the basis for the formation of counter-hegemonic alliances at the global level, paraphrasing Karan, to “fight against a common enemy”. Whereas Karan constructs a global counter-hegemonic struggle by emphasising concrete enemies of the global poor, Rama does so by using a more abstract and embracing, but nevertheless realist notion of ‘human’, to explain the need for trans-border alliances:

“I feel that those who understand us and support us, they come from outside also – England, America, Japan, London, Germany. So these people have nothing to do with us but they are still thinking of us. So why do they come? I think that we are Adivasis- the original people, so we are humans and they are humans and they think why should there be destruction in the name of humans” (Rama, 2/11/05).

Even though Rama connects foreign support to the movement through a discourse of humanity, rather than a concrete global enemy, this is not in the sense of a passive sympathy for those who are suffering, which was evident in the discourse of national and local citizens. Rather, foreign people extend solidarity to Rama’s struggle because they are *both* fighting a common and active battle against the abuse of humanity and human life by hegemonic forces. In this way those fighting for human dignity cannot absolve themselves from Rama’s struggle because humanity transcends the nation-state and thus the fight to save it is a global, politicised, and thus counter-hegemonic struggle that Rama is engaged in along with fellow human beings.

Through their engagement in a local movement with global significance, people of the valley are *performing* their global citizenship. That is, global citizenship is about participation in transformative global politics rather than simply a legal bondage of rights and duties in the manner in which national citizenship is formally defined (Kymlicka and Norman, 1995). Kantya views himself as a global citizen and believes that:

“If we are able to stop one dam somewhere then it will mean victory for the whole world. That is why we give and take support from other organisations across the world” (16/4/05).

In corollary to Kantya, who sees himself as enacting his global citizenship through the movement, Bahadur (30/3/06) sees himself as an Indian rather than world citizen precisely because he does not view his struggle as actively global – “First and foremost I am a citizen of India...If I am able to bring some changes in my country only then can I think of doing something for the world”.

For some the adoption of a global political identity, does not lead to a rejection of national citizenship. Both are described as relevant to identity, though global affiliation derives from being part of a transnational political project and national affiliation from a more cultural sense:

“I am an Indian citizen because I live here and eat its food. I need water in a mud pot and glass, I can't drink water from a plastic bottle. When foreigners take a bath they need soap. We use mud to clean ourselves...but now I see foreign movements coming here to visit us, so I feel I am a citizen of the world also. Now I feel like I have a voice abroad and I am part of what happens there” (Mohit, 8/2/06).

Others outrightly reject Indian citizenship on the basis of the sovereignty of the individual. The nation-state is constructed as an arbitrary and unnecessary unit of division and thus the individual should have the liberty to relate to other people across borders without mediation of the state:

“I think that India is a country, America and England are also countries. They are only countries aren't they, divided by water and some other boundary? My identity is determined by the right thought, whether it is in England, Japan, whatever country it is in the world, but the right thought, the right way of life, for

truth, that is important to me, that is my identity” (Rama, 2/11/05).

By emphasising that his identity is constituted by the pursuit of a ‘right and truthful way of life’ (though he leaves this undefined) rather than from national affiliation, Rama implies that nationalism does not necessarily intersect with, and can detract from what is ‘right’. A similar perspective is presented by Rohit, though he is more pointed in describing the manner in which the nation-state is an undesirable form of identification:

“Whether we are citizens of India or abroad, we are all the same. It is only politicians that separate us saying that we are citizens of different places. The people who come from abroad are the same as us. The rich people and politicians have created this bondage of citizenship; they have created these boundaries so that they can grind the people. The poor are made to suffer”.
(Rohit, 23/1/06).

Rohit perceives the nation-state to be an ideology created by capitalists and politicians to construct barriers between poor people across the world, though in actuality “we are all the same”. By manufacturing differences of nationality those in power prevent the poor from uniting, and thus enable the perpetuation of their exploitation.

In summary, crucial to the notion of global citizenship is the sense of involvement in a global struggle. This extends the basis of solidarity with foreign movements beyond a moral duty to help others, inherent in moral universalism, to an assertion of participation in a common struggle. Such a ‘pragmatic’ notion of global citizenship is facilitated and necessitated by the globalisation of political and economic structures. The common enemy identified by many global citizens is transnational capital and world governments that facilitate its flow, to the detriment of ‘the poor’. In that national governments are identified as colluders in this process of exploitative economic globalisation, global citizens reject national allegiance. Instead they emphasise the sovereignty of the individual acting through global political collectivities. By locating their local grievances within global, systemic conditions, and forming trans-border

alliances on this basis, global citizens are *performing* their global citizenship by constructing and acting within a counter-hegemonic struggle at the global level.

So far the forms of citizenship discussed are those typical of the modern era, but in the next section I will draw attention to a non-modern type of citizenship still characteristic of many Adivasis who are not aware of their inclusion in the Indian state.

Non-Modern Citizenship – ‘Adivasis as those who struggle’

As I have discussed earlier, many Adivasis who have been less directly involved in NBA protest events across the country have not developed a worldview based on a concept of the globe divided into nation-states. By extension, they are also not aware of their being part of the state of India. Accompanying this lack of awareness of the nation-state is an absence of cultural affiliation with the ‘people of India’. Thus when I would ask whether they saw any differences between the ‘white people’ and other ‘brown’ outsiders, such as myself, who come to visit the valley, they generally replied in the negative (fieldnotes, 30/10/05). While a modern identification with the nation state is absent, identity is expressed as Adivasis in opposition to puravasis who “are educated and wear full clothes”, or as “hill people” in opposition to the bazaarias or market people (fieldnotes, 30/10/05). In this sense Adivasis subscribe to a non-modern form of citizenship which “attributes to the citizen primary membership and sense of allegiance to a non-territorialized (usually culturally defined) group” (O’Byrne, 2003, p3). However this is not to suggest that Adivasis are only bound by a reified and fixed sense of cultural identity. Instead it emerged through the course of my fieldwork that the meaning ascribed to ‘Adivasi’ has been undergoing change in the process of the mobilisation, becoming more of a fluid, political identity. This has happened through the incorporation of experiences of social struggle in Adivasis’ self-representations. Thus Adivasi identity has been re-constituted to refer to those who are ‘struggling’ against the ‘sarkar’ or government:

“People who are fighting in andolans are Adivasi – they know they are Adivasi. But those who do not listen to the Andolan are not Adivasi” (Ahoryia, 30/10/05).

A corollary to this is that other 'poor people' who are not actively struggling against the government are not viewed as Adivasi:

“They feed the government and they think that the sarkar is good. So they would not be considered Adivasi, they are sarkar's people ('sarkari')” (Ahoriya, 30/10/05).

Such a politicised Adivasi identity, while certainly excluding some people, provides the basis to extend membership to others with whom, though no cultural affinity is shared, are instead bound by a sense of common struggle against the sarkar. Thus 'white' and 'brown' people who are part of other organisations and express solidarity with them are referred to as Adivasi also. It must be noted, however, that even though Adivasis in the NBA seem to have developed a fluid, transnational form of identity, this is not reflective of identification with global citizenship. In the absence of a modernist awareness of the nation-state against which to juxtapose or supplement the global construct of 'Adivasi as struggler', this remains a non-modern form of affiliation (though it is a space of contestation and may provide the basis for the emergence of modern notions of global citizenship). This is reflected in an absence of the modern discourse of humanity and justice to establish solidarity with other movements which I found amongst Nimaris and Adivasis that were familiar with the modernist notions of country and globe (as has already been discussed).

CONCLUSION

While the previous chapter illustrated the manner in which social movements develop through a process of collective learning, this chapter highlighted how the radical democratic space of social movements provides critical learning experiences that allow individual participants to challenge their oppression. In the first moment of resistance people were made aware of their rights as citizens, and thus the illegitimacy of the feudal control exercised over them by the state. This empowerment within the framework of a liberal democracy led to the second stage of resistance, when the state's continuing denial of their rights revalorised their position towards a more radical rejection of the state's authority. This was manifested in the symbolic 'reclamation of

eminent domain' as well as an emphasis towards social movements and political collectivities rather than the individual as the 'site' for citizenship. Finally, NBA's politics of multiple scales that involved contestation at the national and global levels, led to further pedagogical experiences that facilitated a scalar understanding of space amongst grassroots participants and the politicised framing of their grievances beyond the local scale.

These various educational processes of the radicalisation of citizenship and construction of grievance scales were constitutive elements of the three expressions of modern citizenship found amongst grassroots participants, i.e. national, local and global citizenship. While all were critical of the government's failure to protect the interests of the poor in India, they differed regarding the extent to which they perceived their local grievances to be connected to the global hegemony, and consequently the basis they provided for extending support to foreign movements. Significantly global citizens explicitly framed their grievances in terms of a broader global struggle against capitalism, destructive dams or the destruction of humanity. The expression of solidarity with foreign movements was therefore counter-hegemonic in nature in that it was based on recognising common political interests against the hegemony. This was in contrast to national and local citizens, who while framing their struggle as one of national relevance, rationalised support to foreign movements through non-political considerations of moral duty or instrumental value.

This account provides a reading of global citizenship that moves beyond moral universalism as the guiding principle, as espoused by some (Dower, 2003; Kung, 2002). Rather it supports a *pragmatic* form of global citizenship which is a politicised response to globalised conditions of modernity. This also suggests that as people actively and critically encounter global conditions through social struggle, they can learn to become global citizens, as did the global citizens of NBA. Yet the learning of global citizenship is not inevitable. The hegemonic discourse of nationalism that serves to undermine the realisation of trans-border commonalities and connections can act as a strong counter-check against learning of global citizenship. This at least partly explains why most NBA

participants continue to articulate a strong sense of nationalistic affiliation, even though they are critical of the Indian state's actions.

Apart from modern forms of citizenship, I also identified non-modern affiliations amongst Adivasis who are not aware of India, the nation. Here the identity of Adivasi has been re-worked to encompass all those engaged in struggle against the sarkar, regardless of cultural differences. While this represents a fluid and dynamic identity that transcends political borders, it is stressed that this does not represent a modern conceptualisation of global citizenship. This illuminates the embedded centrality of national citizenship against which constructions of global citizenship can be juxtaposed, and thus given political meaning.

By providing an account of the politicisation of identities and emergence of global citizenship amongst grassroots participants of NBA, this chapter deepens the analysis of the role of Third World local movements in GCS. Not only can they collectively contest the role of supranational and national institutions in their oppression, and form global alliances in response, but through this politics they also hold the potential for the radical transformation of identities and consciousness and formation of global citizenship amongst local people.

Chapter 9

(Performing) Global Citizenship at the Local Level

INTRODUCTION

So far I have examined how NBA was enacting radical global citizenship through its struggle against national and global forces of domination. Here however, I turn to exploring how movement participants are performing global citizenship at the local level – that is whether their increasing consciousness of the national and global nature of oppression is refracted back, leading to consciousness and action to transform oppressive social relations of gender, caste and class that are normalised and embedded within their own communities. The chapter therefore contributes towards understanding the extent to which social movements might provide a learning environment to facilitate reflexivity towards local social structures of oppression.

The chapter primarily draws on data from villages in Nimar. This is because Nimar is more stratified than Adivasi society and hence provides a more conducive context for examining and following processes of social transformation at the community level. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first provides a descriptive and theoretical account of gender, caste and class relations in Nimar. The second part is an analysis of changes in reflexivity towards, and consent for these three dimensions of oppression amongst village participants of the movement. Attention is also paid to the movement processes that facilitated these changes.

NIMARI SOCIETY: THREE DIMENSIONS OF OPPRESSION

Nimari society is fractured by three main axis of oppression – gender, caste and class. Here I provide a brief description of the manner in which these have been traditionally manifested in the lives of people in Nimar, and rural India in general.

Patriarchy

While women are generally recognised as part of the marginalised ‘subalterns’ (Chatterjee and Jeganathan, 2000), nowhere is this more apparent than in rural India (Grey, 2004; Seenarine, 2004). Hegemonic cultural ideologies of pativrata (devotion to husband who is considered akin to god), maryada (female honour emanating from her modesty), and sringar (female adornment – women as objects of beauty) ensure that not only are women treated as appendages to men but that such subordination is often conceded to by women themselves who view it as a parameter of their virtue (Bagwe, 1995).

Traditionally women in rural India, including Nimar maintain *purdah*, which literally translated means veil or curtain. This is the social practice of veiling and seclusion of women from the public arena and even within the house itself. The practice of *purdah* involves an intricate set of rules regarding mannerisms, clothing and body language – all indications of women’s subservience to male members of the community but also symbolic gestures of her modesty and dignity. For instance, married women are required to cover their heads, and in some instances their faces in the presence of husbands and male in-laws.

While cultural practices of patriarchy severely restrict the interaction and participation of women in public life, they are solely responsible for domestic work, which in rural areas can be physically gruelling, involving cleaning out animal sheds and threshing and manually grinding grains, apart from cooking and cleaning for a large joint family. Apart from this, women, especially in lower caste families⁸², also lend their time and labour to their agricultural fields working alongside hired labour. While the contributions of women are crucial to the economic situation of the family, they themselves remain financially dependent on their husbands (Omvedt, 1993).

⁸² Women in wealthy or upper caste families draw their dignity and prestige from not having to labour outside the house.

Caste

Apart from patriarchy, the caste system is another important dimension of oppression in Nimar, and rural India in general. The caste system has ancient origins, with the earliest references to it in the Rig Veda, which is one of the oldest religious texts in the world, written between 1700-1100 BC. In this, a hymn describes the creation of the universe and humans from the sacrifice of a 'cosmic being' called Purusha. The gods divide Purusha into four parts – his mouth becoming the Brahmins (priests and men of learning); his two arms – the Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors); his thighs – the Vaishyas (traders and merchants); and his feet – the Shudras (the lower occupational groups) (Klass, 1980). This religious myth provides a justification for, as well as graphical representation of the hierarchical or stratified nature of the caste system, with the Brahmins as the most revered, and the Shudras occupying the lowest position. Sometimes a fifth category, falling outside the four varnas is also mentioned – that of untouchables or *achhoot*, within which Harijans and Adivasis are placed. Varnas are further divided into an innumerable number of castes, with castes within a varna also ordered in a hierarchy in relation to each other (Morton, 1980).

Despite vigorous debate surrounding the origins and meaning of the caste system, there is general consensus that it is, in Max Weber's terms a 'closed status group' (Jayaraman, 1981), in that membership to various levels within the hierarchy is fixed and relatively impenetrable. Ensuring the 'closed' nature of this social system are various social practices such as endogamy that prohibit inter-caste marriage; occupational specialisation wherein particular occupations are reserved for particular castes; commensality that restricts interactions between castes in relation to eating and drinking activities; and finally hereditary membership to a caste (Klass, 1980). According to Dumont (1980) the hierarchy of castes is based on the principle of opposition between pure and impure. Thus the superiority of a caste derives from the purity of its occupation and eating habits. Castes engaging in 'polluting' activities such as eating meat, or jobs involving contact with animal and human refuse, excreta, and

cadavers, are considered the most impure and thus relegated to the lowest level in the caste hierarchy. These are generally referred to as the untouchables and are not only considered 'dirty' but evil and inauspicious. Whether occupational purity is itself a reason for the caste hierarchy, as Dumont suggests, or a means for culturally legitimising its existence is however debated (Mosse 1999).

Though the original function of the caste system is contested (Klass, 1980; Dutt, 1931), it is clear that caste ideology has served to legitimise and entrench class stratifications (Jayaraman, 1981). Thus the caste ideology of occupational differentiation between castes has been used by high castes to prevent lower caste individuals from acquiring land. For instance, as recently as 2003, a Harijan family in Gujarat was forcibly prevented from cultivating land they had received from the government by upper caste farmers forcing them to return to wage labour (Dave, 2003). This economic subjugation is given ideological legitimisation through religious notions of karma and transmigration that place responsibility for the social position of the lower castes on transgressions they have committed in their previous life. At the same time the ideology of karma conditions lower castes to "uncomplainingly, willingly and obediently" fulfil their preordained duties towards upper castes in their current life as the only way of achieving redemption (Singh, 2005, p202).

The caste hierarchy, however, must not be conflated with class structure. As Perez (2004) points out economic classes do not always correspond with caste positions. Thus within a particular region a 'dominant caste' that possess greatest economic strength may not necessarily be from the highest caste (Perez, 2004). For instance in Gujarat, the Patidars have secured a dominant political and economic status even though they are ritually below Brahmans and Kshatriyas. Hence, though the caste system strongly intersects class divisions it represents a form of oppression in itself. This necessitates a separate exploration of class stratifications as another form of oppression in Nimar, to which I now turn.

Class

The economic landscape of rural India can be divided roughly into four classes – Rich, middle and poor farmers and agricultural labourers. While the rich farmers, defined as owning over 15 acres of land constitute 7% of the agricultural population, 30% of the population are poor farmers, cultivating between 1-5 acres of land. A large 44% percent of the rural population are constituted of agricultural labourers who either own less than 1 acre of land or nothing at all (Dass and Deulkar, c2002). This class earns its livelihood mostly as casual labour, remaining unemployed if work is not available, while a minority work as attached labour, securing regular employment from a single employer. With the emergence of capitalist agriculture pushed forward by the Green Revolution such inequality in land-ownership is only increasing (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000).

In Pipri, a Nimari village, which is the main subject of this chapter, middle farmers owning between 5-15 acres of land predominate. Most farmers employ agricultural labourers to work on the fields. Largely workers are employed on a casual basis though some have regular employment. While the per day wage rate stipulated by the government is 50 rupees, they are normally paid between 20-30 rupees. Their economic existence thus hovers a little above the poverty line⁸³. Aside from satiating hunger, this income is not enough to afford education and full medical care.

Farmers in Pipri are of various castes in the hierarchy – predominantly scheduled caste Yadavs but also higher caste Kshatriyas. The interplay between caste and class is most evident here in the manner in which landless labourers in the village are predominantly Adivasi or Harijan untouchables. Economic relations between labourers and farmers are thus mediated by caste practices of purity-impurity or *chooa-choot*. However *chooa-choot* is also practiced amongst farmers of different caste statuses regardless of

⁸³ The poverty line here is not measured by the popular international parameter of \$1 a day (income of labourers in Pipri falls below this). It refers instead to the poverty line measure of India which records the “most basic calorie intake”, in terms of satiation of hunger rather than nutrition. This measure does not take into account the other basic necessities (shelter, clothing, transport etc) that an individual spends his income on. As of 2005 the poverty line for rural areas stands at Rs.368 per person per month which is just about enough to purchase 650 grams of food grains a day (Guruswamy and Abraham, 2006).

economic standing. Having briefly explored how gender, caste and class oppression is manifested in Nimar the next section develops a framework for identifying transformative changes in the practice of these forms of oppression. This will aid subsequent analysis of movement participants' reflexive engagement and transformation of these practices.

A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES OF OPPRESSION

In order to identify transformations in the practice of gender, caste and class oppression it is necessary to understand the ways in which they are manifested in everyday life. In rural India, these relations of domination and subordination are highly semiotised. That is, a complex system of cultural 'codes' or 'signs' are used to articulate and manifest authority and deference. Though the creation of symbols is a characteristic of all societies, Ranjit Guha (1983), an eminent Indian historian argues that semioticity in general and the semiotisation of power relations in particular is especially pertinent to feudal societies that are driven by tradition. While he characterises rural India of the colonial era as feudal, it appears that this characterisation is also applicable to the rural India of today, where caste, gender and class superiority continue to be expressed through cultural practices, though perhaps less rigorously than before. 'Signs' of hierarchy in rural India take a number of forms. Verbal speech contains derogatory and reverential versions for pronouns. Paralinguistic signs relating to distance, posture and sitting arrangements are loaded with power implications, as are ornaments and clothing. Some examples of these 'signs' will be seen later in the analysis.

Given the significance of cultural practices in symbolising authority and deference, Guha (1983) theorises transformative action as the radical subversion of these practices – "Indeed the struggle for any significant change in existing power relations in the countryside often appears as a contest against those who are determined to retain their traditional monopoly of such status symbols and others who are keen on appropriating them – that is, as a cultural conflict." (p61). Transformations of these cultural practices

become even more significant given the manner in which they are anchored to religious idioms that make deference to authority not only natural but desirable, and therefore manufacture a Gramscian consent for people's own subordination. Critical reflection and action to change or remove these cultural signs of deference are thus viewed to be significant to the transformation of local oppression. Yet at the same time, in the absence of changes in broader economic and cultural structures of hegemony these can only represent intimations of change. This suggests a conception of social transformation as process rather than abrupt moment. It also suggests that active consciousness or reflexivity regarding these changes is a critical aspect of social change. Conversely, without reflexivity, changes in social practices are not indications of social transformation. Having developed this framework for interpreting changes in traditional practices of hegemony in Nimar, I now move on to exploring the pedagogical context that NBA provided to facilitate movement participants' critical engagement and transformation of these local practices.

NBA AS A PEDAGOGICAL SPACE FOR LOCAL TRANSFORMATION

As I have already argued, the struggle against SSP developed into a counter-hegemonic struggle against oppression operating at multiple scales. This section begins by illustrating how this struggle provided a facilitative space for movement participants to critically reflect and act upon traditional power structures at the local level. It also highlights the movement's limitations in facilitating this reflexivity, arising from the strategic consideration of maintaining unity amongst participants.

Counter-Hegemonic Struggle and the Rupture of Traditional Power Structures

The movement's contribution to facilitating the critical reflection of grassroots participants' regarding locally legitimised oppression lay primarily in interrupting and rupturing traditional power structures during mobilisations, as well as providing a discursive repertoire of human rights, justice and oppression that developed through the movement's wider struggle against the dam. As a movement for social justice, the

mobilisation of marginalised sections of Nimari society – women, lower castes and labourers – was ideologically relevant to the struggle. It was also instrumental to gaining support from national and international civil society, as well as for strengthening the movement’s resistance against political opponents. Movement leaders thus made significant efforts to mobilise women and untouchable hill Adivasis along with higher caste men. However, though they were successful in this endeavour they were less able to organise labourers.

Nevertheless, the joint participation of women, lower caste and higher caste men provided an opportunity to experience social interactions that departed from normal practices. Where women are concealed by purdah, the arrival of Medha Patekar – a female activist to lead mobilisations was itself viewed with scepticism. Male farmers wondered - “what will a women be able to achieve for us?” However as she organised impressive meetings with farmers and politicians “talk spread of how, even though she was a woman she seemed capable” (Nanak, 20/3/05). Medha Patekar was also able to use her charisma and remarkable social and political abilities to convince male farmers of the need to mobilise women from the villages. Prem Yadav describes one of the first instances of women participating in public protests:

“When we went to Kevadia colony women did not go. Medha felt there should be women so she spoke to Dev Ram Bhai who used to be the sarpanch⁸⁴ here. He said ok we will bring women too. The next time *Didi* (Patekar) came the women also came to the temple. Before they never used to. The first woman to come was Geeta bai. *Didi* had come with a mike and she told Geeta bai to shout a slogan. At first she shied away but *didid* took away her veil and then Geeta bai shouted a slogan. She didn’t come in front though. She shouted from behind the window in the temple

⁸⁴ A sarpanch is elected by village members to represent the village at the statutory institution of local self-government called the Gram Panchayat. The sarpanch mediates between the village community and government officers.

– *Koi nahi hatega, bandh nahi banega*⁸⁵! After that women started to participate in the movement.” (Prem, 27/1/06).

Women who previously had been restricted to the household entered the public domain. They often took centre stage in demonstrations, *gheroing* and questioning officials, addressing large rallies and making speeches, and often even bearing the brunt of brutal attacks by the police. Women have also been involved in the decision-making processes of the movement, though to a far lesser extent. For instance, Shanta bai is a member of a committee set up by NBA activists to act as a watchdog against corruption, and Geeta bai is a member of the Narmada Ghati committee – a group made up of village level activists in the Valley that deliberate over issues relating to the movement’s functioning. Such participation of women is punctuated and encouraged by movement slogans – ‘*Hum Nimar ki nari hain, phul nahi, chingari hain*’ – ‘We are the women of Nimar, we are flames not flowers’, that evocatively reject women’s identity as submissive ‘flowers’ and celebrate their new radical form as burning ‘flames’ of anger.

The joint mobilisation of Adivasis and Nimari farmers also interrupted caste practices within the context of movement activities. The intervention of the leader of the movement was again crucial in achieving this. She encouraged people of all castes to travel together, sit next to each other, and share food and water during protest events. When satyagrahas (passive resistance) started in the hill villages of Adivasis facing submergence, many Nimaris of various castes joined them and stayed for months in their houses. This was a particularly significant departure from existing caste interactions given that Adivasis were considered to be dirty untouchables who were mystified as evil spirits, and so kept at arms length. Initially Nimaris therefore had been “scared” of going into the hills. Once there, however, these events provided an opportunity for learning each others language, exchanging opinions about the dam and its consequences and learning about each others culture, farming practices and lifestyles (fieldnotes, 3/12/05). This was an important gesture of solidarity and facilitated the formation of personal relationships between these social groups. The display of caste

⁸⁵ An NBA slogan - ‘We will not move, the dam must not be built’.

unity was discursively articulated through protest slogans – “*Larne wale ek hi jati!*” – Those who struggle are one caste; and “*Hum sub ek hain!*” - “We are all one”.

The rupture of traditional patriarchal and caste practices in the space of the movement and its replacement with more egalitarian modes of interaction provided an *opportunity* for Nimari people to enact and experience an alternative social reality to that within which they were normalised. It held the potential to falsify the supposed naturalness and inevitability of their traditional structures and thus enable people to question and challenge these. In essence the movement provided what Allman (2001) refers to as “prefigurative experiences of the type of social relations that would lie at the heart of a transformed society” (p163). Such active experiencing of alternatives is especially important for transforming consciousness, when consciousness is viewed from a Marxist perspective as being dialectically constructed from the material world. Thus drawing from this standpoint, Allman suggests that “authentic and lasting transformations in consciousness can occur only when alternative understandings and values are actually experienced “in-depth” – that is, when they are experienced sensually and subjectively as well as cognitively, or intellectually” (p170). *Experiencing* democratic social relations within the movement could therefore potentially enhance people’s ability to engage in a more in-depth and critical reflection of their own discriminatory community practices.

Apart from these alternative experiences, the movement’s inclusive language of social justice and human rights also contributed to making the movement a facilitative space for transforming traditional practices of caste and patriarchy. While this discursive framework was used to condemn the Narmada people’s marginalisation by national and global forces, it could also be deployed by movement participants to identify and reject discriminatory practices legitimised within their own communities. As Nanak bhai, a villager of Karmal notes:

“The Andolan gave me a new way of thinking about my relationship with other castes. I started to think about the

equality of rights. I started to think that the religion of humanity is above all other religions. That's why I don't practice choo-choot anymore." (20/3/05).

Inclusive discourses drawn upon to resist the oppressive development hegemony were therefore logically extended to counter oppressive traditional practices as well. This discursive framework was reinforced and circulated within the mass-base through movement slogans such as 'Narmada bachao, manav bachao' – 'Save Narmada, save humanity', and movement songs which sought to establish the integrity of all human life. A verse of one such song, sung during movement events goes:

'I have faith in humanity
I believe in honesty
Equality is my thought
Self-reliance my aspiration...'⁸⁶

While the movement generated non-exclusionary discourses, one should not overlook the religious basis for equality and justice – encapsulated in the idea that 'we are all god's children' that already existed amongst local communities (though undermined to a large extent by caste ideology). This notwithstanding, I argue that the movement provided a pedagogical space that could *potentially* facilitate the reflexivity of collective actors towards local oppression by creating conditions both for *experiencing* and *talking about* egalitarian social relations.

Counter-Hegemonic Struggle and the Maintenance of 'Community'

At the same time, however, the degree to which NBA could actualise these facilitative conditions to promote reflexivity was restricted by the movement's need to maintain a coherent and unified challenge against the state and WB's development policies.

⁸⁶ Translated from Hindi. Song title: 'Kahan Ram Hai, Kya Rahim Hai' (Wherever Ram or Rahim), Lyrics by Medha Patekar.

Preventing internal divisions from detracting from this primary goal was therefore important for the movement. As Patekar notes in reference to class divisions:

“We could have raised labour issues, but it wasn’t possible along with the NBA movement - people would have got divided.” (26/02/06).

To the extent that the interruption of unequal power relations strengthened the movement’s unity, leaders encouraged this during protest events, as described above. However they refrained from making deliberate and direct efforts to draw critical attention to issues of caste, gender, and class oppression that could fragment the wider struggle:

“...upper-caste landlords were used to using derogatory language when referring to the Adivasis. It was a challenge keeping them together in the movement. We were very much aware of the fact that social inequality and economic inequality could not be immediately mitigated and dealt with. No organization can really take up and work towards resolving all the issues at a time, even though the framework can be broad and inclusive and comprehensive.” (Patekar, 1993, p163).

In the absence of organised and collective critical reflection, the movement’s slogans of equality tended to promote a sense of ‘community’ that obfuscated underlying inequalities in the village. The discursive formation of ‘community’ can be seen in the way in which movement leaders justified the participation of marginalised people by evoking their traditional roles within the existing system rather than by challenging hierarchies. A ‘community’ framework thus enabled the mobilisation of marginalised sections of society without immediately threatening the power of dominant groups.

A community approach is most evident in the mobilisation of women whose participation was encouraged by movement leaders on the basis that women must

protect their households from the threat of the dam as part of their traditional duties as caregivers of their children, husband and community. In this time of crisis, the ability to defend ones home displaced modesty as the touchstone of female honour (izaat/maryada). The foregrounding of the caregivers role as a mobilising identity is embodied in the slogan – ‘Mahila ki izaat hai kismein? - Ghar, Gaon bachane mein!’ – ‘where does a woman’s honour lie? - In saving her house and village!’. Women of Pipri invariably echoed these notions of dignity and duty to protect in narratives of their mobilisation:

“When Medha came she asked us ‘who runs the household?’
Women not men... The mother will worry about whether there is food in the house, not the father. It is the job of the woman to save the house and the village and not the man. She has no dignity without her house and village.” (Geeta bai, 25/1/06).

For Geeta bai, as for many other women, her participation in the Andolan emerged as an extension of her duty and identity as the nurturer of her family rather than her right as an individual to contest and protect herself against the state. The discourse upon which the mobilisation of women was achieved, thus reinforced rather than challenged the subordination of women to the interests of their husband and family.

This is even more evident in the construction of women as ‘shields’ of the Andolan. As one male villager from Karmal explained:

“Policemen are more scared of women than men. If women come out of their houses to fight then that brings the greatest disgrace on the government. Also, sometimes we have to use women in demonstrations because the police do not hit women as badly as men. So women are the shields of the Andolan.”
(Nanak Bhai, 20/3/05).

Women were seen as material and symbolic resources that could further the interests of the movement – material in that they acted as a ‘shield’ or physical barrier between male protesters and the police; and symbolic in that their presence as vulnerable sections of society further accentuated the image of state injustice and oppression. Such strategic use of women as resources again accepted and drew upon the traditional position of women in society. The rupture of purdah and mobilisation of women was therefore not accompanied by a critique of their subordination within Nimari society. By extending traditional gender roles to the mobilisation of women, movement leaders failed to encourage critical reflection on gender inequalities and hence, promoted a sense of a harmonious and equal ‘community’. This construction of community facilitated the mobilisation of women and men against the oppressors of the movement, while at the same time discouraging gender consciousness and tensions that could divide and detract the movement from its primary goal.

The construction and use of ‘community’ was visible not just in the mobilisation of women but all sections of society. In the case of labourers, it guided the manner in which NBA activists formed organisational strategies for their participation. Conceiving of the village as a community unit, activists liaised with village leaders – invariably powerful farmers, leaving them to mobilise the rest of the village. However unlike its success in mobilising women and lower castes, the notion of community failed to mobilise labourers. Though activists urged farmers to include labourers in mobilisations and to even finance their trips on rallies, such support from farmers was not forthcoming. At the same time activists did not seek to organise separate leadership and independent channels for labourers to access the movement. NBA leadership’s treatment of the village as a community rather than class divided space meant that labourers who had to depend on reluctant farmers to include them, were ultimately left out of mobilisations⁸⁷. However the importance of a ‘community’ approach still lay in denying class differences and thus preventing the aggravation of class antagonisms that could derail the movement’s wider goals.

⁸⁷ Since participation in movement activities involves the loss of paid work time, labourers are constrained by financial imperatives as well.

In summary, the movement's counter-hegemonic struggle against the SSP, was *potentially* both facilitative and constraining of the movement's ability to emerge as a pedagogical space where village participants could critically reflect on power inequalities within the mass base. It facilitated this process in that it ruptured traditional hierarchical practices during protest events and gave rise to the discursive tools of social justice and human rights. The movement's counter-hegemonic struggle thus provided a space where movement participants could experience and talk about egalitarian social relations. The process of reflexivity that these conditions could facilitate however, were constrained by the movement's construction and maintenance of a unified 'community', for whom resistance against external oppressors was paramount.

Thus though certain structural preconditions for reflexivity towards local oppression were created, movement leaders did not make collective efforts to develop this reflexivity. As we shall see below then, the extent to which the movement actually provided a pedagogical space for critical reflection and action on local oppression depended on individual participants' own cognitive engagements with the movement.

REFLEXIVITY AND CONSENT AMONGST THE GRASSROOTS

Here I examine the impact of the movement's facilitating and constraining conditions for transforming local oppression, on the consciousness of village participants. I examine the varying levels of consent, reflexivity and critical action to transform gender, caste and class hierarchies that participants exhibited on a "continuum"⁸⁸ of domestication and radicalisation (Mayo, 1999 p6). I start by examining transformations in gender consciousness and practices.

⁸⁸ The conceptualisation of domestication and radicalisation as poles on a continuum points to the manner in which these are analytical categories that in real life are only identifiable as gradations, in a relative sense, from low to high levels of critical engagement towards social change.

Gender Consciousness and Practices

The failure of movement leaders to encourage critical reflection regarding gender hierarchies in Nimar can be seen in the lack of reflexivity and resistance to male hegemony amongst women. Though women suggested that their position within the household had become 'better' because of the Andolan, they would refer to these changes in a very passive manner. Ganghor mai, an 80 year old veteran of the movement recounts:

“Before the Andolan women would ask their husbands to get things for the house, but they would say it behind the wall. If a man asked for tea, and the milk was finished the woman would be too scared to say so, she would sneak out and borrow milk from the neighbour... Before, the daughter in law would not be allowed to speak in front of her father-in-law; neither would she sit on the bed in front of us. For many years I didn't talk to my husband in front of my in-laws. This has all lessened because of the Andolan” (Ganghor mai, 3/1/06).

Ganghor mai presents a truncated before and after version of changes in gender practices in which her agency and consciousness are not visible. Changes seem only to “happen because of the movement” rather than through women's critical engagement, awareness, and active resistance to their subordination. Though women did refer to these changes as a “good thing”, they were not articulated in a politicised manner that expressed the traditional position of women as “unjust” or oppressive in the same way in which the state's actions against the people of the Narmada valley were.

Women even showed a degree of affinity towards practices of purdah that revealed Gramscian consent for patriarchy. Thus though purdah and maryada (female dignity), were seen as constraints that prevented men and women from “living together as one”, I also noted very strong undercurrents of lament for an age of maryada now lost. With

great bitterness Rajkor talked of how the government had forced women out of their houses and stripped them of their dignity:

“Before women used to have respect and dignity, they would stay inside the house. Now the government has dragged us out on to the streets. We feel so bad about it...The government has made us fight, otherwise we were never like this.” (Rajkor, 4/2/06).

Rajkor’s account of participation in the mobilisation is characterised by a sense of humiliation for being ‘dragged’ out on to the streets against her will, and in violation of her womanhood which she appears to define in terms of “staying inside the house”. Instead of feeling empowered by participation in the movement she feels a sense of shame, indicating her deep internalisation and acceptance of patriarchal practices of purdah.

Women also tried to offset changes in the practice of purdah brought on by their involvement in the Andolan by drawing my attention to the various aspects of purdah and maryada that they had managed to ‘protect’. They proudly talked of how even though the “need of the hour” called for them to enter into the public they still retained a certain standard of dignity:

“Before women had so much dignity (maryada) and respect that even if they stood on a box no one would cast their eyes on them. But then a woman has no dignity without her house and village. So we left our veils – we realised that the need of the hour is such...Even now though we still maintain a certain maryada. We still cover our hair with the dupatta, and we get off the motorbike when it enters the village and then we walk to the house” (Shanta bai, 28/1/06).

Evidently, women did not view *maryada* and *purdah* as wholly oppressive traditions. To the contrary they attached their self-worth to their ability to practice customs of deference to men, in a manner that suggested consent for their subordination. This consent was not simply based on resignation to their oppression as a “natural and inevitable” aspect of their existence but instead on “*believ(ing) actively* in the values that explain and justify their own subordination” (Scott, 1990, p72, italics added).

However, for some women their active participation in the movement provided a catalyst for critically challenging their subordination as women in Nimari society. Dimple, the daughter of a barber, and Sapna whose father is a Patidar farmer, have both been active in the movement and were also members of a now defunct youth group within the NBA. Much to the frustration and dismay of family members, both refuse to wear jewellery and bindis – normally a crucial aspect of not simply beautification or *sringar*, but the female identity itself⁸⁹. Confiding in me Dimple argued:

“Why should I wear these things, there is more to me than this. I don’t want to get married either. People treat girls as if they are only capable of being wives. All I want to do is work in the *Andolan*” (fieldnotes, 19/3/06).

Dimple rejects the reification of her identity as ‘wife’ – a role which negates her worth as an individual with her own unique aspirations. Just like Dimple, Sapna too expressed disdain for marriage. Both these women consciously projected their resistance to traditional female roles through a rejection of the cultural symbols that objectify them as beautiful ‘things’. Unlike the women discussed earlier, for whom changes in gender practices merely “happened”, these women engaged in a politicised resistance to *sringar* as a cultural practice that symbolised male hegemony. While the mobilisation of women in the movement ruptured normal hegemonic practices of *purdah* it encouraged greater reflexivity amongst these women regarding their subordination in Nimari society.

⁸⁹ The fact that these aspects of beautification are fundamental to a women’s identity was made imminently clear by the way villagers would often show exasperation at my lack of jewellery, exclaiming – ‘how will people know you are a girl if you don’t wear jewellery!’.

Caste Consciousness and Practices

The movement, as an educative space, also led to variations in reflexivity and consent towards the caste system amongst movement participants. At the 'domesticated' end of the spectrum were people like Mohani and her husband who believed in the sanctity of the caste system and the need to preserve it. Mohani's consent for the hegemonic system of caste made her uneasy about the apparently improper interactions between various castes within the context of the movement. As she explained, caste rules are laid down by divine authority and must be respected by all. Mohani therefore viewed the caste system as not only natural but righteous and thus showed no reflexivity regarding its nature as a system of power. On her part, when she went on rallies she would try to maintain her distance from the Adivasi untouchables to the extent it was possible. However practical conditions made this difficult – "if you are asked to sit on a vehicle with other people you can't refuse because these arrangements have been made by somebody else. Once you're back at home you can do things according to your own rules." (fieldnotes, 19/4/06). For the sake of movement goals, Mohani tolerated transgressions of caste practices in the space of the movement, but continued to view these as morally wrong, and thus restored such practices in her everyday interactions.

Others rationalised and accepted the need to abandon caste practices within the movement in order to create a semblance of unity as instrumental to strengthening the movement against adversaries:

"In rallies everybody sits together and eats. There is no chooa-chhoot. Andolan means organisation, strength. Adivasis are supporting us and we all have to fight together so there is no place for chooa-chhoot. We have to fight as one, if we fight together as a clenched fist then we are stronger. If we become divided then it is easy for them to crush us individually." (Sharad Yadav, 5/2/06).

Beyond this political necessity however caste practices of many people remained unchanged, with a strict divide maintained between what was practiced in the context of the movement (“*There* we are all one”) and what was done at home (“When we are in the village we have to accept chhooa-chhoot and recognise that they are Adivasis”). For these individuals unity in the movement was more a matter of surface display than the “lived compassion and commitment” that according to Allman (2001) manifests “deep transformation” (p170). Importantly however the failure to engage in such transformation was not simply reflective of a hegemonic need to retain power. Instead the caste system itself exercised power over these individuals as an immutable truth that “we have to accept” (Shagun, 3/3/06).

A greater degree of reflexivity regarding the fallacy of the caste system was shown amongst those who rejected the system as a “myth”. Here Mohit, a Yadav farmer describes his realisation of this:

“I went to the Adivasi villages and stayed with them and ate their food. In the beginning I felt that we shouldn’t be doing this. But we all became one and started considering Adivasis as our brothers, I mean what’s wrong with them, they are not bad. In fact they have fought harder in the struggle than the Nimaris, they have shown real courage. Chhooa-chhoot are old customs, it is all a myth, there is no substance in all this.” (Mohit, 8/2/06).

The caste ideology propagated a magical and sinister quality to social relations, within which Adivasis were considered to be particularly ‘bad’. It also legitimised their dehumanisation as ‘hill monkeys’. According to Freire (1993), both mystification and dehumanisation are a function of an oppressive system that also serves to reinforce the system, in this case the system of caste. These subjective processes however were contradicted by the personal and direct contact that the movement facilitated between Mohit and Adivasis, through which he realised that Adivasis are clearly not evil or

incapable. Mohit was thus able to reject caste practices as socially constructed “customs” based on “myth” rather than divine word. However his rejection of caste practices as myth also shows his naivety regarding the hegemonic function of the caste system for legitimising oppression. Though his rejection of caste hierarchies was significant in a context where they are considered absolute, this was not reflective of a fully formed critical consciousness.

Others did show some recognition of the oppressive dimensions of caste. This recognition was manifested in the feeling of a contradiction between the wider struggle involving the formation of hegemonic alliances with Adivasis on the one hand, and the continuing dehumanisation of Adivasis through caste practices on the other hand. The recognition of this contradiction led to the need to bridge it. Amongst higher caste farmers such as Namdev however this bridging was achieved by converting caste practices of power into a neutral issue of hygiene, rather than challenging these practices. The recognition of oppression was thus paradoxically revealed in efforts to conceal oppression:

“After joining the Andolan, wherever we went we saw poor people from other organisations showing us solidarity. They were all poor people – the gas affected in Bhopal or workers from factories. The sufferers were never businessmen or people with money, they were always farmers and the poor people. This made us feel that poor people are hard workers and we have to fight together. Before we used to give Adivasis their wages and say ‘get lost you Adivasi scoundrel’. Now if I am in the hills I eat their food and drink their water also. But if they are too dirty we keep them away. If they drink alcohol and eat meat we stay away from them – we would stay away from you if you did that too.” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

By attributing a quality of 'dirtiness' to alcohol and meat – the 'things' that Adivasis are regularly in contact with, rather than the people themselves, Namdev is able to present his avoidance of these people as a neutral concern for hygiene. That is, he seeks to sanitise the caste/power connotations of purity-impurity with the discourse of cleanliness. He reinforces this argument by pointing out that he would even avoid a high caste Brahmin such as me if I consumed these substances. The gaps and weakness in this apolitical presentation of caste relations however were brought starkly to light through my observations in the village which suggested that Namdev's concern for cleanliness was not applied uniformly across castes. Yadavs including himself, accepted invitations to marriage feasts from the higher caste Rajput family even though they traditionally eat meat and drink alcohol and serve this in marriage feasts. When I asked him about this he replied:

“Yes they do make meat but they keep it separate...but we can't be concerned with that, how can we worry about that. Even if they do mix our food with theirs, it is his house, he can do what he likes.”

In the hands of a higher caste Rajput, polluting substances seemed to cause less offence to Namdev. That a Rajput can do as he pleases within the space of his own home, seems to be a strong enough justification for Namdev to accept the presence of alcohol and meat in a Rajput banquet even though these substances will pollute his own food too. Adivasis, on the other hand, are not allowed similar space to enjoy meat and alcohol without causing offence. It appears that these people carry the pollution of these commodities continuously, and must therefore be kept at a distance at all times. Such substances, therefore, are not treated as polluting in an absolute sense. Instead the degree of their pollution is a function of who handles them. Thus, concerns for the 'dirtiness' of Adivasis who consume polluting substances, appears to be based on caste discrimination.

Namdev's explanation of these skewed social relations through a discourse of hygiene divested of power implications is significant. In a paradoxical manner it reveals his greater reflexivity regarding the injustice of caste practices at the local level. While through the movement, Namdev had formed political and social relationships with Adivasis who he discovered to be good "hard working" people, this conflicted with his continuing discrimination of Adivasis at the level of everyday interactions. This presented a contradiction to him between the wider struggle for social justice, of which he was a part, and his local practices, which more visibly than before appeared unjust to him. The translation of these practices into a depoliticised discourse of hygiene can thus be read as his attempt to reconcile this contradiction.

Amongst some people – albeit a small number – the wider struggle for justice led to the need to transform oppressive caste practices at the local level. The 'prefigurative' experiences of egalitarian social relations provided by the movement were important in facilitating the critical rejection of caste practices. As Geeta bai, the wife of a Yadav farmer recounts:

"We used to keep Adivasis at a distance before. But when we started going on rallies we would have to eat together. We would travel in the same truck and sleep together. In this way we slowly started to get over chooa-choot. Now we are equals because we are fighting for the same goal. I don't even ask people what their caste is, it doesn't matter to me anymore."
(25/1/06).

The enactment of oneness with Adivasis by eating, sleeping and travelling together provided a context for understanding Adivasis as equals in a common struggle. Discriminatory caste practices that contradicted this equality were therefore rejected. The fact that the rejection of caste practices was a critical and conscious process can be seen from the manner in which she made efforts to transform caste relations beyond the context of the movement. Thus, of her own accord, Geeta confronted higher caste

Rajput women in the village about their refusal to eat or drink at Yadav households (fieldnotes, 23/2/06). While previously Geeta would have accepted her inferiority as a divine truth, she now not only experienced it as an affront but was taking action against it.

Karan bhai, a Rajput farmer was also engaged in a reflexive transformation of everyday caste interactions despite the frictions it created with disapproving family members. When I visited his house my status as a superior caste Brahmin meant that I was willingly welcomed into the sanctified space of the kitchen by his family members. However as I enquired into caste relations in the village, they told me of how mortified they were that Karan also invited inferior caste Yadavs to the kitchen. Indeed, his dismayed mother-in-law added that the Rajputs from other villages would stop eating at their place if it became known that their kitchen had been defiled by a Yadav. Karan's politicised engagement with caste practices was based on recognising these as oppressive and thus as dialectically related to the wider struggle:

“See the Andolan is not just restricted to the Sardar Sarovar. It is about rights, human rights, social responsibility, humanity. Our struggle is not just about stopping the dam it is about all these issues too. That is why we are supporting the slum dweller movement in Bombay and that is also why there shouldn't be chooa choot. I consider everyone to be equal now.” (Karan, 1/2/06).

The discursive repertoire of human rights and social justice emerging from the movement's counter-hegemonic struggle against SSP enabled him to reflect on caste practices as unjust. His efforts to transform caste practices were thus an extension of his struggle against the oppressive national and global forces responsible for SSP. In this sense his critical engagement with caste practices was part of his global struggle and he was therefore performing global citizenship at the local level through his actions against caste hierarchies in his community. Karan's enactment of global struggle at the local

level might be viewed as part of a “revolutionary social transformation” which Allman (2001) argues is essentially a “struggle to transform simultaneously not just the socio-economic and political conditions of our existence *but also ourselves*” (p168, italics added).

Class Consciousness and Practices

So far we have seen that for some people the counter-hegemonic struggle against SSP provided a facilitative context for reflexivity and action to challenge gender and caste hierarchies within their villages. In contrast to this, a critical awareness of the oppressiveness underlying class relations seemed to be virtually absent. The endeavour of movement leaders to maintain a unified struggle by treating the mass base as a harmonious community can be implicated in reinforcing this. By obfuscating inequalities between farmers and labourers, the notion of community legitimised the hegemonic position of farmers and therefore did not encourage reflexivity regarding their role in the oppression of labourers.

As mentioned earlier, labourers were not active participants in the movement largely because of the movement’s community approach, which left the mobilisation of this group to the heads of the village – invariably farmers – who failed to involve workers in the movement. However even though they were not included in mobilisations, at the behest of their employers, they refrained from taking cash compensation offered by the government for many years. From around the early 1990s however workers across Nimari villages began to accept compensation⁹⁰. This was a serious drawback for the movement because their acceptance of cash compensation reduced official statistics of the uncompensated and thus weakened the movement’s resistance to the dam. Though this was not a collectively organised decision there were a number of common reasons that led to the mass withdrawal of workers from the movement. Apart from their inability to access and participate in the Andolan, workers began to feel that cash

⁹⁰ Labourers have not been fairly compensated however. There have been significant irregularities in the distribution of cash compensation, with many families and individuals not being recognised by the government for compensation.

compensation – worth more than ten times their annual income – would enable them to escape the exploitation they faced as labourers, and that therefore their “situation will improve after taking compensation” as one worker told me (fieldnotes, 7/2/06). In any case they were not convinced that the movement’s demand for land compensation would benefit them in the same manner that it would benefit land-owning Nimari and hill Adivasi farmers⁹¹. The acceptance of compensation by workers is suggestive of their incipient consciousness of the different class positions and interests of workers and farmers.

Farmers on the other hand articulated a discourse of brotherhood and common purpose that completely negated class divisions:

“Farmers and labourers are brothers. Neither can survive without the other. We have to look after the interests of one another. If the government builds dams and factories where will the farmers cultivate? And if the farmers don’t have their land then the labourers will also starve. ...” (Geeta bai, 25/1/06).

Apart from ‘brotherhood’, suggesting a relationship of equality between labourers and farmers, a more paternalistic discourse also commonly used by farmers, alluded to labourers’ subordinate position, though still negating their exploitation. As one farmer told me:

“We take care of the labourers; we feed and nourish them [*paalan-paushan*]. We give them their wages, clothes, and food” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

⁹¹ It must be reminded that the hill Adivasis are sustained by subsistence-based agriculture and thus have no direct economic relationship with the Nimari farmers. However, historically Adivasis from the hills have migrated in times of need to find seasonal or even permanent employment in Nimar as agricultural labourers.

Both the discourse of brotherhood and *paalan-paushan* portrayed the village as a harmonious ‘community’ of interdependence and downplayed relations of exploitation and oppression. It thus served to normalise oppressive economic relations, allowing farmers to “feel, and appear, virtuous” (Foley, 1999, p7)⁹².

The hegemonic discourse of farmer-labourer equality allowed farmers to maintain congruity between their struggle for human rights and justice at the national and global level, and their economic relations with labourers at the local level. Even when the impoverishment of labourers was acknowledged farmers constructed this as the joint oppression of labourers and farmers by the state:

“The government doesn’t give farmers the right price for his produce. So we are always in debt. If we got better prices we would be able to feed labourers more as well. We are both at the hands of these forces.” (Bahadur, 30/3/06).

By absolving themselves of responsibility for the exploitation of labourers, farmers could maintain their own position as victims of injustice against the state. The negation of farmers’ exploitation of labourers and the foregrounding of their own oppression provided the basis for farmers to view themselves as agents of social transformation. Thus according to one farmer:

“One day there will be farmers rule. No one will be corrupt, if we go to hospital no one will demand money...if farmers have land then mazdoors will get good work and they will get justice too.” (Sharad, 5/2/06).

⁹² Foley describes how such paternalistic discourse was also prevalent amongst plantation owners in the fifteenth and nineteenth century who built their wealth on the backs of African slaves. “A paternalistic ideology assumed that owners were responsible for the material and spiritual welfare of slaves. The ideology required owners to look after slaves; it also allowed owners to feel, and appear, virtuous.” (Foley, 1999, p7).

From the perspective of the 'benevolent' farmers, the withdrawal of labourers from the movement was thus viewed as an illegitimate betrayal. It did not emerge from the economic marginalisation of labourers or from the failure of the movement to address their class interests. It was instead evidence of labourers' weak personal character:

“...they got greedy for money and so they moved away from us. I feel like they betrayed us and the movement.” (Namdev, 5/2/06).

The hegemonic discourse of farmer-labour unity was effective in depoliticising their relationship with workers and therefore also allowed farmers to maintain a separation between the wider political struggle of the NBA and the apolitical 'community' at the local level. It allowed farmers to continue their legitimate struggle for justice while remaining unreflexive regarding their exploitation of labourers.

To summarise, most village participants displayed various levels of a domesticated consciousness in that they generally expressed varying degrees of consent for gender and caste, but most strongly for class oppression in their communities. Nevertheless, a small minority appeared to be emerging in the process of social struggle, as critical actors against marginalising gender and caste practices at the local level.

CONCLUSION

The movement's counter-hegemonic struggle at the national and global scale was thus ambivalently related to local transformation. Though it provided facilitative conditions for reflexivity and action on local forms of gender, caste and class oppression it also constrained these processes. As a struggle for social justice, the need to critically question local oppression was ideologically relevant to the movement, however, movement leaders did not actively encourage such collective reflection because this could divide and destabilise the struggle against the dam. As such, the connection and extension of the wider struggle to the transformation of local forms of oppression

depended on how individuals responded to the ambivalent educative context created by the movement. Thus for a few grassroots participants, the experience of more egalitarian social relations within the space of the movement and its discursive construction as a struggle for human rights and social justice provided the foundations for developing reflexivity regarding the oppressive nature of local practices. At the same time however, the uncritical discourse of 'community' that was encouraged by movement leaders served to keep concealed unequal social relations and to obfuscate contradictions between the wider struggle and oppressive local practices. Within this context it is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of participants displayed varying levels of consent for gender, caste, and class oppression in their localities, especially considering that such oppression is deeply normalised through cultural, everyday practices of tradition and religion.

Thus, while social movements perform global citizenship through their resistance to global and national capitalism and defence of human rights, this may not be fully related to transformation of oppressive structures within their own communities. Their ability to be agents of global transformation is circumscribed by exploitative social structures which they themselves are a part of and that they must critically engage with in order to realise their transformative potential. Though the process of struggle can create social conditions that are potentially transformative, it is clear that the politicisation of consciousness and the learning involved in this is difficult and uneven.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws to a conclusion the main threads of the research undertaken here, which sought to probe the nature and processes of grassroots resistances to oppressive aspects of globalisation, and the role of these movements in the transformative space of global civil society. In concluding this thesis, the chapter firstly reflects back on the research questions in light of empirical findings emerging from the ethnographic case study of the Save the Narmada Movement. Secondly, it highlights significant empirical and theoretical contributions made by the study to the field of global civil society, and radical informal learning in social movements, and finally, it considers future areas of investigation that can potentially build on these contributions.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The ethnographic investigation of NBA was informed by the central consideration to explore the forms and extent to which local social movements that transnationalise their grievances are engaged in the construction of global citizenship (p22-23). In doing so the study has examined how far assertions of the parochialism of grassroots movements is correct – an assertion which has served to justify the paradoxical *empirical* invisibility of these movements within the field of GCS, which is *conceptualised* as involving the direct democratic participation and empowerment of these actors (Chapter 1, 2). Adopting a Gramscian lens to understanding global citizenship as a politicised identity of resistance, it has been argued that NBA did indeed perform and articulate global citizenship at the collective level through the central process of extending its local struggle for compensation of the displaced to a national and global struggle against ‘destructive development’ and globalisation. This process emerged from the movement’s engagement with a Gramscian dialectic between structures (material) and

subjective reality (consciousness), visible in the way in which the various political/practical and cognitive/subjective dimensions of global citizenship that the thesis was interested in examining, interrelated to constitute and construct the movement's participation in, and emergence towards global citizenship.

Firstly, in terms of political practices (political praxis), NBA's global citizenship was evident in its targeted protest against the supranational structure – the WB – which along with the Indian state was held directly accountable to the people of the Narmada Valley. This began to displace the notion of accountability as solely pertaining to citizenship of the nation-state. Secondly, the subjective dimensions of NBA's global citizenship were revealed in its cognitive praxis which consisted of counter-hegemonic discourses against destructive development, neo-colonialism and globalisation. These discourses extended beyond a defence of local, place-specific interests and formed the basis for an extended transnational solidarity with other oppressed groups. These globalised discourses were more than strategic rhetoric to gain support of powerful INGOs – they represented NBA's symbolic resistance against global forces of capitalism and thus even after WB withdrew, provided the ideological impetus for many more solidarity efforts such as CAWBADIA, and the Declaration of Curtiba at the global level and NAPM at the national level, which can be seen to represent nascent formations of GCS as a progressive 'war of position'. Together these elements of NBA's political and cognitive praxis provided the basis for its self-identification as a 'global struggle' for social justice and human rights. Finally, this global struggle was consciously though nevertheless ambiguously constructed in a dialectical relationship with the need to challenge structures of oppression relating to caste, class and gender within local communities. Engaging in local transformation was thus another dimension through which global citizenship was performed. Below I will elaborate on these various components of global citizenship, but here it is necessary to reinforce the point that these dimensions didn't simply happen independently of each other. Instead, they were, actively and self-reflexively connected together by movement leaders in order to articulate NBA's collective identity. Further, they were not pre-formed, but arrived at through a gradual process of learning in social struggle. This self-reflexive connection

of various dimensions of social struggle was also visible to varying degrees amongst grassroots participants, and for some informed their self-identification as global citizens.

The extension of the movement to the global scale did not, however, override national politics, citizenship and affiliation. Whereas orthodox globalisation accounts suggest that power and resistance is bifurcating to the global and local levels, NBA's politics was defined by a simultaneous globalisation *and* nationalisation of local issues. This was based on an awareness of the government's active role in promoting SSP in "collusion" with the WB in order to facilitate national, and more broadly transnational, capitalist interests. That the Indian government was an active agent in this development project, is clearly evident from its tenacious pursuit of the project even after the WB withdrew. Recognising the national-global power matrix, NBA thus contested the government's cost-benefit analysis and in the process expressed concern for the nation's prosperity and well-being. Apparently the globalisation of resistance does not necessarily represent a concomitant withdrawal from the state as some advocates of globalisation might suggest.

Through the case study of NBA, the central proposition developed by the thesis is that global citizenship in grassroots movements is formed when these movements develop a critical awareness of the globally-organised structures of power implicated in their subjugation. Further, possibilities for the formation of this critical consciousness arise in the process of political engagement with these structures, a process which reflects the Gramscian/Marxist dialectic between consciousness and material reality.

Thus the number of ways in which NBA performed its global citizenship (most powerfully, perhaps, through the formation of ideological, horizontal alliances with other social movements of the oppressed within and beyond India) were facilitated and necessitated by the critical realisation of the wider systemic forces that were responsible for the displacement of the Narmada people. This essentially involved unlearning the discourses that were used by these powers (the WB and Indian state) to legitimise and

entrench their hegemonic positions and subvert resistance. Thus it involved unlearning the hegemonic discourse of 'development for all' and 'political sovereignty' that were used to conceal their class positions and trans-border connections respectively. This process of learning itself arose from experiences gained from NBA's political praxis with these institutions that revealed their systemic failure to respond to the legitimate concerns of the movement, and thus in contradiction to their hegemonic discourses, their mutual class interests also. NBA's development of a systemic critique was facilitated by the ideological inputs of civil society organisations (NGOs and support groups) especially at the national level, with which NBA formed strategic, vertical linkages. However the main contribution of these national and international organisations was in bridging informational and geographical gaps between the movement and political institutions, and thus in facilitating NBA's political praxis, and subsequent experiential learning in relation to these structures.

It is not simply the collective practices of local movements that indicate their development as global actors. In fact, the radical democratic spaces provided by such movements can enable deeper levels of engagement with the global, seen in the politicised self-transformation of grassroots participants' identities and subjective notions of citizenship. Transformation of the individual emerges from a process similar to the manner in which a movement's collective identity evolves, through a process of learning from empowering experiences of collective action and resistance against agents of power. This process of learning is at the same time mediated and facilitated by the practices and discourses of resistance emerging from the collective context of the social movement. Thus amongst grassroots participants of NBA, the process of collective organisation and action subverted the sense of passivity and lack of control that was experienced under their historical subservience to the 'sarkar'. Movement events such as demonstrations, *gherao-ing* and questioning officials, and police confrontations provided critical learning experiences in which participants developed a more potent sense of agency as citizens, and also came to understand the state's violations of their *rights* as an injustice. The movement's politics of multiple scales that united project affected people from the three states and also created linkages with other struggles in

India and abroad, further contributed to local people's appraisal of the exploitative nature of the state and of forces beyond it.

This politicisation of consciousness is related to people's subjective articulations of identity and citizenship, and may thus be viewed as products of the process of learning in social struggle. Though many village participants of NBA continued to express primary allegiance to the state, some rejected this political identity for regional affiliation to the people of the Narmada Valley, and still others expressed a global citizenship. These divergent expressions of citizenship though underlined by a common commitment to resistance against injustice differed in terms of how they constructed and negotiated between this commitment, national loyalty and global struggle. Significantly global citizenship was distinguished by a politicised awareness of the global nature of local exploitation and thus by an active expression of common, counter-hegemonic struggle with other oppressed groups around the world. National and regional citizens in contrast had a less developed sense of the global dimensions of their struggle. Though they did express support for foreign movements this was based either on instrumental concerns or on a 'moral universalist' duty to help fellow humans. Clearly these strategic and moral reasons did not seem to be a sufficient basis for the formation of global citizenship.

As NBA's case study therefore indicates, the ideological reconstruction of a local movement's collective identity as global, and the articulation of global citizenship amongst individual participants, is a counter-hegemonic response to structures of power that are globally-organised. Further, such politicisation of identity is learnt through pedagogical experiences arising from political encounters with the concrete structures through which globalisation manifests and impacts on local conditions.

However, the rearticulation of local movements as global, counter-hegemonic struggles provides a paradoxical and ambiguous context for critique and transformation of internal axes of oppression of gender, caste and class that is embedded within movement communities. While local transformation becomes ideologically relevant to a

wider struggle against social injustice and inequality, at a strategic level it can also fragment the wider struggle against external forces of oppression. Amongst the leadership of NBA this paradox led them to discourage exclusionary social practices in the context of the movement, while at the same time promote an undiscerning discourse of 'village community' that ignored divisions and exploitation within the village. The imperatives of social struggle can therefore lead to an ambivalent educational context for grassroots participants to dialectically relate struggle against global and national structures of oppression to critical praxis at the local level. Though the leadership provided "abbreviated experiences" (Allman, 2007, p272) of liberated social interactions that are consistent with an ideological struggle for social justice, the discourse of village community simultaneously prevented critical reflection on local practices of oppression that could destabilise the wider movement. The ambivalent educational context created by the struggle for social justice was visible in the various levels of domestication and critical reflection on traditional social practices that was displayed amongst grassroots participants of NBA. Evidently, while local movements may wage a battle against global agents of capitalism, performing global citizenship at the local level proves to be more difficult.

Finally, the contribution of international NGOs in the Narmada campaign supports theorisations of GCS advocates of the role of these organisations in filling the 'democratic deficit'. INGOs in this case established the accountability of supranational institutions to local people by bridging the informational and geographical divide between them. However while INGOs perform this function, the experience of the international Narmada campaign suggests that this is not necessarily accompanied by the articulation of global identities and citizenship that is hoped for by GCS theorists. Indeed from their positions of power over local communities, it appears that INGOs are more prone to galvanise support for local people on a moral appeal to *national* citizens in the West to use their privileged position to help suffering people. In corollary, they are less likely to construct a common struggle that emphasises the interdependence and equal partnership of *global* citizens in the North and South.

The empirical and theoretical analysis developed here of NBA's political and cognitive processes of resistance has a number of implications for studies in global civil society and learning in social movements. Below I turn to highlighting these contributions.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, by showing how the formation of global identities and discourses in this local social movement arose from an internal, creative process of engaging with and ascribing meaning to transnational and domestic structures of opportunity and constraint, I have challenged prevailing accounts of local-global alliances that present the globalisation of local movements as a more mechanical process of the local appropriation of global visions and discourses articulated by international NGOs. Thus, the transnationalisation of local movements is not always characterised by the disempowering narratives presented by critics of global civil society where local grievances are superseded by global discourses to secure the support of powerful INGOs. Neither is it necessarily typified by depictions suggested by GCS enthusiasts of ethically-conscious INGOs guiding parochial movements towards broader political objectives. Instead the globalisation of the local movement in this case is based on an emergent understanding of the dialectic between local oppression and global forces, learnt through the process of struggle. The NBA thus consciously perceived and performed its global citizenship through its local struggle against the dam. Contrary to the accounts above which imply a dichotomisation of local and global politics this analysis suggests an imbrication of the local and global.

Secondly, the thesis makes an important empirical contribution to the field of transnational contention where research on the subjective processes of identity formation has been scant. In the absence of empirical analysis relating to the meanings that transnational actors ascribe to their political activity, debate between global and transnational civil society theorists regarding the extent to which transnational politics represents a qualitative shift away from state-centric social organisation has remained unresolved. My analysis suggests no easy yes or no answer to this debate. Above I have delineated the global discourses and identities constructed by the movement and shared

by 'global citizens' in the NBA villages – elements that are indicative of an emergent global civil society. However at the same time the endurance of national framings and expressions of duty and citizenship to the state not only within the local struggle but also in the international campaign of NGOs, cohere with a transnational civil society thesis. It appears that these two theoretical positions are not exclusive of one another. As national development becomes further intertwined with global funding and decision-making processes and power is negotiated between the state and trans-border agents, conditions have emerged that necessitate civil society actors to articulate political identities, visions and alliances across national and global levels simultaneously. Further, in the case of the NBA transnational and global processes appear to be symbiotically related. While transnational contention started as a strategic initiative to protect local interests as TCS theory argues, the movement experiences that emerged from this led to the evolution of a more normative global politics against neo-imperialism, characterising GCS.

Thirdly, it has been demonstrated that global citizenship is not necessarily an elite identity or practices tied to the cosmopolitan experience of global travel, diaspora, multiculturalism, or cyber space. It is also relevant to rural communities in third world contexts that though physically bound to place, develop global imaginations in the course of struggle. As they unravel the global forces impinging on their daily lives and construct global linkages and solidarities of resistance they may come to replace local or national affiliations with articulations of global citizenship. While in the Western milieus referred to above global citizenship is a socio-cultural identity, in the context of the Narmada villages it signifies a political identity of contestation against the exclusionary and undemocratic processes of globalisation.

Related to this, the analysis presented here sides with 'pragmatic' versions of global citizenship that view it as a response to political conditions of globalisation, over those based on moral universalism. While 'national citizens', both in the movement villages and international NGO campaign, based transnational support on a moral duty towards fellow humans, it was 'global citizens' that constructed transnational solidarity on a

political commitment to forming a *common* global struggle – a struggle that has become possible and necessary in the context of globalisation. It thus appears that global citizenship cannot be sustained on the basis of ahistorical ideological assertions of moral universalism. Instead it is a politicised identity with real and experiential basis in the globalised conditions of late modernity.

Fourthly, by emphasising the emergent, processual and dynamic nature of social movements this study follows Foley in suggesting that movements engage in and are sites for informal political learning. In particular it supports a Gramscian-Freirean view of learning defined by a constant dialectical interaction between action and reflection, strategy and meaning-creation, through which movements develop a deeper understanding of the systemic forces they are struggling against. This conscientisation is embedded in the movement's collective identity and can even have implications for movement participants' subjective identifications. While in the case of NBA the learning process led to the emergence of globalised citizenship, the thesis suggests that political learning is a central constituent of an emergent global civil society. Contrary to federalist theories of global citizenship, the institutionalisation of global structures of governance is not a vital precursor to the formation of politicised global identities. It is critical engagement with the local-global dialectic facilitated by conditions of globalisation that lies at the crux of the globalisation of transformative politics, action and citizenship. However the process of conscientisation does not follow a uniform, unilinear trajectory from domestication to liberation. Contradictions between global resistance and local consent for caste, class and patriarchy suggest that this learning is difficult, complex and uneven.

Analysis and interpretation of transformation within social movements as learning processes has a number of advantages. It puts social movements at the centre of investigation by seeking to understand how they engage with their environment and the internal processes through which a movement's collective identity emerges. This provides a more agency-oriented alternative to accounts that have presented the collective identity of transnationalised movements like the NBA as a fragmented

amalgam of acquired global discourses superimposed over conflicting local interests. Also, while critical learning is understood to be constituted by the dialectic between political and personal transformation, a focus on learning processes, allows global resistance and local transformation to be understood as equally relevant levels in investigating the articulation of global citizenship and global civil society.

Further, the process of learning in political praxis through which NBA's struggle against neo-colonialism/globalisation evolved, provides valuable lessons for forming a political project of resistance against globalisation. It suggests that a postmodern retreat into civil society associations and cultural resistance may not be enough for the formation of politicised consciousness and development of a sense of agency. In that normative framings and radical critique slowly evolved from strategic action, it appears that ability of social movements to act upon structures of power by making them *concrete and identifiable* is critical to the emergence of globalised resistance and global citizenship. Thus conceptualisations of globalisation in the academia as nebulous and amorphous do nothing to facilitate the critical praxis of social movements (Cox, 1992). Scholars need to support movements on the ground by devoting more attention to uncovering the concrete nodes of power that lie behind the oppressive and undemocratic processes of globalisation. However, as a dialectical theory of consciousness and material reality suggests, mere knowledge of these structures is insufficient – movements will then need to engage with these structures in order to radically transform their consciousness and relationship to them, and hence to test their own capacities to challenge the power of these institutions.

Fifthly, the pursuit of the dialectic between global and local/personal, i.e. global solidarity and resistance back down to local transformation of oppressive traditional social practices, has provided a more comprehensive account of the workings of GCS that tend otherwise to be limited to analysing resistance against external oppressors. It has revealed that emancipatory struggles against national-global injustices can occur amidst enduring local oppression of caste, class and gender at the local level. This highlights the difficulty of achieving a complete local-global reflexivity. Often local

structures of oppression are held in place through cultural ideas and practices that inhibit reflection and action against oppression at the local level, even as collective actors proclaim a global struggle for justice and human rights.

Thus, in contrast to the postmodern depiction of the local as an untarnished force for social emancipation against 'global' forces of domination (Esteva and Prakash, 1998), I emphasise the contradictory and contested nature of civil society. Rigorous political effort towards transformation will require an examination and engagement with the divisive and exclusionary forces that are embedded within civil society. This 'contested' nature of civil society problematises the tendency of some radical educators to view this sphere as an autonomous political space for emancipatory learning, while juxtaposing it against schools as an 'ideological state apparatus' that is necessarily constrained and co-opted. Nevertheless, it does appear that through the course of social struggle, movements develop discursive and experiential opportunities to facilitate the beginnings of a dialectical deconstruction and transformation of existing hegemonic structures at the local level.

Finally, the argument that political action against supranational institutions is not in itself a sufficient condition for the formation of global citizenship and that critical consciousness is also required, has implications for establishing the descriptive parameters of GCS. While it has been shown that INGOs in the much celebrated campaign against the WB, continued to evoke national sentiments and identities to draw support from the Western public, it appears that theorists need to move beyond surface descriptions of GCS that highlight the increasing trans-border networks of INGOs or the increasing institutionalisation of human rights. Instead examinations of the global consciousness, identities and visions of those engaged in trans-border contestation are required to develop more robust and deeper indicators of GCS. It has been shown that grassroots movements are spaces where these deeper processes of global citizenship and GCS can occur. Indeed they facilitate critical reflection and provide a sense of agency to tackle oppressive aspects of globalisation amongst some of the most vulnerable and

marginalised communities in the world and in so doing actively construct the transformative project of GCS.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has made a start in investigating global processes at the local level. In order to better understand the generalities and specificities of these findings to geographical, cultural and political contexts more research is needed on movements in various regions and countries mobilising around a diversity of issues.

I have shown that the nature of learning experiences was a critical determinant of the kind of discourses and identities that emerged within NBA. While NBA's transnational action was initially based on a strategic, vertical alliance with powerful international NGOs it would be interesting to explore whether horizontal political linkages between local movements in various countries might create different learning experiences and thus divergent forms of identity and discourses of global politics. Given that global citizens in this case study based their support for other oppressed groups on a sense of common political struggle, would there be greater prevalence of globalised discourses and identities in a horizontal alliance that is based on action against a common enemy? And what place would national forms of affiliation have within this coalition?

While I have concentrated here on a local movement that formed global alliances, the thesis also suggests that the formation of global identities in this case was at least partially founded on the process of contesting against the state and forming alliances with other national movements. It would thus be worth studying how far local movements that remain limited to the national level are involved in the creation of global processes.

Transnational civil society theorists have suggested that global alliances are generally transient and instrumental politics driven by overarching national or local interests. My findings have suggested that this misses the normative, radical dimensions of global

politics. Yet I have also noted the endurance of national loyalties and frameworks for collective action. While, turning the transnational civil society thesis on its head, I wonder whether these state-centric articulations could be strategic political efforts to defend globally oriented political values. Intimations of this possibility were made by some activists in India during my fieldtrip:

“For the sake of the decentralisation of the people’s power we think that the Indian nation-state has to go. But I think there are limitations to decentralisation. In the day of globalisation the state is working for the agents of the corporates, but we are playing into the hands of the corporates if we are destroying our own state. The WB wants the state to be done away with, so they can directly deal with the people of this nation. The organisation will certainly have to reshape our relations with the state, but there is also a peril in completely removing the state. I think our job is to make the state do things for the people.”
(Sanjay Sangvai, 6/5/06).

The debate regarding the usefulness of the state revolves around a central concern for the protection and enhancement of people’s power. Though the state is recognised as an inimical force in this wider global objective, the need for the state seems to be based on an assessment of its strategic value in protecting people from oppressive global forces. These views could be tentative indicators of the changing position and significance of the nation-state as a political formation worth defending and respecting in its own right to an instrumental medium for accomplishing global political objectives inherent in the idea of “people’s power”. Again more research is required to explore this hypothesis.

Due to constraints of time and money this study relied on historical narratives of movement participants. In the absence of these constraints however, longitudinal research on social movements as they arise and develop would be another fruitful methodology for exploring the issues of process and transformation investigated here.

Further, longitudinal research could be conducted on how, and to what extent, the identities and political learning that has emerged within the context of the movement are carried forward and used in other contexts.

In conclusion, it is certainly the case that there is a need for caution in generalising implications from a case study of one of the multitude of grassroots movements that exist across the world. Nevertheless, in illustrating the transformative potential of NBA the thesis has made a small, but important contribution towards challenging the perceived localism of grassroots movements and therefore in recognising elements of global agency in the practices of these actors. This is critical in an era of globalisation where the marginalisation and exploitation of local communities in the South is exacerbated by the formation of trans-border connections between dominant powers who conceal their class positions while promising 'development for all'. In this scenario it is when movements critically engage with political structures at the national and global level, and in this process come to experience, learn and understand their systemic positions, that there is a real possibility of their emergence as transformative agents, who perform global citizenship through their local struggle, and find common cause with others struggling for social change across the world. It is in learning these connections and performing these counter-hegemonic alliances that globally-organised structures of oppression may be defeated, and the transformative power of GCS realised. While further research needs to examine the generalisability of this thesis for understanding how grassroots movements learn to constitute global citizenship, it also needs to proceed in the spirit of forwarding this transformative project. It is hoped that in time this will correct the 'paradoxical' marginalisation of grassroots movements within the transformative field of GCS

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APPENDIX: DATA ANALYSIS

This appendix provides greater detail regarding the process of data analysis. In the thesis I have worked with two types of data sets – one relating to the narratives of movement participants (section A), and the second relating to the movement as a whole, i.e. its collective identity (section B). While analysis of interviews and observations was required for both these data sets, analysis of documents was unique to the second. Here I provide 1 example each of how the unique data analysis issues arising from the two data sets were tackled. In relation to the narratives of movement participants I illustrate how analytical constructs were arrived at through a process of searching for themes and identifying commonalities and differences between themes in the data. In relation to the collective identity data set I illustrate how the actions of the movement were interpreted through a process of triangulation and comparison of texts and actions at a particular time and across time.

Section A:

Analysing narratives of movement participants: An example - Global citizenship as a politicised identity

To illustrate the data analysis procedure for the narratives of movement participants I take the example of how the construct of global citizenship as a politicised identification with global struggle was developed. Below I elaborate on the various steps involved.

Step 1: Based on my research questions interview transcripts were categorised in terms of various forms of self-identification of citizenship by the interviewees. Three different types of citizenship were identified: national (12 people), local (3 people) and global (6 people).

Step 2: Transcripts were then coded with particular attention paid to the various reasons given by interviewees for their subjective expressions of citizenship.

Step 3: Closer attention was given to the various ways in which global citizens expressed their citizenship to establish the extent of commonalities or divergences amongst these narratives.

Step 4: A common theme of the construction of a political relationship between local and global movements emerged within the transcripts of global citizens. NBA was viewed to be in common struggle with other foreign movements. Based on this, the preliminary construct of global citizenship as a politicised identification with global struggle was developed (selection and categorisation of interview extracts in relation to this is shown in Table 1).

Step 5: In order to confirm this, the transcripts of national and local citizens were revisited, to more closely examine the ways in which these interviewees described and justified their relationship with trans-border movements. While these transcripts revealed a favourable attitude towards developing alliances with such movements the reasons given for this were either strategic, or based on the moral universalistic argument that suffering people should be helped. In contrast to global citizens, these interviewees did not view NBA and foreign movements as part of a common struggle (coding of interview extracts presented in Table 2).

Step 6: Based on establishing commonalities within narratives of global citizens and differences against the narratives of national and regional citizens, the construct of global citizenship as a politicised identification with global struggle was confirmed.

Table 1: Examples of interview extracts of ‘global citizens’ expressing a common (political) struggle with foreign movements or people

Extract from interview	Comments
<p><u>Rama (adivasi)</u></p> <p>Int: I feel that those who understand us and support us, they come from outside also – England, America, Japan, London, Germany. So these people have nothing to do with us but they are still thinking of us. So why do they come? I think that we are adivasis- the original people, so we are humans and they are humans and they think why should there be destruction in the name of humans. People hear in the newspapers that all is running well but some people come and see whether this is true or false. They come to see if the government is genuine. When they come here and see the oppression of the government for themselves some of these people come and stay to fight with us.</p> <p>NS: Do you feel you are part of India? Do you feel like you are citizen of India?</p> <p>Int: I think that India is a country, America and England are also countries. They are only countries aren't they, divided by water and some other boundary? My identity is determined by the right thought, whether it is in England, Japan, whatever country it is in the world, but the right thought, the right way of life, for truth, that is important to me, that is my identity.</p>	<p>The common global struggle constructed here is the struggle against the oppression of humans by governments.</p> <p>Indian citizenship is not embraced – identity is based on a more global, inclusive construct of the ‘right thought’, which drawing from the above section might be based on fighting against oppression of humans. – identity is therefore global and politicised.</p>
<p><u>Kantva (advasi)</u></p> <p>NS: Where would you say you are a citizen of – India, your village, where?</p> <p>Int: I was born in India so I would have to say I am a citizen of India. But there is more than that. Before I only used to think about my farming, my family that's it. Now I have started to think about other things also. If we are able to stop one dam somewhere then it will mean victory for the whole world. That is why</p>	<p>Indian citizenship is accepted by birth – it is not a matter of choice. Beyond this, he sees himself as a world citizen because he views himself as connected to people across the world through his local struggle against the dam – a struggle which has global political implications.</p>

<p>we give and take support from other organisations across the world. We are fighting together. So my life is connected to these people also. That's why you could say I am a citizen of the world.</p>	
<p><u>Rohit (Nimari)</u> NS: What is the importance of NBA to your people? Int: The Andolan is not only about one dam, it is about the whole process of development. People sitting in the government decide what will happen to people here. It is the people who should decide the direction of development. This is what NBA talks about, it doesn't just talk about India it talks about development in general and the right of people to participate in decision making. The andolan also talks about alternatives – if we are opposing something we have to give an alternative to it. NS: Can I ask you if you feel like you are citizen of India? Int: Whether we are citizens of India or abroad, we are all the same. It is only politicians that separate us saying that we are citizens of different places. The people who come from abroad are the same as us. The rich people and politicians have created this bondage of citizenship; they have created these boundaries so that they can grind the people. The poor are made to suffer.</p>	<p>Here again NBA is constructed as a global struggle for democratic involvement of people in development. It is more than a national movement. Along with this global construction of the struggle, national citizenship is rejected as a 'bondage' that is created by the rich to divide and oppress the poor. The rejection of national citizenship and identification with the global poor is therefore a politicised inclusive identity.</p>
<p><u>Karan (Nimari)</u> Int: These days the governments of the powerful countries get together and make policies that affect the whole world and they also exchange money. America gives billions to push forward certain policies. So these governments are getting together to displace poor people. So our fight is with a common enemy. This is why I am not concerned with Indian citizenship I feel like a citizen of the world”</p>	<p>Karan identifies powerful governments as a common enemy of poor people. His identity as a world citizen is based on a common struggle with oppressed people against this common enemy and thus his world citizenship is a politicised global identity.</p>

Table 2: Examples of interview extracts from national citizens: Expressing support for foreign movements on an instrumental or moral bases in contrast to political basis.

Extracts from interviews	Comments
<p><u>Ganga</u> “We should support foreign movements because they come here and help us. If we don’t support them then they won’t help us”.</p> <p><u>Ram Singh</u> “Foreigners come and spread news about us. This strengthens our struggle so we should also help them.”</p> <p><u>Dev Ram</u> “We should help foreign movements when we can. Of course it is not possible to go there but we can support them from here. Medha goes sometimes to help them. It is very important to give them support because they help us so much. They put pressure on our government.”</p>	<p>These extracts reveal an instrumental basis for supporting foreign movements. Support is extended because they are viewed as benefiting the local struggle. No common political goals are suggested.</p>
<p><u>Narendra</u> “When I see other people suffering I feel pity for them. I know how I am suffering. If I can help them in anyway I would.”</p> <p><u>Bahadur</u> “Giving support to others is a good thing. If people gain strength from us then I am happy about that.”</p>	<p>Here support for other movements is extended out of a sense of moral duty or pity. No sense of a common political struggle with these movements is expressed.</p>

Section B:

Analysing the collective identity of the movement: An example – Interpreting the meaning of NBA's demand for withdrawal of the World Bank

Analysis of the collective identity of the movement partly involved analysing the political actions of the movement. Deciphering the meanings of these actions involved triangulating actions with the wider discourses and other actions of the movement in that particular time period. By doing this it was possible to see that though a particular action appeared to remain constant across time the meaning behind that action often changed. Understanding these changes made it possible to decipher the changing meaning of the movement itself.

For example the demand for withdrawal of the World Bank from the project was a political action that remained constant for many years, but the reasons surrounding this demand changed in the course of the movement. While initially this was related more to a strategic attempt to stop the dam, in the later years it also became significant as a counter-hegemonic resistance against neo-colonialism. Below I show the process of triangulation of actions and discourses involved in understanding the changing significance of the demand for the withdrawal of the WB from the project.

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

