Land for Industry:
State-Society Relations in Agrarian Maharashtra

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

Usurping land and driving communities off it has been at the heart of state-driven 'development' processes in India since its independence from British colonial rule. Post-independence India has seen large-scale land dispossession for the grand ideological purpose of 'nation-building' through dams, industries, mines and ports. The conversion of rural farmland, commons, and forests has gone hand in hand with dispossession and displacement. In neoliberal India, land continues to be converted for a diverse set of contemporary uses, ranging from highways to golf courses, that are increasingly less productive. The purpose of the thesis is to make concrete how land is driven out of agriculture and with what implications for state-society relations in the neoliberal era.

Using an empirical case where the state has driven land dispossession for the purposes of industrialisation, in a 'backward' district of Maharashtra, without facing organised opposition, I make three arguments. First, a set of structural and political variables forge a 'near consensus' around state-mediated industrialisation. This is buttressed by a strategic state that aims to balance legitimacy with accumulation. Second, rural classes carve out different economic trajectories in the 'non-farm' economy spawned by manufacturing industries. Third, while resistance to dispossession is absent at the time of land acquisition, I observe staggered political reactions over time. Rural politics here is thus seen as a more drawn-out process of negotiation between the state and rural classes.

Acknowledgements

I owe my greatest debt to my supervisor, Dr Nikita Sud. My journey with Nikita began in 2011 when she agreed to supervise my first assessed essay in Oxford. It has been an intellectually demanding and exciting journey since under keen guidance. I am grateful for her inspiration and patience. This written piece of work has benefited immensely from constructive feedback from my examiners, Dr. Diego Sanchez-Ancochea and Dr. Michael Levien.

I owe a great debt to the men and women of Aurangabad who gave me their time for this study. I hope this piece of work does justice to their stories of struggle and anticipation through an important moment of change in their lives. I am thankful to an incredibly warm community in Aurangabad for hosting me. I am grateful to Veejay Deewan (Sir) and Chaaya Deewan (tai) for opening their home to me when I first arrived in Aurangabad. Vijay sir helped initiate my field study and introduced me to a world of passionate activism in Marathwada. His energy and stories keep me inspired. I am also grateful to Subhas Lomte and his wife, who gave me a place to stay before I settled into my more permanent residence in Aurangabad. Kalyan Dugle was incredibly generous with his time, particularly in the first two weeks of fieldwork, taking me around and introducing me to villages that I finally decided to focus on.

In Mumbai, Jasmine Damle and Abdul Shaban, faculty members of TISS, gave me their precious time and, on occasion, space to wander around on the TISS campus. My friends KB and Liesl generously hosted me during my transit stays in the city. Activist Ulka Mahajan introduced me to the community in Aurangabad and helped initiate what, I hope, will be many more years of learning and reflection. Rahul Bhatia, Raksha Kumar, and M. Rajshekhar helped at various points with information on how and where to chase people and documents.

Ali Jan was the first friend I made on the first day of my MPhil in 2011. He has since been a giving friend, relentless critic, ardent cheerleader, and a constant source of intellectual inspiration. I am grateful to him for patiently reading and critiquing chapters and being an incredible support in the last leg of writing.

I am deeply thankful to an incredible set of friends. Ankita, Geoff and Zaad read chapters and sections on short notice. Amogh helped with my glossary of terms at a desperate moment.

Several friends have affirmed my time here and it is quite difficult to articulate their contribution. Simukai has been a source of immense support by doing what comes naturally to him: being an inspiration and always a message away. Kieran filled the gruelling last year with laughter and meaning. Mridula Paul, Ankita Pandey, and Reema Omer have buoyed me through trying times. I am thankful to these incredible women for their support and friendship. Ana, Adriana, Moizza, Emma, Heidi, Bastian, Ovyind, Nora, Greta, Shannon, Sa'eed, Garima, Ikuno, Lipika, Manav, Mirna, Adil, and Ali Ali filled days with conversations and unconditional support.

Through my time in Oxford, Dr. Sabina Alkire has been incredibly supportive of my work and professional growth. My work has also benefited from comments from Dr. Barbara Harriss-White, Dr. Judith Heyer, Dr. Nandini Gooptu, and Dr. Doug Gollin through informal and formal examination at various points.

The doctoral journey in QEH is incomplete without conversations and laughter with Gary and Penny. Gary prevented me from crumbling on multiple occasions, and Penny helped me stay grounded. I am also grateful to an incredibly loving and supportive community at Green Templeton College, particularly Dr. Denise Lievesley and Ruth Loseby.

It is challenging and awkward for me to thank my family, but here is my best attempt. My mother has been most encouraging, bordering on nagging, of my doctorate. What I am most grateful for, however, is that she learned to not ask when I was going to be done. My father and brother have been supportive and encouraging in their own way: by never really asking me anything about my project. That helps with perspective.

In the two weeks leading up to submission, Projjol, my partner, was my rock. I would like to document my gratitude to him for editing and proof-reading my document, formatting tables and maps, and staying up nights with me. I have, no doubt, missed out on naming remarkable individuals who shower me with love and support.

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List of Abbreviations

S5IA	Shendra (Five-Star) Industrial Area
S5IA+	Shendra (Five-Star) Industrial Area, Shendra-Bidkin Industrial Node, DMIC Convention Centre, Shendra Eco City
DMIC	Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor
MIDC	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation
MID Act	Maharashtra Industrial Development Act, 1962
MPCB	Maharashtra Pollution Control Board
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PDS	Public Distribution System
DE	Dominant Elite
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
NT	Nomadic Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Classes
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
INC	Indian National Congress
MNC	Maharashtra Navnirman Sena
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
GoM	Government of Maharashtra
GoI	Government of India

Glossary of Terms

Scheduled Caste (SC)	Sub-communities within the framework of the Hindu caste system who have historically faced oppression; in modern literature sometimes referred to as Dalit, meaning "broken/scattered" in Sanskrit; officially designated group of historically disadvantaged people who have reservation status (Mahar and Maang in the study area)
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Specific indigenous peoples whose status is acknowledged to some formal degree by national legislation; officially designated group of historically disadvantaged people who have reservation status (Banjara in the study area identified as ST but in some parts of Maharashtra they are classified as NT)
Nomadic Tribe (NT)	Specific indigenous peoples whose status is acknowledged to some formal degree by national legislation; officially designated group of historically disadvantaged people who have reservation status (Dhangar in the study area)
Other Backward Class (OBC)	Collective term used by the Government of India to classify classes that are educationally or socially disadvantaged; reservation status
Reservation Status	System of reservation in India, including access to seats in the various legislatures, government jobs, and enrolment in higher educational institutions, for historically disadvantaged castes, tribes and classes
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	Right-of-centre Hindu nationalist political party, formed in 1980, that traces its ideological roots to the RSS; preceded by the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1951-1977) [Reference: Jaffrelot's Hindu Nationalist Movement in India, Craig Baxter's Bharatiya Jana Sangh]
Indian National Congress (INC)	Left-of-centre political party, founded in 1885, that played a leading role in the anti-colonial nationalist movement in India; enjoyed a dominant position in Indian politics during the 50s and 60s until it gave way to a multiparty system
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)	Socio-cultural' organisation, founded in Nagpur in 1925, for the purpose of consolidating and uniting the 'Hindu' community in colonial India; champions the ideology of Hindutva (lit. Hindu-ness), which envisions India as a nation guided by Hindu cultural ethos, and has given birth to a network of Hindu nationalist organisations known as the 'Sangh Parivar' [Reference: Anderson & Damle's Brotherhood in Saffron, Jaffrelot's Hindu Nationalist Movement in India]
Shiv Sena	Right-wing, 'sons of soil' Marathi regional political party that arose in the 60s seeking to foreground the interests of the Maharashtrian "common man"; often took recourse to street violence against non-Maharashtrians and Muslims [Reference: Katzenstein's Ethnicity and Equality: The Shiv Sena Party and Preferential Policies in Bombay]
Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)	Nationalist, far-right 'sons of soil' Marathi regional Indian political party based in the state of Maharashtra; founded in 2006 by defectors from Shiv Sena
Sarpanch	Village headman elected by the village-level constitutional body of local self-government called Gram Sabha (lit. village government)
Talathi	Keeper of land records at the level of village; open examination is conducted for the position and official eligibility criteria in Maharashtra include a bachelor's degree, knowledge of Marathi and Hindi, applicant age between 18 to 38 years, but in practice networks help
(District) Collector	Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer in charge of revenue collection and administration of a district
Public Distribution System (PDS)	Part of India's public system, established by the government in the 1940s, which distributes rations at a subsidized price to the poor; also known as fair price shop (FPS)
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)	An Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'; first proposed in 1991, launched in 2006 and rolled out nationwide in 2008

Map of Study Area

Western State of Maharashtra in India

Aurangabad District in Maharashtra

Aurangabad District in Marathwada Region

Aurangabad Town in Aurangabad District

Sources: Maps of India, Marathwada Statutory Development Board, Government of Maharashtra (Aurangabad District)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Making land available for development has been the touchstone of the Indian state's commitment to business as its ally. A cursory scan of the keyword 'land' in the Indian press, particularly the business media, draws the impression that economic growth and the subsequent trickle-down human development is shackled singularly by the state's inability to supply land. 'Biggest bottlenecks for businesses in India', one recent article claims is 'acquiring land' (The Financial Times, 23 July 2019), and another cautions the private sector will not begin to invest in infrastructure '… until they see signs that the government is making progress on cutting through the perennial regulatory hurdles surrounding land' (Bloomberg, 24 May 2019). Breaking down the necessity of land by sector, an article in the Business Standard claims 'access to land, which is expensive and difficult to acquire, remains the single biggest issue for why road and other construction projects stall in India …' (the Business Standard, 25 May 2019)

The preoccupation with supplying land and dispossessing communities is not a new phenomenon either in India or in most of the capitalist world. It was the fount of English industrialisation in the 16th century, and Chinese and Russian collectivised agriculture. These historical processes have been the empirical bases for linear transition theses in orthodox Marxism and Modernisation theories, predicting that coercive expropriation of land in the countryside, what Karl Marx (1887) called primitive accumulation, makes way for industrialisation and urbanisation.

Usurping land and driving communities off it has been at the heart of state-driven 'development' processes in India since its independence from British colonial rule. Land for non-agricultural use has gone from 9.36 million hectares (ha. hereon) in 1950-51 to 19.6 million ha. in 1980-81, and to 26.31 million ha. in 2008-09 (Sud 2014). Post-independence India has seen large-scale land acquisition for the grand ideological purpose of 'nation-building' through dams, industries, mines and ports. In a liberalising context, land continues to be converted for a diverse set of contemporary uses – for infrastructure development like highways and industrial corridors; for industrialisation as manifested in industrial areas and corridors, Informational Technology (IT) Parks, Special Economic Zones (SEZs); and commercial uses such as real estate, malls, and golf courses. The conversion of rural

farmland, commons and forests has gone hand in hand with dispossession and displacement. According to one estimate, 30 million people have been displaced between 1947 and 1997 for infrastructure such as dams, canals and power stations (Walker 2008, 580).

The purpose of tis thesis then is to examine how the state drives land out of agriculture in contemporary India and what implications that has for state-society relations.

1.1 Global Land 'Grab' Debate

In the last decade, a prolific body of scholarship has analysed the spectacular rate at which land is being expropriated, not just in India but in the Global South in general. The global food crisis of 2008 was marked by a precipitous rise in food prices as a consequence of high demand for maize, corn and other crops for the production of energy. An initial body of academic and activist literature posited this event as the bugle call for a 'global rush' for land and inadvertently cast the wave of land dispossession as a 'new' phenomenon (GRAIN 2008). Cases of 'land deals' covering spectacularly large acreage animated global 'land grab' debates in the popular media as well as academic scholarship. Rife with inaccuracies in definitions of 'land deals' and vagaries of data collection (Oya 2013), the initial tendency in the scholarship was to 'fetishise hectares' (Edelman 2013, 488). Yet with all its limitations, the phenomenon that came to be labelled as the global 'land grab' drew academic interest post 2008, which progressively became grounded in more rigorous empirical research and sharper epistemological focus.

The research agenda on global land 'grabs' underwent scrutiny from a community of critical scholars sympathetic to the threats to the livelihoods of the poor and the marginalised in the Global South but cautious of oversimplifications and generalisations that had started to become common in the literature. From about 2013, the research agenda began to shift: refining 'facts', methods, and frameworks to study the patterns in land dispossession were brought into focus. Two criticisms and related suggestions for rectifications that emerged through these revisions are noteworthy. First, it was pointed out that the variety of ways in which land is being commodified should be placed in a *longer* perspective of capitalist development (Oya 2013; Edelman et al 2013). A deeper historical perspective on the role of

land in capital transformations, in the context where the dispossession was taking place, would enhance our understanding of possibilities for outcomes and politics.

Second, a disproportionate emphasis had been placed on a scramble for land by multinational corporate capital for the production of food, feed and fuels in the earlier phase of this research (Hall et al 2013; Edelman et al 2013). What has been at play instead is a *larger* project combining '… globalisation, the liberalisation of land markets and the worldwide boom in FDI' (Zoomers 2010, 430). With the re-focusing in the literature, several factors have been identified as key drivers of international land deals. Zoomers (2010) identifies seven main motivations behind the phenomenon – farms for food, biofuel and other non-agriculture crops, natural conservation and ecotourism, infrastructure works for urban expansions, SEZs and tourist complexes being most important on her list. Land dispossession from industrialisation and urbanisation had not received the attention it deserved, even though, according to a World Bank estimate, 10 million people were displaced in China, India, Thailand and Cambodia in 2000 for various infrastructure, industrialisation and urbanisation projects (Zoomers 2010, 437).

Diverse processes of land dispossession have been met with a variety of 'political reactions from below' (Borras and Franco 2013). Reactions have included overt contestation against expulsion, as in the case of the Mapuche people who resisted 900,000 ha. of acquisition for the clothing company United Colours of Benetton in Patagonia (ibid, 1733). The more common responses, however, have been covert contestations against the state through 'everyday forms', as in Ethiopia (Moreda 2015), or by taking advantage of the incoherence and differences within the 'state' (Hall et al 2013), as in cases where threatened rural communities in China have made use of fissures between Central and local state authorities. Opposition in a single case has, on occasion, been both overt and covert. When the Cambodian government acquired 20,000 ha. of irrigated rice fields, destroying crops, displacing people, and causing destruction of community forests, to supplant them with sugarcane mono-cropping by powerful corporations (amid tie-ups with a Thai business), covert acts of sabotage and demands gave way to stoning of bulldozers, marches to the capital, and highway blockades (Borrass and Franco 2013, 1734). Politics over land dispossession, thus, has been varied and involved a diverse set of strategies. Moreover, political struggles have not simply been against expulsion and displacement. Political reactions have also taken the form of mobilisations for more favourable terms of inclusion

into the economic trajectories envisaged through the 'development' projects for which land is acquired (Larder 2015). It is for this reason that the value-laden term 'grab' cannot be used uncritically and across contexts, and is placed within single inverted commas here.

Critical scholarship on global land 'grabs' in the 21st century, as described above, has thus seen broad engagement from a number of disciplines, undergone an evolution in the research agenda in a short span, and been uniquely energised by debates both within and across academic and activist circles.
It is within this important and topical global context that this thesis on land dispossession in India is placed.

1.2 The Indian Land 'Grab' Debate

Academic debates on large-scale land dispossession in India saw a resurgence around the same time as the global land 'grab' debate but were triggered by a domestic event. In June 2006, the Left Front government in the State[2] of West Bengal attempted to forcibly acquire 405 ha. of fertile agricultural land in Singur, a village north of the State capital. The land was meant to site a car manufacturing plant for the Indian corporate behemoth Tata Pvt. Ltd. The coercive attempt was met by fierce opposition from farmers and the project was eventually abandoned as Tata decided to relocate its factory to the western State of Gujarat. The violent attempt at wrenching farmland from unwilling farmers in Singur was followed by a similar effort in the following year for the construction of an SEZ to host an Indonesian company. Resistance to compulsory acquisition of farmland and homestead was met by horrific state-orchestrated violence that led to the death of 14 people, the rape of women and a 12-year-old girl, and many being gravely injured by the police and party musclemen (Rai Chaudhuri and Sivaraman 2007).

This incident rightfully stirred academic and policy debates on land dispossession in India, bringing to the fore the role of the state. The state has been the central actor of land dispossession in India, although its legitimacy in driving this process has varied over time.

[2] Following Sud (2009), I use state with a small 's' for the 'institutional apparatus of government, with its attendant norms, ideologies and politics'; State with a capital 'S' is the sub-national territorial unit of the Indian union

The praxis of land dispossession by the Indian state has both affected and been influenced by the purposes for which land is acquired.

1.2.1 Land Dispossession in Post-Independence India

Land dispossession observed today in India needs to be placed in a longer-term perspective of capitalist development.

At the dawn of independence in 1947, abdicating the feudal *zamindari* system in Indian agriculture and redistributing land to the landless were articulated as a national priority. The right to property was instituted as a fundamental right in the Constitution through Article 19 (1)(f)[3] in order to guarantee 'land to the tiller' (Wahi 2013). The realisation of this liberal order required large-scale land redistribution.

Simultaneously, other social and economic goals, such as a state-planned policy of industrialisation as part of a larger goal of postcolonial 'nation-building', began to be pursued with fervour. The combined aims of land redistribution and 'nation-building' required the state to acquire land on a large scale from landed private owners towards two very different and contradictory ends – one involved redistributing smaller parcels and, the other, amassing large tracts for state projects. This paradox between upholding a fundamental individual right and implementing state policies culminated in Article 31, commonly known as the clause of eminent domain: the legal provision for the Indian state to compulsorily acquire land to fulfil important 'public purpose' upon the payment of just compensation to the owner of the land (ibid). Legally equipped with the provision of 'eminent domain', the postcolonial state embarked on fulfilling developmental goals through the practice of planning. Development planning involved the state at the centre of India's federal polity setting both production goals in key sectors of the economy along with vital social objectives, and a 'neutral' bureaucracy with technical expertise planning for the realisation of those goals[4].

[3] This was eventually abdicated in 1978 through the 44th Amendment to the Constitution (Wahi 2013), as the executive tasked with land reforms and industrialisation was drawn to constant battling with the judiciary which was meant to uphold the right to property

[4] For a Marxist analysis of the political economy of planning, see Byres (1997)

The first and second Five-Year Plans outlined a grand project of 'Nehruvian modernity' that involved developing public-sector industrial and urban infrastructure. The term 'Nehruvian modernity', linked to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, refers to the state ideology of planned industrialisation and urbanisation as a larger project of nation-building in the post-independence period. The commitment to this ideology spawned land dispossession for large-scale agrarian infrastructure, such as dams and irrigation canals, heavy manufacturing industries and conjoined industrial townships, mining, and planned cities.

Large proportions of private rural lands were acquired by the state in the 1950s and 1960s for heavy-manufacturing plants and industrial townships – the Bhilai Steel Plant, for example, was set up in the mid-1950s on 1700 ha. spread across 96 villages in, what is today, the central State of Chhattisgarh (Parry 2003, 223). Public infrastructure such as the Bhakra Nangal dam, constructed in the 1950s in the northern State of Himachal Pradesh, submerged 17,876 ha. of land across 371 villages and displaced 36,000 persons (Manthan Adhyayan Kendra 2009).

While the scale of these projects and their location in rural areas resulted in large-scale dispossession, they were unique in that they were 'fundamentally productive spaces' (Levien 2013, 386) driving a national project of modernity. Accompanied by employment generation[5] in the public sector, state-managed townships and large-scale future benefits to agriculture, land dispossession for industrial and agricultural transformations in this phase 'enjoyed widespread public legitimacy'. In these cases, the state had project-specific policies for managing development-caused-displacement and provisions for monetary compensation, relocation and rehabilitation, which produced, at best, mixed results[6]. This phase of land dispossession overall, however, did not meet with strong or sustained resistance precisely because of the legitimacy of the developmental goals and the state driving it[7].

[5] The extent of employment generation and absorption of those displaced differed by state and project. A rich literature interrogates this: see Parasuraman (1990) for Durgapur, Sanchez and Strumpell (2014) for Rourkela and Jamshedpur, Parry (2003) for Bhilai

[6] As a starting point, see Modi (2009)

7 Exceptions include conflict during the construction of Sardar Sarovar dam but, where there was resistance, it was quelled or managed (Levien 2013: 391)

After the first two decades of planned capitalist development in industry and agriculture, growing disparities between urban and rural areas, and the politics that stemmed from it, caught the attention of state planners. In the 1970s, India renewed efforts for 'balanced regional development' to bring industry-based employment to rural and 'backward' regions (ibid, 389). To this end, parastatal corporations for industrial development were formed in most States. The Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), for example, had acquired 52,609 ha. of land for 225 industrial areas by 2002; the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation had amassed 31,970 ha. for 184 industrial areas (ibid). The main objectives of these were to acquire land in rural, relatively remote areas, build infrastructure to attract entrepreneurial ventures and allot lands to private investors. The industrial areas represented a continuity of 'state spaces' from the previous decades in that the state owned the land and skeleton infrastructure on it and extracted rent from the private or other entities to which it leased these out. However, a couple of features distinguished them from the land acquisition that preceded this phase: they were generally smaller in scale, and dispossession of agricultural and common lands met with more friction than in the past as disillusionment with large-scale industrial employment and state-sponsored resettlement began to set in.

The decades beginning 1980 saw the start of a piecemeal but enduring process of economic liberalisation[8]. A set of policies associated with liberal economic reforms – opening the economy to foreign capital, unleashing trade in the free market through reduced tariffs and flexible exchange rates, and deregulating key industries in the economy – were pursued 'earnestly' (Kohli 2006, 1251) from 1991, marking the year as the advent of liberal reforms. This ushered the era of neoliberalism. Ideal-type neoliberalism quite 'simply demanded one thing, that the state should roll back from many areas where it had become active, responsible and regulative' (Chandoke 2003, 2961) as market forces took over. 'Actually-existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) in India, however, hardly involved a retreat of the state. I will draw on the vast literature on neoliberalism to develop this further in the thesis, but here it is important to note that an invigoration of export-oriented production and flow of foreign capital into sectors like manufacturing, retail, Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled services (ITES), and more recently real estate, has meant the demand for land has been immense for uses different from the previous periods.

8 Vast literature exists on its politics Corbridge and Harriss (2000), Kohli (2006); process Byres (1997); impact Ghosh (1997), Basu (2005), Sen (1996)

In the liberalising setup of encouraging foreign direct investment in sectors ranging from garment manufacturing to IT services, both the central and federal states began to promote large economic zones – Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) – with enabling infrastructure and an array of commercial incentives. The general aim was to link India's industrial and services sectors to global markets by drawing both domestic private and foreign capital for rapid economic growth. The frenzy for land in the decade beginning 2000 was driven in large measure by the passage of the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005. The Act paved the regulatory way for the creation of economic enclaves with limited taxes and duties to promote exports. By 2008, barely two years after the Act had taken effect, several hundred SEZs had received formal approval from the Ministry of Commerce at the Centre. Fierce inter-State competition to attract private capital into States resulted in 126,077 ha. of land allotted to SEZs. By 2011, 133 SEZs were in operation supporting primarily IT and ITES sectors, pharmaceuticals and gems and jewellery (Jenkins et al 2014, 4).

The governance and implementation of these state-directed economic zones are marked by a lot of variation across and within States. Gujarat and Maharashtra have been forerunners of SEZ undertakings while Punjab and West Bengal have had a more wavering commitment. Land acquisition for SEZs has met with intense contestations and resistance, especially since the late 2000s, for many reasons[9], one of which is the very nature of SEZs. As 'hyper-liberalized enclaves', they are designed to attract foreign investors to take advantage of cheap labour, cheap land and several concessions in the form of tax exemptions and lax regulations to produce goods and services for export.

Following the unrest in West Bengal, mentioned above, and similar uprisings against state-led land acquisition elsewhere – although not driven solely by them – the SEZ agenda began to abate around 2008 with several approved SEZs being eventually cancelled[10]. Other recent state efforts of developmentalism have been Land Banks – repositories of contiguous pieces of land for disbursement for miscellaneous public purpose. This process is again very state-specific; Bihar, since 2011, has been acquiring 'barren' or 'fallow' land (Bihar Times, 2013)

[9] For social movements see Guha 2007, Jenkins et al 2014
[10] Goa for example cancelled three notified and seven planned SEZs in the state

while Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation has accumulated approximately 50,000 hectares of private agricultural land since 2010 (Asher in Jenkins et. al 2014, 141). One last contemporary trend worth mentioning is land acquired for speculative real estate development in urban areas[11]. Rural land has been converted to planned cities (Parikh 2015) as well as 'worlding' (Roy and Ong 2011) of existing cities. Several metropolitan cities – Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai – have seen spectacular infusion of capital from foreign banks and sovereign funds into an expanding real estate sector (Searle 2011). This has been combined not just with privatisation of urban infrastructure but also of city governance (Goldman 2011).

Together these trends represent a purposive restructuring of land use and remodelling of productive spaces for economic and social projects of modernisation and urbanisation.

As the neoliberal 'reconstruction of space' creates 'new geography of centrality and marginality', there are contestations: 'fierce resistance struggles of diverse forms are erupting in different parts of the country' (Banerjee-Guha 2013, 179). Mass opposition to the proliferation of large SEZs, according to Jenkins (2007), highlights an '… important structural weakness of India's political system' in pushing through preferred policies of economic transformation: its increasing 'inability' to 'broker accommodation' due to corruption and a history of 'broken promises'. Indeed, there have been many instances of fierce struggles at the moment of land acquisition that have successfully resisted land dispossession. Beyond the two villages in West Bengal, farmers, fisherman, and even dock workers, came together to resist the development of a port for a company in Maharashtra (Mujumdar and Menezes in Jenkins et al 2014). In Ghaziabad district, in India's most populous State of Uttar Pradesh, hundreds of farmers mobilised against the district administration office and stalled land acquisition for a powerful private corporation, Reliance Ltd. (Pai in Jenkins et al 2014).

Yet not all instances of land dispossession are met with resistance – a mass movement of rural landholders opposing their antagonist – against the state. Tempering the imagery that India's political landscape is mired in 'land wars', Jenkins et al (2014, 26) provide a more balanced view: 'A typical Indian state will have accumulated a portfolio of relatively

[11] For real estate development on Mumbai, see (Weinstein 2008) for Mumbai; (Chatterji 2013) for Gurgaon

uncontroversial SEZs alongside some that have generated intense and/or sustained opposition.' Their observation was based on a study of SEZs across multiple States in India when the SEZ agenda was alive. Beyond the high-profile SEZs, it is the case that the state continues to proceed with land dispossession for various non-farm uses in the neoliberal era.

In this section, I have shown that the state in post-independence India has been driving land out of agriculture for various projects of capitalist development – they have ranged from dams in the 1950s to SEZs in the mid-2000s. While the state remains the key actor in processes of large-scale land dispossession today, the uses land is being put to are, arguably, increasingly *less* productive. Not only is land being commodified for 'development' in which dispossessed farmers find themselves excluded, land is increasingly being used for largely unproductive activities such as speculative real estate. The perverse uses to which commodified land is put have triggered violent resistances from farmers. There are, however, regional pockets where the state is able to proceed with land dispossession without mass opposition. If land dispossession in the neoliberal era is increasingly for purposes that are unproductive and, more importantly, excludes those from whom land is expropriated, *how does the state continue to drive this process?* This question animates the research agenda of this thesis.

Before unpacking the research agenda further, I will summarise how land dispossession has been theorised in critical scholarship in the next section. In doing so, I also clarify what I understand as the concept of land dispossession.

1.3 Land Dispossession: Conceptual Note

This thesis is placed *within* debates in critical scholarship on land dispossession emerging from the disciplines of critical sociology, political economy, politics and development studies. Within this scholarship, two Marxian concepts have featured prominently to theorise contemporary process of land dispossession: Karl Marx's primitive accumulation (PA) and David Harvey's 'Accumulation by Dispossession' (AbD). In fact, the notion of 'dispossession' is at the centre of both concepts.

Marx's (1887) concept of PA was based on the English Enclosure movement, which involved forcible conversion of commons into private property. A necessarily violent process, PA is an assault on non-capitalist production relations through the alienation of land users and dependents from their means of production and livelihood. In its original conceptualisation based on a historical moment, PA is the prime force that engenders capitalist relations. The inapplicability of the concept to contemporary cases in most contexts in the Global South has been persuasively argued (Hall 2013, D'Costa and Chakraborty 2017, Levien 2018). I will not rehearse them here but summarise as land dispossession today occurs *within* the process of capitalism.

The second concept widely applied to land dispossession is David Harvey's (2003) AbD – a reinterpretation of PA that reflects circulation of capital on a global scale dispossessing people off land for the purposes of accumulation that are of a 'nonprimitive variety' (D'Costa and Chakravarty 2017, 27). Globally integrated financial markets and international institutions of credit, backed by state powers, have enabled a renewal of imperialist tendencies by using over-accumulated capital from one part of the world to generate further surplus by absorbing 'cheap resources' elsewhere. The issue with deploying AbD unproblematically in Indian cases as a response to a global crisis of capital '… raises questions about the balance between global and domestic forces in driving land grabbing and about the agency of (global) capital, states and smallholders' (Hall 2013, 1583).

Levien (2018, 16-17) theorises land dispossession as a 'social relation of coercive redistribution' that affects different rural classes unequally. As a 'social relation of coercive redistribution' it is able to account for the exact forces that undergird social relations in different contexts and over time. In the case of India, as described above, a different set of visions, ideas, and forms of capital have driven land dispossession at different times. The constellation of factors then come together as a 'regime' of land dispossession (Levien 2018). Shifting away from state-mediated capitalism of the Nehruvian period, a 'neoliberal regime of dispossession' is what we observe in India today. The regime is marked by land being increasingly expropriated for any use by a private entity, without any limits on speculation or stipulations on labour absorption, so long as it generates purported economic growth.

1.3.1 Dispossession as Process and Outcome

Dispossession, in the land literature, is used to denote both a specific process as well as its outcomes, and often simultaneously, though the emphasis on one aspect is greater depending on the focus of the argument.

In its processual sense, dispossession is a one-time act: a 'temporally discrete process' of separating people from their land (Levien 2018, 18-19). Demystifying the process of dispossession, Levien (ibid) argues that states accomplish this through explicit 'inducements', which generally involve a combination of 'coercion, legitimization, and/or material compensation'. The extent to which states rely on active physical violence varies, given the 'political cost' of such actions tends to be high, especially in democratic societies. The threat of coercion, however, looms over every process of land dispossession.

Others have theorised dispossession as an outcome of gradual and stealthy processes that do not necessarily involve a one-time physical expulsion: the economic compulsion to part with land and de-agrarianise, as a result of a stagnant agricultural sector, is an outcome of 'dispossession by neglect' (Vijayabaskar and Menon 2018). Looking at the post-market reforms strategies in the agricultural sector in Russia, Vorbugg (2019) decouples land from the process of dispossession to argue that land is not necessarily the central 'good' at stake in determining the foreclosure of livelihoods and possibilities of social reproduction in many capitalist societies. In a context where the concentration of agricultural assets, such as land, has been ongoing through markets and other state mechanisms, rural smallholders struggle with livelihoods and are driven to poverty as a result of devaluation of land and disintegration of rural infrastructure. Dispossession, in this case, is neither necessarily solely about land, nor is it a one-time act of 'grabbing'. While such theories claim to focus on 'other' processes within capitalism that lead to over-time foreclosing of livelihood opportunities for rural agrarian households, by deriving the concept through acts of distressed land sales, poverty, and inequality, they essentialise dispossession as an outcome. The starting point of their analysis then is dispossession as an outcome usually observed by changes in the agrarian economy, which is distinct from dispossession as a particular process that leads to a specific kind of politics (Levien 2013).

For my purpose here, dispossession is both a process predicated on *unequal power*, and an outcome that perpetuates *inequality*. The purpose of the thesis then is to ***make concrete how land is driven out of agriculture and what implications that has for state-society relations within the neoliberal regime of dispossession.***

I describe the empirical case in more detail next. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the research questions and the main arguments following an engagement with the literature.

1.4 Empirical Case of State-Developed Industrialisation in the 21st Century: Maharashtra and S5IA+

In 2014, the current prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, began his first tenure as the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party won the general elections with a large majority. As part of a multi-pronged effort to mark a sharp break from the policy regime under the Indian National Congress, its predecessor, the Modi-led BJP government dismantled India's central policy co-ordination unit, the Planning Commission. It was replaced by the Niti Aayog, which espouses the language of 21st century 'corporate' India and private 'think tanks', rather than the more statist leanings of its predecessor. Even as logos and fonts on reports have been updated to resemble the slickness of private consultancies, recommendations show more continuity than change: more and cheaper land for industrialisation, infrastructure, urbanisation, and modernisation. In this effort, the western State of Maharashtra is the torchbearer. According to a 2017 report published by the Niti Aayog, of the total INR 50.58 lakh crore (approx. GBP 600 billion) of investment allocated to infrastructure projects, the largest chunk, 11 per cent, was concentrated in Maharashtra (The Asian Age, 21 September 2017).

Maharashtra is one of the more industrialised States. In 2013-14, Maharashtra's contribution to the domestic product from the industrial sector was the highest – INR 2267 billion (GBP 26 billion), followed by Gujarat and Tamil Nadu (The Economic Times, 25 January 2015). Mumbai, the State capital, located on the western coast along the Arabian Sea, has been a dynamic centre of trade and commerce through pre-colonial and colonial periods. Thriving mercantile capital was combined with industrialisation, particularly in the textile sector, up

until the 1970s. Today, Mumbai is an important hub of financial services in Asia and is known as the 'financial capital' of India, with the Reserve Bank of India based in the city. It is also home to a range of IT and other knowledge-based services, trading (via sea routes), and entertainment (Bollywood).

Maharashtra's industrial production is located in 289 industrial complexes, spread across 66,000+ hectares of land (MIDC website). These industrial complexes – industrial areas, industrial zones, Special Economic Zones, Industrial Corridor – are designated physical areas for specific industrial activities operated by the public sector, private enterprises or a combination of the two. They are intended to be contained spaces of productive industrial activity created by the state to convert backward, agrarian areas into pockets of modern hyper-development. According to the Maharashtra Industrial Development Act 1962, an industrial area is 'any area' declared as such by the state, through a notification in the Official Gazette, that is to be 'developed and where industries are to be accommodated'. These industrial areas and clusters, however, are not evenly spread across the State. Industries are concentrated in the urban centres of Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Nashik, a fact that is central to the spatial politics of industrialisation that I discuss later in the thesis.

1.4.1 Aurangabad

Located in the central part of the dynamic State of Maharashtra are a cluster of eight districts[12] that form the 'backward' region of Marathwada (see Map of Study Area). This region is primarily dependent on an agricultural sector that has been grappling with the outcome of systematic neglect in agricultural infrastructure, particularly irrigation, and has been beleaguered by droughts and erratic rainfall for the past three and a half decades. The term 'backward' is rooted in a set of ideas called modernisation theories. I will elaborate on this cluster of theories and its relevance in the next chapter, but here I am using the term 'backward' as it is used in the policy discourse on Aurangabad. The policy and political discourse of 'backwardness' in the region refers to a specific idea of political-economic neglect of the region: it is rural, agrarian, and has low rates of industrialisation and urban infrastructure compared to other parts of the State (Desarda 1996). It also has a history of marginalisation in formal State politics. The economic 'backwardness' of the region and the

[12] District is an administrative unit one level below that of State in India

political neglect are long-term outcomes of the pre-colonial land revenue system, colonial policies and post-colonial politics. The discourse of 'backwardness', as I will show in chapter 3, is an important factor in understanding state action in relation to land dispossession and the politics around it.

Aurangabad, where the study is located, is one of the eight districts of this 'backward' region (see Map of Study Area). It is agrarian: 62 per cent of the labour force is engaged in agriculture and allied activities (Census 2001). The district lies in the basin of the second-longest river in India, the *Godavari*, which flows all the way from its source in Maharashtra to the eastern end of the subcontinent, emptying into the Bay of Bengal. While this description, on first reading, may animate visions of an ebullient river nurturing verdant fields through an agrarian district, the reality is in sharp contrast. Aurangabad district is semi-arid and drought-prone, and the agrarian economy has not been buttressed by active state support as has been the case in the dynamic sugarcane- and cotton- growing regions of Western Maharashtra, a point I develop further in this thesis.

Up until the 1960s, Aurangabad town had a few co-operative sheds that had received considerable state support in securing land, electric supply and basic infrastructure. Industrialisation in this district, though relatively tepid, has proceeded gradually since the mid-1960s through planned efforts under the parastatal unit, the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Once plans for the development of industrial clusters and corridors are approved by the State ministries, or when relevant the Centre, the MIDC is made responsible for its implementations. The MIDC is a body comprising primarily bureaucrats and technicians that focuses on industrial development in rural areas (as will become clearer later in the thesis). From mid-1960s onwards, MIDC developed industrial areas – the Railway Station area within the official boundaries of Aurangabad town saw the first batch of clustered industrial units, followed by the Chikalthana industrial area (in 1966) and the Waluj industrial area (from late 1970s to mid-1980s). Table 1.1 below lists the industrial areas chronologically.

Table 1.1 Phases of Planned Industrialisation in Aurangabad

Year(s)	Name	Status and Features

Early 1960s	Railway Station Area	Within the official boundary of Aurangabad town. Hosts a cluster of small-scale light industrial units
1966	Chikalthana Industrial Area	East of Aurangabad town. Light manufacturing plants, mainly pharmaceutical and auto-engineering plants
Mid-1980s	Waluj Industrial Area – A 'Benchmark' in social memory	Southwest of Aurangabad towm. Sites a number of manufacturing industries, primarily automobile plants. Bajaj Ltd., a leading automobile industry, has one of its three manufacturing plants
1997 – early 2000	Shendra Five-Star Industrial Area (Wave 1 of this study)	Developed industrial area with manufacturing plants – automobile, automotive parts, distillery, packaging plants, pharmaceutical manufacturing
2008 onwards	Shendra-Bidkin node of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (Wave 2 and 3 of this study)	No industries had come and no concrete plans or commitments were made at the time of fieldwork in 2016

In this study, I use the most recent industrial area developed between 1997 and 2008 as the main case to understand land dispossession for industrialisation in the neoliberal era. The planned Shendra Five-Star Industrial Area is discussed in more detail in section 1.4.3. This phase of industrialisation forms 'Wave 1' of the study, the relevance of which is discussed in section 1.4.4. Here I want to briefly highlight two empirical facts: first, the politics of land dispossession in Wave 1 was heavily influenced by the previous phase of planned industrialisation in the 1980s, labelled as the 'benchmark' in Table 1.1 above. A large automobile manufacturing company, Bajaj Auto Ltd., was set up a plant in the 1980s industrial area, which in turn spawned several automobile ancillary parts manufacturing units, made the phase of industrialisation relatively labour absorptive, generating factory and other forms of non-farm employment for the rural classes in the area. The 'Bajaj' model

was perceived as exemplary in generating industrial and non-farm employment for the dispossessed farmers and was etched in Aurangabad's social memory as such. The significance of this in generating 'compliance' (Levien 2018, 18) across subsequent waves of land dispossession is explained in chapters 3 and 6 in more detail.

Second, while in this study I started out by focusing on the S5IA of Wave 1, subsequent land dispossession in Waves 2 and 3 became vital to understanding the process and politics of dispossession in the area. The analytical compulsion for doing so will become clearer in the next sub-sections.

1.4.2 The Maratha Farmers

> Waah! Look at that mast bungalow. And the tractors parked outside. They definitely belong to a Maratha.
>
> Driving down the narrow road of rural Pune, private cab driver Shankar Shinde announced his guesses with great conviction. He paused every time a lush green farm or a large village house appeared in the distance, nodded in the direction and said, "That belongs to a Maratha."
>
> In the rural belts of Western Maharashtra, Shinde said, no Dalit or lower caste person could afford "those kinds of farm properties". "Of course there are many poor Marathas in the state. But a house that looks richer than the others in the village? That has to belong to a Maratha," he said, smiling. "I would know – I am a Maratha myself." (Scroll.in 2015)

Sociological studies in India have shown that the distribution of power in the countryside is particularly unequal and charged by caste.[13] Caste, in the Indian social order, is social rank based on ritual status under the Hindu Brahmanical tradition. As a social marker of power, caste has historically been reinforced by local economic systems. The Marathas are an intermediate caste, between the ritually superior Brahmins (priests), and the lowest ranking Scheduled Castes (previously 'Untouchables'). The Marathas were historically engaged in warrior and peasant occupations. The Marathas are the largest 'caste' cluster in Maharashtra

[13] See Beteille (2011) as a starting point

and encapsulate a notion of power that Indian sociologist Srinivas (1955) famously conceptualised as ‘dominance’.

The Marathas are not simply the largest in terms of number, they also wield ‘preponderant’ economic and political power (ibid). While they represent 32 per cent of the State’s overall population, they own 75 percent of its land. In post-independence Maharashtra, 12 of the 18 chief ministers of the State have belonged to the Maratha caste. Historically, landed Marathas used their stronghold over local politics to make a foray into sugar cultivation and its commercial distribution through co-operatives in the early 20th century (Attwood 1987). The sugar co-operatives allowed for the incorporation of the Marathas into capitalist agriculture and their diversification into various economic activities along the rural-urban spectrum. Out of the 175 co-operative sugar factories in Maharashtra, at least 140 are under Maratha ownership (Damodaran 2008, 228). Maratha farmers are largely seen as emblematic of the State’s dynamic rural agrarian capital, the kind that captures local imagination as represented in the quote above.

Not every Maratha farmer is a local powerhouse in rural Maharashtra. There is heterogeneity in the social grouping. In 2011-12, the wealthiest quintile within the Marathas (the highest 20 per cent) earned 48 per cent of the total income of the Marathas (Jaffrelot & Kalaiyasaran 2017). Significantly, the poorest 40 per cent of Marathas claimed less than 13 per cent of the total income, making them on average fall short of the top-most bracket of the Scheduled Castes. Furthermore, dominance of rural Maratha elites in the overall political economy of the State is spatially concentrated in certain parts. For example, over three-fourths of the sugar output comes from cooperatives in the seven, non-coastal districts of Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Solapur, Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur, which constitute 29% of the state's area. Marathwada, Vidarbha and Khandesh (together 60% of Maharashtra) provide less than 25% of the sugar (Damodaran 2008, 217-258).

The aim of this discussion is to highlight the power of rural agrarian classes in Maharashtra. The social dominance of the Maratha caste needs special mention in a study located in the State. The Marathas are numerically preponderant in the study villages in Aurangabad district. While local influence is concentrated in the hands of landed Maratha farmers in the region, it is important to contextualise their political-economic status within the larger context of Aurangabad’s struggling agricultural sector and its ‘backward’ districts. As I will

show, the dominant class of Maratha farmers are critical to the process of state-led land dispossession.

It is within this social agrarian context that the state, through its implementing agency, the MIDC, is acquiring land for an industrial area.

1.4.3 Industrialising 'Backward' Aurangabad: S5IA, the 'ideal-type' Industrial Area

Situated 13 kms from Aurangabad town, the Shendra Five-Star Industrial Area (S5IA) is spread across 902 ha. of land. The S5IA was developed between 2000 and 2010, but land acquisition for the project began in 1997. Land for it was acquired from three villages, beginning in 1997. It was farmland that was acquired for the industrial area while land where communities are settled was spared. Land acquisition in this phase proceeded without any overt resistance.

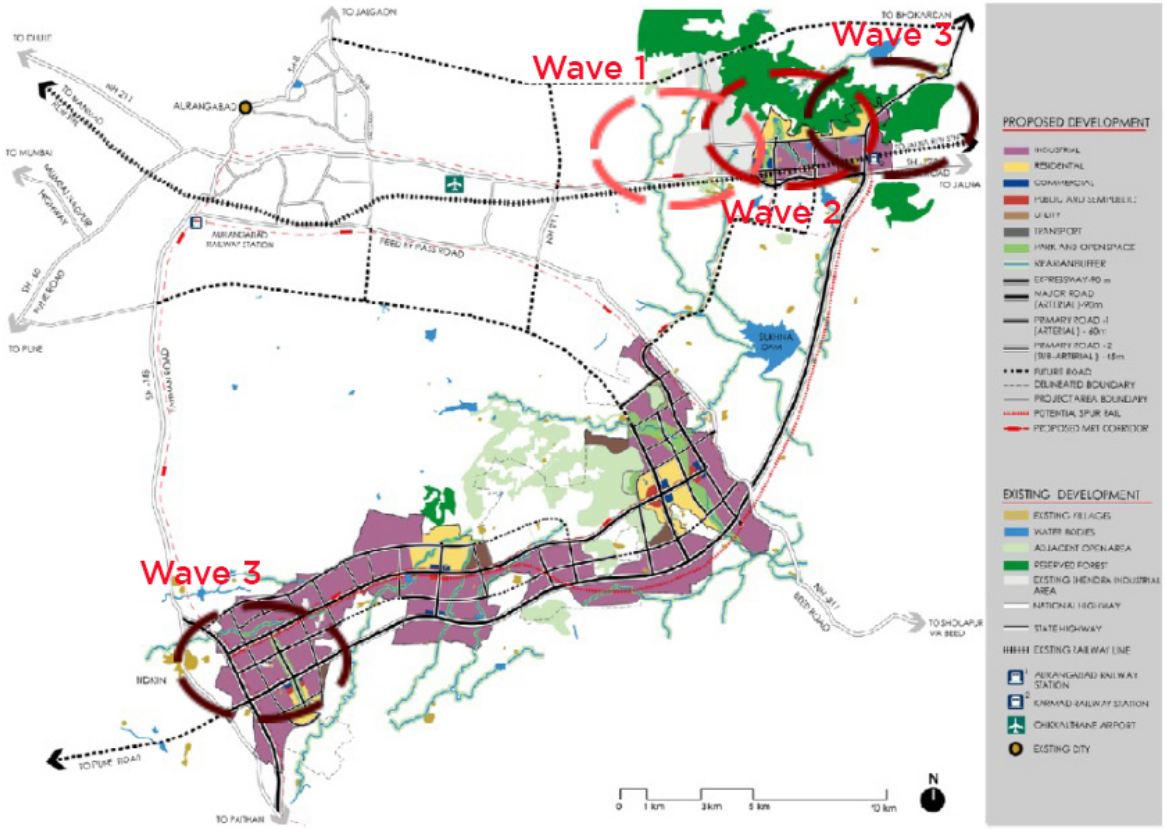
The S5IA is a deviation from neoliberal economic enclaves characterised by unmarked predatory global capital, speculative land markets and knowledge-based service sectors (Business Processing Units) common in 21st century India – it is no ghost-town nor a partially-materialised economic project. S5IA sites multiple light and medium manufacturing companies, embodying a lingering vision of state-led planned industrialisation. Furthermore, land acquisition in this case has not met with sustained resistance. The social memory of the more generative and dynamic economic effect of the industrial area that came about in the 1970s, combined with the politics of sub-regionalism, distressed agrarian economy, and successful elite incorporation, have together generated a 'near consensus' (Nielsen 2010) around land dispossession.

From around 2008, farmland adjacent to the S5IA, belonging to the next set of villages, began to be acquired to site further industrial activity. The expected industrial activity is in connection with the snaking Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). The DMIC is intended to serve as a freight corridor running across six States, connecting Delhi and Mumbai. It is envisioned to be 1483 kilometres in length. The government of Japan has advanced financial loans to the Central government of India for the project and is a 26 per cent stakeholder in it. The majority of the length of this corridor will lie in the Western States of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

In 2007, the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India) along with the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry (Govt. of Japan), issued a concept paper for the DMIC. The vision was stated as 'to create strong economic base with globally competitive environment and state-of-the-art infrastructure to activate local commerce, enhance foreign investments and attain sustainable development' (DMIC Concept Paper, 2). Within this larger vision, one of the more specific 'sectoral objectives' is 'upgradation of existing industrial clusters/industrial estates with requisite facilities; developing new industrial clusters or townships and export-oriented manufacturing zones.' (ibid, 3). The Shendra-Bidkin node falls under this larger objective of 'upgradation', the most visible manifestation of which is to be a Mega Industrial Park (MIP). It is unclear how existing industries spread across various industrial clusters in and around Aurangabad city will be upgraded but, as a first step, 10,000 Ha. of land is being acquired from 24 villages to the east and south of Aurangabad town, shown as Wave 2 and Wave 3 in the map below.

Figure 1.1 demarcates land acquired in Aurangabad as waves, which I will elaborate on in the next section. Wave 1 is where the S5IA is situated and land was acquired for this phase in 1997. Wave 2 and Wave 3 refer to land acquired for DMIC-related development in 2008 and 2010 onwards respectively. I refer to S5IA and the land acquired in Waves 2 and 3 as 'S5IA+', an expanding project of industrialisation.

Figure 1.1: Three Waves of Land Acquisition



Source: DMIC Aurangabad

Land acquisition for most large-scale infrastructure projects, such as highways and dams, takes place in phases. The DMIC is a mega initiative and acquisition of land has been proceeding gradually within and across States. In 2008, land had been acquired from three villages and I included one of them in my study. It is shown as Wave 2. In 2015, when I arrived for fieldwork, land was being acquired from six villages, of which one is a part of this study and shown as Wave 3.

Land from new rounds of dispossession will site the Shendra-Bidkin node of the Corridor. As indicated in Table 1.1. above, land for what is to be an industrial node has already been acquired, no development has taken place. There were no concrete plans or commitment from industries at the time of fieldwork in 2016. While this bit of development is at the 'implementation' stage, the S5IA is a living industrial area.

The S5IA has been carved into 435 plots for lease to mostly private industries. In 2010, all but 53 plots were yet to be distributed. In contrast to the activities of other parastatals, such as the Rajasthan Industrial Development Corporation's actions in the case of the Mahindra Special Economic Zone (Levien 2018), or even the state's administrative unit, such as the Town Planning department in the case of Dholera project in Gujarat (Sampat 2015), land for the S5IA was not acquired at the behest of private capital and directly transferred to private corporations. It was planned as part of a larger goal of industrialisation and the development of the area was financed by the state alone.

According to official rules, plots in the S5IA were allotted to private enterprises and multinational corporations based on a bidding process. This was not always the case, as I will show later in the thesis. It is enough to note here that MIDC did not acquire 900 ha. of land on behalf of one or a cluster of private entities, and its development was state-financed, as opposed to a Public-Private Partnership arrangement germane to the neoliberal strategy. The S5IA is part of a larger industrialisation drive in the region and is not the first of its kind in Aurangabad. Developed in a period when India had formally undergone half a decade of liberalisation, it embodies, through policy and practice, lingering ideas of state-planned industrialisation. In theory, it represents an 'ideal-type' of the 'modernisation' theory and state ideal. The process of land acquisition and infrastructure development was led by the state. Through a largely rule-bound process of bidding, industries were allotted plots, limiting real estate speculation common to infrastructure projects in neoliberal India. The S5IA, thus, forms the empirical core for analysing one of the main aims of this study – what kind of economic 'transitions' are possible when the state acquires land for industries in contemporary India.

1.4.4 Industrialisation in Perpetuity: 'Waves' of Land Dispossession

The DMIC is a new layer of 'industrialisation' to the S5IA. It is an entirely different project in that a different set of state actors (Centre and the State) and financial capital (Centre, State and Govt. of Japan) are driving it. However, the local communities have their own imaginaries associated with it and they are varied. For some farmers in Wave 1 villages, it

is more of the same: 'again MIDC has come'.[14] For some farmers in the most recent round, it is a new state initiative and brings with it a new set of expectations: 'DMIC is not MIDC'.[15]

I had intended to study the S5IA. Even though land acquired in 1997 for the S5IA was in a distinctly different period and purpose, it became important to include the DMIC-related land dispossession in the study. The reason I had to include all three phases of land dispossession is because people did not contain their experiences and, consequently, their responses to land dispossession to 'their' wave. People spoke of their own experiences in comparison to previous or new rounds of land dispossession and relative to others' experience. Each community narrated its experience in relation to the others; negotiations with the state, trajectories of accumulation and dispossession, while absolute and objective, were often communicated relationally. The analysis I present here attempts to do justice to the relational and non-linear understanding of the communities I studied.

New large-scale projects of industrialisation and infrastructure development can bring hope and aspiration, what Cross (2014) observed as 'economy of anticipation'. In this case, at the time of fieldwork, land for the DMIC was being acquired in adjacent villages as the 'impact' of industrialisation through the S5IA was being fully understood by those dispossessed in Wave 1. I use this ongoing process of land acquisition to understand experiences of dispossession 'over time'.

In her study of a gas plant in Bangladesh, Gardner (2018) found how people's negotiations with the project changed over time and their narratives of 'impact' did not reflect a linear idea of either hope or despair. Her methodology involved several repeated visits through the 1980s, 1990s and in late 2000. Reflecting on the 'over-time' changes in people's experiences, she says that by focusing on a particular time, especially one of 'crisis', we run into the 'danger of over-determining the future and forgetting about the past. In doing this we might also reflect upon how ethnography, both as a method and as form of writing, 'locks' unfolding events into lineal narratives that pull us towards 'end points' which are actually snapshots of a moment in time, over-determining what in reality are ever-changing, disordered and tangled realities'(Gardner 2018, 4).

[14] Interview, Shendra, 2 November 2015
[15] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015

This study does not have a longitudinal design in that a sample was not surveyed repeatedly over several years in order to tease out over-time changes in responses to the same set of questions. However, multiple rounds of land dispossession for an expanding project of industrialisation allowed me to tease out economic trajectories and negotiations with the state, as well as with the process of dispossession at large over a longer period of time. As mentioned above, people's perceptions and narratives were relational: they were always in relation to what they thought would happen at the time of acquisition, what transpired, and how they perceived it subsequently in relation to the new waves of land dispossession. Of special significance were the people from Wave 2, particularly the large Maratha farmers. They were, in a way, at the 'inflection point'. Their land had been recently acquired in 2008 and memories of hope had not entirely faded. Yet, their narratives were fraught as they compared their negotiations with the state and the events the 'development' that unfolded thereafter with those whose land was being acquired at the time of fieldwork. The waves provide an opportunity to understand dialectical negotiations between the rural classes, particularly the dominant class, and the state.

1.4.5 Research Agenda: A Summary

In summary, two important features of the empirical case that make the findings of the study significant are important to highlight.

First, land dispossession for industrialisation has been an ongoing process, albeit in phases, in Aurangabad district. The wave of land dispossession for an industrial area in 1980s, that is in the pre-liberalisation era in India, is viewed as a 'benchmark' of the generative capacity of industrialisation. In this thesis, I focus on the phases of industrialisation in the neoliberal era – 1997 onwards. In this neoliberal period, I observe that the first industrial area, the S5IA, showed more continuity with the developmental regime of state-led industrialisation of the 1980s. The empirical case of the S5IA, thus, provides an opportunity to study the processes and outcomes of land dispossession under, what the proponents of state intervention, would classify as 'ideal' condition: planned industrial area, state incentives for industries, limited speculation and the eventual setting up of manufacturing factories. This not only provides a relatively exceptional case of industrialisation, challenging theorisations of what land dispossession in contemporary critical land scholarship (summarise in the next chapter). It also contributes to our understanding of policies, processes, and politics of late-

industrialisation in developing societies, specifically the continued importance of the role of the state in mediating between visions of industrialisation, private capital, and the rural dominant class.

Second, land dispossession proceeded without stiff resistance. There has been no sustained organised resistance in any of the three waves that are studies here. A few groups of farmers and landholders have contested the process of land dispossession at various points and have been driven by different motivations. Overall, however, the state has managed to drive land dispossession for industrial development over nearly two decades without opposition. Levien (2018, 18-19) argues that land dispossession requires a one-time compliance at the moment of acquisition – that people *comply* with the order of a political authority to the act of leaving their land. Given that there has been no resistance to land dispossession for industrialisation, it raises the interesting question of how the compliance is generated over time. Just as precedence of a successful round of industrialisation can serve as a 'benchmark' to generate compliance for dispossession subsequently, industrialisation that marginalises the material interests of the dispossessed rural classes may dissolve compliance. The phased nature of land dispossession makes for an interesting case to interrogate the politics of compliance over time.

The specific research questions that I aim to answer int this study are as follows:

- How does the state facilitate land dispossession across villages without meeting with stiff opposition?
- As defined above, land dispossession is a process predicated on unequal power. What kind of economic transitions come about when the state mediates industrialisation in the neoliberal era? How do those trajectories vary across different sections – rural classes – of the society?
- What kind of political responses does land dispossession engender between the state and rural society, as well as across different sections of society?

In interrogating these questions, I focus primarily on the relations between the state and dominant-caste Maratha landholders. Evolving negotiations between the state and landholders from the dominant class – Maratha landholders with large landholdings – became central to understanding the politics of dispossession not just at the time of

acquisition but a decade after the first industries arrived in the industrial area. Local 'dominance' of landholders can only be analytically situated in relation to other classes that fall below the dominant class in the socioeconomic hierarchy of the rural society. In analysing the three research questions on process, outcomes and politics of dispossession, I bring together the negotiations and struggles of Maratha caste landholders belonging to the different rural classes (defined in chapter 4 in more detail). The thesis, however, focuses primarily on state-dominant class relations. Furthermore, I pay significant attention to the role of key local rural 'elites' in the political process that has fostered compliance over time. A few individuals were repeatedly cited as 'influential' – 'big men' ('*bade aadmi*') – in the villages. It is not simply that they belong to the dominant class based on the caste-class position defined above; their class-based dominance is further reinforced by a combination of political and social networks. Thus, the category of people I classify as 'rural elites' is a sociological category of local influence and power. Their relevance to the process of land dispossession as well as their significance to state-society relations in Maharashtra will become clearer beginning chapter 2.

The broader question of 'how the Indian state drives the process of land dispossession in a democracy', as mentioned earlier, motivated the choice of empirical case here. Equally, the particularities of the case study prised open the larger enquiry in the three questions above. The empirical case is of significance to contemporary literature not just on land dispossession but also that of late-industrialisation because it provides an opportunity to interrogate economic and social outcomes in an 'ideal-type' setting of industrialisation – a state committed to promote industrialisation; state-led process of land acquisition that curtailed feverish land speculation; the eventual development of an industrial area where manufacturing companies arrived and generated employment. Furthermore, a socially powerful grouping of farmers with political connections, amongst the rural classes dispossessed through the process of industrialisation, were well placed to 'transition' into non-farm jobs through the industries that developed on their land. The outcomes however, as I show in this thesis, were varied and largely not favourable for the dispossessed rural classes, including those who were best positioned to take advantage of the limited industrial employment generated. The thesis then simultaneously complicates contemporary theories on the processes and politics of land dispossession for speculation in neoliberal India and shows the serious limits to the 'transition' thesis of orthodox modernisation theories.

A clarification on the use of two recurring terms and concepts is necessary. First, as I mention above, I use dispossession as a 'coercive redistribution of land', where accumulation for a few go hand-in-hand with dispossession of/for a large number of individuals, particularly from the marginal rural class. The outcome of acquiring land, depriving agrarian households of their primary means of livelihood and driving them to struggle in an ever-increasing informal economy, is bound to create uneven trajectories. Not every household across rural classes or even within classes will experience the same outcome, whether immediate accumulation, instant proletarianisation (landlessness and conversion to wage labour), or gradual proletarianisation. The geography of economic and social trajectories will be imbalanced, as I will show. This should not, however, be a reason to discard the use of the concept of dispossession. While I take on board land dispossession, I make general use of the term 'acquisition' which is used in formal state discourse: acts, documents, and narratives. It is technocratic and apolitical. Since this treatise concerns the dispossession of private agricultural land for state-planned industrialisation through the compulsory acquisition clause of an Industrial Act (described later), it was clumsy to maintain a semantic distance from it. The use of acquisition is undergirded by the process of 'dispossession' as I have defined it.

Second, much of the land grab literature, while acknowledging economic and social heterogeneity among those whose land is grabbed, including variations in their relation to land and unequal power through which they relate to land and each other, ultimately refers to them as 'poor people' (Borras and Franco 2013) or 'poor peasants' (Adnan 2013). If the poor are defined by the condition of income or other metrices of multidimensional poverty, then the rural classes I observe are certainly not all poor. Nor are they all peasants. I focus on different rural classes throughout and refer to them using their class position, and at times as members of 'dispossessed' or 'landlosing' households. I use the term 'farmer' if they are actively involved in cultivation. If they simply own land but are primarily involved in non-farm occupations, I use the term landholder. In both these cases, 'farmer' or 'landholder', I suffix their class position.

1.5 Methodology

Much of the land literature has focused on SEZs and demonstrates an increasing role of private capital and speculation in large-scale projects of 'development'. In sharp contrast, the public discourse that followed the violent acquisition attempts in Nandigam-Singur in West Bengal reinvigorated discussions on industrialisation and the state's role in it. The lingering faith in the 'transition' thesis that surfaced in the media, post the violent attempt to take over farmland in the State of West Bengal, was in sharp contrast to much of the academic scholarship emerging on dispossession in India. In order to test the possibilities in policy, social outcomes and politics of a state-led project of industrialisation, the ideal-type empirical case necessarily implied that land be 'successfully' acquired and converted into an industrial area where manufacturing units exist. The S5IA *a priori* met the criteria for the more traditional variant of 'industrialisation' in contemporary times. It was an 'industrial area' and one that had been 'planned' by the state in the neoliberal era. The first wave of land dispossession had been completed in the early 2000s and a majority of plots had functional industrial units in 2015.

I began my fieldwork by focusing solely on the S5IA industrial area, assuming a microstudy of a 'case' would allow me to draw boundaries – physical (land), temporal (start date - end date of the physical development), and technocratic (enabling policies and state visions) – around which I would operationalise my thesis. What I found instead was that the narratives on and responses to the experience of land dispossession for the S5IA were not limited to land acquired in 1997 for the industrial area. Comparisons with current waves of land acquisition were inescapable.

I have used an 'extended case study' (Burawoy 1998) method, that is rooted in reflexive sciences. In reflexive science, we take context as the point of departure but not point of conclusion. Context is not 'noise disguising reality but reality itself' (Burawoy, 13). The extended case method, 'applies reflexive science to ethnographic fieldwork in order extract the general from the unique, to move from the *micro to the macro*, and to connect the *present to the past* in anticipation of the *future*, all by *building on pre-existing theory*' (ibid, 5, emphasis mine).

As mentioned above, I chose S5IA as my empirical case based on certain criteria for an ideal-typical state-led manufacturing area, which in turn was informed by pre-existing theories on land dispossession in India. Even though I began with a deductive method in identifying S5IA as the site of study, the initial round of observations and interviews with people in Aurangabad town and those that had lost land for the S5IA opened new avenues and insights. Studying the S5IA through the experiences of further waves of industrialisation, thus, is an attempt to centre the contextual reality of people's negotiations that reflect knowledge of past waves of industrialisation and expectations in the future. The connection between the 'present', 'past' and 'future', featured in the definition of the extended case, emerged from responses to interview questions and other narratives.

In using reflexive methodology, I have also extended upwards from the 'micro' to the 'macro' and extracted the 'general' from the 'unique'. I have used situated observations on state practices and the political responses of rural classes to the state in present-day Aurangabad to understand the larger macro structural forces of rural class, agrarian realities, and political opportunities that engender them in the first place. I have looked backwards to the history of Maratha farmers and state relations in the region, but also drawn on current events affecting rural classes in other parts of the State to understand responses and reactions to state intervention in the study area. From the negotiations through this process of land dispossession in Aurangabad, I am 'extending out' into an analysis of relations between the state and the dominant rural class.

The extended case study used here was thus informed by both deductive and inductive methods, wherein I have constantly tried to engage with pre-existing theory during fieldwork and at the time of writing. Before moving on to the discussion on specific methods and sources, I want to briefly highlight an aspect of the study that determined the nature of fieldwork. Land acquisition and dispossession evoke images of people, families, and communities being physically expelled from land and large tracts of standing crops being destroyed or houses being bulldozed. In the study area, agrarian communities owned farmland on one side of the highway, while their dwellings, untouched by acquisition, are located in hamlets (*gaothan* as they are called in Marathi[16]) on the other side of the highway. In some cases, farmers lived in *gaothans* adjacent to farming sites on the same side of the

[16] Marathi is the official language of the State of Maharashtra

highway. Usually, the *gaothans* and the land on which the communities farmed fall under the same administrative apparatus, or *Gram Panchayat (GP)*. In this case study, even as swathes of agricultural land have been acquired, communities were not physically displaced, making it possible to conduct this particular study of land dispossession.

Methods and Sources

The fieldwork was conducted over two visits. The first visit was between August 2015 and June 2016. This was followed by a two-week visit in September 2018. Following these two rounds of fieldwork, I build on semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a collection of policy documents, media articles in Marathi and English, legal documents and consultancy reports.

I conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with farmers and landless labourers. The semi-structured interviews collected information systematically on acreage of land owned, land acquired, compensation amounts, timeline of land acquisition process, actors involved, crops cultivated, source of agriculture labour, as well as other sources of income. When relevant, brief oral histories of how landholders came to own the land they did, navigated changes in livelihoods prior to land acquisition, and trajectories of other key members in the household were gathered. I had repeat interviews and meetings with some of the farmers. I had two interviews with 10 respondents. In addition, three became key respondents – two were dominant class farmers from Waves 1 and 2, respectively, and I met with them several times during my stay. The third respondent, who features prominently in the chapter on labour, became a key guide to understanding labour organisation in the S5IA as he was a labour contractor in the S5IA.

I had seven unstructured discussions with seven different groups: four with groups of (all male) farmers, two with men's labour gangs and one with a women's labour gang. The group discussions followed two months of individual interviews and getting a sense of the lay of the land. Not all group discussions were planned as 'group' discussions. This was the case with two of the discussions with farmers, where I arrived with the intention of interviewing one individual but found several farmers of similar social standing joining in spontaneously. The labour group discussions were planned as it was easiest to speak to them together at the

industrial site or the village (in the case of the women's gang) after work. The group discussions turned out to be incredibly rich sources of individual and collective narratives.

I conducted 18 elite interviews with local land-acquiring officials and bureaucrats in the parastatal unit. I spent several days 'waiting' in the regional office of MIDC in Aurangabad city, the Collector's office, and the Department of Town Planning I was witness to several interactions between officials and vexed individuals – farmers, 'landlosers', fixers and brokers who came to seek permission, to follow up, or simply to be sighted as a ritual of joggling institutional memory.

My data gathering exercise was thus sited in villages, along highways where labourers congregate, in village and town tea stalls, bureaucratic offices, as well as the posh offices of two industrial units in the S5IA.

I have made use of several secondary sources, such as government reports and policy documents produced by private consultants, that one of my key informants accessed through the Right to Information Act. I have also relied extensively on legal documents procured from Advocate Vilasrao Sonwane, who had represented a group of farmers in my analysis on litigations, as well as from the Sarpanch of one of the villages in Wave 1. News articles, both in the English media and local Maratha print publications, were used. I sought the services of a professional translator based in Pune for the Marathi documents. I have indicated sources used for analysis in chapters when I have felt it necessary to lay out the balance of evidence.

In Appendix A, I have provided a list of interviews with pseudonyms for all except for those elite respondents who gave consent to be identified by their name and/or position.

Data Documentation and Anonymity

Interviews were conducted in Hindi with farmers and landholders. Elite interviews with industrialists and some of the civil society members were in English; many were fluent in Hindi and preferred to communicate in that language. I oscillated between using a tape recorder and note-taking for interviews; in settings where using a voice recorder on the phone seemed like an obstruction, I avoided it.

I have used original names for the villages from Wave 1 as land for the S5IA (industrial area) was acquired from a finite number of villages. Moreover, the S5IA is eponymous with one of the three villages. Names used for all respondents from the villages are pseudonyms. Names of villages and respondents from the other two waves are pseudonyms. Names of activists, journalists, state officials, and industrialists – 'elite' respondents – when used are original. I secured consent for such usage.

Ethical Challenges

In the first two months of fieldwork, I was hosted by social activist Mr. Vijay Deewan and his family in their house until I found accommodation in the city of Aurangabad. Mr. Deewan strongly opposes the processes of industrialisation, urbanisation, and privatisation of basic state provisions, such as water supply in the city of Aurangabad. He is a member of the all-India civil society organisation, National Alliance for People's Movement (discussed further in chapter 3). He introduced me to Kalyan Dugle whose family had land acquired in one of the Wave 1 villages. He, along with a few farmers (discussed in detail in chapter 8), fought a legal battle to get their land back. My initiation into the first village in Wave 1 was through Mr. Deewan and Kalyan Dugle. The first set of landholders and dispossessed residents I met in Shendra were through Kalyan. They belonged to a small group of farmers who came together to collectively resist the state's muscular acquisition of the parcels of land that belonged to them by filing a court case. The group of farmers, however, were an exception in their negotiations with the state. After my first few trips to the field with Kalyan, I began to make daily visits alone to mark a break from my association not just with Kalyan but Vijay. While I am sympathetic to Kalyan's struggles and respect the work and activism of Mr. Deewan tremendously, it was important for me to carve out my own identity as an independent researcher in order to access a more representative cross-section of farmers and landholders in the villages. Marking my identity as a researcher working on a doctorate allowed me to access a range of respondents and experiences, which reveals a more contoured picture of land dispossession. My identity as a scholar-researcher from the University of Oxford also enabled me to access a number of officials in government offices which would not have been possible if I were not from an elite university.

The ethical challenge then, not unique to this thesis, is one of representation – whose voices get represented and the 'silences' that do not get documented. The first challenge revolved around stepping out of the world of Mr. Deewan and Kalyan that I was cohabitating to evaluate their narratives with equal critical scrutiny. This challenge was most acute in the analysis provided in chapter 3 and 8. Here, Burawoy's insight is apposite: 'No claims of "impartiality" can release us from either the dilemmas of being part of the world we study or from the unintended consequences of what we write' (Burawoy 1998, 17). With this self-awareness, I proceeded to bring together varied and conflicting ideas, responses, and actions from a variety of sources to demonstrate that the experience of 'dispossession' does not fit one neat narrative.

Secondly, I recognise that the study is skewed towards the landholding Maratha caste men in the study area. The negotiations of those at the margins of rural society – the landless and labouring women from dispossessed households – is under-represented and not discussed in substantive depth. However, I conducted two unstructured and one focussed group discussions with those who were landless, and their observations have informed my analysis, even if their voices are not always present verbatim. I have found the absence of substantive formal analysis of their experiences in the dissertation an ethical challenge, which I hope to rectify in subsequent pieces of written work following a round of fieldwork in Aurangabad.

The next chapter provides a thematic review of literature. Following the review of literature and a summary of how state-dominant class relations are explored, I will provide a detailed chapter plan.

Chapter 2. Thematic Review of Literature

In this chapter, I provide a review of relevant literature. I systematise my review thematically and the themes emerge from the research questions outlined in the previous chapter. The review then allows me to further elaborate on the research questions and identify the contributions of this study. I end this chapter with a detailed chapter plan.

2.1 Three Themes in Literature on Contemporary Land Dispossession in India

Recent studies interrogating large-scale land dispossession post-2000 have provided important insights into the processes, outcomes and politics at play in neoliberal India. They are empirically grounded and, instead of aiding narratives of dispossession and accumulation at a high level of abstraction, have uncovered a great diversity in the processes through which the state has facilitated dispossession. The scholarship is also beginning to expand the scope of rural politics beyond resistance against the state and private corporate capital.

Many studies in contemporary land literature, including the ones discussed here, have taken a single project of industrial or infrastructure development as their 'case' and generated a rich corpus of evidence using ethnographic fieldwork. Studies have looked at SEZs (Sampat 2015, Levien 2018, Jenkins et al 2014), the making of planned luxury cities (Parikh 2015), urban highways (Balakrishnan 2013), peri-urban housing development (Sami 2013), and real estate development within and in the outskirts of cities, such as Bangalore (Goldman 2011), Delhi (Ghertner 2011), and Gurgaon (Searle 2013).[17]

Within cases of industrial and infrastructure development, these studies, and contemporary land literature in India in general, have overwhelmingly used Special Economic Zones and

[17] There are several studies that have explored land dispossession in relation to forest land, common property and mining projects. These are typically intertwined with the struggles of Adivasi (indigenous) communities and involve a separate set of epistemological debates. They also involve a different set of policy frameworks related to forests and Scheduled Areas, which are protected areas with predominantly Adivasi population

peri-urban commercial development, involving mainly real estate, as their empirical cases. This pattern reflects the current empirical reality which is skewed towards urban commercial and infrastructural development.

Theme 1: Role of the contemporary state

The state is indispensable to land dispossession in the neoliberal era.

State and capital have allied in different configurations across different sectors of the economy in India and have thus been at the core of analysis of the Indian political economy. The postcolonial Indian state directed a 'command economy' (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987). With the liberalisation process that began in the late 1980s, the Indian state moved towards deregulating economic sectors gradually. The liberalisation process itself has been 'stealthy' (Jenkins 2007), preventing organised opposition to reforms. Furthermore, the state has managed its alliances with private domestic capital with caution. The Indian state in the liberalised context is more 'pro-business' than 'pro-market' (Kohli 2008) and has promoted economic growth by 'midwifing' certain economic sectors, such as the IT sector (Evans 1995). The neoliberal state in India is an active player, not a cheerleader of the market on the sidelines.

The role of the state as an active economic agent is not inconsistent with the revised neoliberal orthodoxy of the late 1990s promulgated by the World Bank and other proponents of liberalisation, such as the International Monetary Fund. The revised neoliberal principles accept the necessity of state mediation in postcolonial developing societies and offer a set of prescriptions for how the state should 'govern' markets, 'public' services, and civil society. The role of the state, in this revised agenda, is to be a provider of 'good governance': '…accountable, transparent, rule-bound, participatory and efficient facilitator and regulator of a market-driven economy' (Sud 2009, 649).

Just as the neoliberal policy agenda has a prescribed role for the state in general, it has principles for the governance of land markets. Drawing on tenets of neo-classical economics, international institutions like the World Bank and International Financial Institutions states have a designated role in the development of efficient land markets. Through the 'good

governance' agenda for land, a depoliticised state has a neat list of tasks: making titles clear, digitising land records, reducing bureaucracy and ensuring transparency (Deininger et al 2011; Deininger 2013). It is this efficiency-enhancing role of the state that the neoliberal proponents of land deals envisage. The governance of land, however, has not been 'good' (Sud 2009): the neoliberal state in India is not exactly a *reduced-form* rule enforcer of land markets.

Literature on land governance in neoliberal India has shown that the state is an active ally of private capital in driving projects of 'industrialisation', minerals extraction, and infrastructure provisions such as ports, highways and, increasingly, real estate. The state does not simply regulate land markets to enable cheap land deals for private business; it actively creates land markets through policies and 'governance' (Sud 2014). In fact, one of the reasons the SEZ model was so attractive to India's policy elites, according to Jenkins et al (2014, 18), is that it retained a role for the state in not just physically developing the zones but also in 'operating' them. The state's role in transferring land for SEZs can be theorised as 'direct purchaser', 'property dealer', 'law interpreter', 'policymaker' (ibid). Furthermore, it does not just enable the commodification of land by creating markets, it is also able to create usable 'land': rules and classifications generate usable productive land from wasteland (Baka 2013) and from water (Sud, forthcoming).

As the financial stakes of private capital, both domestic and global, in the development of large infrastructure projects are growing, the relation of state to capital is increasingly becoming that of an eager 'broker' (Sud 2009, Levien 2018). The primary discourse of 'high-return' and 'efficiency' has justified the overbearing intervention of global capital appropriating land and other resources. Additionally, the loosening of centralised control of the economy and diminishing fiscal support from the Central government, intensifies the power of private capital. Sub-national States have been in intense competition to attract private capital. Providing cheap land, among other infrastructure facilities such as electricity, water, and tax exemptions, push State governments and their bureaucracies to brokering deals successfully and cheaply for private capital (Levien 2018).

Sampat (2015, 63) does not find the 'state' ontologically suited to the idea of a 'broker'. In the case of smart city planning in the western state of Gujarat, she finds that 'while rentiering interests within the state constitute an important tier in what I call the rentier economy, the

state itself is not amenable to the descriptor "rentier state"; the rentier economy includes private actors, especially large landowners'. Yet, with rentier 'interests' within the state, heightened profit remains a significant logic driving state actors. 'Rents' in this case imply land rents, which are premised on future gains from a real estate and commercial boom. The entanglement of 'industrial' activity with real estate, on the cheap land provided for SEZs, has turned many of these infrastructure and 'industrial' sites into enclaves of speculative investment for corporations and the urban rich to park money.

The literature also finds that the powerful neoliberal state, when having to broker land deals with private actors, becomes blurred with equally powerful actors of society. The contemporary sub-national state, in actualising land policies, is networked, and the networks span the informal 'shadow' spaces, and social and kinship groups, making it 'porous to social forces, and is hardly institutionally coherent' (Sud 2016, 4). For Parikh (2015), this poses a methodological challenge in locating the actually existing 'state' in the process of land dispossession for the making of a city, when the state allies with powerful local actors, such as village headmen, or when a government official blurs his sources of income by moonlighting as a real estate agent. The 'porosity' is not just limited to the realm of land dispossession; the state in its dealings with most sectors of the economy is increasingly 'porous' (Sinha 2019).

The nature of capitalist 'development' has indeed been gruesome for large sections of the rural population and the urban poor. The question that emerges from this picture in relation to the state is its ability to perpetuate land dispossession repeatedly, as I observe in Aurangabad. The state, in a capitalist democratic society, has the twin goals of 'the continuation of private capital accumulation and the preservation of some historically conditioned minimum of political legitimacy' (Fox 1993, 31). Legitimacy, following Fox (ibid), is garnered through the creation and renewal of the conditions for social peace – that is, the containment of most conflict within 'proper channels.' Rather than necessarily implying subjective consent to, or contentment with, the dominant political or economic power, legitimacy refers to a political system's renewable lease on power, which depends on its appearing to function better than plausible alternatives.

The Indian state has always had to balance private accumulation with legitimation since its independence from colonial rule. In the initial decades following independence, the state

attempted to resolve the contradiction of accumulation and legitimation through the practice of bureaucratic planning (Chatterjee 1993). It was also the case, as already pointed out in the introduction, that 'development' that followed land dispossession was more generative and buoyed by postcolonial ideologies of 'nation-building'. In neoliberal India, the state can use material compensation and force to make people comply with the coercive act of dispossession. However, 'States almost always find it necessary to legitimize dispossession' Levien (2018, 19). The English enclosures were justified as 'improvement' and contemporary states use broad-brush 'development' (ibid). If legitimisation is an important task for the state, *how does it manage to legitimise its role in making cheap land available to private capital over time?*

I grant that the act of taking land away from a landholder requires 'compliance' (ibid, 18) to a temporally discrete process of land dispossession once, that is at the moment of land acquisition. In the case of Aurangabad, we find that land has been acquired in phases – as the outcomes of 'development' through the S5IA unravelled, land for the DMIC began to be acquired from adjacent villages. The farmers in subsequent rounds of dispossession are not insulated from the experiences of those from the previous round. In a project where land dispossession has proceeded over two decades without resistance, the *legitimation techniques* or *contextual political-economic variables* that allow the state to exercise its authority and secure compliance repeatedly must be interrogated. One of the three aims of the thesis is to understand the role of the state that perpetuates land dispossession over time. I aim to make concrete ideas, practices, and institutions of the state, as well as political and structural factors, in the neoliberal era that allowed it to carry out land dispossession between 1997 and 2016 in the study area. In doing so, I also show how the basis of compliance changes over time.

Theme 2. Post-dispossession trajectories and 'transitions'

The state is a '*grand abettor* to the entire process of neo-liberal reconstruction', an order where 'displacement, dispossession and environmental degradation have consequently emerged almost as structural components of development, representing an irreversible economic structure that favours the rich' (Banerjee-Guha 2013, 166, emphasis mine). Beyond the increased financialisation and speculation that is at the heart of the neoliberal order Banerjee-Guha talks about, economic activity that has transpired disguised as

'development' overall has been 'predatory' (Le Mons Walker 2008). Highly specialised IT and ITES sectors have grown and the simultaneous withdrawal of state support in agriculture has generated income growth that has accumulated in the hands of a privileged few in urban middle classes. This form of 'predatory growth', building on prior patterns of capitalist development in agriculture, has 'precipitated an agrarian crisis' and crippled opportunities for the rural poor (ibid).

A legitimising discourse of land dispossession in policy circles is its potential to generate non-farm employment. One can pick any policy document for one of the large-scale infrastructure development projects to see the awe-inspiring projections of employment. The DMIC Concept paper, for example, quotes 'double employment potential in five years (14.87% CAGR), triple industrial output in five years (24.57% CAGR), quadruple exports from the region in five years (31.95%)'. The potential for employment generation through land dispossession is also found on global technocratic views, such the World Bank's *The Rising Interest in Farmland* report (Li 2011). The landscape of actual employment generation in India has, however, not been encouraging.

While employment generation is a safely vague formulation, the predictions are rooted in the 'transition' thesis found in modernisation theories (Rostow 1960), within the idea of primitive accumulation (Marx 1887), as well as neo-classical theories of agricultural modernisation (Mellor 1995). Each strand is an enormous body of contested ideas and I cannot cover them here. A distilled version of the 'transition' thesis is as follows: when land is expropriated by the state, those who depend on land for livelihood are thus compelled to sell their labour. In the case of both Marx's PA and modernisation theories (discussed in the previous chapter), this necessarily implied a transition to industrial wage labour. The transition to wage employment can also actualise when a dynamic capitalist agricultural sector produces surplus (surplus labour and cheap food) to fuel the non-farm industrial economy. As agriculture becomes more productive, labour that is no longer needed in agriculture is absorbed in industry (neoclassical models). The criticisms of these strands, as I mentioned, are many.[18] I bring them up briefly, as the linear trajectories to wage

[18] See Bernstein (1971) as a starting point for modernisation theories; Gollin (2010) for a discussion on neoclassical growth theories

employment, packed into the term 'development' in policy discourse, continue to be a potent legitimising device for land dispossession.

What is posed as a thesis – a prediction of a linear trajectory – is really an empirical question. As a question, it can be posed as follows: does capital need both land and the labour of those expelled off it, or do processes of land dispossession usurp land without absorbing the labour? Empirically observed, such a 'transition' is a 'moot' point in India (Bernstein 2010), as it is many other contemporary societies of the Global South.

For Sanyal (2007), the process of primitive accumulation (defined in the previous chapter) is a permanent feature of capitalism and land coerced out of agriculture is only producing surplus labour in the 'non-capital' spaces of India's informal sector. In 2003, as per the nationally representative National Sample Survey office data, 42 per cent of rural residents were landless, dependent entirely on wage labour (Lerche 2013, 396). Additionally, 63 per cent of those who owned land could be classified as 'marginal farmers', a rural grouping that earned more than half of its income also from wage labour, adding to an enormous labour force in the swelling informal economy (ibid). Informal workers, that is those without contracts and outside the gambit of union representation and labour laws, have been steadily increasing in India. In 2004-05, 423 million of 457 million total workers – 92 per cent of the workforce – were informally employed (Pattenden 2016, 43). Regular waged employment, the ideal-type non-farm jobs implied by the classical transition to capitalist development, has been limited and shrinking since the mid-1980s. Of the rural wage labourers employed in the non-farm sector, only 24 per cent of male labourers were in regular employment in the same survey year, higher than the 20 per cent amongst female labourers (Jatav and Sen 2013, 17). This proportion of workers decreased further for male labourers to 21 per cent in 2009-10 (ibid).

The thesis of 'transition' into industrial jobs for the dispossessed, thus, is 'moot' in the neoliberal era. For D'Costa and Chakraborty (2017, 28), the transition theory has lost ground to such an extent that for them the land question in India today is '*less about transition and more about the conflicts and the political economy of the differential benefits of circulation of land as commodity'*. Rather than questioning the role of land dispossession in facilitating capitalist 'transition', we should focus on interrogating how land circulates as a commodity *within* contemporary capitalist development.

While the set of theories that formed the modernisation orthodoxy do not hold sway in academic circles, a modernisation imperative – 'transition' from farm to non-farm economy as a process of economic growth and social development as a realistic goal – continues to linger in both academic and policy debates. The end-goal of 'transition', instead of modernisation and socio-cultural transformation following industrial factory jobs specifically, is replaced by more neutral terms such as 'employment generation', 'jobs', and 'development'. Tempering expectations of industrial employment, debates over non-farm employment continue to surface in relation to land dispossession. Following the public outrage over state-orchestrated violence in West Bengal by its Left government cited above, for instance, a number of scholars, civil society members and public intellectuals opined on the issue. Many influential economists advanced an oft-repeated argument, redolent of the modernisation imperative: the need for state-led industrialisation to revive economic growth, non-farm employment and poverty reduction in the State (Banerjee et al 2007). They argued that the state should be involved in the process of land acquisition, for reasons of both efficiency and equity. The state acquires land more efficiently by preventing some sellers of land from 'holding out' their plots till the end and hiking land prices to an unviable level (Ghatak et al 2013). The state can also build necessary industrial infrastructure by co-ordinating efficiently across different bureaucratic units and utility providers (Banerjee et al. 2007). Compared to the private sector, the state can also be entrusted with ensuring a more equitable outcome of just compensation to those who hold rights to land as well as other stakeholders whose livelihoods are threatened. Even though industrialisation is not necessarily 'pro-poor', meaning absorptive of 'un- and low-skilled' labour, the state can ensure more fairness in the process by being transparent about figures of job creation and prioritising and incentivising labour-intensive industries (ibid).

The equity-enhancing role of the state can also be found in the intellectual energy expended in defining and refining the definition of 'public purpose' in debates over India's Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (2013) in the public domain but also in the legislative assemblies and in the court rooms of the apex judiciary body of India, the Supreme Court (Wahi 2013). At the time the 2013 Act was being debated, various special committees were set up to discuss what constitute as 'infrastructure projects' (Bagchi 2012). In a recent case, where the land acquired by the state was eventually transferred to a private company for building expressways in India's most populous State of Uttar Pradesh, the

Supreme Court widened the interpretation of 'public purpose' as projects that 'serve more than a small section of the populace' (Livemint, 9 September 2010). Ideologies of modernisation and state-led developmentalism drive the view that there is such a thing as development-inducing 'purpose' that serves a broad range of 'public'.

Edelman et al (2013, 1522) argue that evidence is 'patchy about the extent and dynamics of wage employment creation as a result of land acquisition' in the 21st century. Not only is the evidence patchy, the peasants-to-wage-labour 'transition' theorises a movement from one lumpy category of 'peasants' to another, that of 'wage labour'. Levien (2018) systematically unpacks this question by tracing changes in livelihood opportunities and trajectories within different rural classes in his case of a SEZ in Rajasthan. He found that in the economy centred around the SEZ, a class of neo-rentiers emerged largely from 'the previously comfortable agrarian classes' (Levien 2018, 101). The lower caste and classes were rendered landless and reduced to depending solely on selling their labour. The IT and ITES-based SEZ generated limited non-farm employment for the rural classes. Vijayabaskar (2015) similarly maps types of employment generated in an IT corridor in the southern metropolitan city of Chennai. These are, however, both cases where land is used to site highly specialised knowledge-based service units. The possibilities following state-mediated manufacturing development in the neoliberal era continue to draw more optimism in various academic and policy circles, as discussed above, but remain under-studied.

The question then is: *what kind of economic trajectories and 'transitions' does one observe when the state orchestrates land dispossession for manufacturing industries in the neoliberal era? How do they vary across different rural classes?* This is an empirical question; while a lot of the land literature has focused on 'expulsion', the labour dimension remains relatively under-explored (Edelman et al 2013, 1522; Li 2011). The second aim of thesis is to shed light on the kind of economy that develops in a manufacturing site and how rural classes carve out different economic trajectories.

Theme 3: Rural politics at the moment of expulsion

The initial phase of land literature tended to locate the politics of land dispossession in and through resistance: conflict was 'often presented and analysed in Manichean terms' (Oya 2013, 1536). While the 'land wars' that have erupted in India in the last decade, as mentioned

in the introduction, havereceived much attention[19], a more diverse set of 'political reactions' (Borrass and Franco 2013) are being gradually being observed and theorised.

The variation in the politics of land dispossession emerges from the heterogeneity in the economic motivations of rural classes. Drawing on James Scott, Borrass and Franco (2013, 1733) remind us:

> …often it is not about how much was taken but how much was left that is crucial to providing a trigger to poor people's decision to engage in contentious politics. Moreover, in some cases it is not only economic subsistence that provokes poor people to engage in contentious politics. At times when non-economic considerations such as their identity, culture or tradition, are threatened or, indeed if there is a perceived threat to what is considered 'public goods' (water source, landscape, community forest) poor people may also engage in political contention.

In agrarian contexts where income from agriculture has stagnated and the rural poor have access to relatively robust social safety nets, such as in Tamil Nadu, one finds a politics of *silence* (Vijayabaskar 2010) or sporadic struggles over terms of incorporation. In other situations, where smallholder farming has been remunerative and the non-farm economy has shown limited capacity to absorb rural labour, such as in Nandigram, West Bengal, *organised struggles* have erupted against expulsion (Nielsen 2010). Variation in political responses is also a function of the diversity in local politics and social histories. As the above quote from Scott suggests, non-economic considerations, such as threat to identity, can lead to fierce resistance. In the case of SEZs in Goa, movements were shaped around preserving a regional Goan identity (Sampat 2015). In the case of displacement of Adivasis in mining and heavy-metal manufacturing industries in Odisha, the struggles have been about preserving indigenous identity (Pattnaik 2013). Struggles that aim to halt dispossession crucially depend on a constellation of other enabling factors: political history, party politics, civil society presence, among others (Jenkins et al 2014, Levien 2013, Nielsen and Oskarsson 2017).

[19] See Jenkins et al (2014) as a starting point

Beyond dissent and resistance, studies have also analysed the absence of resistance. In light of cases where farmers and rural landholders have not mobilised, not just in India but also elsewhere in the Global South, the question 'why people fail or refuse to mobilise in the face of attacks on their livelihoods?' (Borrass and Franco 2013) has motivated analysing 'silences' (Vijayabaskar 2010; Moreda 2015 for Ethiopia) and acquiescence (Hall et al 2013). Studies on India in such cases have found that a critical mass of rural elites and dominant class farmers are co-opted by the state or private capital (Levien 2012, 2015; Parikh 2015; Sami 2013). Their social standing and landholdings allow them to negotiate with the entity acquiring land and the resistance they put up is with the aim to 'bargain' (Levien 2013, 373) for higher compensation and for better terms of incorporation into future trajectories of accumulation.

The literature on the politics of dispossession is refined and has drawn out variations in 'reactions from below' (Hall et al 2015). It shows that a variety of strategies, frameworks, and solidarities are available for struggles against dispossession. There is one distinct feature to the analysis that I want to highlight. The scholarship is primarily focused on resistance *at the moment of dispossession.* This, according to Levien (2013, 355) is because land dispossession creates a different kind of politics, 'distinct not just from labour politics, but also from various other forms of peasant politics'. The threat of land dispossession provides a 'single opportunity to save land', which in turn demands that resistance be overt for it to have a chance at success, resulting in pitched battles at the point of enclosure (ibid, 363).

In theme 1, I showed how the state finds it necessary to always legitimise land dispossession by promising 'development'. Yet, the nature of 'development' at large that follows dispossession in the neoliberal era is largely 'predatory' (Le Mons Walker 2009), as mentioned in theme 2. As mentioned under theme 2, the 'development' in the neoliberal era has can be characterised by either highly specialised sectors, such as IT, or speculative development that have failed to absorb large sections of those who are dispossessed for these projects. In theory, this ought to create a deep distrust not just for the state's promises of 'development' and but also the legitimacy of the state. Furthermore, in contexts where land dispossession for such non-generative forms of 'development' have being ongoing – from one decade to another, and from one district to another – one would expect that the state would encounter, at the very least, frictions in its relations with the dispossessed rural classes. In cases where resistance is missing, the literature has highlighted the role of local

rural elites and dominant rural classes that are co-opted into the process as they stand to gain from accumulation. The politics of co-optation observed amongst local rural elites is also analysed at the moment of dispossession. In cases where land dispossession continues to proceed over time, as it does in the study area: *How does the state politically navigate the cul-de-sac – the crisis in legitimacy that emerges over time from unfulfilled promises of 'development' – in state-society relations? Are there wider possibilities for rural politics over and above struggles against dispossession or co-optation at the time of land acquisition?* The third aim of the study is to use consecutive waves of land dispossession in adjacent villages to understand the unravelling of rural politics.

2.2 Analysing State-Society Relations Through Two Decades of Land Dispossession

This thesis adds to the current literature by evaluating relations between the state and a differentiated rural society over two decades of land dispossession. The contributions to the literature emerge from the specificities of the case of state-led industrialisation I study. I distil the main features that set the developments in Aurangabad apart from the cases observed above.

First, the state 'plans' the development of an industrial area in this rural agrarian region in the State of Maharashtra. This allows me to understand the *role of the state* in neoliberal India. The focus on private speculative capital in the land literature marks too stark a shift in state and public discourse. Ideologies of 'planning', 'industrial development', and 'modernisation' linger and legitimise state-led land dispossession. I also find that the state moves strategically between regulating private capital in some spheres and enabling its interests of accumulation at other times.

Second, the industrial area, S5IA, develops into a productive zone of manufacturing units. This allows me to trace different *trajectories and 'transitions'* that materialise for the rural classes. Empirical evidence on labour transitions in planned industrial areas in the neoliberal era post-land dispossession is thin. The second contribution to the literature is to draw out the economic possibilities for rural classes within the non-farm economy in the neoliberal

era. The rural agrarian society of Aurangabad is economically and socially heterogeneous. I capture the unequal capacity of households for social reproduction and to navigate economic change by classifying them into rural classes. While the pre-dispossession class position is critical to understanding the trajectories thereafter, each class has to negotiate with a set of opportunities for and limits to economic and social mobility in the non-farm economy. I interrogate the value and meanings of land in the 'industrialising' economy.

Third, land dispossession in the area has not been met with organised resistance. A decade after land dispossession for the S5IA, land is being acquired for the DMIC. This project has been layered on to the S5IA as an 'extension' and has engendered new waves of land dispossession. The third aim of the thesis is to interrogate politics of dispossession in the absence of organised resistance. A constellation of political and structural factors come together to prevent organised resistance to land dispossession in this case. While resistance in 'Manichean terms' Oya (2013, 1536) is absent, I observe *staggered political reactions*. Frictions between the state and rural classes surface after the act of dispossession is concluded and everyday bargaining over dispossession with limited development takes over. The aim here is to broaden our understanding of rural politics beyond the co-optation-versus-resistance binary that much of the land literature has focused on. Rural politics here is thus seen as a more drawn-out process of negotiation.

In the introduction, I drew attention to the dominance of the Maratha farmers in society. Traditionally, the local Maratha landed elites have been critical to the dynamism of the rural political economy of Maharashtra and the nature of capitalist development in the State. Their vitality in state-led development in the past necessitated a closer look into their roles in the current wave of economic change. The literature has allocated a limited role to the social group of influential landholders, particularly local rural elites, in most agrarian contexts. Restricting the role of the elite, as mere agents of the state in the commodification of land, reduces their motivations to that of a 'petty autocrat, using his connections with state power to dominate villagers' (Attwood 1974, 228). Their own negotiations get lost and the larger politics of the class they belong to get blunted. The contradictions in the interaction between aspiring and accumulating members of the dominant class, and the state are important to recognise with an eye on rural politics.

In cases of land aggregation for large private-sector Special Economic Zones – the failed attempt at land dispossession for the Maha Mumbai SEZ (Majumdar and Lobo in Jenkins et al 2014); Lavasa city (Parikh 2014); the Mahindra SEZ in Rajasthan (Levien 2018) – the price of land is negotiated individually with each landholder by land brokers, touts and agents of the company, or officials of the state. The compensation amount for a state-governed industrial area, such as in this case, is 'collectively' bargained between communities of landlosers in notified villages and state officials. It is collective in the sense most 'participatory' governance in neoliberal praxis is: locally powerful voices get represented as that of the 'community.' The local rural Maratha elites have played an important role in enabling the process of land dispossession over time in Aurangabad. The state co-opts important local actors, such rural Maratha elites, at the time of land acquisition. These alliances between the state and local rural elites are, however, provisional and fragile. Traced over time, state-rural elite relations, as well as state-society relations more generally, cannot be mapped to a co-optation-versus-resistance binary.

In engaging with the full range of actions of the rural elites, *I do not aim to sentimentalise* their intent to carve out opportunities for personal material gain through their compliance with the land dispossession process. The overall outcome of land dispossession is the reproduction of existing inequalities, with few exceptions of mobility for households from the lower end of the class spectrum. My aim is to draw attention to the larger normative register the state draws from to perpetuate the project of capitalist accumulation. It is important to not just take academic cognisance of it but to engage with it analytically in order to have a better understanding of possibilities and limits to rural politics in contemporary agrarian contexts.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Maratha farmers, as a dominant social grouping, have a distinct politics in the region. The political history of the landed Maratha farmers as a class – dominant class – and in relation to the state is at the centre of how land dispossession unfolds in the region. State-dominant class relations in general have been key to understanding capitalist development in rural India. In the next section, I converse with some of the older debates on political economy that have analysed the role of the rural dominant classes and their relations with the state in processes of capitalist accumulation.

2.3 State-Society Relations: The Role of 'Dominant' Elites

In this section I provide a brief explanation of the concept of 'dominance'.

Scholars of Indian political economy and sociology of Marxist, modernist, and heterodox persuasions have spent considerable intellectual energy to observe and analyse the critical location occupied by local elites, from dominant caste and class, in the larger political and social framework. In their two-volume study of change and continuity in social order in India, Frankel and Rao (1989), show how certain 'dominant' groups have had close ties with the state in navigating social and political transition in pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods in India. By dominance they, and several scholars of social sciences in the edition, mean (ibid, 2):

> the exercise of authority in society by groups who achieved politico-economic superiority, and claimed legitimacy for their commands in terms of superior ritual status, or through alliances with those who controlled status distribution. By contrast, the term 'power' is used to refer to the exertion of secular authority by individuals appointed or elected to offices of the state, which claimed legitimacy, under law, to make and implement decisions binding on the population within their territorial jurisdiction.

Dominance of ritually superior groups based on higher ranks in the Hindu caste (*varna*) system has not been static, though they prevailed under various kingdoms in pre-colonial times. The colonial era saw the forging of new alliances, and social dominance based solely on ritual superiority gave way to commanding authority through control over land and labour.

As mentioned in the introduction, the concept of 'dominant caste' was authored by Srinivas (1955) based on studies in sociology that focused on one village at a time. Centring the notion of local dominance around caste, Srinivas (quoted in Carter 1974, 49) argued that:

> a caste may be said to be 'dominant' when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can more easily be dominant if its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too low.

A numerically large 'dominant caste' commanding disproportionate control over local resources has been a pervasive concept in studies of social and political change, particularly at the empirical level of the village. Dumont (1970), while accepting that the concept itself is vital to the study of India, objected to coupling caste dominance with ritual status based on the varna (caste) hierarchy, and argued instead that dominance had more to do with control over land in a region. Writing in the 1990s, Harriss (1999, 3368) similarly notes that typically the 'middle castes' are farmers (*kisans*, Hindi for peasants) and 'it is usually the case that they are locally 'dominant castes' – dominant by virtue of their control over land and labour, which are still commonly the basis of local political power'. What we find in sociological literature spanning precolonial and colonial periods is that a combination of caste and control of economic means of production has served as legitimate authority in the countryside. Furthermore, this local authority in rural areas – local dominance – has been charged by caste and agrarian class orders in close interaction with the state.

In the post-independence period, the state continued to work closely with dominant groups who were located both in the countryside but also in the industrial urban centres of modernising India. The political economy after independence had to essentially balance three powerful economic interest groups: (urban) industrial capitalists, rich farmers, and organised white-collar workers and professionals. The three together were the 'dominant proprietary classes' (Bardhan 1985) – a plural coalition of interests – and the state was primarily concerned with distributing resources across these classes. The evolution of 'rich farmers', defined variedly across diverse sub-national settings, as an influential class in the 1960s was most significantly shaped by the technological advances in agriculture of India's Green Revolution[20]. Spirited debates rage over the benefits of the Green Revolution, but there is consensus on the one point more relevant here: the Green Revolution disproportionately benefited the upper layers of agrarian classes with better quality land and access to agricultural resources, and typically from the middle castes. The state-led technological intervention, thus, catalysed a wave of economic and social churning, resulting mostly in the consolidation of rural dominance of cultivators from the middle castes.

[20] A programme that involved packaged inputs such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticides distributed at subsidised rates in irrigated areas, like Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and parts of UP and Maharashtra

According to Bardhan, the plurality of dominant interests, counter to Western formulations, was critical in enabling India's democracy. At the same time, the politics of accommodating competing demands of heterogenous classes meant that the Indian public economy, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s, had become 'an elaborate network of patronage and subsidies'[21] (Bardhan in Kohli ed 1988, 219). Public subsidies encompassing losses in government-owned irrigation works, state electricity boards, road transport corporations, and other public enterprises, to accommodate the accumulation strategies of the industrial capitalists and rich farmers, in particular, came at the cost of compromised economic growth. Political accommodation of rich farmers, as one of the dominant proprietary classes, involved not only subsidised agricultural infrastructure (irrigation, electricity) but also farm credit and minimum support prices for crops. Influential classes of agrarian producers accessed these state extensions through patronage networks with elected representatives, but also through mass mobilisation, the latter famously conceptualised as 'demand group' tactics. The politics of accommodation of agrarian producers reached a populist height in the 1980s in the form of the New Farmers' Movement. The shrill India-versus-*Bharat* (Hindi for India; aims to represent the rural masses) rally-cry pitted the rural agrarian society against the urban middle classes as a repudiation of the state's development model focused on industry. Gupta (1995) found that this discourse of the movement penetrated rural Western UP into practices and everyday discourses that were uniform across all rural classes that aimed to make demands on the resources of the local state[22].

It is the case then that the political economy of India has always been characterised by close interaction between the state and certain 'dominant' groups. Rural dominant groups have historically been from ritually superior castes, typically with a lower bound that stops at middle-castes, such as the Jats (Punjab, Haryana, Western UP), Marathas (Maharashtra), Kammas (Karnataka), and Reddys (Andhra Pradesh). Insofar as ties between the state and rural dominant groups are concerned, they have been characterised by a recursive process of legitimation: the state extends patronage to rural dominant groups, typically via local elites, and strengthens their local dominance. In exchange, the elites legitimise the authority of the state, which in democratic India is through electoral politics, as well as, by assisting

[21] The politics of patronage, Bardhan's argument went, was ultimately parasitic for economic growth, which in turn threatened the dominant class' faith in the democratic politics for negotiating their demands

[22] Jeffrey and Lerche (2000) argue that Gupta's analysis, by ignoring class, collapses postcolonial contestations into a state-society dichotomy, where society is given primacy as an undifferentiated antagonist to the state

with making ideas, discourses and practices of the state legitimate, even hegemonic. State-rural elite relations described have regionally specific histories and trajectories. The rural dominance of agrarian Marathas is particularly critical to the State's political economy. A study of large-scale dispossession of agricultural land in Maharashtra cannot ignore this as a key explanatory variable; in this case, it forms the subject of study.

The established ideas of dominance in the political economy scholarship in India help understand the motivations of local rural elites in the study area, their relationship with the state, and the role played by local rural elites in the process of land dispossession.

The next section presents a detailed chapter plan.

2.4 Chapter Plan

The thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 3 provides context on the larger political-economic factors to highlight why there was no organised resistance in the region. I show how a set of structural and political factors come together to forge a 'near-consensus' (Nielsen 2010) around the project of land dispossession for 'development'.

In chapter 4, I unpack the state that drives planned industrialisation in the region. I describe the process of land acquisition, as well as the manufacturing-based industrial area that materialises on the farmland acquired. I find a lingering commitment to developmental discourses and ideas, such as that of 'planning' for 'modernisation'; even though private capital welcomes state intervention to avail of cheap land, the source of planning is not linked to alliances with capital.

In chapter 5, I focus on the heterogeneity of rural society by locating four rural 'classes'. I use a caste-class combination to show how differentiated the rural society was at the time of land dispossession. Within the dominant class of dispossessed, I identify a layer of rural elites who are critical to the compliance with land dispossession I observe in the study area.

In this short chapter, thus, I highlight how the dispossessed occupied different positions in the rural economy and had unequal capacities to negotiate with the process and outcomes of dispossession. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 collectively distinguish the process of state-mediated land dispossession in Aurangabad as more than 'brokering' for private capital, and foreground the wider economic conditions and politics that explain why resistance was missing in this case.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 focus primarily on the evolution of relations between the state and the dominant class through the process of land dispossession. In chapter 6, I show ways in which local elites comply with the process of land dispossession, ally with the state through the formal process of 'acquisition', and their motivations for such alliances with the state. Chapter 7 uncovers how sections of the dominant class, including rural local elites, are excluded from factory jobs in the industrial area. As incentives and extensions made by the state – contracts, land rents, and active networks – begin to recede and incorporation into a permanent factory workforce appears elusive, the legitimacy of the idea of 'development' begins to erode. This results in frictions with the state and within society, analysed in the chapter 8. The chapters together also highlight how the basis of compliance amongst the dominant class changes over time - in Wave 1 it is primarily the hope and possibility of opportunities generated in industries by a legitimate state and privileged access to non-farm enterprises enabled by the state. In Waves 2 and 3, the basis for compliance changes entirely to financial gains, inflected by varying levels of individual economic and social capital of landholders.

In chapter 10, I respond to the three research questions I set out to answer. I summarise arguments as response to the main research questions. I also identify wider implications of the findings to debates on late-industrialisation in developing societies, for inequality in India, and the question of land.

Chapter 3: Unmaking Agriculture

'No point stopping one project – it is the compulsion of the period[23]'

– Santaram Pandere, Aurangabad-based *Dalit* Activist

Land dispossession evokes images of peasant resistance and often physical violence, and the land literature, as explained in the previous chapter, spends a significant amount of attention on analysing resistance. Yet, land dispossession in S5IA+ has proceeded —and continues to do so— without stiff opposition. The region of Marathwada is not without a history of Maratha mobilisation. The numerically dominant Marathas have coalesced as a caste to make ideological claims (Omvedt 2004) of superiority over the lower caste Maang and Mahar Dalits (Scheduled Caste). This resulted in violent riots in the 1970s in Aurangabad. Cultivating classes within the dominant Marathas have also mobilised to make practical-tactical demands (Attwood 1974; Omvedt 1981) on the state related to crop prices and loan subsidies. The region has a political history of mobilisation by the dominant Marathas. In this chapter, I begin to address why land dispossession in agrarian Aurangabad has not met sustained opposition.

This chapter has two aims. First, to provide a background on the local political economy of the district in post-independence India. Second, to understand how economic factors combined with the politics of sub-regionalism stave off mass resistance against land dispossession.

In terms of political economy, three aspects are highlighted. I begin by explaining why Aurangabad is labelled a 'backward' district, the official discourses that set it out as 'backward', and what the import of such a term is for local as well as State-level politics. I show how a legacy of uneven development at the level of the 'region', in policy discourse and politics, has been crucial in allowing the promise of industrial transformation to perpetuate despite little evidence of economic and social convergence across regions. I then discuss the state of agriculture as a sector and the issue of agrarian distress in the district. These issues together explain why there is 'near consensus' (Nielson 2010) over the role of

[23] Interview, Aurangabad, 21 March 2016

industrialisation as a motor of economic growth and agrarian transition within three constituencies: sections of dominant class farmers, activists and civil society members, and political parties. This in turn sheds light on why the region has not seen strong, protracted resistance to land acquisition, the second aim of the chapter.

Over and above economic factors, regional politics and policy also contribute to making land dispossession not altogether a hostile process.

3.1 'Backwardness' and the 'Modernisation' Impulse

Maharashtra is historically divided into four regions – Konkan, Western Maharashtra (WM), Marathwada and Vidarbha. Table 3.1 shows the per-capita income for the four regions over a decade between 1993-94 and 2002-03. The Konkan region has always had the highest income and the nature of disparities, despite overall economic growth, has remained stubbornly intact over time. Distribution of income has a further urban bias: it is disproportionately concentrated in the metropolitan areas – Mumbai (Konkan), Thane (Konkan), Pune (WM) and Nagpur (Vidarbha) account for about half of the State's income. These four urban areas account for more than 55 per cent of the income from the tertiary sector. In fact, as an indication of the highly urbanised nature of income concentration in the State, it is 'frequently stated that if Greater Mumbai and Pune division are taken out, the rest of Maharashtra would not be better than the 'BIMARU' states' (Shaban 2006, 1803). Table 3.1 demonstrates the dominant position of the Konkan region in terms of income in the State and Table 3.2 shows how per-capita income in Marathwada, as a fraction of Rest of Maharashtra (WM and Konkan combined) declined in the decade beginning 2000.

Table 3.1: Regional Per-Capita Income in Maharashtra in 1993-94 and 2002-03

Region	Per-Capita Income (INR)		Rank Based on Per-Capita Income	
	1993-94	2002-03	1993-94	2002-03
Konkan	20,424	23,938	1	1
Western Maharashtra	10,344	14,243	2	2
Vidarbha	9801	11,876	3	3
Marathwada	8035	9498	4	4

Source: Adapted from Shaban (2006, Table 2, 1807)

Table 3.2: Ratio of Per-Capita Income of the Region (Vidarbha and Marathwada) to Rest of Maharashtra

Region	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Rest of Maharashtra	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Vidarbha	0.82	0.77	0.78	0.75	0.75	0.69	0.72	0.70	0.68	0.76
Marathwada	0.66	0.63	0.60	0.59	0.56	0.53	0.56	0.55	0.55	0.59

Source: High Level Committee on Balanced Development, Report (2013, 2)

Given that a majority of the population depend primarily on agriculture and allied activities, the state of the primary sector is of particular concern. In general, as shown in Table 3.3, contribution of agriculture to total state income either stagnated or declined, except in WM where it saw a rise. Not only did Marathwada's share in the total income from the primary sector decline between 1993-94 and 2002-03, its overall share in the economy decreased during the same period.

Table 3.3: Shifts in Regional Share in Total State Income Between 1993-94 and 2002-03 (by Sector)

Region	Primary Sector		Secondary Sector		Tertiary Sector		Total	
	1993-94	2002-03	1993-94	2002-03	1993-94	2002-03	1993-94	2002-03
Konkan	12.2	9.5	53.5	46.1	45.1	45.9	40.7	40.0
Western Maharashtra	39.4	47.5	29.2	34.3	28.8	29.9	31.2	33.9
Vidarbha	29.9	25.5	10.4	11.9	16.6	15.6	17.5	16.2
Marathwada	18.5	17.5	6.9	7.7	9.4	8.7	10.6	9.9
Maharashtra	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.1	100.0	100.0

Source: Adapted from Shaban 2006, Table 1, 1806

Uneven development is the core logic of capitalism, and Maharashtra is not unique in evincing intra-State disparities. In this section, I show how the disparities in economic opportunities and representation in formal politics, particularly in relation to WM, have over time been articulated politically in Marathwada, what implications such a form of sub-regional politics has had for policies, and how they continue to affect contemporary political reactions to a potentially volatile process like large-scale land acquisition for industry.

3.1.1 The Politics of 'Backwardness': Dominance of Western Maharashtra and Sub-regionalism

According to Mohanty (2019), the four regions of Maharashtra were at the same level of development in the pre-colonial era; the prevalence of subsistence farming with simple technologies and little investment by the ruling dynasties meant the agrarian economies were similar. During the British colonial period, WM came under direct colonial administration as part of the Bombay Presidency, while Marathwada remained in the Hyderabad state under the Nizam of Asfiya dynasty. Agriculture in WM underwent significant change under the British colonial administration with construction of major irrigation works, particularly in Poona (of which the city of Pune is a part) and Satara districts, propelling a sugarcane boom. The primary beneficiaries of canal-irrigated sugarcane cultivation were the landed Maratha and Kunbi cultivators. Further consolidation of their economic power came as the Maratha-Kunbi cultivators began to control (via ownership and governing boards) the production and distribution of sugar through cooperatives. As a combination of economic accumulation and

social assertion, following anti-Brahmin social movements like the Satyasodhak movement, the Maratha-Kunbi caste was able to consolidate its dominance in the countryside of Western Maharashtra. The economic, political and social dominance of the agrarian Maratha elites in rural areas was difficult to ignore by the nationalist Indian Congress party as it prepared a post-independence economic agenda. At the time, the Congress party in Bombay was controlled by urban educated service-based Brahmins or industrial and merchant elites. The dynamic capitalist agriculture in Western Maharashtra provided markets, in geographical proximity, for modern agricultural appliances and it was in the interest of the urban industrial class to incorporate the rural Marathas into political alliances in the province's capital (Mohanty 2019, 63). As a result, the Maratha-Kunbi rural capitalists of WM began making inroads into the power corridors of Bombay.

Under the Nizam, the political economy of rural agrarian Marathwada and the trajectories of the landed Marathi-speaking elites were different. Cotton and sugarcane cultivation in the area allowed Maratha-Kunbi cultivators with large landholdings to make material gains, but the Nizam's regime did not allow for control of political institutions, state resources and participation in governance in a manner similar to Western Maharashtra. The Marathi-speaking elites of the region were not able to assert a culturally Marathi identity as did their counterparts under British colonial rule in Western Maharashtra. Tambe (2014, 675), for example, explains how the merger of the Hyderabad State in the Indian federation in 1948 was welcomed and celebrated 'by the people with the hope' that it would mark the 'end of political oppression' under a Muslim ruler and allow for the realization of 'democratic aspirations'. She further adds that 'Once the restraints of the press, education in regional languages and against Urdu…establishment of different associations and organization were removed, the possibilities of the expansion of civil society began to unfold' (ibid, 675). While the secession of the Marathi-speaking region reflected politics of frustration and hope, the 'people' referred to were primarily the Marathi-speaking elite – Brahmins and Maratha-Kunbi.

The trajectories of Marathwada and Western Maharashtra continued to diverge, with the latter securing an increasingly dominant position in the political economy of the State, even after the reorganisation of the Indian federation based on linguistic lines. The Nagpur Pact of 1953 brought together a unified Maharashtra by arranging the Marathi-speaking regions of the States of Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad into one sub-national unit. The

Pact was simultaneously the first document in the post-independence period to formally recognise regional imbalances in Western India. The need to achieve more balanced development was an explicit aim of the effort of reorganising States. One of the clauses in the Pact, for example, stated that one Legislative Assembly session would be conducted in Nagpur every year to discuss development issues related to Vidarbha. The unification effort of Maharashtra, however, was conducted against the backdrop of demands for separate statehood for the region of Vidarbha with Nagpur as the capital. Following protracted negotiations between leaders of the movement demanding a Vidarbha state and the Central government under the Indian National Congress party, Vidarbha was eventually included within the boundaries of Maharashtra in 1960. As an appeasement measure, Nagpur was unofficially recognised as the second capital of the State. Limited symbolic gestures were made towards Nagpur by way of shifting the legislative session to Nagpur and setting up a High Court Bench; 'nothing substantial took place on the developmental front till the elapse of five successive Five-Year Plans' (Mohanty 2019, 66).

Disillusionment for the Marathi-speaking elites of Marathwada continued post the consolidation of Maharashtra. By the end of the 1960s, it was clear the state was controlled by an alliance between the urban industrial bourgeoisie of the Konkan region and the rural landed capitalist farmers of Western Maharashtra. In the first three Five-Year Plans, around 40 per cent of total state expenditure was on irrigation and power, and the projects were disproportionately concentrated in WM (ibid, 69). Table 3.4 shows the irrigation intensity in each region – irrigated land as a proportion of total sown area. Irrigation intensity was around 10.44 per cent in 1970-71 in WM, increasing to 17.87 per cent by the 1990s. In the same period, Marathwada saw an increase from 5.14 per cent to 14.11 per cent. Even though the growth rate in Marathwada was high in this period, it slowed dramatically in the subsequent timeframe. More importantly for sub-regional politics was the continued rise of irrigation intensity in Western Maharashtra, and its dominant position in the State.

Table 3.4: Irrigation Intensity (by Region)

Region	Irrigation Intensity (% of irrigated area to net sown area)			
	TE 1970-71	TE 1980-81	TE 1990-91	TE 2000-01
Konkan	2.70	3.56	4.33	6.71
Western Maharashtra	10.44	13.42	17.87	23.63
Vidarbha	6.77	8.66	9.28	12.71
Marathwada	5.14	9.21	14.11	15.47
All	7.62	10.52	13.80	17.06

Source: Mohanty (2019, 70)

This was most problematically combined with further control of rural political institutions such as cooperative credit societies and the Employment Guarantee Scheme. In the political arena in Bombay, in order to expand its political roots in rural area, the Shiv Sena actively engaged rural Maratha elites from Western Maharashtra. Simultaneously, the protection of crop prices for onion and sugarcane, among others, was steered by the Shetkari Sangathana farmers' organisation grounded in WM. The *imbalance of privilege* led to, what Tambe (2004) calls a state-society crisis, particularly for members of the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster, in Marathwada. However, a crisis in state-society relations did not result in a rejection of the state: claims to redress imbalance and marginalisation were made on the state and through formal state mechanisms and institutions. Fundamentally it was the *imbalance of privilege* of the Maratha-Kunbi caste in the politics of the State that was at the core of the disgruntlement during this period.

Aurangabad became the epicentre of strong Marathwada sub-regionalism in the 1960s. One of the movements associated with sub-regionalism is Marathwada People's Development Movement (MJVA), which started at the end of the 1960s but was at its peak between 1970 and 1974. 'In the 1970s, 'development' was the keyword in the social life of Marathwada [sic]' (Tambe 2004, 684). This movement was primarily driven by an urban middle class – 'a class of self-conscious neo-literate, first-generational leaders' and was largely about the opportunities for their vertical mobility (ibid). The urban youth, particularly students in Aurangabad, were incorporated into the movement. The movement worked towards generating and articulating a coherent discourse of 'neglect' defined not only by marginalisation in infrastructure development but also corruption in state institutions and limited political representation from the region. Demands to rectify these were directed at

the state by sending delegations to government officials, as well as through participation in electoral politics – in 1962, two independent candidates stood for election as a mark of rejection of the ruling Congress in whose hands the region had been experiencing neglect. On occasion, such as in April 1974, the movement took violent form – agitations claiming four lives and resulting in several injured as well as the destruction of public property worth several lakhs (Datye 1987, 518). The movement was primarily an elite articulation of frustration at an imbalance of privilege – literate Brahmins and first-generation literate Marathas dissatisfied with the lack of urban industrial and professional employment opportunities, and landed Maratha-Kunbi rural classes anxious about limited opportunity for accumulation through agriculture.

Region is the spatial unit through which the interests of the numerically dominant Maratha-Kunbi cluster have manifested. As Tambe (2004, 683) points out: 'Problems of regional imbalance in development faced by the people of Marathwada were always articulated in comparative terms. The reference point for demands and deliberation was always Western Maharashtra or Southern Maharashtra – the subregions of the ruling leaders of Maharashtra'. As a disproportionate portion of the state's resources were systematically diverted to a single region in order to accommodate the dominant Maratha-Kunbi caste there, the State thus got engulfed in a politics of sub-regionalism.

3.1.2 State's Response and its Discourse of 'Backwardness'

The term 'backward' is used generously in orthodox modernisation theories to describe non-industrial societies of the Global South. Official documents of the colonial administration in India used it varyingly to describe agrarian systems, physical rural locations, as well as communities such as the Adivasis. Planning, as a central practice of governance in post-independence India, drew on the same idea of 'backwardness' as modernisation theories did – rural and agrarian. In Marathwada, 'backwardness' has served as an important idea in the politics of the Marathi-speaking society – the politics of sub-regionalism. Backwardness has also been vital to the development discourse of the state taking a specific meaning – depoliticised understanding of how different regions and communities have been related to one another in processes of accumulation through the decades following independence.

Politics of sub-regionalism was reignited at the beginning of the Sixth Five-Year Plan as a district-wise study of a narrow set of development indicators showed unequal achievement. Beyond registering the inequities, the Plan itself did not promise any concrete time-bound measure. It did, however, lead to the appointment of a Fact-Finding Committee (FFC), known as the Dandekar Committee, in 1983. Maharashtra was carved into Vidarbha, Marathwada, and a lumpy 'Rest of Maharashtra' to analyse regional inequities. The FFC documented 'developmental backlog' and 'noticeable disparities' in nine broad sectors and recommended the allocation of INR 3186.78 crore (USD 3.2 billion at 1982-83 exchange rates) to overcome disparities (Statutory Development Board Report 2003, p.18). The list of nine indicators (irrigation, land development, electrification of pumps, veterinary services, along with health and education) represent a commitment towards enhancing infrastructure necessary for agriculture. It was, in fact, irrigation and roads that accounted for the most egregious disparities across the regions and were allotted the largest disbursements – in Marathwada, for example, INR 316.71 crore (USD 318 million) was assigned to ramp up irrigation facilities covering 316710 ha. of land. Table 3.5 below indicates how the complex trajectories of uneven development had been simplified into 'inputs' for the three regions.

Table 3.5: State's Review of Regional Imbalance Estimates

Region	Regional Share (in backlog %)		
	FFC Report (1984)	IBC Report (1994)	Backlog position of IBC as on 1.4.2000
Rest of Maharashtra	37.3	23.6	22.1
Marathwada	23.6	28.8	29.6
Vidarbha	39.1	47.6	48.3
Total Backlog (in INR Crore)	3187 (1982-83 prices)	14,007 (1993-94 prices)	11,974 (1993-94 prices)

Source: Report on Statutory Development Board, 2003, viii

Between 1984 and 1994, even though the State government spent nearly 100 per cent of the assigned finances in addressing the backlog, it met with limited success. Disparities across regions continued to grow. In 1994, Statutory Development Boards and an Indicators and Backlog Committee were set up for each of the three regions with the identical agenda of

re-assessing regional imbalances, proposing a new set of recommendations, and monitoring and evaluating the progress of policies aimed at redressing unevenness. This committee set the 'backlog' in the 9 sectors of infrastructure at INR 14006.77 crore (USD 4.46 billion). Until the mid-1990s, the bureaucratic efforts were marked by allocation of state funds under various infrastructure headings to counter deviation from a shifting state average.

In 2011, yet another committee – High Level Committee on Balanced Regional Development (HLC hereon) – was set up to study the issue of uneven regional development. In its report it acknowledged that, while past committees focused on physical inputs and financial allocations – public funds devoted to different categories of infrastructure – alone, this committee was more concerned with 'outcomes, and advocated monitoring of outcomes as the principal focus' (Report 2013, 1). The HLC report marked a shift in the discourse of 'backwardness' in two ways.

First, the report made generous use of terms like 'competitive advantage' and 'private-public partnership', further limiting the role of the state in allocating public funds for infrastructure. Second, the role of private capital as a key driver of economic growth was a new emphasis. According to the report, addressing disparities in public resources for infrastructure was important insofar it helped draw private investment in the regions (Report 2013, 5). This was in line with state ideologies of the day and the normative framework of policymaking in the neoliberal era. There was a fleeting attempt at recognising the politics of geography in the report – that growing disparities between regions dependent on agriculture and the more industrialised belts was not just a result of how the economic structure had evolved, but also the 'regional shift in the political power of coalition governments' (Report 2013, 3). This cursory note did not lead to a detailed assessment of the distribution of political power in the State in subsequent pages. The rest of the report skilfully manoeuvred the discourse of 'backwardness' as one of having 'equity' in infrastructure development in the regions in order to let the forces of capitalism unleash.

The state discourse of 'backwardness' in view through bureaucratic exercises gives a perfunctory nod to variations in historical legacies under the British colonial rule, that of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maratha Peshwas. The most recent articulation in the HLC report also mentions 'politic power' in passing. The technocratic solutions generated by the various committees depoliticise the trajectories of capitalist development across the State:

the specific terrain of unevenness of the flow of capital as a direct result of active state intervention and politics is not the subject matter of official discourse. A Fergusonian de-politicisation, as Chottray (2011, xix) describes, 'relies on the representation of places or processes in particular ways.' The specific representation of 'backwardness' as a deviation from a State-average that can be reversed through public funding alone is the de-politicization of uneven development. In effect, the discursive practices of the state through the committees makes 'backwardness' an 'intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics' that the bureaucracy can act on. The dis-embedding (Polanyi 1944) of material unevenness from the wider social relations and networks that created it in the first place is a discursive practice of the state. *The relational quality of capitalist growth where politics favoured the growth of Western Maharashtra is, however, not lost on the ground.*

At the centre of the politics of sub-regionalism is the dominance of Western Maharashtra – it is not just the case that Marathwada is in need of public investment in economic infrastructure and is below the State-average or behind 'Rest of Maharashtra'. The more rooted understanding of relative economic deprivation - 'backwardness' - amongst the local population, particularly the Marathi-speaking population, is how Marathwada is located relative to Western Maharashtra (WM) in the political economy of the State. The committees succeeded in sustaining 'backwardness' in everyday popular discourse in Marathwada, particularly amongst the urban and rural elites, through the period of massive land-use change. In its everyday usage in Aurangabad, 'backwardness' is imbued with political meaning as it embodies the structural and systematic political marginalisation of the region in relation to Western Maharashtra.

3.1.3 The Politics of Sub-regionalism and Legitimation

S5IA as a distinctly state-planned initiative was in part a response to the politics of the time. The politics of sub-regionalism has retained a discourse of 'backwardness' that primarily casts Marathwada's deprivations in relation to the local political economies of Western Maharashtra, legitimising the need for rapid industrialisation. It has fermented an overarching consensus across most sections of society, including elite circles and farmers, as I show below, around the need for bureaucratic planning to redress uneven infrastructure development and industrialisation in Maharashtra. As Desarda (1996, 3233) puts it,

Marathwada sub-regionalism created a socio-political environment where '…the Bombay-Thane-Pune-Nashik pattern of industrialisation…became the prime model of the state's economic growth, a new idiom of rural and agricultural revival'. The need for active planning for 'balanced regional development' thus lingered even in the post-liberalisation context. The S5IA is a product, at least in part, of this political-economic commitment. This brief political history specific to the agrarian context of Aurangabad is vital to understand the responses and negotiations of rural classes to the state-led process of land dispossession.

3.2. Agrarian Crisis and the Reality of a Struggling Agriculture

Beyond the discourse of 'backwardness', there is the stark reality of an agrarian economy wherein agriculture is precarious and crisis-prone for the majority of farmers in Marathwada. Indian agriculture has been in the grips of a crisis since the mid-1990s – while there is no one definition of agrarian crisis, a vast mass of empirical evidence for different States of India forms the basis for general agreement across scholars and policy makers of different ideological bent that agriculture is a stagnant sector of the economy.

Jodhka (2018, 5) offers a simple and pithy explanation encompassing the macro-dimensions of the *nature of the phenomenon* – Indian agriculture is in a '…state of crisis: low growth, low returns, and that the farmers were finding it hard to make ends meet.' For Lerche (2011), agrarian crisis is in evidence from the low growth rate of 0.6 per cent per annum between 1994/95 and 2004/05, a resurgence of 'usurious moneylending', and farmer suicides. Reddy and Misra (2018, 6) add colour to the issue of slow growth of the sector by pointing out the slow diversification of the rural workforce away from agriculture – while the share of agriculture in total GDP has declined from 41 to 20 per cent between 1972-73 and 2004-05, the share of employment in agriculture has reduced from 74 to 57 per cent in the same period. The farmers are in distress and the most desperate *manifestation* of that is the large number of farmer suicides in Western, Central and some parts of Southern India. According to the M.S. Swaminathan in the eponymous final report submitted to the Government of India in 2006, the major causes of distress are 'the unfinished agenda of land reform, quantity and quality of water, technology fatigue, access, adequacy and timeliness of institutional credit, and opportunities for assured and remunerative marketing.'

The agrarian economy in Aurangabad has been beleaguered by multiple factors. In the next section, I discuss the issue of agrarian crisis through the following variables – droughts, irrigation infrastructure, and the culmination of these factors in farmer suicides.

3.2.1 Droughts and Irrigation Infrastructure

The issue of access to water combined with droughts is an important dimension of agrarian crisis, particularly in the agro-ecologically dry areas of Marathwada. Farmers have been struggling with dwindling water tables all over the State for over two decades – in April 2019, in 71 out of 76 blocks across Marathwada water levels dropped below the five-year average (The Times of India, 29 April 2019). Jayaji Suryawanshi, a local activist on agrarian issues, believes the issue of water to be the most pressing for farmers in Marathwada. Suryawanshi is vocal activist of agrarian issues in Aurangabad, organising protests and frequently speaking on behalf of farmers to the English press. The article above quotes him, as do several others that I had read before I met him[24].

Aurangabad district, as the rest of Marathwada, has seen a spate of droughts in the post-independence era. Maharashtra's renowned Employment Guarantee Scheme, the one that served as a model for the Central National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS[25]) was in fact introduced in May 1972 as a drought relief programme. Aurangabad district, in particular, has been debilitated by severe droughts. Droughts in two consecutive years in 1996 and 1997 caused serious devastation to the agrarian economy. Another bout of droughts between 2001 and 2003 battered agrarian income. The region received deficient rainfall in 2010, 2011 and 2013 and faced severe droughts in 2012 and 2014. At the time of fieldwork in the summer of 2016, Marathwada was reeling under what was being commonly referred to as the worst drought – 'worse than the 1972 drought'[26] – in post-independence Maharashtra. Marked by a three-pronged shortage – no water, no fodder, and decline in food

[24] I got his contact information from a Mumbai-based journalist when I was looking to explore activist perspectives on land dispossession and the lack of resistance
[25] The NREGS was a Congress flagship programme of employment guarantee.
[26] Interview with Jayaji Suraywanshi, Aurangabad, 22 March 2016; Interview with farmer, Kumbephal, 5 May 2016

crops – the districts of Latur and Beed were the worst hit, followed by Aurangabad (Down to Earth, 4 May 2016).

Irrigation facilities have been disproportionately concentrated in Western Maharashtra. As mentioned previously, even as expenditure on agriculture declined over the decades, expenditure on irrigation continued to rise till the Sixth Plan and then at a more tempered pace thereafter – the growth rate of irrigation subsidies in Maharashtra was the highest in the country at 6 per cent annually between 1974-75 and 1987-88 (Mohanty 2019, 43). The major part of this subsidy was consumed by the sugarcane farmers of Western Maharashtra. Marathwada hosts 31 per cent of the State's total cropped area, but accesses only 14% of the state's surface water (High Level Committee 2013)

Specific to Aurangabad district is the issue of distribution of water from the Jaikwadi dam located in the district on the Godavari river in Paithan block. According to Suryavanshi, the Jaikwadi dam had been built to provide water from upstream irrigation projects to five districts in Marathwada – Aurangabad, Beed, Jalna, Parbhani and Nanded. The original Jaikwadi project plan estimated 81 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) every year to Marathwada; instead, since the 2000s, only 40 TMC was being received in the area (Down to Earth, 4 May 2016).

The issue of water is not one of spatial distribution alone but also that of sectoral access between agriculture and industry. Water from Jaikwadi, for example, was meant to first be utilised for drinking, then agriculture and lastly for industrial purposes. Suryavanshi pointed out, what he considers a grossly erroneous and unethical prioritisation:

> In drinking water, urban areas get priority – 200 units per person in the city compared to 20 units in villages. Why should this be the case? And the priority was supposed to be agriculture, not industry. Yet water is being diverted to industry first. We have beer and chemical factories here in Aurangabad. I fear that soon there will be big fights between agriculturalists and industrialists.[27]

[27] Interview, Aurangabad, 22 March 2016

A report titled Water Grabbing in Maharashtra by a Pune-based NGO revealed that between 2003 and 2011, the state government's Ministerial-level High Power Committee on Water Allocation and Reallocation diverted water from 51 irrigation dam projects to non-irrigation purposes (in cities and for industries) and that this diversion represented between 30 and 90 per cent of various dams' live storage capacities (Down to Earth, 4 May 2016). Control of limited water supply has crystallised in the form of 'water mafia' in the shadow economy of Aurangabad town, involving stealing water from lakes and ponds to refill large water-supply tankers in the dry summer months (The Times of India, 29 April 2019).

Water crisis in Aurangabad does not always result in crop failure. However, it can lead to a debilitating increase in production costs as farmers have to buy water from other sources – wells owned by other farmers and through tankers. The operational cost of production of jowar, one of the primary crops in the district has increased from INR 5258.65 (per hectare) in 1998-99 to INR 8728.16 in 2003-04; of this, cost of irrigation has gone from INR 100.72 to INR 350.77. The consequence of increased cost of production from water is accrual of debt, making farming non-remunerative and distress inducing. At the time of fieldwork, there was a severe water crisis – droughts as well as limited water supply in the town of Aurangabad. Even accounting for proximity bias, the issue of water was paramount in semi-structured interviews, particularly when the question on why people were selling land was approached. 'There is no water. People want to sell their land.' was a leitmotif expressed in different ways across farmers, journalists covering farmers' issues, and activists rallying to bring drought-relief schemes to the district.

3.2.2 Farmer Suicides

Adversities in the agrarian economy in the district, as a result of factors mentioned above, have resulted in widespread loss of life at the level of the individual. The 'crisis' in the agrarian economy culminates in 'distress' for an individual farmer, which, in periods of further exogenous shocks such as sudden intensification of pressure to repay a loan or a crop failure, manifests in drastic measures such as suicide. Table 3.6 below presents the dismal picture in its entirety.

Table 3.6: Suicides in Marathwada

Year	Perished Lives from Suicide in Marathwada	Perished Lives from Suicide in Aurangabad
2018	909	130
2017	991	139
2016	1053	151
2015	1133	144
2014	574	56
2013	207	04
2012	198	2
2011	169	0
2010	191	2

Sources: United News India, 27 December 2018; Venkateswarlu et al 2019

Farmer suicides in Aurangabad have steadily increased in the last decade. Furthermore, the number of suicides concentrated in the 'backward' region of Marathwada is significant when compared to all-India figures: in 2016, 6, 351 farmers/cultivators committed suicide in all of India (IndiaSpend, 21 March 2018). In the same year, 1053 suicides were reported in Marathwada. The sources for the figures on suicides for the all-India report and the one on Marathwada (and Aurangabad) are not the same and, consequently, not strictly comparable. The disproportionately large number of suicides in Marathwada and other parts of Maharashtra since 1995, however, has been seen as one the most desperate manifestations of agrarian crisis in the region (Mishra in Reddy and Mishra 2010).

The 909 suicides reported in Marathwada in 2018 followed a season of low rainfall (63 per cent of average) that destroyed the kharif (monsoon/autumn) crop and did not allow farmers to sow the rabi (winter) crop on time (UNI India 2018). The highest number of suicides in Aurangabad district was at the time of fieldwork, when farmers were faced by the debilitating drought discussed above.

One of the most-cited reasons for farmer suicides in multiple farmers surveys is the level of indebtedness. As per NSS data, between 2003 and 2013, the average proportion of cultivating households in debt increased from 55 to 57 per cent, and the average amount of

debt increased from Rs. 16,973 to Rs. 54,700 (Mohanty 2019, 248). Loans for purchase of seeds and other inputs is a common and necessary element of production activity. It is not surprising given average surplus for a household dependent primarily on agriculture is low: the average monthly total income for a household classified as 'agricultural' in 2012-2013 in the State was INR 7386: 2156 from net wages, 3856 from cultivation, 539 from farming of animals, and 834 from non-farm business. Monthly household consumption expenditure is INR 5762 (NSSO Report,20).

Suicide is indeed a 'complex interplay of multiple factors' (Mishra in Mishra and Reddy eds. 2010, 145) and it is beyond the scope of this chapter or dissertation to understand the phenomenon even in the context in any substantive form. The purpose here is to highlight the extent and intensity of the phenomenon: to point to its existence as a symptom of a crisis that is real and plaguing the district.

3.2.3 Unmaking Agriculture

In this section, I have shown that policies in the State of Maharashtra, after an initial two decades of relative support, have systematically neglected agriculture since the 1980s. The all-India trend of gradually withdrawing spending on agricultural infrastructure, compounded by ecological changes in soil and water availability, have resulted in a crisis in the rural agrarian economy. The concentration of the crisis, however, is unevenly distributed in the State, following from the imbalances in policies. A regional bias in policies against Marathwada, combined with the relative neglect of agriculture in general, has resulted in an unmaking of agriculture as a force of capitalist development and modernisation. A more complex phenomenon of dispossession is at play in India than what is understood through state-coercion for private speculative capital.

It is critical to understand how macro political-economic forces activate land markets and incentivise dispossession by driving farmers to become 'voluntary sellers' of land. On the demand side, state policies such as providing cheap credit to the real-estate sector as well as housing loans has boosted demand for land as a vehicle for parking investments by urban elites. On the supply side, a macro context of policy shifts, particularly a neglect of irrigation infrastructure, that makes commercial agriculture unviable for marginal and small-scale farmers, has activated supply of land in peri-urban and increasingly rural areas. Irrigation is

particularly salient to the ability of small and medium farmers to survive through agricultural livelihoods. For these classes of farmers, irrigation from canals and tanks, instead of dependence on bore wells, is important because the latter is an expensive alternative that these classes of farmers cannot afford. Thus, dispossession that is 'seemingly driven by the 'silent compulsion of economic relations' is, in fact, a result of 'shifts in state policies and less visible forms of non-economic coercion' (Vijayabaskar and Menon 2017, 584). Politically, a flailing and neglected agriculture in turn results in a 'politics of silence' in cases of large-scale acquisition, such as for SEZs and industrial parks, as Vijayabaskar (2010) has shown elsewhere.

In the case of Aurangabad, I argue that there is a systematic unmaking of agriculture. On one hand, those with marginal and small landholdings struggle to hang on to a viable livelihood from cultivation. On the other hand, flailing commercial agricultural sector undermines the ability of the medium- and large-scale farmers to pursue more dynamic trajectories of accumulation; trajectories of upward mobility in the rural agrarian milieu and through urban non-farm employment that resemble those of Maratha farmers with similar landholdings in Western Maharashtra. A frequent exclamation among larger Maratha farmers during interviews was along the lines of 'we will make Magarpatta'[28] and 'look at Pune'.[29]Magarpatta and Pune are a township and city respectively in Western Maharashtra that are emblematic of material prosperity amongst Maratha farmers in the local imagination. Magarpatta is a real estate and commercial zone developed by Maratha farmers by pooling land near Pune. I will elaborate on the discursive power of Magarpatta in chapter 6. Here, I want to highlight that limited opportunities of accumulation and stable diversification away from the farm through agriculture is an important factor for the locally dominant and powerful farmers to be actively co-opted, or in some cases to acquiesce, to the state's acquisition of agricultural land for industry.

The last two sections have shown that the discourse of 'backwardness' feeding into sub-regional politics has legitimised the idea of development through capitalist industrialisation along the lines of what transpired in Western Maharashtra. Redolent of orthodox modernisation theories, the potential of industrialisation and urbanisation to promote a

[28] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015
[29] Group Discussion, Kaamgaon, 17 December 2015

largely virtuous transition into a non-farm economy in the area enjoys legitimacy, particularly in elite circles. *This, combined with a systematic neglect of agriculture, has engendered what can be called a 'near consensus' in Aurangabad around the diversion of land away from agriculture*. The forging of this consensus has staved off sustained organised resistance against land acquisition.

3.3 'Near Consensus': Fragmented Interests and Ideologies

As mentioned in the introduction, the violent attempt at land dispossession in West Bengal spawned animated debates over the issue of 'development'. In his examination of these debates, Nielsen (2010, 149) found a 'near-consensus' among the elites as well as large sections of resisting farmers over the need for industrialisation for growth, employment and poverty reduction. The narratives and opinions presented in elite circles – political parties covering the entire ideological spectrum and economists, and large sections of farmers – were in fact not 'highly polarised'. Instead, Nielsen (ibid) found a range of 'intermediary positions', such as 'reluctant acceptance' to 'moderate criticism'. Criticisms of the violent land acquisition process were targeted at implementation and administration of the process; the idea that industrial growth driven primarily by private capital is necessary for broad-based development, however, enjoyed a 'near-consensus'.

In Aurangabad, there is a similar 'near consensus' around the potential of industrialisation as the route to growth and redressal of uneven development. The MIDC, in fact, was introduced in the 1960s under the initiative of Y.B. Chavan, the first Chief Minister of the State, to promote industrialisation using domestic private capital and redressing uneven development in the newly formed State of Maharashtra (Mohanty 2019, 38). I will discuss the instatement of MIDC in Aurangabad, its operations and the effect on the region's development in the next chapter. Here I analyse views of local elites – Maratha landowners with large landholdings, local activists and political parties – to demonstrate how industrialisation-urbanisation as an ultimately indispensable force of development for the public at large ('compulsion of our time', quoted in the beginning of the chapter) was a hegemonic idea. Negotiations with the seismic process of state-led industrialisation, thus, revolved primarily around terms of incorporation. The 'near consensus' among the elites, in

particular, was an important factor that prevented stiff sustained opposition to land dispossession.

3.3.1 A differentiated 'peasantry' and 'near consensus' among the dominant landholders

In analysing what makes 'peasants' revolt, Scott (1976) argued that the answer, in fact, allows no easy generalization. His studies of peasant communities in various parts of Southeast Asia and the scholarship on peasant studies conjunctively suggest that 'at a minimum we would expect that an increase in exploitation that touches *many peasants similarly*, that is sudden, and that threatens existing arrangements would be especially volatile' (ibid, 193, emphasis mine). If the change is not a 'collective threat to the livelihood to a solid majority of the villagers', then the reaction to change is unlikely to take the shape of an uprising (Scott 1986, 13). Conversely, a more undifferentiated and 'communal' (Scott 1976, 202) peasantry receives 'shocks' more uniformly, reacts and responds in a similar fashion, and is more capable of collective action and solidarity. Instead of drawing strong causal links between the rural structure of Aurangabad on one hand and class consciousness, solidarity and collective action on the other, I suggest there are at least three factors that have prevented all affected landholders from responding collectively.

First, there was a clear lack of alignment of material interests in opposing land acquisition since the loss of agricultural land affects different agrarian classes unequally. A strong '*shetkari*' (the word for farmer in Marathi) identity in the current environment of a beleaguered agricultural sector is missing. In chapter 5, I will unpack the category of 'peasants' into rural agrarian classes with different economic motivations vis-à-vis land acquisition based on their existing economic and social resources. The heterogeneity in their material bases and interests is key to understanding why their reaction to land dispossession is fragmented. This is drawn out more clearly in the rest of the thesis, beginning in chapter 5, but here I simply want to point out that a differentiated rural society did not make for a strong united opposition. Significantly, a thin class of rural elites stood to gain from land acquisition, an argument I develop further in chapters 5 and 6. Within a class of rural society, thus, there was a 'near consensus' around the benefits of moving to a non-farm economy.

The second factor for the absence of a collective response was that landholders across rural classes were apprehensive that the state response to an open challenge could be severely repressive.

In the case of rampant SEZ development on agricultural land in Tamil Nadu, Vijayabaskar (2010), argues that the absence of a history of assertive farmers' movement or lobby prevented the sporadic and dispersed protests from becoming a strong force of resistance. In contrast, Marathwada and Aurangabad have been fertile ground for farmers' movement and collective agitation. Assessing one of the largest social movements of the 19th century in Maharashtra that stretched all the way into post-independence period, the Dalit (Mahar) Movement, Zelliot (1970, 398) noted that a crucial factor in the enormous support was that 'grievances [were] understood and felt by both the 'elite' members of the caste and the masses.' The movement would have possibly taken the form of a narrow, minor protest had it not been for the elite support. Similarly, Omvedt (1981) highlighted how the farmers' march in Western Maharashtra, as part of the larger new farmers' movement that had gripped the State in the 1980s under Shetkari Sangathana, was primarily a collective of rich peasants (*Maldars' sons*, or kulaks), who were able to draw in middle peasants (as an extension of caste solidarity) and landless labourers (through the organisation force of the Left parties).

Unfortunately, in this case, elite support has been fragmented; there is neither a unified ideological opposition to land acquisition for industry nor a binding grievance amongst the 'elite' Maratha landholders against the state-led dispossession attempts. Most significantly, the local Maratha elite landholders were largely in support of aligning themselves with this opportunity to profit from cash compensation which they were in a position to invest in non-farm businesses and land, allowing them to diversify in ways they have seen capitalist farmers in Western Maharashtra pursue in the past. This class of landowners, for whom agriculture no longer provides opportunities for sustained trajectories of accumulation, spoke of resistance in conjunction with compensation; for them the purpose of 'resistance' (or '*virodh*' in Marathi) was the same as negotiating a higher compensation price. One such Maratha rural elite from the dominant class who moonlights as a journalist explained how he had rounded up a group of landholders in Wave 3 to put up a collective front for

negotiation – 'resistance is not the solution, negotiation is'.[30] He explained how a formal act of discontentment was a necessary first step for negotiating a higher price. *I*n the current phase of land acquisition, there were at least three such elite-led resistance-for-negotiation micro-movements. The politics of negotiation of rural elites is elaborated in chapter 5. Here I want to point out that, powerful local actors do not oppose land dispossession as they are able to carve out opportunities for material gain, and most of their micro-'protests' are tactics to negotiate higher prices.

There was also the strong aspirational quality of being able to harness opportunities for accumulation through speculation, neo-rentier income, and non-farm businesses, as rural Maratha elites of Western Maharashtra had done. This was variously described by landholders who had primarily diversified out of agriculture and were renting out agricultural land for cultivation with the ambition of 'development like Pune',[31] 'factory jobs for sons with ITI [Industrial Training Institute] degrees',[32] and 'Magarpatta style of development'.[33] The constant reference to Pune as a successful case of Maratha upward mobility was difficult to not reflect on. It becomes of analytical importance in understanding the politics of the Maratha dominant class in Aurangabad. The feeling of economic and political marginalisation among Maratha large landholders in relation to Western Maharashtra was critical in legitimising the role of industrialisation-urbanisation for upward mobility.

A second factor was the threat of state violence, particularly in Waves 2 and 3, even for the larger dominant landholders. As one would expect, the threat of violence and arrest was pressing for the smallholder and marginal classes as their voices can more easily be muffled and disregarded. What is noteworthy is that even the larger dominant farmers were intimidated by the possibility of state oppression. The potential threat was also based on press reports, hearsay and rumours about incidents from other parts of the State: 'We had heard that in Chakan, Pune, there were some murders because people opposed giving up land',[34] a local elite farmer from the dominant class told me. This respondent has a son

[30] Interview, Bidkin, 7 November 2015
[31] Group Discussion, Kaamgaon, 15 December 2015
[32] Interview, Maangaon, 3 February 2016
[33] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015
[34] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015

working in the local police force and despite this minor inroad into the state machinery, his apprehension of state-orchestrated backlash was evident. Just as visions of prosperity from Pune travel to Aurangabad to propel landholders towards imagined non-farm futures, incidents of brutal repression from other cities serve as a deterrent to resist acquisition. For those who lack the means to take on the state, the dearth of overt sustained resistance tilts more towards a 'peace of repression' than a 'peace of contentment' (Scott 1979:228). For sections of the rural elites from the dominant class who have actively carved out avenues for spectacular material gains and economic accumulation, it is the latter as I discuss next.

A third factor is the relative success of Waluj industrial area in attracting labour-intensive industries and enabling the transition to regular non-farm employment for many of the socially networked Maratha landholders. Several landholders, as described in subsequent chapters, mentioned how Bajaj Auto Ltd., a private automobile manufacturing unit in Waluj, was used as a 'model' to concretise the benefits from their land being acquired by state officials. One farmer from the smallholders class told me about a visit by an officer: 'think about Bajaj, the officer had said'.[35] Equally, several farmers themselves invoked 'Bajaj' as the benchmark of their expectation and measured deviations in relation to it: 'we thought it would be like Bajaj',[36] 'Skoda here is no Bajaj'.[37] The presence of relatively labour-absorptive industries in the vicinity, as a precedence etched in the collective memory of the area, was another factor for not rejecting industrialisation altogether.

The alignment of economic opportunities of certain rural elites with those provided by land acquisition, economic compulsions of landholders from various rural classes, and the threat of state violence conjunctively dispel the consequentialist argument of 'false consciousness' or 'mystification' among the poor, the peasants, and the marginal classes for not rising up against the oppressor. The political-economic realities on the ground strongly determine the ultimate absence of sustained resistance. This, I argue, in no way indicates a 'mystified', passive and prostrate rural mass.

3.3.2 A 'near-consensus' among the Activists

[35] Interview, Shendra, 16 February 2016
[36] Group Discussion, Shendra, 15 May 2016
[37] Interview, Shendra, 16 February 2016

The role of activists and civil society members has been an important factor in determining the course of mass mobilisation against land dispossession. As Jenkins et al (2014, 26) argue, the 'tactics employed by activists have been an important factor in shaping these varied outcomes'.

The position vis-à-vis land dispossession of an ideologically and politically diverse set of local activists in Aurangabad is, borrowing from Nielsen (2010), to 'civilise' rather than 'substitute' contemporary capitalist development. The idea that industrialisation is a necessary and desirable pathway for economic and social development holds widespread legitimacy. A 'blind' ideological opposition to industrialisation, as Pandere, a local *Dalit* activist quoted at the beginning of the chapter, told me, was absent.

Santaram Pandere is a veteran social activist and has spent a majority of his life working with *dalit*, tribal and nomadic tribe communities in Aurangabad. Pandere himself belongs to the lower-caste NT community. He is a core committee member of Loksamiti-Lokparyay, an NGO that addresses issues of land, livelihood, education, health and other aspects of wellbeing for socially marginalised communities. When I asked Pandere about the constant churning of land away from agriculture, he pointedly dismissed those who 'blindly'[38] oppose capitalist development, in general, and a move away from agriculture specifically:

> I don't blindly oppose capitalism, globalisation and liberalisation. Think of the Seventh Pay Commission for example – it allows for an 'easy chair' mentality. The *talathis, gram sevaks*, etc. [village-level state officials] sit in AC offices, take bribes from the farmers and get a guaranteed income. The farmers look at this and think that they should also quit farming and fight for government jobs.[39]

His reproach is largely consistent with *dalit* activism that has welcomed the 'withering' of the village (Gupta 2005), urbanisation and the growth of a non-farm economy. As I show later in the thesis, the Dalits in the study area do back-breaking work as manual labourers for industrial units. What Pandere welcomes are 'opportunities' that in principle allow

[38] Interview, Aurangabad, 21 March 2016
[39] Interview, Aurangabad, 21 March 2016

lower-caste members to break out of the everyday oppressions within a Maratha-dominated agrarian economy.

Nishikant Bhalerao, is the editor of *Adhunik Kisan*, an independent researcher, and an expert on agriculture in the region. Adhunik Kisan, which translates from Hindi to 'Modern Farmer', is a 40-page weekly magazine in Marathi published in Aurangabad. The magazine was started by Bhalerao and reflects his 'left-liberal' vision for 'modernising' agriculture: to empower farmers and researchers of agriculture by disseminating knowledge on new techniques and scientific developments in agricultural R&D and discussing issues that concern farmers of Marathwada. Through its readership the magazine aims to eventually build a platform for agri-entrepreneurs, seed producers, breeders, farmers, poultry owners, policymakers, and agri-scientists to have a dialogue. According to Bhalerao, it primarily has a readership in Aurangabad and Pune.

Bhalerao had a longue durée perspective on the lack of mobilisation by activists, particularly those with 'left leanings'.[40] Among activists in the area, a transition to industrial jobs was viewed as a positive outcome of development, the promotion of which was a vital state activity. That converting agricultural land for large industrial areas may stunt livelihood transitions and leave classes of landholders worse-off was not part of the ideological frame of most elite, urban-educated, left-leaning activists:

> This awareness [to oppose land acquisition] came perhaps in the late 1990s. Until then, even us Leftists and Socialists were demanding industrialisation and industrial jobs so there was no movement against this because it was not seen as a threat. It was only in the 1990s that we began to see the fallacy.[41]

The 'fallacy' Bhalerao spoke of is an acute mismatch between what was professed by orthodox theories of modernisation, to which ideologues within the older Left political parties and civil society members subscribed, and what has actually transpired in terms of industrial jobs in the region. What has been observed in Aurangabad district is a stunted transition to industrial jobs, one that fell far short of the theoretical models and policy

[40] Interview, Aurangabad, 8 March 2016
[41] Interview, Aurangabad, 8 March 2016

rhetoric, as I will show in detail in the remainder of this thesis. Furthermore, the most recent iteration of S5IA+, specifically, has also fallen short of the local, more successful 'Bajaj' model. Yet this fallacy has not made Bhalerao commit to holding on to agricultural land for the purposes of farm production. He was sympathetic towards landholders who have not resisted. The state of agriculture, in his opinion, is the primary reason to support the larger idea of a 'civilised' and palatable process of industrialisation than to entirely reject it. He did not find his views aligned with that of my host, Vijay Deewan.

Vijay Deewan is a retired educator, a well-respected local activist, member of the National Alliance of People's Movements, an all-India civil society alliance of peoples' movements and organisations. He was a key supporter of a pocket of resistance in one of the villages. Bhalerao contrasted his stance with that of Deewan:

> This is where I differ from Deewan because I think that if they [farmers] are distraught and are getting a good price, they should be given advice on the management of the cash as they get into better investments. I don't think they need to stick to agriculture. I'm a liberal, not like the others.[42]

A rational 'liberal' view is one of making demands for the delivery of more favourable terms of incorporation during the process of land acquisition as well as subsequently for accommodation in the non-farm economy.

Even members of civil society who were critical of the land acquisition process were directing their opposition to *aspects of state implementation* and not at the goal of industrialisation; this is what Nielsen (2010) calls the 'civilising' view towards industrialisation in the case of West Bengal. Farmer-activist Jayajee Suryawanshi, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, is vocal in his criticism of state policies towards the agricultural sector. He was one of the more critical voices against the S5IA+. His harsh critique at a time of severe drought was, however, targeted at tempering and taming the process of and policies around industrialisation in the district:

> The real question is why does land acquisition have to be on such a large scale. Bajaj is sitting on 1200 acres of land out of which it has only used

[42] Interview, Aurangabad, 8 March 2016

> 200 acres for its factory. It has been sitting on it for more than a decade…The other issue is why do they [the MIDC] not share the proceeds from selling land to industry with the landowners…Why don't they let farmers benefit from that [appreciated] amount…And what kind of industries are being brought to Aurangabad? I'm not saying no industry. I'm saying don't bring chemical factories, bottling plants or water consuming plants in Marathwada. There is no water.[43]

Activists from varied ideological quarters are not a hindrance for mobilisation per se. The Maha-Mumbai SEZ (MMSEZ) proposed on 14,000 Ha of land across 45 villages is a case of successful resistance in the recent history of large-scale land dispossession in Maharashtra. The anti-MMSEZ movement was not one cohesive force of mobilisation – the movement was split into two distinct fronts and both mobilising units used multiple strategies including protests, hunger strikes, drawing on national civil society organisations like the National Alliance for People's Movement. The divisions in the organisation of resistance can result, as it did in this case, into a 'multiplication of fronts and techniques that increased the hurdles to SEZ implementation' (Majumdar and Menezes 2014: 263). In this case, that of the MMSEZ, it was *appropriation of land by private capital* that was opposed by most classes of landholders. The articulation of this opposition, while finally organised by two organisations, converged on the issue of *opposing the* forced exit from agriculture at the expense of an SEZ for a private entity like Reliance Corporation and *not contesting the terms of incorporation*. In contrast, in the case of Aurangabad, the views of Pandere and Bhalerao, who are concerned with different rural classes (landless Dalits and Maratha farmers respectively) and political ideologies, represent a 'near-consensus' (Nielsen 2010) over the need for capitalist development for the attainment of social progress. In the study area in Aurangabad, this hegemonic view in the activist circles has prevented a top-down organisation of resistance.

An instrumentalist approach to understanding activist participation, or the lack thereof, would be to look at the range of communities affected by land dispossession. Civil society organisations, unions and activists tend to come together as a collective front if the groups and interests they represent are directly threatened, allowing for a coherent articulation of

[43] Interview, Aurangabad, 22 March 2016

potential damage. For example, in Singur and Nandigram (in West Bengal), landless labourers had extended their support to the land-owning landlosers because agriculture labour was the primary source of livelihood for them. Similarly, in the case of the Wadhwan dock protests (in Thane, Maharashtra), dock workers and diemakers extended their support and solidarity to the struggles of fishermen and fisherwomen, drawing their organised trade union into the movement. The fear of being replaced by machines in a 'hi-tech' port made multiple affected communities and their organised fronts coalesce into a mass movement. In the S5IA+ case, a fragmented base meant activists and organised activism from different quarters have not thrown their weight against land acquisition. On one hand, we have a differentiated community of landholders fragmented in their interests in relation to opportunities from acquisition, and on the other there are communities of landless, primarily *dalit* households and households with marginal land and livelihood connections to agriculture. Consequently, allied activism has been fragmented, flimsy and limited.

Lastly, the potential for a strong movement has been weakened by activist actions. At key moments, activists practiced ideological distancing from each other. An influential local advocate, Advocate Sonwane, representing farmers of Nathnagar and the key legal expert in the case, refused to participate in protests organised by the very farmers he was representing. He skipped meetings leading up to the protests because the agitation was being spearheaded by Medha Patkar, an activist who organised fierce resistance against dispossession caused by the construction of a dam on the Narmada river in Maharashtra. Patkar is a leader figure in the National Alliance of People's Movement. Sonwane, a vocal local member of the RSS, had differences of ideas and methods from the more radical, left-liberal activists that form the core of the NAPM. In the same vein, Deewan had hesitations about the involvement of Sonwane - 'an 'RSS-type' activist' – in their movement. The clash of activist identities and political ideologies dissipated a coherent, if not entirely united, show of strength.

A 'near-consensus' over industrialisation, thus, emerged as the overarching current among civil society organisations and in activist circles. The quote at the beginning of the chapter is emblematic of this consensus.

3.3.3 A 'near-consensus' among Political Parties

Over and above the 'near-consensus' among farmers from the dominant class, particularly the local rural elites, and middle-class civil society members in Aurangabad town, the role of political parties in harnessing land dispossession as an electoral plank has also determine the course of resistance: 'Politicians must balance the possibility of capital flight against the electoral threats from less mobile coalitions of interest groups. Being able to demonstrate 'success' in reversing – or slowing down – a prospective land deal is one way in which local politicians can seek to nurture political constituencies' (Bedi & Tillin 2015, 196). Jenkins et al (2014) provide a synthesis of the politics of land acquisition for SEZs in 11 States, including the strategies and modalities of movements and protests where they emerged. Mass movements negotiating land acquisition have pursued a diverse array of strategies but a 'crucial distinction is between movements that have cooperated systematically with political parties (or fragments thereof) and those that have not' (ibid, 26). When driven by the compulsions and opportunities provided by electoral politics, mobilisations against SEZs have seen energetic espousal by political parties but yielded mixed results – violent but successful stalling of land acquisition in West Bengal and Punjab, but limited success in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

In some cases, political parties take a direct and pivotal organisational role; for example, in the case of Singur, the mobilisation was primarily organised by local members of the opposition party which subsequently won the State Legislative Assembly election, ending a historical 32-year-long spell of Left rule. In other cases, political parties and local politicians throw their weight behind farmers once they have organised and sustained opposition for a while, as in the case of the Ghaziabad-Reliance power plant in Uttar Pradesh (Pai and Kumar 2014). Given the organisational infrastructure of political parties, they have been an important mobiliser of mass resistance against land acquisition when such acts have been central to the interests they represent or simply electoral outcomes. This has not been the case in Aurangabad. Political parties in Aurangabad have largely been silent on the issue of land dispossession in the district. On occasions, local MLAs have actively lent their support to land dispossession.

Maharashtra has two influential regional parties which have an important presence in formal politics – the Shiv Sena and the National Congress Party (NCP). The Shiv Sena has over time positioned itself as the political platform to voice the regional interests of the Marathi-speaking people. It thrives on a strong militant regional-linguistic identity. The NCP was

formed by Sharad Pawar, a bastion of rural agrarian Maratha mobility, who was a part of the Congress party. The State's Legislative Assembly since the 1990s has seen the Congress-NCP and BJP-Shiv Sena alternating as the ruling coalition. In 1999, when land for Wave 1 for S5IA began to be acquired, the Congress was in power in Mumbai. The town of Aurangabad itself has been a Shiv Sena stronghold, particularly since the 2000s, and the politics in Aurangabad town has, as one of my activist informants, Jayaji Suryawanshi, said, focused on identity politics of Hindu nationalism or *Hindutva*:

> The Shiv Sena has been in power for three terms now and it keeps coming back to power by filling the minds of people, especially young people, with Hindutva talk. Look at the current Assembly, it is discussing '*Bharat maata ki jai*' [long live Mother India] slogan instead of discussing farmer suicides.[44]

What Suryawanshi refers to is the preponderance of Hindutva ideology in local politics in Aurangabad. The Shiv Sena in Aurangabad appeals to the identity of vast sections of farmers as Hindu Marathas, instead of drawing on them as an interest group of farmers. Moreover, the imaginary that the S5IA originated as a vision of a fellow-farmer-turned-politician, Haribhau Bagade, gave it legitimacy amongst the farmers. The legend of 'the file' that possibly originated at the time of the previous Congress regime, but was finally implemented by a BJP MLA, mentioned in the next chapter, shows the accepted idea of industrialisation has refracted through local elites into the corridors of power in Mumbai.

Beyond the more active parties like the Shiv Sena, the BJP and the NCP, other parties in opposition have shown tacit, if not active, support for industrialisation as a means to redress backwardness in the region. One of the political parties that warrants brief discussion is the regional Marxist political party, Peasants and Workers Party (PWP). In Maharashtra, PWP has been an important element in organising campaigns on agrarian issues – for example, it actively participated in the protest led by All India Kisan Sabha, the peasants wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in March 2018. On 12th March 2018, 35,000 farmers marched from Nashik to Mumbai to demand higher minimum support prices for grains and vegetables and waivers for crop loans. PWP reinforced farmers' mobilisation actively – one of the images that got substantive media coverage was that of PWP workers providing

[44] Interview in Aurangabad, 22 March 2016

cooked food and water to farmers during their long journey on foot. It has also actively steered the anti-SEZ struggle in the case of the Maha Mumbai SEZ in Raigad. PWP, along with the Socialist Party, Republican Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), comprise the progressive left democratic forces. Their combined influence has declined steadily since the 1990s; today it is only significantly present in Raigad and it was the compulsion of electoral victory that drove its participation in the region.

Mobilisation around land for industry by parties of the Left (CPM, CPI(M) and PWP in Maharashtra) has been delayed, tentative and full of ambivalence due to an ideological commitment to industrialisation and a vision of fermenting an urban industrial proletariat consciousness. At the level of civil-society activism, this was clear from Bhalerao's account presented above. In the case of political parties belonging to the 'Left', their non-participation has also been observed by Vijayabaskar (in Jenkins at al 2014) in the Chennakuppan region of Tamil Nadu. With a strong history of communist mobilisation and an elected legislator from the Communist Party of India, the region did not see opposition when land acquired in 1999 was claimed to be in relation to an industrial park. It was only later when the real utilisation for a multi-purpose SEZ was announced that the local former MLA mobilised to get the tenancy rights of *Dalit* farmers recognised.

In essence, the ideological current among the political parties in Aurangabad can be described as that of 'near-consensus' with regards to industrialisation. The most important factor in assessing the lack of 'politicisation' of land acquisition is that development through industrialisation is a hegemonic idea in 'backward' Marathwada. In line with what is observed among activists and sections of landholders, there is a 'near-consensus' even among the political parties. I asked one of the Maratha farmers from Wave 2 if political parties in the opposition had tried to organise resistance against land dispossession: 'BJP, Congress, all steal from farmers. How does it matter who is in power'.[45] What the farmer was commenting on was a continuity in state visions, ideas, and commitment towards industrialisation-urbanisation across political parties. When land was acquired in Wave 1 for the S5IA, the BJP-Shiv Sena were in power in the State Assembly; when land was acquired in Wave 2, a Congress-NCP coalition had taken over. Government formed by the different political coalitions have all pushed large-scale development of industries.

[45] Interview, Maangon, 15 December 2015

The overall commitment to industrial development across political parties in Maharashtra is further visible from the arena of formal politics around industrial legislations. The aggressive SEZ Act of the State of Maharashtra was exceptional in how far it went in its proposal to dilute labour laws. The proposal was formulated in 2005 under the Congress-NCP watch. The Bill then met with rhetorical resistance from parties in opposition, particularly the BJP. However, this opposition lacked credibility because the BJP was involved with similar policies in States it was in power. In 2008, thus, the central ministry of commerce approved the GoM's SEZ policy with the condition that labour laws were *not* diluted.

3.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to lay out the political-economic context of Aurangabad.

I first showed how the economic neglect and political marginalisation of Aurangabad in relation to Western Maharashtra has generated a discourse of 'backwardness'. This, in turn, has engendered a politics of sub-regionalism. Active state intervention in industrial and infrastructure development is, in part, a response to the politics of sub-regionalism in the area.

I then discussed the reality of agrarian crisis by focusing on droughts, irrigation infrastructure, and the culmination of these factors in farmer suicides. The history of sub-regional politics and the reality of agrarian crisis come together into a 'near consensus' in Aurangabad over the project of state-planned industrialisation.

This consensus can be observed in sections of the rural society, particularly dominant class farmers. It can also be observed among activists and across political parties. The 'near consensus' has, thus far, been an important intervening variable for the absence of hostility against the process of land dispossession.

It is within this political-economic context that the state has been driving land dispossession since 1997. In the next chapter I unpack the ‘state’ as understood through the process of land dispossession in agrarian Aurangabad.

Chapter 4: State and Land Acquisition - Planning for Industrialisation in Neoliberal India

Critical scholarship on land dispossession in India, as summarised in chapter 2, has shown that the state is the protagonist of this process in post-independence India. Recent literature has further emphasised that the contemporary state brokers land deals on behalf of private capital. I argue that a more complex phenomenon of dispossession is at play in this case than what is understood through state-coercion for private speculative capital. In the previous chapter, I showed a set of economic and political factors in the region that make the context of Aurangabad not hostile to 'industrialisation'. In this chapter, I show how the practices and institutions of the state further challenge the emphasis on its role as a broker for private capital. I aim to make concrete how the state drives land away from agriculture in the neoliberal era in a backward agrarian region.

There are few intellectual tasks in the social sciences as daunting as attempting to advance *an idea* of the 'state'[46]. My intention is relatively modest: to empirically trace the key actor that has mediated the process of land dispossession in the region for two decades without stiff resistance. The analysis is necessarily *context-specific* (industrial development in a backward area in rural agrarian Maharashtra) and *historically grounded* (beginning at the neoliberal turn in the late 1990s and carrying on for two decades). I show that the contemporary state is more than a 'broker' working on behalf of global and domestic capital. I do this by making two interlinked arguments. First, I foreground ideas, ideologies and visions, over and above practices and institutions, to demonstrate the presence of a local authority I call the state in this thesis. Second, I show that the nature of industrial

[46] Abrams (1988) critically examines debates on the concept of the 'state' in Western sociology and in Marxism. The debates within the fields noted in Abrams' article and his own discussion are based on Western modern, typically capitalist, societies. In her book 'India Working', Harriss-White (2003) uses five cases studies from South Asia to showcase how sources of power, 'actually existing states', can be located through how local informal economies are organised. Other relevant debates on the contemporary Indian state are discussed within the chapter.

development itself is not one that can be easily categorised as a neoliberal 'economic space' mired in speculative commercial activities.

In the first section, I describe how land is governed in India. A brief discussion on India's main land law gives way to the legislative framework that guides land acquisition for industry in the State of Maharashtra. The labyrinth of laws is used advantageously by the state to reinforce its authority over land and society. It is also used strategically, as the land literature summarised in chapter 2 shows, in its brokering services through law-bending and rule-making. This is followed by a brief discussion on the specific modalities associated with the waves of land acquisition through the application of the law.

In the second section, I begin to unpack the 'state' as it orchestrates industrialisation in the agrarian district. Its authority is made palpable through *ideas* (planning for industry), *personnel* (politicians with visions of progress) and *formal institutions* and their *practices* (administrative apparatus and its legal-bureaucratic authority). I am primarily drawing on Abrams (1988, 82) in understanding authority in context: a 'palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centred on government'. I have added 'ideas' of legitimate state action – planning – to Abrams' concept. The constellation of legitimate ideas, personnel, and formal institutions and rules, thus, come together as what I call the 'state'. In the context of land dispossession, it can be empirically observed as an authority that aims to drive a fraught process with limited friction. In achieving this objective, it needs to ally with local rural elites during the acquisition process, and with private capital in the industrial area. The aim here is not to advance an abstract idea of the state and intervene in the ontological debates of state-society separation (Migdal 2001). The intent is to understand the mechanisms through which authority is made palpable to drive a project of land dispossession that requires society to comply. The complex and deeply political process of dispossession without organised opposition necessarily implies connections across different loci of power and authority. In this state-led process of dispossession, I aim to identify ideas, actors, institutions and practices that produce the authority to carry out this process.

In order to understand the state in context, one has to also understand the project it is driving. In the third section, I then turn to the type of space S5IA, the primary industrial area I studied, embodies. Theorisation of the broker state is very closely tied to the contemporary projects for which land is acquired. I describe the productive activities that have emerged in the S5IA

and mark the industrial area as distinct from neoliberal 'economic spaces' (Banerjee-Guha 2013; Ong 2006). This section therefore provides a window into how a planned industrial area functions in the neoliberal era. It also sets the stage for how the marginal and the landless rural classes navigate the economic landscape as labourers, analysed in the penultimate chapter.

The process (state acquisition through MID Act), the protagonist (the state), and the project (S5IA as a manufacturing zone) for which land is acquired together *problematise the emphasis and focus on the brokering dimension of the neoliberal state within debates on land dispossession, as identified in the literature review.* The arguments, I hope, can be empirically validated through other similar cases, and are useful in demystifying 'state' projects, not just in India but also other areas of the Global South where land dispossession for large-scale projects of industrialisation continues to hold sway.

A brief note on the methodology is necessary. The chapter is based on interviews with bureaucrats, industrialists, and farmers, as well as a range of official documents on town planning, proposals and presentations on the S5IA sourced from offices, individuals and the internet. By using a wide array of sources, I hope to have avoided allowing the powerful subject of study 'dictate terms of knowledge' (Abrams 1988, 62). When using official institutional sources, I have tried to not fall into the trappings of taking on board state discourse uncritically: I have been careful to 'avoid thinking about the state with state thinking' (Bourdieu in Levien 2018, 21). It is important, however, to not lose sight of the developmental discourse of modernisation and balanced regional development around the S5IA, which I discussed in the previous chapter and integrate here. The discourse, as I argued previously, promotes a 'near-consensus' (Nielsen 2010) in Aurangabad for land dispossession for 'industry' and for imbuing the locus of authority – the state – with capacity and legitimacy as I will show in the chapter. Keeping the developmental ideology and discourse in sight is further necessary as it has implications for relations between the state and the dispossessed as the realities of industrialisation begin to unfold.

4.1 Governing Land: Land Laws in India

State power to govern land is divided between the government at the Centre as well as the sub-national federal units, the States. Land, as a subject of governance, is part of the Concurrent list, meaning that both the Central government and that in States legislate over the use of land. The States jurisdictional scope over land is significant: 'rights in or over land, land tenures, the collection of rents; transfer and alienation of agricultural land; land improvement and agricultural loans; colonization; land revenue, the maintenance of land records; and taxes on lands and buildings' (Article 246 of the Constitution of India, quoted in Sud 2014, 46). Governance of land across Central and State jurisdictions is, thus, a complex maze. As a new initiative at the Centre for Policy Research in the capital city of New Delhi exclaims, India is a 'land of a thousand land laws'. As a step to map the difficult legal terrain of this land, the initiative has created a database of nearly 1000 colonial and post-colonial Centre and State laws related to land reform, acquisition, governance of forest and commons and urban land. The legislative space within which land is governed, therefore, is enormous and complex, allowing state authorities to navigate the process of land dispossession through a combination of 'legitimation', 'consent' generation, and legally acceptable 'coercion'.

In recent times, a single piece of Central legislation has captured much public attention. Given the experiences of land acquisition through eminent domain in the decades leading to 2013, a new act – The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (LARR) – was passed with the aim to 'empower' communities, particularly 'land losers'. The Act mandated fair compensation, a Social Impact Assessment and consent from 80 percent of community members prior to acquisition. It also attempted to combine the legislated provisions on land acquisition with issues of rehabilitation and resettlement as part of a coherent whole – a policy that gave a human face to land acquisition. The 2013 Act was met with a diverse set of feedback. The corporate sector (e.g. FICCI) viewed it as an anti-growth political move with no economic basis (Kanoria 2012). Some viewed it as progressive legislation with the potential to deter the scramble for land (Rajappa 2015); others saw it simply as lip-service to the farming community with no real capacity to stall corporate interests from grabbing land.

When the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government came to power at the centre in 2014, the Act got embroiled in further controversy with several attempts to remove clauses involving consent and impact assessment. Fresh rounds of 'anti-farmer' versus 'pro-growth' discursive duels ensued (Al Jazeera, 10 April 2015). All through, the state rhetoric of pitching land acquisition as a necessary step towards 'jobs' and 'eradication of rural poverty' has been a constant: Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister at the time, for example, made assurances that '30 crore landless people will get employment in the industrial corridors' (The Economic Times, 8 April 2015). The overwhelming focus on the legal aspects of 'consent' generation and compensation amounts in the recent debate on the LARR that ignores the important questions of power and dispossession does what Li (2011, 292) calls 'rendering technical': taking a 'complex political economic problem driven by unequal power', and parsing it 'into components that can be addressed by technical means', such as information, choice, and prices. However, control for resources is a tussle for power situated in social relations and politics and must be understood as such. Conflicting rules and clauses make substantial space for obfuscation on the part of state power when it needs to actualise the process of land dispossession.

4.1.1 Legal Framework in Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, land for industries is acquired not through the provisions under LARR 2013, or its predecessor, the colonial Land Acquisition Act 1894, but within the rules set by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Act, 1962 (MID Act hereon). The aim of the Act was to provide a framework for the Nehruvian ideology of planned industrialisation in postcolonial India: 'rapid and orderly establishment and organisation of industries in industrial areas and industrial estates in the State of Maharashtra' (MID Act 1962, 6736). The Act provided the legal framework for instituting the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation, (MIDC hereon) as a 'corporation', a nodal state agency that coordinates the development of industries in rural areas of the State. The MIDC, in essence, is a parastatal unit of the Maharashtra government with significant powers to carry out the plans of the 'state'. It has 17 regional offices located mostly in Tier 2 cities and towns. While MIDC is involved with industrialising rural areas, CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation) oversees development and regulation of industrial units within cities in the State. Since its inception, the MIDC has been voraciously acquiring and converting farmland

intro industrial estates, areas and corridors. Today, Thane, Pune, Nashik form the other important industrial cities where both MIDC and CIDCO have been involved.

The use of the MID Act for industrial development and the provisions within it are protected fiercely by many politicians as well as district-level bureaucrats. In 2015, the chief minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP, appealed to have the MID Act exempted from the provisions under the Right to Fair Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (LARR 2013). The MID Act, he argues, is 'specifically necessary to give a fillip up (sic) to industrialisation so that Make in India launched by the Prime Minister is a success' (Business Standard, 7 January 2015). LARR 2013 was legislated into an Act in 2013 when the previous regime led by the INC had been in power (with the BJP in opposition). LARR 2013 aimed to strengthen the rights of landowners and limit the powers of the state, some argue insufficiently, by adding clauses on mandatory consent of 80 per cent of landowners before acquisition of land and compensation reflecting four times the market price. The political party currently in power at the Centre and in Maharashtra, the BJP, had opposed several of these provisions on grounds of dampening the appetite of private capital and consequently the ability to undertake infrastructure projects. Fadnavis' appeal, as the head of one of the most 'industry-friendly' States and a member of the BJP normative frame, is indicative of the will to protect the authority and sanctity of industrial efforts.

In the administrative corridors, the MIDC has emerged as one of the bureaucratic arms whose functions and visions, in practice, supersede that of the others. A senior officer in the Town Planning Authority[47], Aurangabad, explained plainly that 'MIDC, or any Special Purpose Authority actually, is supposed to take the approval of the Town Planning authority for any development in the area – even if that is industrial area. But in reality, that does not happen'.[48] This was echoed by a mid-level MIDC official, assistant district inspector of land record, with ears close to the ground. When I asked him what role the Town Planning Authority plays in the procedure of land acquisition, he explained that when the feasibility of a project is assessed (prior to notification of land acquisition), the Town Planning authorities are consulted to check if the proposed land is protected for agricultural, environmental or residential purposes:

[47] He wished to remain anonymous
[48] Interview, Aurangabad, 20 February 2016

> Usually there is no conflict on this matter because MIDC does not acquire green-zone land; we only acquire barren land. Actually once land is declared for industry then it **does not matter** what kind of land it is.[49]

Maps are blurred and classifications swapped in the regional planning documents when necessary, such is the hegemony of industrialisation and power of the MIDC in the area.

The town of Aurangabad has urbanised into its current status as a Tier-II city in conjunction with gradual planned industrial areas that were developed by the parastatal MIDC. By the 1990s, three planned industrial zones had developed in and around Aurangabad town – the Railway Station area within the official boundaries of Aurangabad town had seen a first batch of clustered industrial units, followed by the Chikalthana industrial area around 1966 and the Waluj industrial area developed through the 1970s and 1980s in the eastern and western outskirts. Land for planned industrial areas in the State of Maharashtra is acquired under the MID Act.

4.1.2 Land Acquisition in Context: Process

In the introduction, I had briefly described how land dispossession for large-sale projects entails acquiring land in phases. This necessarily means that the state actors involved with the acquisition process, the negotiations of communities and compensation packages – that is the modalities of state-led land acquisition – vary across phases, affecting neighbouring villages differently. The notion of 'waves' aims to capture the variation in modalities. In this section, I elaborate on the modalities of land acquisition observed for the expanding industrial S5IA+.

In 1997, a wave of land dispossession began for the S5IA, which was to be located on farmland in villages to the east of the town. Table 4.1 details modalities of the acquisition phase. Here I provide information on compensation, timeline and acreage of land acquired. The intention is to set the context for the deeply political process that I discuss throughout this thesis.

[49] Interview, Aurangabad, 28 January 2016

Table 4.1: Modalities of the Acquisition Phase (by Wave)

Wave	Acquisition Years	Study Villages	Land Acquired (in hectares)	Compensation Rate per *acre* (in INR)	Compensation Rate per *hectare* (in INR)	Compensation Rate per *hectare* (in GBP)**
Wave 1 (S5IA)	1997-early 2000	Shendraban	345.86	INR 48,000	INR 1,18,560	GBP 1730
		Shendraban -Kamangar	61.84			
		Kumbephal	453.63			
Wave 2 (Shendra Node for DMIC)	2008-2011	Mangaon	246.38	INR 8,50,000	INR 20,99,500	GBP 26,048
Wave 3 (Shendra and Bidkin Nodes for DMIC)	2010*	Kaamgaon	493.27	INR 23,50,000	INR 58,04,500	GBP 82,333

* Official acquisition notice was sent out in 2008

** Exchange Rate on 31st December for the years 1998, 2008, 2010 for Waves 1, 2, and 3 respectively were used as the reference point from www.ofx.com

Source: Author's fieldwork and documents from the Collector's Office

Around 900 ha. of farmland was acquired from three villages – Shendraban, Shendraban-Kamangar and Kumbephal. The largest chunk of land acquired was from Kumbephal, yet the industrial area was named after the village of Shendra. I asked the elected head of the village council – the Sarpanch – of Kumbephal why this was so: 'politics, what else'[50] he responded. In 1998, through a Government Resolution (GR) in the Gazette, an official notification was provided to landholders that their plots had been identified for acquisition. The final compensation offered was INR 48,000 per acre (or GBP 1730 per ha.). In addition to cash compensation, landholders had been assured that every landowner that lost a plot would have the option of buying 1000 square feet of developed land either within or in the vicinity of the industrial area for the same price that the state acquired their land. This piece of land would allow them to earn a rent – the difference between what the deflated buying price (set at the dated compensation amount) and the new appreciated price they would get for land classified for commercial use. This provision of land 'buy-back' is not a legal requirement under the MID Act. It was, what an officer in the MIDC called, a 'goodwill gesture'[51]. It is not surprising that the goodwill was spread selectively based on the landholder's class position: men from the dominant class, typically the local elites, with resources (cash for bribes) and networks (connections in MIDC) would be able to avail of this opportunity of material gain. At the time of fieldwork in 2016, none of the respondents had been approached with this option.

As I mentioned in the introduction, a fresh wave of land dispossession began in 2008 to extend the S5IA as an industrial node within the DMIC. The acquisition of the 10,000 ha.

[50] Interview, Kumbephal, 15 May 2016
[51] Interview, Aurangabad, 11 December 2015

of land in Aurangabad had been planned in three phases. The first phase of land acquisition for the DMIC, involving nearly 4000 ha. of farmland, began in 2008 and was underway at the time of my field visit in 2015. A round of negotiations and land dispossession had occurred in 2008, the modalities of which differed from the ongoing wave in 2016 at the time of fieldwork. Maangaon was the only village on the eastern side that had land acquired at this stage and I classify the negotiations between the state and the landlosers there as Wave 2. Maangaon has a total geographical area of 590.64 ha. (Census 2011). Nearly 42 per cent of the space that is the village has been acquired for what is to be the 'Shendra' node. Based on negotiations with primarily elites from the dominant class (shown in next chapter), the compensation amount was finally set to INR 8,50,000 (or GBP 26,048 per ha.).

Compensation in this round shows learning on the part of both the dominant class farmers and the state. In addition to the cash compensation, the dominant class farmers also negotiated compensation for standing crops and other agricultural assets on their land. The negotiations and the eventual actualisation of these terms was not without friction, as I show in subsequent chapters, but it is worth highlighting the incremental learning on the part of the landholders in their negotiations with the local state officials. Furthermore, landholders in this wave, as well as in Wave 3, have been assured the opportunity to buy-back land in the developed commercial corridor – up to 15 per cent of the original holding acquired from them and for the compensation amount. In the rest of this document I refer to this as the '15% buy-back' scheme. The Centre recommended this policy as a 'technique for avoiding social unrest. However, such models do not necessarily easily translate from one state-level context to another' (Jenkins et al 2014, 23). One of the reasons why the state managed to do so in the study area is because it was able to reproduce its legitimacy amongst a core group of local rural elites, as I will show in chapter 6.

Of the villages impacted by land dispossession in 2015, Kaamgaon featured prominently in the narratives of those in Wave 2. It was also geographically located right after Maangaon, further east of the S5IA. The final compensation amount in Kaamgaon was set to INR 23,50,000 per acre (GBP 82,333 per ha.). Given that land in Maangaon and Kaamgaon had been acquired around the same time, the difference in compensation in the two villages was a source of friction between landholders of Wave 2 and the local state. I explore this in greater depth in chapter 8. In addition to this spectacular premium in the compensation amount, based on lessons learned by landholders of Wave 1, a few local elites from Waves

2 and 3 got assurances of non-farm employment, due to arrive in writing, for one male adult of the household in the S5IA or other units. A promissory note in practice, the letter had the signature of the regional officer of the MIDC and the Collector[52] (district administrative head) who had negotiated with the influential elites.

4.2 The State and its 'Industrial' Utopia

Having chalked out the timelines and compensation packages of state-led land acquisition, in this section I empirically ground the concept of 'state' steering land dispossession over two decades in the region of study.

In doing so, I argue that the contemporary local state, as the driver of an industrial vision, is: (1) different from a broker working on behalf of global or domestic capital; (2) and, while it is embedded in society, its authority has a distinct 'effect' (Mitchell 1991, 81) in processes of land dispossession. The conceptualisation of the state here, thus, problematizes the emphasis on the brokering dimension of the state in critical land literature on India. A vast scholarship on the contemporary state, particularly those emerging from ethnographic studies in India and other parts of South Asia, have found the contemporary state to be 'porous' (Sinha 2019) and pluralised (Chandoke 2003), making it difficult to identify the boundaries of the 'state' (Parikh 2014). In theorising the state, as I do here, I add to this strand of literature by showing both connections with and embeddedness within society, while also showing practices that mark it as separate from society when its authority needs to be made distinct. A distinct 'authority', ideally one that also enjoys legitimacy, is vital to a coercive process, such as land dispossession, that demands compliance from society. I use this to help locate the 'state': as Mitchell (1991, 90) argues, 'producing and maintaining the distinction between state and society is itself a mechanism that generates sources of power'.

4.2.1 State: Ideology and Practice of Planning

In chapter 2, I showed how a 'near-consensus' exists around industrialisation as the path to economic growth, modernisation and rectifying regional imbalances across different

[52]The Collector presides over the unit and is the head of district administration in India. The Collector's office is in charge of the maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, as well as developmental functions in the district like sanctioning and disbursing funds. The Office importantly maintains all land records and oversees land acquisition in the district, which I will demonstrate in this chapter

segments of society. What follows from this 'near consensus' around industrialisation is an active role for the state to address 'backwardness' through planning.

The practice of planning in industrial development in agrarian Aurangabad can be traced back to 1962, the year the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) was founded. The early stages of planning in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were focused on building industrial infrastructure for the public sector across most of India. In Aurangabad, the planned industrial estates of the 1970s and 1980s hosted small, medium and large industrial units from the public sector, but also the private sector.

As mentioned previously, the industrial area on land from Wave 1, the S5IA, was planned in 1997, right around India's neoliberal turn. The gradual adoption of neoliberal policies, as mentioned above, hardly meant a reduced role for the state, particularly in making land available for capitalist development. However, what is noteworthy is the ideology of planned development that lingered on through the development of the S5IA as an industrial area for manufacturing units. The same Assistant District Inspector of Land Record quoted above, who works closely with the regional officer, said:

> In 1991, the central government dropped the 'location of industry' requirement. So, industries could go where they wanted. This was a problem for backward regions like ours. For a backward region like Aurangabad to develop, you need to get industries. The Maharashtra government did the right thing by categorising districts as A, B, C… and offering incentives. Today Aurangabad is developing. It is even getting DMIC.[53]

Following changes in industrial policies at the Centre, the Maharashtra government produced its own rules, regulation and policies for industries put together in the Industrial Policy of Maharashtra, 1993. Under this framework, the state incentivised private capital to move to regions that were classified as 'backward' by providing a set of subsidies and exemptions, the 'Package Scheme of Incentives,' that included subsidised loans, exemption from sales tax, cheap electricity, among others. The incentives were more attractive for the most backward regions. The state's role in directing and attracting private capital into

[53] Second Interview, Aurangabad, 5 February 2016

backward areas, according to the officer interviewed above, was vital to the ideology of backward development. As a Maratha himself from the region, he saw it as the state's 'responsibility to focus on Aurangabad'[54]. The S5IA was an expression of that 'responsibility'.

The active role of a bureaucratic unit, locally based in the district, to attract and direct industry, has widespread legitimacy among regional industrial capitalists. Industrialists in the district see it as necessary and rational.

A local industrialist with operations in the Waluj industrial area in Aurangabad and ex-president of the Chamber of Marathwada Industries & Agriculture, Mr. Ram Bhogale, stressed the need for a specialised state body, like the MIDC. In 1967-68, seven industrialists in Aurangabad came together to form Chamber of Marathwada Industries and Agriculture. One of the two main flag bearers in the group was Mr. Bhogale's father. The CMIA websites refers to 'close association' with national bodies such as the Chamber of Indian Industries and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the 'most visible and vocal' apex bodies for business that exemplify 'pluralist forms' of influence on state policy and public opinion, as observed by Rudolph and Rudolph (1987, 31).

In his historical account of how industrial development emerged in the town of Aurangabad and the district more generally, Mr, Bhogale was clear about how he saw the state and its 'responsibility' towards industry:

> You need to have some kind of an ***expertise*** and a ***focus***. Collector's office is involved in so many other activities ... we needed a specialised body who would focus on and develop industrial parks. Water supply was an area, electricity was another area, building roads ... In an industrial park you need so many services and somebody has to sit and plan for all this.[55]

In the rationale for a developmental bureaucratic unit, separate from the Collector's office, there are two expectations from planning: *expertise* and *focus*. While Mr. Bhogale does not

[54] Same as above
[55] Interview, Aurangabad, 3 May 2016

quite use the term 'capacity', his subsequent statement about providing a plethora of services – electricity, water, and roads – indicates what he expects from this 'specialised body' of the state is the ability to deliver all these resources for an industrial unit to function profitably.

Similarly, the chairman of CII Marathwada Zonal Council in 2016 and president of the multinational company Endress + Hauser (I) Automation Instrumentation Pvt. Ltd. emphasised the undisputed need for the state for land acquisition. According to Mr. Narayanan, there are two reasons for active state intervention:

> first, then *planned development* will happen otherwise tomorrow industry can come in the middle of city, so there has to be some ***neutral*** body which is meant for that [planning]. Private acquisition [private purchase of land] can happen but is generally for a for-profit motive, like speculation … There should be ***clean*** acquisition through digitisation of land records which the Maharashtra govt. is doing.[56]

Elaborating on his idea of the state's role, he explained how industries with a global footprint, such as his, avoid getting embroiled in controversies of 'any sort'[57]: companies like to move into areas where the land allotted is not mired in litigation, proper rules have been followed, and the acquisition process has not been met with resistance and protests. Furthermore, he also saw the need for active state intervention to prevent speculation which, presumably by being under the media spotlight, deters 'genuine'[58] industries like his to flourish. This is the idea of a 'clean'[59] acquisition mentioned in the quote above. The 'cleanliness' of acquisition, thus, requires the state to be the rule-maker (digitising land records) and rule-enforcer (regulator).

Mr. Narayanan also envisions the state as an arbitrator. Ideas of 'planned development' and 'neutrality' in the quote above, it appeared from the rest of the interview, together refer to performing the political task of balancing multiple interests – that of private capitalists and rural classes. He said with utmost candour: 'obviously not everybody will get a job. But industries can create a larger ecosystem for jobs outside of farming. This is not to say

[56] Interview, Aurangabad, 10 May 2016
[57] Same as above
[58] Same as above
[59] Same as above

farming is not important. One industry cannot do everything'.[60] 'One industry cannot do everything', but the state should be able to balance multiple interests through planned development.

That the 'state', through a trained, dedicated, and 'neutral' bureaucratic machinery, will efficiently plan and co-ordinate resources for industry has widespread legitimacy among representatives of two different types of private capitalists – an older industrialist of the developmental era and a younger managerial professional of a multinational company. The practice of planning was at the core of governance in the postcolonial period. The postcolonial Indian state was defined by its developmental ideology and derived its legitimacy, as an authority different from its colonial predecessor, through its mandate of promoting national 'development' – modernisation of the economy through building a strong industrial base (Chatterjee 1993, 278-9). A rational bureaucratic apparatus, insulated from the pressures of electoral politics, was to deliver on the developmental pursuits of the state. However, it is the very legitimacy of planning as a practice insulated from politics that made possible the dominance of urban industrial capital in certain sectors (Chatterjee 1993; Byres 1997).

Planning here, as endorsed by the respondents above, does not refer to the kind of direct state-control through licensing of what to produce, how to produce and what to do with the produce of the post-independence period spanning 1950s to mid-1980s. Planning here is limited to providing an infrastructural base for private domestic and multinational capital to flourish. The state, as a planner, directing resources and infrastructure towards industry, is instrumentally important and even critical for industrial capital to operate profitably. Insofar as the setting up of production plants and assembling units is concerned, industrial capital is not in opposition to bureaucratic planning so as to avail of a host of facilities – land at conducive rates, assured supply of water and electricity, a stream of labour that can be controlled, and legal and institutional support of various kinds. The 'neutral' and focused 'expertise' the respondents spoke of are closer to the 'law-backed specialised agencies operating through administrative means to support the unitary goal of economic efficiency' view of the 'regulatory state' (Dubash et al 2012, 263). This is the 'pro-business' orientation of the state. It, however, represents an additional idea: that of balancing multiple interests.

[60] Same as above

For the officer at MIDC, state intervention also involved redressing 'backwardness', and for Mr. Narayanan it was arbitrating across different interests.

There are two important observations relevant to understanding the nature of the state. First, the *practice* of planning through a discrete *institution*, MIDC in this case, marks an entity called the state that has both authority and capacity. At the scale observed (regional office), it is distinct from the private capitalists of the region. Second, I find that state mediation through planning has legitimacy, not simply because private capital can then 'network' with the state for cheap resources, incentives, or largesse, as a large literature has shown (Chandra 2015, Sud 2009, Levien 2018). State mediation is seen as necessary to attract industry to backward areas, bargain with different classes, and curb speculation by regulating a variety of private interests (big-small, and rural-urban real estate). This does not imply that the state successfully manages it or finds it necessary to deliver on these different ideas. I intend to point out the *diverse set of ideas*, some lingering from the developmental era, that foreground a state that is not strictly acting on behalf of private capital.

4.2.2 State: Visionary Politicians

A second way of locating the state is to understand industrial zones as visions of politicians and political parties in power. This again draws from the original definition of state as 'ideas' and 'personnel'.

According to a Maratha farmer in Maangaon, the S5IA was a concerted effort of a politician from the district, Haribhau Bagade. Bagade is a legislator from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party currently in power in coalition with the Shiv Sena, and the current Speaker of the Lower House of the State. He belongs to Aurangabad district and has held several important posts whenever the BJP has been in power, either as a majority government or in coalition with the Sena. His reputation of an incorruptible politician and that of a 'grassroots worker' in touch with the problems of agriculturalists, having been trained in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) tradition, lends credibility to his ideas and proposals among farmers in the region. The RSS is a Hindu nationalist organisation that forms the ideological base for the ruling BJP.

When Bagade was a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the 1995 BJP government, he lobbied to build an industrial area on lands belonging to the villages Shendra and Kumbephal: 'He [Bagade] was looking for a road file and found an MIDC file on industrial development. He introduced it [the file] in the Assembly and got it passed.' This narrative has elements starkly inconsistent with the general proceedings of industrial planning in the State – an MIDC plan to build industries does not have to be passed by the State Legislative Assembly. Yet this vivid and specific account of the origin of S5IA points to the common conception of an elected representative, a politician, bringing a vision to the village. Linking the conception of the industrial area to the MLA, an elected representative in power, establishes its credibility as an event that is legitimate and imminent. A local MLA from the dominant caste is certainly embedded in the social fabric of the region. The political lobbying to bring industry in his constituency, however imagined, is predicated on a degree of power that makes him distinct from society. The scheme classified as such then belongs to a 'state' that is not 'up there' (Li 2005, 385), but to a repository of power that draws its legitimacy from the local community.

Furthermore, while the first iteration of S5IA+, i.e. the Shendra industrial area, is linked to the Maharashtra government's goal of backward area development, the DMIC-associated extension is attributed to the economic ambitions of the Central government. This distinction – the State versus the Centre as the driver – was clearly and widely made by farmers whose land was acquired in Wave 2 and Wave 3. A farmer from the dominant class, whose land had been acquired in 2008 by the MIDC and at a compensation rate lower than the ongoing amount, lamented as follows:

> the state (*sarkar*) has been most unjust to us. MIDC gave us 8.5 lacs per acre and now DMIC is giving 23 lacs. MIDC is local Maharashtra. DMIC is *Dilli Sarkar* [Delhi government].[61]

Similar accounts of landholders indicate that this separation between previous rounds of land acquisition and the current phase by '*Dilli sarkar*', as the farmer above put it, had been spelled out by bureaucrats and advocate-politicians to mark a break from past land acquisition procedures and to highlight novel opportunities that may arise from the commitment of a higher, more resourceful 'state'.

[61] Interview, Maangaon, 18 January 2015

I will elaborate on this in chapter 6 when I deepen my analysis of how the state co-opts landholders from the dominant class. The point I aim to make here is that politicians and personnel of the local, regional (Maharashtra) and central (New Delhi) levels mark *repositories of state power*.

4.2.3 State: Local Authority through Practices

As mentioned above, land for S5IA+ (S5IA industrial area and ongoing DMIC) has been and continues to be acquired under the clauses provided by the MID Act. As per the Act, once a plan for an industrial area has been approved and the location identified, land acquisition is supervised by the Collector's office and the closest regional MIDC office. In practice, the administrative (Collector's office) and bureaucratic (MIDC) units work closely, with the former taking the lead role in the early stages of the acquisition process. As an MIDC official, assistant to the regional officer of MIDC Aurangabad, told me: 'The authority is in the hands of the Collector's office. MIDC just co-operates as we need land fast ('*zameen chahiye jaldi jaldi'*)'.[62]

The following discussion on the administrative practices of land acquisition by local state officials in the Collector's office and the regional office of MIDC demonstrate (a) how certain procedures allow these bureaucratic units to be perceived as local repositories of state power and (b) how the entities themselves come to understand their own authority. This allows us to sieve through the various layers of powerful local actors to identify the 'state' as it is understood in the context of land for industry in Aurangabad. It does not, however, imply that the entities described here always act with the heavy-handedness the provisions permit.

[62] Interview, Aurangabad, 20 February 2016

Information Gap as a Performance of Authority

There is no legal requirement for consultation with those affected if land is to be acquired for industry in Maharashtra. The acquisition clause in the MID Act requires neither consultation nor, in a strict formal sense, consent:

> If, at any time in the opinion of the State Government, any land is required for the purpose of development by the Corporation … the State Government may acquire such land by publishing in the Official Gazette a notice specifying the particular purpose for which land is required, and stating therein that the State Government has decided to acquire the land in pursuance of this section (MID Act 1962, Chapter VI, section 32(1)).

Once a project to set up a cluster of industries is formally approved by the Industries Department of the State government (located in Mumbai), the regional MIDC office, the 'Corporation' in the quote above, is notified. Simultaneously, the Collector's office in the district where the industry is to be located is sent an official order to begin the process of land acquisition. The first task before the Collector's office then is to make an 'official announcement' through the state's formal channel of communication with the community, the Official Gazette. The Gazette is published in Marathi and available from the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer, the administrative unit below that of the Collector. Land earmarked for acquisition is listed as various 'plots' (*Gutt* in Marathi). The announcement, called the 'first notification' takes the form of a one-way proclamation, as one of the landholders complained – 'Gutt no. 71', 'Gutt no. 82', … so on and so forth 'are to be acquired for the purpose of the DMIC', as one of the notices in a 2008 Gazette appeared. The finality of the land acquisition plan and the way it is communicated – as a decree – make evident the will of the 'state'. That it comes through the Gazette procured from the administrative offices in the district ascribes authority to the Collector's office.

Prior to the first notification, section 32(2) in the Act goes on to specify, 'the owner or any other person who in the *opinion* of the State Government may be interested' is to be called upon to 'show cause' (MID Act, chapter VI 32(2), emphasis mine). This is to be accomplished by publishing notices to individual landholders with formal titles to land. It is unclear how the 'opinion' of the State government is generated but an informant in the

MIDC office told me that the local keeper of land records in villages, the *Talathi*[63], is consulted. The compulsory nature of acquisition implies that an individual with formal titles has to present reasons for why land owned by the individual as private property should *not* be acquired. Furthermore, this formal opportunity to 'resist' is entirely perfunctory – the non-fulfilment of this step by the state machinery does not allow an individual to contest coercive acquisition at a later time in the judiciary, particularly if the compensation amount is determined by way of 'agreement' between the landholder and the state. That such an 'agreement' on compensation is forged between two entities with largely unequal power is ignored.

The compulsory nature of land acquisition is built into the process of land dispossession as part of a longer tradition in development planning. It is not unique to the MID Act. The 1894 Land Acquisition Act mentioned above empowers the state with 'eminent domain', the ability to compulsorily acquire private land upon fulfilment of two basic conditions – the land is used for public purpose and just compensation is paid to the owner of the land. This colonial legal remnant, until as recently as 2016, was used by the Collector's office to acquire land for percolation tanks, irrigation canals, and electricity grids in the villages in Aurangabad. The precedence of compulsory land acquisition in the district, through both the 1894 Act and the MID Act, makes the authority of the Collector's Office palpable.

The MID Act also allows for and legitimises a degree of opacity in the communication of plans, which in turn imbues the local land acquisition machinery with bureaucratic power. That the Collector's office is not obliged to share information with the community outside of the notification in the Gazette allows for a performance of bureaucratic authoritarianism. A lack of clarity is seen as appropriate 'state behaviour' by state actors. In the context of S5IA+, this performance was alluded to in the narratives of different classes of landowners. A landholder from the dominant class, who moonlights as a journalist in Aurangabad town, said of the latest round of land acquisition: 'Since I am a journalist, I knew something is up. So, I went and got the Gazette from the SDM office and saw that my plot had been listed as one of those to be acquired for the DMIC'.[64] Similarly, another farmer

[63] Term explained further with relevant details in the Glossary
[64] Interview, Bidkin, 7 November 2015

from the dominant class spoke of a 'buzz'[65] that had started to emerge around 2007-2008 when a helicopter flew over the farmlands in his village.

Overall, a vision of such large-scale transformation does not follow the governmentality of 'participation' or 'consultation'; the state vision descends on the area, usually for the first time by way of information in the Official Gazette. The interaction can proceed with serious information gaps, which is viewed as legitimate state behaviour. These performances by the state – the Collector's Office legitimised through the MID Act – produce a separation of an authority from rural society, including local powerful actors such as the village headmen, the local keeper of land records, or landholders from the dominant class who may collude with these figures of authority. I find it important to locate the mechanisms through which this separation is produced in order to understand how authority is made palpable for land dispossession. After all, actualising the process of land dispossession is 'ultimately an issue of political authority', meaning it is the 'ability of states to make people comply with their orders' (Levien 2018, 18-19).

4.2.4 Locating the 'State' through Industrialisation: A Summary

In this section I have shown that the entity orchestrating industrialisation in the region, the state, is a distinct authority made visible through a nexus of ideas, institutions and practices. The industrial project, in this case, pertains to two different phases of post-liberalisation development. The S5IA is a planned industrial area for manufacturing units for which land was acquired between 1997 and early 2000. This industrial area is now envisioned to be linked to a larger industrial corridor, an ambitious project which so far seems to be limited to visions of large industrial infrastructure.

First, the idea that industrialisation should be planned by a bureaucratic authority enjoys widespread legitimacy. In the agrarian district of Aurangabad, the S5IA is a planned initiative of the state linked to ideas of a more even distribution of industrialisation and modernisation. The development of S5IA was not at the behest of the private sector but emerged from the political and bureaucratic corridors of state power. The importance of planning was articulated by representatives of both domestic capital (local industrialist) and

[65] Interview, Bidkin, 9 November 2015

multinational capital (high-level executive of multinational company). Planning here is not the practice of a 'command economy' (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987; Chatterjee 1993) where the state presides over production decisions. ~~'from above' (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). It~~ Planning here, instead, represents state effort to provide private capital with cheap infrastructure for profitable industrial production. In doing so, the state intends to bring to fruition its idea of capitalist development. Planned infrastructure, as state action by a dedicated body, necessarily entails it interact closely with local industrial capitalists – small, medium and large enterprises. However, there is a lateral separation of this entity from industrial capital and the rural classes, and this distance, it is expected, allows it to act with autonomy. That there is a separation then allows for local capital to 'network' with the state, creating the 'business-friendly' economic-political regime that Rodrik and Subramanian (2004), Kohli (2006), and Sud (2014b) describe as the very nature of development in India. Furthermore, this separation makes visible a 'state' that has a distinct terrain even if the borders today are 'porous' (Sinha 2019).

Second, elected politicians that flit in and out of the process of land acquisition represent a notion of the state as 'ideas' linked to 'personnel'. Elected representatives from the district, as well as the projection of the S5IA and the DMIC as visions of the State and Centre, link projects involving large-scale dispossession to *repositories* of political power. This shows a multi-scalar state (Sud 2016): policies and projects are sanctioned at the sub-national scale (S5IA from Mumbai) and the national (DMIC from New Delhi). They are brought to the villages by local politicians. Instead of reflecting a 'diffusion' (Sinha 2013) of state power, locally embedded politicians and other such local actors ground the power of the state and make it palpable. Furthermore, politicians, like Bagade, from farming backgrounds and with local lineage imbue state projects with legitimacy. When these projects descend on rural society as their visions, they are received as both powerful and legitimate. As Cross (2015, 429) observes in the case of a large SEZ in Andhra Pradesh, the everyday presence of the state at the time of acquisition conjures a credible image of the industrial area to come as a 'state space': '… a space of state activity and intervention in which people were invited to imagine they would be protected from economic precariousness and poverty'.

Third, the bureaucratic and administrative units involved with the process of land acquisition are powerful. The use of the MID Act vests significant power in the hands of actors in the Collector's office to compulsorily acquire land with limited consultation. The local state

officials involved do not necessarily exercise coercion built into the Act; in instances where landholders are firmly opposed, they prefer to use forgery and blur rules, as I show in chapter 8. The authority to dispossess people off their land and the capacity to carry out this process, however, is located within the Collector's office, which then can be sieved out as a powerful state actor.

Through this I find that a set of ideas and practices produce a discrete effect, which has political legitimacy at one point in time, but equally, can be challenged at another point in time. A rich body of scholarship on the contemporary state cautions against any structural articulation of the state as an 'up there' entity (Li 2005, 385).. Seeing state power as a 'thing – one that is spatially concentrated in the bureaucratic apparatus and the top echelons of the ruling regime' is an empirical fallacy. Ethnographic studies (Gupta 1995 for example) have furnished a rich array of empirical detail to hone the conceptualisation of the 'actually existing state' as a complex malleable entity with elastic ontological boundaries. The state, as I see through the process of land dispossession for industrialisation in this context, however, is an authority capable of making large sections, or at the very least key sections, of rural society comply *repeatedly*. While it has authority that allows it to use coercion for land dispossession, it aims to balance goals of accumulation and a minimum level of political legitimacy. It is the legitimacy and authority of the state that is contested and challenged as the state and rural classes negotiate with one another over time, as I will show later in chapters 7 and 8.

The state I conceptualise, contra theme 1 outlined in the introduction, is importantly not a 'broker' that acts on behalf of capital. This certainly does not imply that the state does not ally with private capital, providing incentives to set up lucrative industrial units. When an industrial area is built on 900 ha. of land, factories do not simply emerge. State-capital relations in post-independence India have gone from inflexible 'command' (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987) in the era of planning to 'mid-wifing' (Evans 1995) in the early stages of liberalisation. I will, in fact, show in chapter 8 how, in one instance, the state bends official rules and uses physical coercion against a group of dissenting farmers. The state, in this case, however, is not sans ideas and visions and acts with a degree of autonomy from private capital. It regulates and penalises private capital, as I show later in the chapter, but also strategically allies with it for the larger goal of capital accumulation.

By arguing that the state is not a 'broker' I am also not insisting that individual actors in the bureaucracy (both the regional and Mumbai offices of MIDC) or politicians did not accrue personal profit from buying a parcel or two of land cheaply prior to acquisition, or by providing key information on locations for land acquisition to private actors, including businessmen.

While the local MLA with farming roots, Bagade, appeared to have a clean record, stories about a few politicians benefiting from land dispossession were commonplace. Rajendra Darda, a Congress MLA from the Aurangabad (west) constituency, in power in 1999 at the time of land acquisition and the editor-in-chief of Lokmat, a popular daily, legend goes, benefited enormously from land acquired in Wave 1 in the late 1990s.

Narayan Rane, a powerful politician in the State, has allegedly benefited from land rents. Rane was the minister for animal husbandry in the first BJP-Shiv Sena government in 1995. He rose to further prominence within the influential regional party, the Shiv Sena, when he was picked as the favoured chief ministerial candidate for the 1999 Assembly elections. Following disagreements on party leadership with the Shiv-Sena patriarch and leader, Bal Thackeray, in 2005, Rane left the Party and joined the Congress. He quit the Congress in 2017 and formed his own party, the Maharashtra Swabhiman Paksha, which he has positioned as an ally of the BJP. Rane is rumoured to have purchased agricultural land in the name of family members and associates during the DMIC-related land acquisition in late 2000, making windfall gains by selling some of the land to the state already and holding on to the rest for sale at appreciated market values later. I did encounter instances of such rent-seeking activities by state actors. The study area, however, has not seen spiralling speculation; if that were the case, the buzz generated by such land rents would have reached me during my 10-month long fieldwork.

Literature that casts the state as 'broker' (Sud 2009, Levien 2018) and 'abettor' (Banerjee-Guha 2013) of private capital accumulation has rightly emerged from the nature of projects to which commodified land is applied. In these projects, speculation in real estate has been observed to be a dominant outcome. When Levien (2018), for example, traces the 'genesis of the broker state', he places empirical weight on the type of 'industries' that come in the name of 'development'. A highly specialised ITES Special Economic Zone and real estate development in the adjoining areas is what he observes in Rajasthan. As mentioned in the

literature review, most of the observations are based on urban infrastructure (highways, housing development) and Special Economic Zones. As the next section shows, the S5IA sites manufacturing units that cannot be reduced to the highly IT-focused and speculative economic spaces that the more recent cases of land dispossession in India, summarised in chapter 2, have focused on. In the next section, I develop my reasons for not seeing the state as a broker further by focusing on the nature of production activities in the S5IA.

4.3 Shendra Five-Star Industrial Area: Manufacturing 'Modernisation' in Aurangabad

As mentioned in the introduction, the S5IA is a planned industrial area where plots of land have been leased out to manufacturing production plants and processing units. It is not an industrial estate of the Nehruvian modernity with public sector units. At the time of fieldwork in 2016, most of the occupied units were in operation. According to one report by the District Industrial Promotion report, 392 out of 453 plots were allotted. The S5IA sites manufacturing units in automobiles, pharmaceuticals and industrial products, such as wires and ancillary parts, plastic, packaging and food processing. The size of plots ranges from .05 ha to 107 ha. Most of the plots have been given to a mixed bag of large and medium industrial units in operation owned by domestic as well as multinational capital.

Radico NV distillery is part-owned by politician and legislator from the Bharatiya Janata Party, Gopinath Munde, a fact mentioned at the time of fieldwork by multiple sources, including Advocate Vilasrao Sonwane. As per official records, until at least 2014, he and his daughter were on the Board of Directors of Radico (Livemint, 12 May 2014). Sterlite Technologies, that manufactures optical fibres in the S5IA, is owned by Volcan Investments, whose other investment include Vedanta Resources, the infamous steel plant in Odisha (The Economic Times, 20 March 2016). Wockhardt Ltd., Skoda Auto India Pvt. Ltd, and Siemens Rolling Stock Pvt. Ltd. are notable examples of big multinational industrial plants. Based on official accounts on websites and promotion materials, investments made by these units in their respective plots range from 150 million USD (Perkins Ltd., an engines manufacturing company) to 2 billion USD (Siemens Ltd.), generating 250 (Siemens Ltd.) to 500 (Perkins Ltd.) units of direct employment. The land occupied by Wockhardt. Ltd. has

been demarcated as a Special Economic Zone, but the rest have leased plots with individualised incentive packages for industries.

Unlike Special Economic Zones dominated by IT/ITES firms, the S5IA is comprised of manufacturing units producing primarily for domestic consumption. Plots in the area have been allocated and utilised by industrial units as per the intent stated in Memoranda of Understanding with the state; 'fevered speculation' by private capital, real estate brokers, and large farmers has been largely absent. I do not suggest that the S5IA is aligned with the more traditional notions of industrial activity associated with public-sector heavy manufacturing (chemicals and mineral processing, for example) or the relatively labour-absorptive steel plants of the Nehruvian developmental period. The 'heaviest' industrial units in the area are automobile plants, like that of Skoda Ltd., where operations are increasingly mechanised and centred on assembling car parts. The S5IA overall, however, has a diverse set of manufacturing plants powered by labour forces of varying skills and sizes, albeit under the larger neoliberal regime of the times.

A second feature that distinguishes the S5IA from 'neoliberal spaces' (Banerjee-Guha 2009; 2008) or economic enclaves of 'exception' (Ong 2006) is that it does not operate in a regulatory vacuum where private capital reigns supreme. I also do not observe the 'speculative governance' (Goldman 2011) that neoliberal urbanisation enjoys. 'World-city projects not only represent large-scale place-altering capital infusions (i.e. billions of dollars from Dubai, Singapore and the IFIs), they do more than merely facilitate the restructuring of governance institutions for improved access to public goods and services for international capital (i.e. privatization of townships governance, special citizenship rights and privileged rules for SEZs)'(ibid, 575). This leads to a form of 'speculative government' where bureaucrats and political officials are constantly brokering the cheapest land deals for IFIs to park over-accumulated capital in exchange for rents, the majority of the poor are denied all rights, and 'real estate become the real state' (Goldman 2011, 577). These are the new rationalities of speculative governance and the new technologies of speculative rule.

In 2013, for example, the Gram Panchayat (GP) of Kumbephal, one of the villages from which land was acquired, issued a legal notice to the car manufacturing multinational company Skoda Ltd. operating in the S5IA. The village council notified legal action on Skoda for the non-payment of tax under the Bombay Village Panchayat Act 1985. Skoda

Ltd. appealed against the tax notice and filed a case against the 'State of Maharashtra' as represented by, among other state-, district-, and block-level administrative units, its land lesser MIDC. The Court ruled in favour of the Gram Panchayat and Skoda Ltd. had to pay taxes for the use of open, constructed and under-constructed land in the S5IA for every year of operation.[66]

In another instance, a manufacturing plant was heavily penalised on the grounds of environmental pollution. Radico NV Distillery set up its plant in S5IA in October 2007, and it is the fourth largest Indian liquor company. As mentioned above, Gopinath Munde, a powerful BJP politician in the State, was associated with the management of the plant and likely had a direct financial stake in it. Munde, a BJP legislator from Maharashtra, was a close aide of Narenda Modi. He was appointed the Rural Affairs minister in the cabinet of the Modi-government when it came to power in 2014. Right after his appointment, he was allegedly murdered. At the time of fieldwork, he had passed away, but his daughter presumably continued to be on the Company's Board.

One of the first issues I encountered in Kumbephal (Wave 1 village) was that of acute pollution of ground water. Effluent from a distillery in the S5IA has made ground water unsuitable for human and livestock consumption. Radico Distillery Pvt. Ltd. had been violating environment regulations by discharging toxic industrial waste into nearby water bodies through the MIDC draining system, polluting ground water, killing crops and affecting soil fertility. The current Sarpanch of the village showed me a bottle of dark, sticky liquid and asked: 'Would you drink this? This is what Radico has done'[67]. Some of the villagers had lodged a complaint with the Collector and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) branch in Aurangabad. They were advised to file a case in the court: 'we complained to MPCB. They did not do anything. But one officer in MPCB said that we should go to court',[68] the Sarpanch continued.

Two farmers filed a court case in the High Court along with a Public Interest Litigation demanding compensation for crop loss and future damage from marred soil. The High Court ruled in favour of the farmers and ordered the MPCB, Aurangabad to take notice and

[66] Court ruling and other legal documents from the Sarpanch
[67] Interview with Sarpanch, Kumbephal 2 November 2015
[68] Same as above

implement the closure of Radico Distillery in June 2015[69] (The Times of India, 2015). Radico was issued a closure notice by the MPCB and shut down for almost a year in 2015 for flouting regulation under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and polluting ground water.

This instance of state action against a unit owned by a powerful politician is noteworthy, as it marks efforts by the state to carry out its regulatory function. This provides a counter to most contemporary theorisations on the ever-increasing power of the state-capital nexus in neoliberal India. Sinha (2019) finds that the business interests have infiltrated state and public such that the Indian state is essentially 'porous'. This rightfully raised an alarm on the potentially 'deleterious' effect this type of state-business enmeshing has on public interest. Even outside of this deep state-business entanglement, one observes a pro-business state side with private capital: Sud (2009) has shown how state departments in charge of industries and land acquisition in Gujarat have negotiated, on behalf of Karkhana Ltd. (a cement factory), with the judiciary to bend and blur environmental regulations. What we find here instead is that institutions of the state – a bureaucratic unit and the judiciary – regulate powerful private interests to uphold the interests of local farming communities when transgressions by the former affect whole communities.

The tension between being an ally of private capital, by providing it with cheap land and infrastructure, while also regulating it is not new. It is one that has been amply documented about the postcolonial Indian state (Harriss-White 2003, 73). Regulating private capital by imposing penalties (such as the pollution case) and reversing some of the excesses of exploitation (such as the village tax) are part of the minimum level of political legitimacy that the state needs to maintain. The plurality of state institutions – bureaucracy, judiciary, parastatals – allows the state to strike the balance. Here, I do not mean plurality in the sense Chandoke (2003) cautions against: the unwieldy 'fanning' out of the neoliberal state through subcontracting and privatising governance. The horizontal spread of neoliberal governance across private and civil society actors makes the 'state' blurred in the pluralisation she identified. What I mean by plural are the legal and administrative institutions of the state. While MIDC can work closely with private capital offering cheap land, water and electricity

[69] https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/aurangabad/MPCB-sends-closure-notice-to-distillery/articleshow/47823348.cms

in the industrial area, the judiciary can enforce that the industries do not overstep the limits set for exploitation of resources.

Not Simply a Broker State

It is not that the neoliberal era has been without state intervention – liberalisation in India has meant re-regulation (Snyder 2001) by local state officials and also de-regulation (Sud 2009). An entrepreneurial state that 'networks' with private capital (Sud 2009; 2017), creating a 'business-friendly' economic-political regime (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004; Kohli 2006b; 2006a), has been at the core of India's capitalist development in the post-liberalisation period. In the current environment of inter-State competition, however, recent cases of urban and industrial development have shown a state that is willing to be supplicant to private capital, and often a 'broker'. 'At the level of formal policy, the notion that *deregulated* land use must form the base for India's economic liberalization is reflected in the Karkhana case' (Sud 2009, 655, emphasis mine). The deregulation that Sud observed in her case was overriding objections from all dissenting quarters, including the judiciary, against Karkhana Ltd., a private company that wanted to set up a cement factory on protected forest and coastal land in Gujarat. It is not just bending of rules to make land available but instances where certain government departments actually negotiate with and confront other State departments, the national government and environmental activists, that Sud calls an 'act of brokerage'. In the case of land dispossession for the S5IA, the main site of study, I do not observe a state that plays junior partner to capital, willing to suspend rules and regulations. Instead, it proceeds dialectically between its main aims of accumulation and maintaining a level of political legitimacy. While there are instances of prioritising the profit-motive of private capital, there are also examples of reining in the excesses of industries, as shown above. Moreover, it has its own visions and goals driven by regional politics, as shown in the previous chapter.

Without reifying the S5IA into a prototype of Nehruvian modernity or a neoliberal 'economic space' (Banerjee-Guha 2008), what I aim to highlight instead is a lingering commitment to active state planning for industrialisation at the sub-regional level. The purpose of foregrounding the discourse and practice of planning in this case is to sharpen the focus on a state that aims to retain an active role in steering industrialisation. The idea of 'development' is infused with concomitant goals of 'modernising' a backward area,

generating a ‘productive’ non-farm economy, and gradually eliminating rurality. These goals, as mentioned in the previous chapter, are shared by large sections of the society and buoyed by the politics of sub-regionalism.

4.4 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I showed how the regional history of uneven development has resulted in a politics of sub-regionalism. This, combined with the concrete reality of agrarian distress, come together into a ‘near consensus’ over the need for industrialisation. This chapter deepens the analysis of how the legitimacy of a ‘transition’ into a non-farm industrial economy is harnessed by the ‘state’.

I first argued that the ‘state’ in the context of land dispossession can be located through ideas (‘neutrality’ of planning, ‘clean acquisition’), personnel (politicians with visions of progress), and formal institutions and their practices (administrative apparatus and its legal-bureaucratic authority). Theorised as such, the state is a repository of authority that produces a separation from the agrarian classes of rural society, as well as the private capital it draws to the region.

I find it necessary to locate this separation in order to understand the nodes at which state and society connect and perpetuate the process of land dispossession repeatedly. The state is certainly embedded: a local elected politician who ‘brings’ industry to the region draws legitimacy from the local community.

I showed next that the S5IA, as an industrial space, is not an unregulated neoliberal enclave where private capital is left to operate without any checks. Moreover, the S5IA is, in part, a product of a lingering commitment to planned industrialisation for ‘backward’-area development.

The two arguments together show that the state is not simply a broker of a neoliberal economic space. The state, in this case, is not sans ideas and visions and acts with a degree

of autonomy from private capital. It regulates and penalises private capital but also strategically allies with it for the larger goal of capital accumulation.

Having located the state through the nexus of ideas, institutions and practices in the context of industrialising rural Aurangabad, I unpack the rural society next.

Chapter 5: Demystifying 'Landlosers' – Rural Classes in Aurangabad

The term 'peasants' has been defined, refined and theorised across different contexts. Bernstein (2010) defines peasants as those belonging to farming households that produce simply for subsistence, and restricts them to pre-capitalist organisation or societies transitioning to capitalist modes of production. For Marxist scholar Gavin Williams, peasant agriculture is a livelihood where 'wages and profit could not be distinguished from each other', is not entirely integrated into the market, meaning a large component is for subsistence and subordinated to other classes and the state, and that, upon encountering commodity relations, is separated into capitalist and proletarian classes (Harriss-White 2012). In addition, it has a strong normative character, echoed by other scholars, of a way of life marked by solidarity and reciprocity along the lines of kin, community, household etc. Debates abound around peasantry. The fundamental point here is that the different landowning classes of informants I encounter cannot, with consistency, be classified into the analytical category of 'peasants' and certainly not 'poor peasants.'

The uncritical use of terms like 'landlosers', 'peasants', or 'poor farmers' in the land literature has been critiqued (Borras and Franco 2013; Oya 2013). Negotiating with the state, through the process of land acquisition, and navigating outcomes of dispossession are necessarily based on unequal economic and social standing in society. While this is widely recognised, a handful of studies in the Indian land literature systematically document variations in trajectories based on social differentiation in rural societies. Levien's 2018 study tracks this systematically in the case of an SEZ in Rajasthan. Vijabhaskara (2015) maps types of employment generated in an IT corridor in the southern metropolitan city of Chennai, but the categories of jobs are not linked to the dispossessed classes. I begin, thus, the task of unpacking the diverse group of individuals with livelihoods and lives grounded in land the state has been acquiring since the late 1990s and converting to the S5IA+.

Class here is not used as a 'master identity', or a total 'sociological categorization', or a singular marker of a 'political phenomenon' (Kasmir and Cabello 2007). The classification of rural households as belonging to a particular rural class highlights the particularities of

Aurangabad's rural political economy. It helps identify the economic place a specific group of the 'dispossessed' occupied in the economic configuration when land was acquired, and how that shapes their class location in the current rural political economy. It makes concrete shared strategies and experiences of navigating economic change; simultaneously it shows how different social identities lead to internal fragmentation within a group with shared material interests. In this case, it makes complex the political potential of this group of dispossessed households as a labouring class and simultaneously points to other allies they may seek. Most importantly, it shows how both their economic and social separation as a class of labourers from other rural classes, as well as internal divisions within their group, are 'aggravated and contested products' (Sanchez and Strumpell 2014, 1238) of capitalist development. In effect, the use of class draws attention to capitalism in motion.

The class position of each household represents the social preconditions that determine how households have dealt both individually and collectively with the process of land acquisition for industry and the gradual shifts in the local economy.

5.1 Agrarian Aurangabad

The district of Aurangabad is a territory spread across 1,010,700 ha. i.e. 3.28 per cent of the total land mass of the State. As mentioned in chapter 3, Aurangabad district is semi-arid, drought-prone, and increasingly thirsty. Agrarian Aurangabad, as a consequence, has its own 'village' characteristics.

The district of Aurangabad is rural: 56 per cent of its population live in its 1300 rural villages. The economy of Aurangabad is agrarian – in 2001, 62 per cent of its labour force were engaged in agricultural or allied activities (Census 2001). In that sense, its dependence on agriculture mirrors the all-India average of 60 per cent (Ghosh 2012, 49). The total workforce is comprised of 11.76 lakh persons, of whom 37 per cent are cultivators, 25 per cent are agricultural labourers, 2 per cent are in 'household industry' and 36 per cent are other workers. The main crops of the region are bajra (coarse grain), tur (lentil), corn, and maize. Those who can afford and access irrigation, grow cotton and wheat.

Table 5.1 below shows the extent to which the communities in the five villages of this study were dependent on agriculture for livelihood in 2001 and 2011. The data are from the Government of India Census and cover all households in the villages. I will focus on the 2001 figures here as the information reflects the situation around the time of land acquisition in the villages of Wave 1 (the first three villages in the table), and certainly pre-acquisition for the villages in Waves 2 and 3. It is the best proxy I have for a 'baseline', though I make no claims of pre- and post-acquisition 'impact'. I am using it to ground my own observations of the material base of the households in my sample and analyse their 'class' position in the following discussion.

Table 5.1: Over-Time Change in Primary Occupation of Households in Study Villages

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5=6+7)	(6)	(7)	(8 = 9+10)	(9)	(10)
Village		**Total Households**	**Total Population**	**Total Worker Population Person**	**Main Working Population Person**	**Main: Farm**	**Main Cultivator Population Person**	**Main Agricultural Labourers Population Person**	**Main: Non-Farm**	**Main Household Industries Population Person**	**Main Other Workers Population Person**
Shendra Kamangar	2001	367	2105	1040	924	734	510	224	190	19	171
						(79.4)	(55.2)	(24.2)	(20.6)	(2.1)	(18.5)
	2011	603	2987	1433	1356	1000	624	376	356	13	343
						(73.7)	(46.0)	(27.7)	(26.3)	(1.0)	(25.3)
Shendraban	2001	126	671	324	324	308	131	177	16	0	16
						(95.1)	(40.4)	(54.6)	(4.9)	(0.0)	(4.9)
	2011	160	731	425	423	409	38	371	14	1	13
						(96.7)	(9.0)	(87.7)	(3.3)	(0.2)	(3.1)
Kumbhephal	2001	587	2957	1437	1424	1028	539	489	396	119	277
						(72.2)	(37.9)	(34.3)	(27.8)	(8.4)	(19.5)
	2011	922	4263	1934	1812	962	594	368	850	32	818
						(53.1)	(32.8)	(20.3)	(46.9)	(1.8)	(45.1)
Maangaon	2001	207	1157	630	630	552	452	100	78	0	78
						(87.6)	(71.7)	(15.9)	(12.4)	0	(12.4)
	2011	243	1254	507	497	345	267	78	152	2	150
						(69.4)	(53.7)	(15.7)	(30.6)	(0.4)	(30.2)
Kaamgaon	2001	774	4230	1804	1444	902	498	404	542	34	508
						(62.5)	(34.5)	(28.0)	(37.5)	(2.3)	(35.2)
	2011	1138	5934	2403	2327	1428	859	569	899	39	860
						(61.4)	(36.9)	(24.5)	(38.6)	(1.6)	(37.0)

Source: Author's calculations based on Census 2001, 2011; figures in parentheses are % over 'main working population person'

Households that identified cultivation as their main occupation ranged between 62 and 97 per cent. Shendra-Kamangar, which saw the least amount of land acquired, a decade later still had a majority of the community reliant on agriculture. Kumbephal, situated next to MIDC and with a bulk of its land acquired, has seen an increase in those leaning on non-farm income. Nevertheless, nearly half of the households still depend on agriculture. In 2011, land acquisition had been completed in Maangaon, while it was still underway in Kaamgaon. Communities whose land was acquired were still growing crops on their land, as most of the land had not been physically enclosed by the state.

The prevalent mode of access to land is direct ownership – *de jure* land rights – documented through land title certificates called the 7(12) (or *saat-baara*). The 7(12) lists the size of the plots, names of individual(s) owning (or co-owning) the plot, the type and amount of crops harvested in the last season. Land acquired for the S5IA and those acquired for the DMIC are Class I and Class II (*varg ek; varg do*, as they are called under the Aurangabad Land Revenue System) agricultural land.

Compared to the State overall, Aurangabad district has a higher proportion of Scheduled Caste groups and a lower proportion of Scheduled Tribe (defined in the section). The largest caste grouping is that of the Marathas – I have introduced the social dominance of the caste in the State and provided a brief history of their dominance in the political economy. In this chapter, I will show how caste scaffolds the rural political economy of the study area today and its implications for land dispossession.

5.2 Landholding in Context

Landholding, as the means of (agricultural) production, is a common proxy for defining and analysing rural agrarian class. The extent to which size of landholding indicates ‘class’, even as a starting point, is highly specific to the context: agro-ecology, climatic conditions, agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation, social structures, and local political history together infuse land with the potency it needs to determine livelihood trajectories of individuals and agrarian societies. A combination of economic assets, including land, access to other factors of production, social and political resources determine what an individual is

able to achieve, either for survival or accumulation, in the rural economy and, more relevantly in this case, negotiate with the state. While land is not the only variable that goes into the making of rural class, it remains an important determinant.

Using the National Sample Survey 2003-04, Vikas Rawal shows the pear-shaped distribution of landholdings in India and it is neatly summarised by Harriss (2013, 359) as follows: 31 per cent of rural households are landless; another 30 per cent own less than 0.4 ha.; little over 5 per cent of households own more than 3 ha., and just about 0.52 per cent own more than 10 ha. While this gives an idea of the unequal nature of landholding and small holding-size of agricultural land (particularly in comparison to rural areas in Latin America and parts of South-East Asia), it hides variation across regions in India.

A comprehensive village survey conducted by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies in 2005-06 showed that in Maharashtra (as in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), households with operational holdings of 2 ha. of land or less, which account for a majority, find it difficult to earn an income sufficient for family survival (Harriss 2013, 358). The notion of marginal holdings and 'marginal' farmers who struggle to survive (simple reproduction in Marxian terms) follows from this fact: the survey across these States thus defined 'marginal' landholders as those with holdings of one ha. or less, accounting for approximately 70 per cent of total operational holdings.

Table 5.2 shows how the agricultural department of Maharashtra classified farmers based on land size in Aurangabad in 2011.

Table 5.2: Official Classification of Households in Aurangabad District in 2011/12 - 2016/17

			Aurangabad District		State-Level	
Classification as per GoM	Category Based on Land Size (acres)	Category Based on Land Size (hectares)	Proportion of Land Holders (%)	Proportion of Land Operated (%)	Proportion of Land Holders (%)	Proportion of Land Operated (%)
Marginal	< 2.5	< 1	49	20.63	48.97	16.12
Small	2.5-5	1-2	33.18	35.75	29.58	29.03
Semi-Medium	5-10	2-4	13.47	26.97	15.76	29.17
Medium	10-25	4-10	3.18	13.49	5.19	20.2
Large	> 25	> 10	0.25	3.14	0.5	5.48

Source: Author's tabulation based on CDAP 2011/12-2016/17 for Aurangabad district

Average landholding in 2011 in the district was approximately 3.2 acres (1.3 ha.). The pear-shaped nature of landholding that Rawal showed for India (mentioned above) holds true for the district: around half own less than a hectare and around 82 per cent own less than the critical threshold of two hectares, making survival difficult as per the Foundation for Agrarian Studies survey. Another important pattern to note, which I use to develop the concept of dominance later in the chapter, is that only about *3.5 per cent of all landholders own 10 acres or more* (*4 ha. or more)*. This is a material privilege in the hands of a few which, when combined with other enabling social factors, such as caste, results in local dominance, a point I develop later.

To ground the linkage between landholdings and socioeconomic stratification in the rural economy in contemporary Maharashtra, an in-depth study focused on the agrarian political economy of the region in recent times is useful. Mark Vicol (2016) conducted a study on contract farming of potatoes in the Satara district of Western Maharashtra in 2013. I present his classification in Table 5.3. In the three villages he surveyed, the average landholding size was 12 acres (4.8 ha.), 7.5 acres (3 ha.) and 6.6 acres (2.6 ha.) respectively. The study is based on the most prosperous region of the State – Western Maharashtra – and unsurprisingly has, on average, larger landholdings than the poorer district of Aurangabad; regional disparities in the State are large with implications on sub-regional politics, which I discussed in chapter 3. Here it is important to note that, despite variation, Vicol classifies the 'best-off households' as those that owned at least 7 acres (3 ha.) of farmland, 'suggesting a threshold of landholding size, below which a household cannot bridge the *gap* to larger landholders by increasing the economic size of their farm' (Vicol 2016, 117). The 'gap' Vicol refers to is the differential ability between a thin layer of dominant rural class to accumulate surplus from agriculture, which is invested back either in agriculture or other non-farm activities in the village, neighbouring town or an urban centre, and the other landholding classes.

Table 5.3: Rural Classes as per Mark Vicol's Study in Satara District of WM

	Village	'Lower Group'	'Middle Group'	'Best Off'
Landholding	Bhushangad	1-3 acres	3-10 acres	Largest landowners
	Pawarwadi	1-2 acres	5-10 acres	Own minimum of 7 acres
	Randullabad	Landless or 1-2 acres	3-10 acres	10-20 acres
Caste	Bhushangad	OBC and other lower caste	70% Maratha; 30% OBC	Maratha only
	Pawarwadi	OBC and SC	Maratha	Maratha
	Randullabad	OBC and SC	Maratha	Maratha
Dominant Income Source	Bhushangad	Labour	Agriculture + significant but low-value non-farm activities	Non-farm income
	Pawarwadi	Agricultural labour, selling cereal crops	Agriculture but increasingly non-farm	High-value agriculture and remittances
	Randullabad	Agricultural labour; limited non-farm	Agriculture but increasingly low-skilled non-farm	Remittances, which are often invested into agriculture
Employ Farm Labour	Bhushangad	No	Seasonal labour for peak-time + family labour	Yes
	Pawarwadi	No	Seasonal labour for peak-time + family labour	Yes (extensive)
	Randullabad	No	Some; labour sharing and family labour mainly	Yes

Source: Vicol (2016, 120-122)

The best-off group here – 'a small class of what might be called big capitalist farmers/rich peasants' (ibid 2016, 124) – demonstrates qualities of Bernstein's (2010, 106-7) 'emergent capitalist farmers' that invest in a number of ancillary agriculture activities and urban livelihoods, including education for children. This class, even if generally in possession of the largest landholdings in the villages, are, according to Vicol (2016, 124, emphasis mine),

> … subject to the pressures of declining farm sizes and variable weather patterns, constraining their ability to expand through agriculture. Most, therefore, now maintain their class status by accumulating through the non-farm economy rather than agriculture. Much of this accumulation is facilitated by their privileged access to higher education for their children, and their ability to use their caste and political networks to find lucrative jobs in cities.

The 'class status' Vicol refers to is the ability to maintain a privileged position in the rural economy, based on activities beyond farming. The importance of non-farm income and remittances as dominant sources of income are noteworthy. In relation to the importance of

non-farm income, it is instructive to also note the dominance of one caste group among the best-off farmers – the Marathas. Vicol's survey in the prosperous region of Satara as recently as 2013 then suggests the following about the most prosperous group in the rural economy: first, they tend to own at least 7 acres (3 ha.) of land; second, all belong to the Maratha caste; third, in light of constrained surplus from agriculture, they aim to maintain their economic and social dominance by expanding livelihood activities both within *and beyond agriculture*. The scale and nature of economic diversification outside of agriculture for this group is possible because of the wide and deep social and political networks they are a part of as Maratha landholders. I find similar tendencies among the locally dominant group in the agrarian structure of Aurangabad and develop it further in relation to the process of land dispossession in this thesis.

5.3 Demystifying 'Landlosers' – Rural Classes in the Study Area

A conjoined notion, using both caste and class, must be used to understand social stratification in rural Aurangabad. Caste critically determines economic trajectories in the rural economy. Caste in itself, however, is not sufficient to understand how a particular agrarian landowning household negotiates with the process of dispossession.

5.3.1 Castes in Aurangabad

As in most parts of Maharashtra, the Marathas are numerically dominant in Aurangabad district. Their dominance permeates most social and political spheres of rural life. The current and past regional officers of the MIDC, most officials in the Collector's office at the time of study, the *Talathi* in all study villages, and *Sarpanches* in all unreserved villages belonged to the Maratha caste. In fact, caste-based solidarity was evoked by many of the urban-based politicians and MIDC officers when they met landholders during the consent-building phase of land acquisition. A Maratha farmer brought this to my attention as follows: 'I'm also a Maratha and my household is in farming. Listen to me'.[70]

[70] Interview, Maangaon, 9 December 2015

Between local and State-level politics, social networks that span Aurangabad town and the local bureaucratic offices and landholdings of various sizes, Maratha farmers have navigated economic changes using resources available to them. As mentioned previously, the Marathas are not a homogenous community. The next sub-section aims to shed light on this heterogeneity in the material base of the Marathas in the micro context of the sample villages.

The SC are communities who were of the lowest ritual rank of the caste hierarchy. They were considered 'unclean' and thus 'untouchables'. The official government classification for the communities today is SC, as the practice of 'untouchability' has been officially outlawed. In 2011, 14.6 per cent of the district' population was SC. The 'Mang' are the second-largest SC community in the State and the main grouping in the sample villages here. Their traditional occupations involved leather work and the removal of animal carcasses from villages, closely associated with their 'impure' status in the village ritual hierarchy. The Mang have also been involved with agricultural labour work in the State, though the communities in the study gradually moved away from agricultural labour at the first opportunity in the 1970s when small and medium factories began to develop in Aurangabad in the planned industrial areas described in the previous chapter. With growing opportunities in manual work in the non-farm sector, the Mang shifted away from the rural agricultural economy. The term 'Dalit', meaning 'broken', is used to refer to SC communities in India. The term was reinvigorated as a symbol of the community's social assertion through a wave of powerful writings in newspapers and magazines in the 1970s in Maharashtra. I will refer to landless households and labourers from the Mang community as Dalit, following their preference to be identified as such.

The Dhangars are a social grouping with marginal landholdings in the district. Some scholars of Maharashtra identify the group as a 'middle caste' (Lele 1981) given their transition into agriculture, even if at the marginal end of the economic spectrum. They are currently listed as a Nomadic Tribe (NT) by the State and I classify them as such. The Banjaras are a nomadic group who, in the villages I studied, identified themselves as *Adivasis*, that is those classified by the Census as Scheduled Tribe. The different groups classified as ST form about 3.9 per cent of the district's population.

5.4 Rural Classes in Context: Class, Caste and Dominance

The following table describes the sample of 44 landholders and labourers interviewed in this study.[71] They mostly belong to three villages – Kumbephal (Wave 1), Maangaon (Wave 2) and Kaamgaon (Wave 3). The three respondents from the Banjara (ST) community belonged to Banglatanda, a village where land is being acquired for the Bidkin node of the DMIC.

Table 5.4: Rural Classes in Aurangabad

Rural Class	Land Size	No. of Respondents	Caste	Labour Relations	Own Agricultural Assets (Tractor, Pumps)	Main Source of Income	Land Ownership after Acquisiton	Land Acquired with Compensation Money	Compensation for Assets and Crops	Access to State Institutions/ Political Networks
Landless	Landless	7 (16%)	SC (Maang), NT (Dhangar), ST (Banjara)	Net Sellers of Labourers	N/A	Wage Labour - Farm, Non-farm	Landless	NA	NA	None
Marginal	Up to 5 acres (2 ha.)	15 (34%)	62% Marathas, SC/NT	Net Sellers of Labourers	None	Cultivation; Wage Labour - Farm, Non-farm	Mostly Landless	None	None	None
Smallholder	5-10 acres (2-4 ha.)	7 (16%)	67% Marathas, 33% NT	Peak Season Buy Labour	Only 1 had a well	Cultivation; Non-farm Wage Labour	Mostly Small Landholdings	About Half	None	Weak (exceptions exist)
Dominant	More than 10 acres (> 4 ha.)	15 (34%)	87% Marathas, 1 Banjara, 1 Muslim	Net Buyers of Labourers	Most had pumps and wells; 1 had tractor	Surplus from Agriculture plus Small Business; Petty Trade; Non-Farm Wages	Mostly Large Landholdings	Mostly	Mostly (after litigation)	Strong

Source: Author's fieldwork; based on semi-structured interviews conducted in 2015-16

Before I delineate rural classes observed in the sample here, a few observations on the composition of the sample. Land-size recorded in column 2 represents land owned by the respondent at the *time of land acquisition*; landholding class, thus, reflects the respondent's status prior to acquisition and her socioeconomic capacity to navigate the process of land dispossession. Since the study was about land acquisition, I started out by primarily interviewing those who had land. The proportion of landless, labouring households in the sample, therefore, is much lower than what one finds in the district. As mentioned in the introduction, I conducted two focus-group interviews with two different labour gangs; they are not represented in the table here which is restricted to those with whom I conducted semi-structured interviews and systematically collated information on the different criteria presented in the table above.

Among landowning respondents, 34 per cent of the interviewees owned up to 5 acres (2 ha.) of land. This landholder class – 'marginal' group as per the official government

[71] I had conducted 50 semi-structured interviews, but I had missing information for a few variables in 6 of them. I had to drop them in this systematic classification

classification – is as high as 82 per cent in the district in Table 5.1. This landholding class thus is under-represented in my sample.

Around 13 per cent of the district owns between 5 and 10 acres (2 and 4 ha.) of land, that is the semi-medium category as per the state classification. This group is about 16 per cent in my sample and I classify them as the smallholder group.

The class I show as 'dominant', with landholdings of more than 10 acres (4 ha.), is 40 per cent of the respondents I interviewed. In the district, this is a privileged 3.5 per cent of all landholders. This group is over-represented in my sample for two reasons: first, as mentioned before, I started out by wanting to study land acquisition and the first few key respondents on the topic in any village were the local elites, such as the village headmen, with large landholdings. My sample snowballed off their contacts. They gave me information on others with similar landholdings, and with either similar experiences (to corroborate the accounts of the person making the introduction) or with entirely dissimilar (better) experiences, making the 'other' a subject of their scorn and envy.

Landless Class

The landless in the area primarily belong to the socially marginalised Scheduled Caste (*Maang* caste). A minority belong to the *Dhangar* caste and the *Banjara* community, classified as Nomadic Tribe and Scheduled Tribe, respectively, by the Census surveys. The landless Maang households live in hamlets separate from the landowning Maratha farmers. Their hamlets (*Dalit* hamlets) in the region are usually called Ambedkar Nagar[72] or Indira Nagar[73]. These households depend on casual, non-farm work in construction sites along the highway, industrial clusters in Aurangabad town, and since the early 2000s, in the S5IA.

[72] It is common to name Dalit hamlets after BR Ambedkar, a trained lawyer, social reformer, and leading voice for reforms for the Scheduled Caste in post-independence India. A Mahar (Scheduled Caste) himself, he strongly spoke against the hierarchical Hindu caste (varna-jati) system and its legitimisation of oppression of the ex-Untouchables; he was also importantly one of the drafters of India's Constitution

[73] Indira Nagar is named after houses made under the low-income housing scheme called Indira Awas Yojana, which in turn is named after Indira Gandhi, India's only woman Prime Minister till date and a key figure of the Indian National Congress

Unlike the landless marginal class in Vicol's Western Maharashtra region, the labouring class in my sample do not rely primarily on agricultural labour, at least not in the villages to which they belong. This is particularly true of the Maang caste: following Dalit mobilisation of the 1970s (mentioned briefly above), Dalit households prefer to labour in non-farm sectors outside their villages as an expression of breaking away from village-based economic and social oppression. Pandere, the Dalit activist quoted in chapter 3, linked the utility of the S5IA as an alternative to being economically tied to villages: 'At least these industries provide an opportunity for them to stay away from the village. This has been true for Dalits for a while. Wherever you find a station, you will find Dalit colonies. They rather work as coolies than work in the farm'.[74]

This class also comprises the economically vulnerable who depend on, what the livelihood literature (Chimhowu and Hulme 2006 in Scoones et al 2012) calls, 'back-foot' strategies – they are first-generation small shop keepers selling cigarettes, *bidis (*local tobacco*),* and *paan* (betel-nut leaf) or belong to families that have for generations provided a service, such as barbers. They need to draw on multiple sources of income as each source is precarious. The wife of one of the landless labourers makes brooms out of dried leaves that come from Indore (a city in the neighbouring State of Madhya Pradesh).

Some in this class survive on manual labour in the MIDC area. Most are not made aware of the projects associated with land acquisition and pick up information through rumours and hearsay: 'I don't know what DMIC is. In Maangaon, I have heard a lot of road construction work is going on. And I have heard in Kaamgaon people have gotten rich overnight – 36 lacs per acre I hear',[75] one landless labourer remarked when I enquired about ongoing land acquisition. The compensation rate in his quote is much higher than the official ongoing rate. The dominant class farmers were much more aware of the exact compensation rates and cases of prosperity as well as dashed expectations. This shows the landless class is not just physically separated from the rest of the village, they are also socially removed from the landed groups.

[74] Interview, Aurangabad, 21 March 2018
[75] Interview, Kumbephal, 3 November 2015

Marginal Class

The marginal class here, with land up to 5 acres, primarily belong to the Maratha caste, with rare SC and NT exceptions. Together, they are much like the broad 'lower group' category of the Satara study: they struggle to make do with production from agriculture alone and rely heavily on income from wage labour in agriculture or in non-farm work in town. It is mostly women of the household who engage in labour outside their own farms, while the men of the household focus on agricultural production. In peak harvesting seasons, they may seek reciprocal help from within their own class for labouring on their farms. Overall, however, households in the marginal class are 'net sellers of labour' and vulnerable to droughts, exogenous shocks on farms and life events, like ill-health or death.

A further trend among this class is their negotiation with the land acquisition process. With the compensation money they received, most spent it on immediate consumption needs: reinforcing the structures of their houses, repayment of loans, and daughters' weddings were the commonly cited expenses. Most households, as a consequence, have been rendered landless after their land was acquired. A minority of those dispossessed bought a cheap plot of land in a neighbouring village to prevent proletarianisation, but eventually lost the replacement plot to a major expense such as hospitalisation or wedding. This class, therefore, is proletarianised. Households in this class were materially at the margins of the rural economy prior to land acquisition, struggling constantly to simply survive on a combination of cultivation of coarse grains on their marginal landholding and wage labour. Today, they are still materially struggling at the margins of S5IA's industrial landscape. A labouring woman from a proletarianised household said of the change in her economic situation: 'same to same'.[76] I discuss the economic strategies of the landless and the marginal class, the 'sameness' in their state of precarity, and their transition into the new rural economy in chapter 9.

Smallholders Class

The rural class of 'smallholders' is largely made up of Marathas, with a few notable exceptions in the landowning Dhangars. This class, although socially homogenous as

[76] Interview, Kumbephal, 2 November 2015

Maratha farmers (*shetkaris*), is more economically differentiated than the marginal class, with material roots in both agriculture and non-farm work. It is comprised of both petty commodity producers, focused on simple survival, as well as those who manage 'intermittent accumulation' (Scoones et al 2012, 521), particularly at the higher end of the landholding spectrum. While most of them were able to manage with household labour for the majority of the year, two of the seven households found it necessary to hire outside labourers during peak sowing and harvesting seasons. The only household with 9 acres (3.6 ha.) of land also had a well for irrigation, but none of the households owned a tractor. A small proportion of households (two out of seven) spent a portion of the compensation amount on purchasing land elsewhere; usually this land was much smaller than what they lost and in a distant village where land was cheaper. Overall, even though they mainly belong to the Maratha caste, their small landholdings mean their social and political articulation was limited. This was evident in the process of land acquisition.

Respondents in this class felt they had limited influence and agency, as a class, to resist the state machinery. It was common to hear amongst this class that they had limited information and it came to them late: 'we heard from the Sarpanchji [village head]'[77]; 'no one came to us. We saw our Gutt no. [land title no.] in the Gazette [Government Notice]'.[78] They were dependent on the local elites from the dominant class to oppose and negotiate. Many found this dependence reliable, legitimate and ultimately beneficial: 'Nanasaheb was the Sarpanch. He knows politicians. We would have been cheated even further if it were not for him'.[79] Others lamented their reliance on local elites from the dominant class, particularly when the outcome was one that they did not favour: 'he said he would fight, but then he turned out to be an agent',[80] said one smallholder speaking of the village head at the time of acquisition; 'big landholders agree at the price they want. We have to follow. What can we do?',[81] said another. The class of smallholder depended primarily on agriculture with one adult member always involved in some form of wage labour. Most of them bought smaller parcels of land in neighbouring village where they could afford it post acquisition.

[77] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 15 May 2016
[78] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 15 May 2016
[79] Interview, Maangaon, 10 December 2015
[80] Interview, Maangaon, 10 December 2015
[81] Interview, Kumbephal, 2 November 2015

Dominant Class

The dominant class in the sample includes households with 10 acres (4 ha.) or more: a thin layer of landholders in the district (3.4 per cent) belong to this landholding group. It is above the 7-acre (2.8 ha.) threshold for the best-off farmers in Vicol's recent study. It is axiomatic in Aurangabad's context to say that an overwhelming majority of households in the class were Marathas. This class of households typically generate a surplus from agriculture in most years, farm with the help of agricultural labour, and have access to irrigation infrastructure and tractors. They have multi-cropped plots and grow two crops a year. Some of them have orchards of sweet lime, oranges, pomegranate and sandalwood. They are largely capitalist farmers, and most have a steady source of non-farm income: non-farm enterprises such as a small shop, factory job, employment in the public sector. Most used a chunk of their compensation money to purchase land of the size lost.

I define them as the 'dominant class' not based solely on their relatively 'best-off' economic position. Households in this class typically had social networks that helped a son in the family get a job in the local bureaucracy or police, or open businesses that required licenses, such as security guard contracting. Their relatively larger contiguous landholdings meant their compliance with the process of land dispossession was critical. For a relatively frictionless acquisition process, they had to be incorporated and their consent collected. Either state actors of the acquisition machinery were proactively involved in getting them to comply; or their incorporation was sought by drawing them through the local elites amongst them.

Within this class of dominant farmers, there are a few individuals who are the local elites. They become critical to the process of land dispossession which I will show in the next chapter. It is thus important to understand their location in rural politics.

Local Rural Elites

Parthasarthy (2015) draws attention to the importance of provincial rural elites in contemporary capitalist transformation in India. In his article, he moves between 'provincial peasant elites', 'rural agrarian elites', and 'agrarian-politician-elites' seamlessly. Given that he devotes considerable space to critiquing definitions of class in Marxist and critical

scholarship, his interchangeable usage of the terms I mention here does not appear to be an analytical oversight. The use of multiple classificatory terms for rural elites lends itself to the idea that a core group of powerful individuals (men) with an economic base in rural villages but networks extending to cities tend to wield social influence in rural areas. Those individuals that the critical scholarship on agrarian studies, sociology, and political economy in India identify as rural elites share certain characteristics.

First, they belong overwhelmingly to either intermediate peasant castes (such as the Marathas in Maharashtra or Kammas in Andhra Pradesh) or, to a lesser extent, the lower caste and other backward classes (like the Gouds in Karnataka). Second, the origin of their material accumulation resides in agriculture and their social base can be found in the local peasant castes. Third, their strategy of accumulation and upward mobility is a deeply political process involving collective mobilisation but also individual power struggles across the rural and urban spectrum. For Parthasarthy (2015, 817), thus, the 'provincial elites' are 'sections of the peasantry who are politically powerful, and increasingly influential in determining the political regulation of neoliberal economic policies and the management of the global economic linkages.' Members of this class play an important role in thwarting or enabling capitalist development not only in the countryside but increasingly in emerging towns and peri-urban areas. It is their role that needs to be interrogated further. Moreover, the rural dominant elites 'need to be represented as a historical fact, their origins need to be constructed historically, something that has been done for the merchants and traders, and industrial elite of India, but not for the provincial capitalists whose origins as peasants continue to define their capitalist enterprises' (ibid).

Similarly, Lele (1982), in his study on politics in Maharashtra, finds it important to differentiate a core group of rural elites from the dominant Maratha caste. Recognising the heterogeneity of the Maratha caste, Lele reminds us that, while control of better quality land, ritual rank and numerical strength makes them a 'dominant' caste, there are dynamic processes of mobilisation at play that allows a small group of elites to maintain dominance 'in the face of substantial internal disparities of wealth, power and status'. This is meant to show the heterogeneity within a class. As a reminder of the 'class' character of caste, Lele sieves out a group of 'elites': 'the ruling elite of the so-called dominant caste maintain their dominance over the unprivileged members of their own caste, and other subordinate castes, by manipulating established political institutions and regimes and, if necessary, by changing

them so as to conform to their interests' (ibid, 155). Furthermore, the emergence of this cluster from its agriculture base to control the 'levers of power in the state', according to Lele (1982), has resulted in a pluralist elite hegemony that withstands changes in the larger economy as a rural landed class.

As mentioned in the introduction, a few individuals were repeatedly cited as 'influential' – 'big men' ('bade aadmi') – in the villages. They are the local rural elites in the study area, a category that is empirically informed. The 'rural elites' are also a conceptual category – they are dominant figures, particularly through significant moments of social and economic change, such as land dispossession for industrialisation and urbanisation.It is not simply that they belong to the dominant class based on the caste-class position defined above; their class-based dominance is further reinforced by a combination of political and social networks. Thus, the category of people I classify as 'rural elites' is a sociological category of local influence and power. The sociological category, as 'repositories of local influence and power', has analytical import in most rural contexts of the Global South; however, the social, economic and political sources from which the local influence is derived are bound to be context specific. In this case, the local rural elites are Maratha landholders from the dominant class, who also have political and social connections spread across the villages and urban towns.

An indicator of the rural elites exercising their dominance for Lele (ibid) is that elites tend to subsume lower caste aspirations when they emerge: 'their inclusion invariably takes place on terms set by the elite, but at the same time it gives the appearance of equality of opportunity and the possibility of the redistribution of privilege. It also destroys attitudes towards repressive situations' (Lele quoted in Church). I also find this in my sample. The ex-Sarpanch of one of the villages in Wave 3, who belongs to the Scheduled Caste community, operates a small local construction business with three other Maratha large landholders. He said he was a local representative of the nationalist, right-wing Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)[82] political party in the village, which gave him connections. This made him attractive as an 'agent' of those who were already in construction: 'Some of the larger Maratha farmers (*gaon ke bade log*) were already in the local construction business in a cluster of villages in and around. First, I had to prove myself as a good agent and now I

[82] MNS like the Shiv Sena draws on a regional-linguistic ideology

work with them'[83]. Not surprisingly, in a manner typical of the local dominant elites, the respondent also advocated the non-farm opportunities land acquisition will provide. This group of local elites from within this class is critical to the process of land dispossession.

The members of the dominant class that the smallholders depend on and feel subordinated by are the local rural elites. They are local village leaders, capitalist farmers, and local fixers with a mosaic of enterprises across the rural-urban spectrum. These individuals have networks extending to the town. It is these individuals that members of the smallholding class, described above, depended on during the process of acquisition. Wider networks of elites enable them to have a larger set of information at the negotiating table with local state officials. While the compensation price is set in the interest of individual accumulation on the part of the elite, these networks enable the capture of a higher value for commodified land than what would otherwise be possible for a majority of the landholders in the absence of a counter to the state's power in negotiation. I will describe their role at the time of acquisition in more detail in the following chapter. Here, I want to point out that they form a thin layer within the dominant rural class.

The vast majority of non-marginal Maratha farmers – those from the smallholding and dominant classes – have been excluded entirely from employment in the industrial zone, carving out different trajectories of reproduction and accumulation, a finding that different studies on dispossession in India have confirmed[84]. I will show the various economic trajectories they have carved out through non-farm business, petty trade, and gatekeeping activities in chapters 7 and 9. I will also show why many of them want to hold on to land and what that implies for the significance of land as a store of value, means of production, and base for local dominance today.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I show how the study area is socially and materially differentiated. Critical scholarship on land, including those with a Marxian lens, make clear that different

[83] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015
[84] Levien (2018) for Rajasthan; Vijayabaskar (2017) for Tamil Nadu

households are placed differently to navigate socioeconomic changes and negotiate with the state.

I find that the study area can be divided into four classes. I highlight four observations on 'class' that are of relevance not just to the study here but to contemporary rural society. They show continuity in what has now crystallised as social fact about the countryside (points 2 and 4), as well as a few shifting tendencies (points 1 and 3).

First, while there are instances of a few backward castes and lower castes in every class category, we see strong caste-concentration at the lowest and highest ends of the socioeconomic spectrum: the landless and the marginal are overwhelmingly non-Maratha, while the dominant class is largely Maratha.

Second, the Marathas are not a homogenous social grouping. In the rural economy, their differentiation is predicated strongly on landholdings.

Third, the local elites are a few individuals from the dominant class where landholding matters, but the diversification into non-farm sources of income and urban networks matter more. It is here that we must note seriously Attwood's warning about taking every Maratha uncritically as a local powerhouse but recognising instead that even when 'dominant caste' has a certain applicability in the analysis of local politics, 'it cannot be interpreted as the definition of the local political elite' (1974, 226).

Fourth, following from above, as many studies on agrarian political economy in India show, rural classes are best understood as a caste-class combination. Class based on economic resources is not the only axis of differentiation in a local economy and intersects with other axes of differences and divides. Therefore, class relations, as Bernstein (2010, 115) lucidly explains, 'are universal but not exclusive 'determination' of social practices of capitalism'.

The state cannot get its visions off the ground without some traction from below. In chapter 3, I showed how a combination of sub-regional politics and agrarian crisis generates a 'near consensus' within large sections of society. In this chapter, I show how material interests are fragmented across rural classes. The three conditions – the presence of an embedded state as opposed to intractable private capital, wide acceptance of industrialisation as a way

out of ‘backwardness’, and a heterogeneous society – come together to stave off stiff opposition. This process is further enabled by the compliance of key actors within the dominant class, discussed next.

Chapter 6: Dominance, Compliance, and Rural Accumulation at the Time of Acquisition

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the heterogeneity across households that lost land for the S5IA+. Using a combination of their economic and social positions in the rural economy at the time of acquisition, I showed households in the area belong to four classes. I introduced the concept of dominance and defined a rural class as 'dominant'. I described how Maratha farmers have been influential in the local political economy of the State and the reason they are the dominant class in my study.

In the previous chapter, I elaborated on my definition of local rural elites: a sociological category of local influence and power. In this case, the local rural elites are Maratha landholders from the dominant class, who also have political and social connections spread across the villages and urban towns. In this chapter, I show why local rural elites themselves comply to the process of land dispossession and how they play a critical in fostering compliance in their community, particularly at the stage of formal 'consent' generation. IN chapter 3, I explained that there is a 'near consensus' over the need for industrialisation. In every wave of land dispossession, thus, key members of rural elites complied with land dispossession to advance their material interests. At the moment of land acquisition, thus, I found alliances of mutual co-operation between the local elites and the state. The elites further co-opted other members of the dominant class, generating an overall environment of compliance to the process of land dispossession on behalf of the state. In this chapter, thus, I focus on why and how rural elites generate compliance. I also show how the basis of compliance for the rural elites as well as other members of the dominant class changes over time, making the cost of compliance for the state progressively higher.

First, I sketch profiles of local elites to show what prototypical local dominance looks like in contemporary rural Maharashtra. They occupy different social locations in the rural power structure and their varied economic and social resources enable them to serve as the state's intermediaries in the process of land acquisition.

Second, I outline their strategies for forging alliances with the state. As mentioned in chapter 2 and elucidated in the previous chapter, co-opting rural elites is not unique to projects of the neoliberal state nor restricted to the process of land dispossession. In this case, the local rural elites comply and use their influence to generate overall compliance across waves of land dispossession. In this chapter, I highlight the specific strategies of the rural elites to negotiate the terms of compliance. This has implications for their politics, as I will show in chapter 8.

Third, I show how compliant local rural elites help generate overall compliance in their communities and prevent resistance. They do this by conducting the complex political work of 'consent' generation on behalf of state officials. It is important to make concrete this work because they aid the state in performing the important work of legitimising the project of land dispossession.

The use of the term 'consent' in quotations is deliberate. In state-led land dispossession, 'consent' generation is a necessary formal practice. Generating 'consent' to land dispossession is complex political work. In the case of land dispossession, it is more accurate to see the eventual acceptance of this complex political process for large sections of the affected rural classes as compliance and *resignation*, particularly among landholders from the marginal class and the smallholders. The use of the term 'consent' is, thus, analytically misleading. The process of 'getting people on board' is a cocktail of carrot-and-stick tactics involving incentives, negotiations, convincing, coercion, and threat. Given the highly unequal power structure and accompanying agency in negotiating or resisting advances of local rural elites and state officials, more often it is the case that landholders resign to terms acceptable to the powerful and dominant. In getting people to eventually resign to the terms, the local rural elites are in fact performing the political work of brokering 'peace' – an incorporation into the development project with limited friction.

It is important to not overstate the non-confrontational modality of 'brokering' in the region. While the state prefers to proceed through a broadly non-frictional process involving compliant key local elites to build a hegemonic acceptance of the project, it uses threats and coercion when necessary. These are tactics used mostly on the smallholding classes that I will discuss in chapter 8. Here the focus is on the local rural elites from the dominant class and the political work they do at the time of land acquisition. *I use the term consent in this*

chapter, therefore, in quotes to indicate its semantic use, rather than conceptual. What I show in the thesis analytically is that rural classes have to *comply* to land dispossession; compliant rural elites play an active role in legitimising state plans and generating further compliance; the basis of compliance changes over time, shifting from hope and aspiration of factory jobs to material gains; shifting basis of compliance makes and will continue to make land dispossession increasingly more costly for the state.

Fourth, I show how the compliant elites are able to secure material gains and rents – that is accumulate – in the short term. The trajectories of accumulation they embark on are highly individualised, plural, and fragmented. It is thus a departure from the more secure and sustained networks of state patronage into which rural Maratha elites have historically been incorporated into.

6.1 Local Rural Elites: Profiles of 'Elites' from the Dominant Class

In this section, I sketch the profiles of four local rural elite. Descriptions of their economic, political and social resources are aimed at highlighting the concrete reality of local 'dominance' today. These are the local 'big men' with large landholdings at the time of acquisition. Over and above land, what has fuelled their local dominance at the time of acquisition are networks and non-farm income linking them beyond the rural agrarian economy of the village. All four profiles presented here are of local elites from Wave 2 and 3 villages. Since land acquisition for the DMIC was still ongoing at the time of fieldwork, their names as key local actors appeared repeatedly, at times derogatorily ('agent of the state'[85] or *dalal*), and at other times, simply as an accepted fact (the 'big men' who 'know everything'[86]).

The narratives of those from Wave 3 bore the optimism associated with the 'economy of anticipation' (Cross 2015) and their commitment to 'development' through industrialisation as allies of the state. The responses of those from Wave 2 were more layered and complex: they articulated their reasons for compliance in 2008, as well as current frictions with the

[85] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015
[86] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015

state. In this chapter, I focus on their narratives of the role they played at the time of land acquisition and their strategies in negotiating the terms of compliance for the community and for themselves.

6.1.1 'Sarpanch'[87]

Nanasaheb, a 50-year old landowner of Wave 2, lives in a two-storeyed house on the highway. He was the *sarpanch* in Maangaon at the time land was acquired in 2008. Around 25 acres (10 ha.) of his land were acquired for the expanding S5IA+. His living room had a large flat screen TV and a cabinet that proudly exhibited his proximity to two prominent political figures through photographs - Narayan Rane (introduced in chapter 4 as the one associated with the polluting distillery; he was Minister of Revenue when land was acquired) and Kalyan Kade (Member of the Legislative Assembly). The photographs, he mentioned, were taken when he was the *Sarpanch* of the village.

At the time of land acquisition, he had 10 acres (4 ha.) of agricultural land and 15 acres (6 ha.) of orchard. He grew bajra, jowar and cotton and traded them, usually through private traders. He also cultivated fruits promoted as part of the relatively new horticulture initiatives, such as sweet lime, pomegranate, mud apple, and had a well on his orchard-farm. He hired agricultural labourers from neighbouring villages to work on both his agricultural land and the orchard.

Today, he has multiple sources of income outside of agriculture. He runs a transportation business: he owns a fleet of ten trucks[88] used to transport goods for courier companies, such as SafeExpress, on a contractual basis. The trucks run on four routes connecting Maharashtra to Gujarat in the west and West Bengal in the east. He is an active land broker with an established business of 'plotting', a local colloquial term to describe the typically combined commercial activities of buying land and developing buildings for housing or petty business and commerce. In some cases, plotting does not necessarily involve developing a full structure on the land; building a cemented boundary wall on a plot of land can also be

[87] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[88] In the absence of his father, his son described their flourishing transportation business comprising 35 trucks

referred to as plotting. Around the time of fieldwork in 2016, he had bought 10 acres[89] (4 ha.) of land next to the MIDC S5IA.

Nanasaheb's eldest son, around 22 years of age, completed an engineering degree from the engineering college in Aurangabad in 2015. He had been offered a job in the local office of Larsen & Toubro Ltd., an Indian multinational construction company, in Aurangabad town. He said he chose to decline the offer and instead join his 'family business.' As the eldest son, he preferred managing his family's expanding enterprises in the transport sector and, increasingly, the business of land 'plotting'.

6.1.2 'Farmer-Businessman'[90]

Kisan Kale (Kisanji hereon) is a 51-year-old landholder from the dominant class in Maangaon. His land was acquired around 2008. He lives in a concrete three-storeyed house with his ageing parents, wife, three sons and their three wives, and five grandchildren. He had 14.5 acres (5.8 ha.) of farmland acquired. His household is paradigmatic of the kind of non-farm diversification necessary to maintain and reproduce local dominance in India and summarised in the previous chapter.

In the 1970s, his father and uncle together cultivated around 5 acres (2 ha.) of land in the village. When Kisanji was about 15 years old, he started working as a general 'helper' in a steel factory in the Chikalthana industrial area. He was able to access the job through a labour contractor from Aurangabad town. His line manager was a man from West Bengal (a '*Bangali babu*'[91] as he called him) who observed him for six months and, based on his performance, absorbed him as a machine operator on the company payroll. He was made a permanent worker and did not have to go through the contractor. The contractor, in the early 1980s, used to pay the labourers Rs. 2.5 for 12 hours (£0.01 per hour[92]). As an employee directly employed by the factory, he was paid Rs. 7 for 8 hours (£0.05 per hour). After he was made permanent in the factory, he got married. He also purchased 14.5 acres (5.8 ha.)

[89] Here again his son had said 20 acres (8 ha.) of land
[90] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015; Second interview, Maangaon, 7 September 2018
[91] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015
[92] Conversion rate in 1985 was 1 GBP=15.87 INR (Pacific Exchange Rate Services)

of land from his uncle in the village for INR 21,500 (£1355). His parents and wife oversaw crop production on the farm and hired labourers to work on their land.

While he was working for the factory, he learned to drive and got a driving license. He then moved to another steel factory in the Chikalthana industrial area and started to drive trucks to transport material for the company. Over time he was able to build a well on the farmland he owned. In 1997, he acquired a tractor using a bank loan. Access to ground water on his own farm allowed him to expand crop production to jowar and wheat. In 2008, when land was acquired, he was growing bajra and moong, which were largely rain-fed, and jowar and wheat irrigated by water from the well. At the time, his middle and younger sons supervised farm work, while he drove luxury vehicles. His eldest son was employed outside of the household farm: he worked for the police in Aurangabad. Kisanji said his son got the police job in Aurangabad purely 'on merit'[93]. He had invested in tutorials for his son to prepare for the competitive examination for the State's police services. Under the Maratha quota, his son scored the highest marks – 'was at the top of the list'[94].

Around 2000, his wife forayed into livestock rearing using a local Self-Help Group. She bought a goat, sold it and then bought a buffalo. Using savings from milk production and their farm, Kisanji and his wife have expanded their animal husbandry into a capitalist buffalo farm on 1 acre of land. In December 2015, they had 75 buffaloes, which by mid-2018 had increased to 110 buffaloes. He has migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh who look after the buffaloes and milk them for his dairy business.

Figure 6.1: Kisan Kale's Office in his Two-Storeyed House

[93] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015
[94] Same as above

In 2016, he bought a truck for his small transportation business. The idea of providing transportation services on contract came from his previous experience of driving trucks for the factory. When factories in the area need to transport raw materials or finished products, they contract out to large transportation businesses. The contractors, in turn, sub-contract the smaller orders to local enterprises of the size run by Kisanji, or slightly larger such as Nanasaheb's described above. There is, thus, an intermediary between Kisanji and the company for whom he uses his truck to transports goods. One of the sub-contracts he gets is for Radico industries to transport empty alcohol bottles. At the time of my second field visit in 2018, his truck had just completed a trip between Aurangabad and Bangalore for Radico. He has a driver who earns wages on a per-trip basis. At times, he drives the truck himself, along with his second son, Shiv. During my first visit in 2015 he had been away on one such trip with Shiv. I had made two visits to his house before he returned from one of the long journeys. The picture above is that of the room in his house he calls his 'office'. He attends to all official visitors in the room.

6.1.3 Farmer and 'Activist-Social Worker' - Professionals in Town

B. Mule, a Maratha caste landowner with land in one of the villages acquired in Wave 3 is vocal about his support for industrialisation as a path to 'development' in the region. A journalist in a local leading newspaper, Divyamarathi, he was an elected member in the village council (Deputy Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat in 2006) in Kaamgaon. With political connections and social networks extending all the way from Aurangabad town to the state capital, Mumbai, Mule self-identifies as an 'activist-social worker'. He attended university and his education, beyond giving him the requisite credential, has equipped him with cultural capital that has been resourceful in navigating an occupation like journalism: 'I am educated. And journalists from Mumbai feel comfortable talking to me'[95], he told me citing an example of a female journalist from Times of India who interviewed him. His access to and integration into urban networks becomes clear as one begins to take stock of the many issues to which he lends his voice in the English media: two farmers – husband and wife – burdened by debt committed suicide in a neighbouring village in 2006, when he was the Deputy *Sarpanch* of Kaamgaon. A Times of India article on farmer suicides in Aurangabad (different from the one mentioned above) quoted his views on the couple's tragic death. That he is an authoritative voice on rural issues in Aurangabad is not an outcome of 'lazy' media research; he has actively cultivated networks through his part-time job as a journalist and positioned himself as a knowledgeable and articulate spokesperson for the villages close to Aurangabad. He is fluent in Hindi and understands English even if he does not speak it fluently. A 2015 Planning Commission document on the 'reconstruction of the process of consultation of civil society'[96] listed him as an 'external stakeholder' consulted in the creation of the document.

Mule's experiences as a journalist have further enabled him to diversify into commercial activities by being among the first to know about commercial opportunities in town. By cultivating political networks and economic connections in banks and co-operative societies, he has been able to convert information into action conducive to accumulation. Mule had diversified out of agriculture even before 24 acres (approx. 10 ha.) of his land in Kaamgaon were notified for acquisition in Wave 3. While he oversaw agricultural production, he was

[95] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015
[96] Link https://www.niti.gov.in/niti/writereaddata/files/document_publication/booklet.pdf

mostly engaged in petty brokerage through land transactions and rental income from rooms he rented out in Aurangabad. In fact, by 2016 he had started to spend a significant amount of time in town, loosening his residential ties with Kaamgaon village.

Mule is constantly on the lookout for opportunities in the non-farm commercial sector and is keenly following the development around one of the compensation offers – the option of 15%-land buy-back described in chapter 2. Mule, through his friends in the Aurangabad office of MIDC, is informed and optimistic: 'Kaamgaon land is in the yellow zone, which means commercial development can take place. We will develop the land we get from the buy-back scheme in Magarpatta format. (*Hum Magarpatta banayenge)*'[97].

The trope of Magarpatta was prominent among and specific to the local rural elites in Wave 3. Magarpatta, as briefly referred to in chapters 3 and 4 as one the euphoric cries, is an urban township in the periphery of the second-largest city of the State, Pune. It stands on 400 acres of land and was developed by a 'coalition' of Maratha farmers who wanted to take advantage of urbanisation that was rapidly sprawling out of Pune and spilling into its rural outskirts. In 2008, 80 per cent of the project, involving an industrial estate for IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) industries and 7500 apartments, villas and commercial centres, was complete (Sami 2011). Magarpatta rose to prominence through the media and urban folklore as the success story of enterprising Maratha farmers. Through her research on Magarpatta, Sami (ibid, 154) argues that coalitions 'that exist in Indian cities build on personal social networks, making individual relationships much more important' (ibid, 154). The importance, though not as the only variable, of 'individual relationships' and trust also hold true for rural cooperatives in Maharashtra, which have been at the core of dynamic capitalist development in agriculture in the State. Magarpatta is located in Western Maharashtra which has an illustrious history of rural sugar co-operatives based on coalitions within and through clusters of villages (Attwood 1992). What Sami (ibid, 155) shows additionally is that:

> The catalyst that converts a social network into a coalition is the ability of one or two key individuals – like the leader of this particular farmer community in Pune, Satish Magar – to recognize or sometimes create an opportunity out of emerging circumstances and consequently bring

[97] Interview, same as above

> together in a coalition other key persons who bring specific resources to the group.

This is the role Mule envisions for himself through the expanding S5IA+. I will return to this later in chapter 8 and in the conclusion, questioning the feasibility of this aspiration given the state of local politics following land dispossession. Here it is enough to note that Mule, charged with this aspiration, is an active ally of the state.

Similarly, Nanda Lele from one of the villages of Wave 3, who has worked as a journalist for two leading local newspapers (Lokmat and Dainik Jagran) over the last decade, spoke of how his 'networks' as a journalist served him in negotiating the process of land acquisition. Around 6 acres (2.4 ha.) of orchard land were acquired from him for DMIC-related development. He was able to retain, through negotiation, a portion between two and three acres, and negotiated to get compensated not just for the land but also the sweet lime trees that grew on it. Although he did not state as such, I suspect, in return for garnering support, he will have the remaining plot acquired for a higher appreciated rate later, or through a private sale to someone in the network of one of the state officials. As mentioned in the introduction and earlier in this chapter, the difference between the rural elites from the dominant class and other rich farmers from the same class is the ability of the former to demand and realise their entitlement – that Lele got compensated for standing crops is a product of his awareness of his entitlements, ability to draw on legal documents, and local power to stir formal and informal friction in the process of land acquisition by the state. His children have no interest in looking after the agricultural plots – his 17-year-old son is studying computer science in Aurangabad and his daughter is still in school. He identified himself as a farmer who was also an 'activist-social worker'[98].

While Lele is not strictly from one of the sample villages, he was the second person to identify himself as an 'activist-social worker', the exact term I had heard Mule employ to describe himself. The term demands reflection, particularly in the context of the process of land dispossession. The farmer plus 'activist-social worker' label, it was apparent, endowed both Mule and Lele with economic and social capital simultaneously. The range of 'social work' they performed – serving as an elected member, writing about local agrarian issues,

[98] Interview, Bidkin, 7 November 2015

being seen as lending their voice on behalf of the villages to official state reports and documents, petitioning 'on behalf' of their communities' – generates a level of social capital that the state officials find useful at the time of land acquisition. They have credibility as well-informed and networked resources for those within the villages, as I will show with further evidence below, and simultaneously have credibility as 'grounded local' voices in urban centres like Aurangabad city and Mumbai. Their compliance is key to imbuing land dispossession with a certain level of legitimacy for both generating consent locally and diffusing opposition from outside.

6.1.4 Non-Farm Income and Networks: Sources for Negotiating with the State

The profiles of the four Maratha rural elites from the dominant class demonstrate the important of non-farm income and networks.

Access to non-farm income – such as regular income from a son in the police force, rent, or a livestock farm – is a significant source of advantage. It provides local elites with leverage during the process of land acquisition. Explaining how dominant class farmers navigate periods of exogenous shock in the agrarian economy of Andhra Pradesh, Parthasarthy (2015, 822) says:

> That rich peasants continue to have resources to buy land, and can even go on crop holiday rather than pay market wages to agricultural labor indicates a kind of agrarian crisis that affects poorer sections of the peasantry and landless labor, but not the entire range of classes in the agrarian structure.

Similarly, this ability to fall back on other sources of income endows local dominant elites with bargaining capacity not available to most at the time of land acquisition.

Social and political networks, such as the kind Mule and Lele nurture in Aurangabad town and Mumbai, highlight that, to remain relevantly dominant locally, one needs networks in the commercial urban centres. In relation to brokering land deals and bridging the 'social distance' (Levien 2015, 83-4) between urban private buyers and rural sellers, both Sud (2016) and Levien (ibid) have argued that not just the presence of networks but their quality also matters. The use of political networks to play the land market, for example, is not specific to neoliberal India, though it now takes new and augmented forms. Land reforms in

the 1950s had introduced frictions in rural land markets through ceilings and restrictions. Rural landed elites overcame these formal hurdles to retain control over land through political connections.

As I show next, access to non-farm income and networks beyond the village are particularly important for local rural elites to be key players not just during the process but also in aftermath of land dispossession.

6.2 Local Rural Elites: Terms of Compliance

In this section, I highlight the strategies through which local rural elites set themselves apart as a force with which the state must contend. Studies that observe land dispossession at the early stages of the acquisition process may find a rural context mired in 'resistance'. In this case, 'protest' is a strategy for rural elites to negotiate better terms of their own compliance with the process of land dispossession. The cost of compliance, as I find across the Waves, increases over time. This increase is not simply appreciation in the value of commodified land. They reflect a rising cost of legitimating 'development' that marginalises a majority of the rural classes.

6.2.1 Local Elites and 'Protest' as Negotiation

As explained in chapter 4, land for the S5IA+ has been acquired under the MID Act. Under this act, consultation with those affected and conducting an impact assessment are not legally mandatory. The acquisition clause in the MID Act 1962 requires neither consultation nor, in a strict formal sense, consent. I'm reproducing the text from the Act quoted in the chapter again for recall:

> If, at any time in the opinion of the State Government, any land is required for the purpose of development by the Corporation,…the State Government may acquire such land by publishing in the Official Gazette a notice specifying the particular purpose for which land is required, and stating therein that the State Government has

> decided to acquire the land in pursuance of this section' (MID Act 1962, Chapter VI, section 32(1)).

As this clause states, projects decided by MIDC are simply announced through the Official Gazette that people can access through the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer, the administrative unit below that of the Collector. Consultation with the Gram Sabha or the village Panchayat is a necessary feature only in cases where the land to be acquired falls under Schedule Areas[99]. Legal provisions for the acquisition of land under the Act confer the state's acquisition machinery, the Collector's office, with incredible power, including the use of force, to compulsorily dispossess landholders, as discussed in chapter 4. State actors, in spite of these powers, prefer to negotiate and broker a relatively 'peaceful' process, with limited friction, confrontation, and controversy. In the words of a senior bureaucrat, A Shinde, who has been involved with land acquisition both as part of the Collector's office and MIDC: 'We do negotiations with the Gram Sabha[100] [village members]. The whole process, especially the compensation amount, is all consensus…We have to get them [landholders] on board'.[101]

Getting 'people on board' is complex political work involving the generation of 'consent' and consensus. The 'all consensus' over the compensation amount quoted above is primarily elite consensus – the state apparatus first gets into protracted negotiations with local rural elites to agree on the compensation amount.

Local elites form the crust of society the state must co-opt in order to begin the process of acquisition, even in cases where the state has the legal authority to compulsorily acquire land. Local elites, as a corollary, form small powerful arrangements of landholders, the class configuration of which varies across contexts, when first faced with the process of acquisition. I observed this in all three waves of acquisition. In every instance, these groups labelled their responses to the state as 'protest'. The protests, however, were a performance of local power and dominance in order to negotiate better terms. The terms varied based on

[99] Areas with significant population belonging to the Scheduled Tribes and protected under the PESA Act 1996
[100] He Gram Sabha is comprised of every member of the village on the voter's list, including the elected village council called the Panchayat of which the Sarpanch is the head
[101] Interview, Aurangabad, 28 February 2016

the political capacity and social power of the local elites, as well as their understanding of what the transformation entailed.

Nanasaheb (the Sarpanch of one of the villages of Wave 2) framed his negotiation with the state as a collective act to achieve a larger common good – 'No village ever readily gives land. We had protested and **I** made sure MIDC could not enter the village. The initial offer was 2 lacs. We fought hard to get it to increase to 8.5 lacs per-acre (GBP 26,048 per hectare)'[102]. The 'protest' is, in part, an expression of gatekeeping. As an elected figure of authority, Nanasaheb wanted to first make sure that 'people did not get a bad deal[103]' ('*humein bevakoof nahin bana rahe hain*') and assert his local dominance in the village as a gatekeeper of local interests. It was, however, clear that the main motive behind the 'protest' was to negotiate a higher price. This he was able to do by harnessing his local authority to put together a group of landholders whose cumulative holdings amounted to a proportion of land that was a clear threat to the state's plan. He also made use of political networks to negotiate with the Collector's office: 'I was Sarpanch. I knew people. I was not going to get fooled.[104]' The photographs with ministers he proudly displayed in his living room and pointed out to me are illustrative of the kind of vertical political networks Sarpanches like him maintain and leverage when required.

Mule, the vocal 'farmer-social worker' described above, led a small group of landholders in the 'fight'[105] against MIDC: their demands were a higher compensation rate, compensation for standing crops, and a written assurance from MIDC that the promised 15% developed land would be located centrally within the DMIC region, and not outside of the commercial zone that is expected to support a manufacturing and services industry and a speculative micro-economy. In the case of Mule, he used his urban networks, cultivated through his job as a journalist, that gave him access to information on the market rate of land – the 'going rate' – that people in town were willing to pay for land in the village that was closer to the highway. He was able to use this information to negotiate a better price for the village:

[102] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[103] Same as above
[104] Same as above
[105] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015

> I knew the Ready Reckoner rate[106] for land next to the highway was 1 cr. 24 lacs per acre [GBP 422,000 per hectare]. I told the Collector that there was no question of selling it. We began to demand 30 lacs per-acre [GBP 102,000 per hectare]. Problem is that those on Western side of the village with less fertile land were willing to sell it for 20 lacs [GBP 68,000 per hectare]. So, in the end we then settled for 23 lacs [GBP 102,000 per hectare] because those people with less fertile land began to look weak. They were going to comply, so we did not want to make more trouble.[107]

Similarly, Lele started a movement titled DMIC Prakalp Gasth Samithi to, in his words, 'oppose the forcible acquisition of land'[108]. From the rest of his explanation of the acquisition process and his role, it was clear that his 'opposition' was not a struggle to prevent the expropriation of the 6 acres (2.4 ha.) of his orchard or that of other farmers. Nor was it a normative opposition to industrialisation, a point I made using his example in chapter 3 on 'near consensus' among the local rural elites. Lele's opposition is a strategy to negotiate a higher compensation price in order to invest in his non-farm enterprises, which he explained to me as follows:

> The entry point of negotiation is to protest. To refuse to sell land. But eventually everyone would sell land because there is no water. So I met a lot of people. The initial offer was 10 lacs. *I started to discuss it with Narayan Rane* [politician introduced in chapter 4]. He and I were able to negotiate the price up to Rs. 23 lacs per acre. The Collector, Vikram Kumar, is a nice, understanding, and smart man ('*acche, bhale aur samajhdar aadmi')*. We fought hard and then agreed to 23 lacs, which is a lot. Nobody will even pay Rs. 7 lacs for this land to be very honest with you.[109]

Resistance offered by groups mobilised by local elites, such as the ones above, if not dissolved, can over time amount to formidable political and procedural hurdles for the state. It is this cohort of local elites the state needs to first co-opt. Officials at the MIDC and

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[106] Ready Reckoner rate is the 'market' rate based on land sales reported to the Land Revenue department
[107] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015
[108] Interview, Bidkin, 7 November 2015
[109] Interview, Bidkin, 7 November 2015

bureaucrats in the Collector's office understand perfectly well that there are spaces for negotiation with local elites. This understanding emerges from their embeddedness in the rural society. Equally, it shows the state aims to proceed with legitimacy, diffusing resistance tactically.

6.2.2 Cost of Compliance: Increasing over Waves

The basis of compliance to the process of land dispossession has evolved over time. For the landholders in Wave 1, the experience of the 1980s industrial area with relatively labour-absorptive factories, such as Bajaj Ltd., was a local precedence. The reason for compliance in Wave 1 was, thus, the aspiration of acquiring factory and non-farm employment in the industrial area by the state that enjoyed legitimacy. Landholders accepted the compensation rate set by the state. All classes of farmers from Wave 1 said they did not realise there was room for negotiation. The rate was higher than the ongoing price in the local land market and they were not aware of the possibility of bargaining with state officials. Moreover, they had hopes and expectations of being able to transition to industrial employment, particularly the educated sons of dominant class landholders.

By 2008, as the lacklustre reality of the S5IA began to surface in the community, expectations of factory employment got muted. The legitimacy of the state, however, did not entirely erode. The basis of compliance for the dominant class began to shift towards material gain. From the state's standpoint, the final compensation rate has become more difficult to negotiate. Landholders from Waves 2 and 3 have become more aware of their rights as 'landlosers'. Stories in the media of protests as well as spectacular cash gains from other instances in the State have made them more astute. The land acquisition apparatus in Waves 2 and 3 has had to negotiate per-acre prices up to a rate that has satisfied the local elites, but additionally has also had to offer several incentives and extensions to get them to comply. These incentives and extensions are incrementally getting more lucrative for the rural elites and expensive for the state. Some of the extensions are worth noting.

First off, state officials traded information on future land acquisition and sites with appreciating land values based on state plans in neighbouring areas. Access to privileged information allowed a few elites to make strategic land purchases in the district (e.g. the 'hill' Nanasaheb bought), and sometimes in areas as distant as a village in Pune (as Mule

has allegedly). In a few cases, acquisition of land for some local elites was staggered and piecemeal. Officials from the land acquisition machinery occasionally entered into informal pacts with local elites who owned large contiguous tracts of land. In such agreements, the state agreed to exempt a portion of earmarked land and buy it through a private sale for an appreciated value. Purchase of additional parcels of land through a 'sale deed' or 'registry'[110] – an individual sale of land instead of state-acquisition process – enabled additional cash gains from appreciated land value. For one elite farmer from Wave 2 it was twofold the value i.e. double of 8.5 lacs-per-acre[111]. I discuss his experience and the evolution of his relationship with the state in chapter 8.

Furthermore, a number of elites, such as Nanasaheb and Kisanji, were assured 'contracts[112]' for non-farm services, such as delivering water in tankers, transporting cement for construction in the area, as well as other long-term contracts for transportation of raw materials in the MIDC area. Assuring service 'contracts' is a common extension granted by the state to co-opt elites. At times these contracts are granted directly by the state, as was the case in this example. At other times, the contracts can be drawn by private companies at the behest of a state official; for example, one of the companies gave a contract to a large landholder in one of the Wave 1 villages to construct the boundary wall of their plot in the S5IA. This has been observed elsewhere, such as the study on land for highways in Pune by Balakrishnan (2013). These can be understood as 'concessions' that have to made as 'confidence-building measures' (ibid, 72).

The performance of protest, opposition and resistance is, in fact, a mode of negotiation for the local rural elites who use land acquisition as an opportunity to carve out trajectories of accumulation. These protests are more tactical rather than ideological opposition to having their 'peasant' ways threatened. Furthermore, what I find in the short span between Wave 2 and Wave 3 is that the cost of co-opting the local rural elites is incrementally increasing for the state.

[110] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[111] Same as above
[112] Interview; same as the ones referenced for them above

Once the local rural elites from the dominant class agree to the compensation rate and other special terms of compliance for themselves, they get to the political task of 'getting people on board', as evinced by the MIDC official's quote above.

6.3 The Political Work of 'Consent'-Generation

The local rural elites generate 'consent' for land acquisition in several ways. They do so within the villages by being local voices of assurance in cases where the elites are a figure of legitimate authority. They also draw on shared solidarity with key, typically large, dominant landholders from their own class. They also stave off opposition by projecting 'consent' and 'acceptance' to the wider community outside their own.

Local assurances for the local communities

Sarpanches, such as Nanasaheb, as figures of local political authority, are particularly well-placed to broker 'consent' amongst the majority. In fact, they are indispensable to the process of consent-building, imbuing a level of normative legitimacy to projects that range from installing a hand pump to building factories in the vicinity. As elected heads of the local village councils, *Sarpanches* are figures of political authority. In this political position, Sarpanches perform the very important task of settling disputes: disputes over control, ownership and use of resources like land; disputes over terms of informal agreements and contracts of economic engagement; on occasion deliberating over moral transgressions and breach of social contracts.

In addition, *Sarpanches* have privileged access to public funds for infrastructure development in the village, the authority to determine and prioritise beneficiaries of state welfare schemes, and discretion to channel jobs in government-funded schools (teachers, Mid-Day Meal cooks), health clinics (ASHA workers) and other petty contracts (road construction) towards individuals in the village. For example, eulogising the Sarpanch, a Dalit labourer in a village from Wave 1 said, *'it is all because of him [sarpanch] that my wife has a job as an Anganwadi worker. He is a saviour of the poor ('garibon ke mai-baap*

hain')'[113]. The quote here is meant to indicate the discretionary disbursement of limited public resources rather than an uncritical character sketch of the Sarpanch. It is through their everyday functions of disputesettlement, distribution of welfare funds, and channelling of patronage, such as the limited jobs that trickle to the villages as in the case above, that *Sarpanches* generate and maintain authority today.

The authority of Sarpanches in contemporary times in the region, and local elites more generally, does not arise from the deep economic dependency such as that generated by patron-client relations based on labour arrangements in agrarian systems of pre-colonial and colonial times (Breman 1974). As members of the dominant class, with economic resources, urban networks, political power, and proximity to state institutions (police, judiciary, local district offices), Sarpanches are dominant figures of local authority. It is this power they use to perform the complex political work of brokering 'consent' amongst the majority.

From multiple accounts of smallholderfarmers and farmers with medium landholdings from the dominant class, Sarpanches of two villages of Wave 1 had extended their normative support to the state's effort at building an industrial area. They held 'meetings' in *Gram Sabhas*, 'explained' the potential benefits to the village, and 'convinced' people that the compensation amount was in fact higher than anything they would get by transacting in the market. The Sarpanch's legitimation was a *local assurance*, one that landholders from the marginal class and the smallholders found more trustworthy. A local voice of authority engendered hope around realistic economic possibilities of a transition into non-farm jobs in the industrial area and diffused scepticism around land acquisition. Other studies on land acquisition confirm this. Balakrishnan (2013, 70), for example, notes their contribution as 'conduits between the state and the agrarian landowners.' She quotes an MIDC official in her study area as follows: 'These [sarpanches] are the leaders of the village, only they can convince the villagers, outsiders cannot'. Several farmers from the marginal class and smallholder class highlighted the role of the Sarpanch in generating support by pointing out the inevitability of compulsory acquisition. A woman from the marginal class said to me, 'we have no say, the state will acquire'.[114] Less than one hectare of land that was in her husband's name has been acquired in Wave 1. Others were convinced they were receiving

[113] Interview, Kumbephal, 3 November 2015
[114] Interview, Kumbephal, 2 November 2015

a high value for farmland, which they could 'make use of',[115] typically to pay off debt as I will show in chapter 9.

A crucial piece of the land acquisition effort is to convince larger landholders in the dominant class; those with larger contiguous landholdings have unequally high bargaining power. Garnering their consent is critical to reducing procedural friction in the process of acquisition. In this case, Sarpanches draw on a *shared class status* with farmers from the dominant class, such as Kisanji, to convince them of similar risks and benefits from accepting the state's proposal. The four current and previous Sarpanches, as well as other members of the village council I interviewed, owned farmland and were engaged in agriculture with varying levels of dependency on agricultural income at the time of land acquisition. Since all of them lost large sections of their land of similar size and quality as many of similarly large farmers from the dominant class, they would often use expressions of solidarity: 'the need to negotiate'[116] and 'this will bring benefit to us'[117]. As Parikh (2015, 168, emphasis mine) in her study of the planned city of Lavasa concludes: it is only by having *Sarpanches* as 'agrarian *intermediaries* that the project can come to life'.

Not all of the intermediation work done by Sarpanches is benign consensus-building through dialogue and deliberation. In a more devious deployment of power, co-opted Sarpanches often exploit privileged knowledge to weaken groups of landholders that offer united resistance. Sarpanches are repositories of information on village politics that are strategically important to land acquisition. They are acutely aware of cleavages between different groups, sub-castes and households, sources of social friction among and within families, as well as stress points (debt, shocks and vulnerabilities) in households that the state machinery can harness to garner consent. As one Maratha farmer from the smallholder with 8 acres (3.2 ha.) of land from one of the villages in Wave 2 said:

> We were resisting and had formed a group. But then the officials knew exactly who would be easy to convince, who was weak. The Sarpanch told

[115] Interview, Shendra, 16 February 2016
[116] Interview, Kaamgaon, 12 December 2015
[117] Interview, Kaamgaon, 19 December 2015

> them. They [state officials] would come to us one-by-one and tempt us by telling how the amount could be used to pay for debt.[118]

Typically, elites of the dominant class, such as the Sarpanches and 'peasant-capitalists' or farmer-businessmen, as I have called them, like Kisanji highlighted above, aid the state machinery to systematically broker consent and compliance by legitimising the prospects of current and future gains from the project or by exploiting vulnerabilities in the context of crisis-prone agriculture.

Legitimating to Wider Society

Beyond intermediation and brokerage of peace within villages where land is acquired, the acquisition of land for development also needs to be legitimised to the wider society. Local rural elites project to the wider society that land acquisition for state-planned industrialisation is 'broadly' acceptable to aspirational rural village residents and agriculturalists, and that such interventions of development and modernisation are indeed 'hegemonic' ideas. The local rural elites with urban networks are particularly well-placed to discursively legitimise the process of land acquisition to the society beyond villages where land is acquired.

Mule, as mentioned before, lends his voice to rural issues in the media in many languages. As a journalist with landholdings in the village, he has been propagating a narrative of 'happy ending' for farmers to the external world (The Indian Express, 2 March 2015). In this news article (in the online version of the English daily), Mule is featured as a euphoric farmer, empowered by the compensation policy of the project: commenting on the 15 per cent buy-back option in the news article, he says 'Even if I don't start up my own project on that plot, if I just rent it out, I will make more than I did as a farmer'. He communicated the economic logic of commodified land to me when I met him. Since land in a developed commercial estate will be of higher value, Mule explained how rents from such value appreciation are higher than any surplus he could earn if the land was in the agrarian economy: land in Kaamgaon was selling for 83 lacs-per-acre (GBP 21,770 per hectare) in 2016, whereas it was less than half of that before MIDC started acquiring land in 2010. Real

[118] Interview, Maangaon, 6 December 2015

estate firms, both small and large, individuals based in cities like Aurangabad and Nashik, as well as local elites are purchasing land in anticipation of selling it for a higher value (the difference amounting to land rents) or constructing a commercial establishment to rent out to an individual wanting to run a hotel, small multi-purpose shop or a restaurant. Using the same tone of confidence and enthusiasm, he explained to me:

> We plan to develop it Magarpatta style. We will all pool in money and develop it. People from previous rounds of acquisition did not have the wherewithal. We know better. We have gotten everything [assurances of getting land back] in writing from MIDC.[119]

A protagonist of the 'win-win' narrative crafted around land acquisition for the DMIC in the region, As mentioned before, Mule lends his voice to multiple documentation efforts outside of the media. He represents the local landholders' interests in bureaucratic endeavours that are meant to be 'participatory' and 'inclusive' of society, such as at the official stakeholders' consultancy session. His views appeared in the Public Hearing section of the Social Impact Assessment document created by C2HM. C2HM is a North American company with offices in Latin America, Canada, Europe and Asia. According to its website, its Indian entity collaborates with a wide variety of ventures to solve 'engineering challenges for private and public sector projects'. CH2M, in collaboration with Cisco, has been hired to plan and implement the conversion of Aurangabad into a 'smart city'[120] as an inlay of the 'golden corridor', an ambitious moniker of the DMIC.

The C2HM office in Aurangabad, comprised mostly of engineers, conducted an Environmental Impact Assessment of the feasibility of converting primarily agricultural land into the industrial Shendra-Bidkin node in 2014. The Environmental Impact Assessment document is not easily available online. During a visit to the local office in Aurangabad, I was able to read the report in the presence of a member of the staff. In the section on 'social impact' assessment, the proceedings of a 'public hearing' were detailed. Mule was present as the voice of the landlosing farmers, 'Project Affected Person' as the

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[119] Interview, Kaamgaon, 16 December 2015

[120] The smart city project was officially launched in 2015 with the mission to develop 100 cities with modern infrastructure, planned housing, and civic amenities. In the case of Aurangabad, the specific mandate is to build critical infrastructure, a world-class exhibition and convention center and a multi-modal logistics part to realize a smart, green industrial city of the future' (C2HM Website, https://www.ch2m.com/what-we-do/projects/aurangabad-industrial-smart-city#project-team)

document called him. He offered unequivocal support to the project – one that would bring jobs and prosperity to the region affected by 'agrarian crisis' and 'droughts.' His ability to use discursive sleight of hand in responding to critical stances was on display when I asked him about the disillusionment among those who lost land to the S5IA – 'DMIC is not MIDC. MIDC is local, DMIC is central'[121], pat came his response.

Lele, as mentioned above, moonlights as a journalist for Lokmat (Marathi), which has the highest circulation among Marathi daily newspapers in the State. The newspaper is a family-run business, co-owned by Vijay Darda and Rajendra Darda, both associated with the Congress Party. At the time of land acquisition, Vijay Darda was in his third term in the Upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), and Rajendra Darda, an elected member of the State Assembly from Aurangabad constituency, was the minister of education. Rajendra Darda played an active role in co-opting large landholders, like Lele, in the process of land acquisition. The local newspaper carried narratives of promised prosperity following the DMIC and willing farmers happily giving up land. They also supressed stories of resistance, opposition, or individual disgruntlement when they emerged in isolated pockets.

Moreda's (2015: 526, emphasis mine) use of Gramsci is useful in understanding the type of political work described:

> As Gramsci (1971) argued, the dominant classes normally control not only the material means of production but also the symbolic means of production. Through creating discourses, the dominant groups try to install or solicit 'consent' for their *hegemonic rule* by defining what is beneficial and legitimate and, as a result, the subordinate groups accept such hegemonic ideologies and exploitations as normal and justified.

In this case, the 'hegemonic rule' is the rule of a developmental vision – capitalist development through industrialisation. The legitimation of this 'rule' is vital and it is for this purpose that 'local' voices are necessary – from landholders who can make the process legitimate, even palatable. For these purposes, local rural elites like Mule and Lele are important to the state.

[121] Same as above

That a section of the rural landed elites is embedded in the local state and enables land acquisition is not questioned. They minimise social and political frictions by professing ideological support to a project. They also minimise procedural friction in aggregating large contiguous land areas by buying key parcels from others in the village through direct sale deeds and later selling to land aggregators or the real estate company for higher value, keeping the land rent. When analysed at the time of land acquisition, the relation between the landed rural elites from the dominant class and the state is symbiotic.

6.4 Accumulation through Compliance

The co-opted local rural elites have carved out spectacular pathways of accumulation through this process. Material gains from the acquisition process were easy to observe as there were conspicuous consumption goods – four-wheel drive cars, tractors, motorbikes, extensions to houses and home appliances that were easy to mark during visits. Parikh's study in Western Maharashtra makes a similar observation: an 'influx of Scorpio vehicles and garish mansions into village life following land acquired for real estate for the Lavasa city (2016: 168). Beyond spending money on commodities and activities meant to express material prosperity and social status (dominance), the local rural elites in this case had invested in a portfolio of new productive assets to either start or expand pre-existing non-farm enterprises.

Several local rural elites made a foray into the provision of transport services for the movement of commercial goods for industries in the area. Nanasaheb owns somewhere between 10 and 35 trucks (based on whether one believes his own account or that of his son). He started this business following land acquisition. Kisanji, who had experience driving trucks long distances, bought a truck following land acquisition. As mentioned earlier, his truck is sub-contracted to transport empty bottles from Radico Distilleries, the infamous distillery (mentioned in chapter 4) that received notification for ground water pollution. During sowing seasons, he uses his truck to transport his tractor to the farmland in Jalna he bought with the compensation money. As remuneration for their intermediation services, a few local elites were rewarded with contracts to provision industries either in the S5IA or elsewhere in nearby industrial areas.

Another large landholder, Ram Waghle, who along with his brothers owned 64 acres (26 ha.) of contiguous land in a village in Wave 2, was given the assurance of receiving a contract to provide water to factories in the S5IA at the time of acquisition. He invested a part of the compensation amount towards tankers and owns six water tankers. He provided water to the industries for around four years, a lucrative enterprise in an ecological context struck by acute water scarcity every other year. As mentioned in chapter 3, water tables in Aurangabad, and Marathwada more generally, have been depleting for decades. With a bulk of the population – as high 85 per cent at the All-India level as per World Bank estimates – depending on groundwater for drinking water supplies, providing water through tankers to both households for domestic consumption and industries is a business where huge profits are generated through scarcity. Waghle was not very transparent about the financial details of his different income sources. He did, however, mention thatthe water business was an important source of income after his land was acquired. His contract to supply to industries in the S5IA, however, was eventually dissolved, following his friction with MIDC (discussed in the next chapter).

A pattern among those belonging to the class of rural elites is to use a significant chunk of the compensation money to invest back in land in either the same village, when affordable, or elsewhere. Cash earned from compensation as well as rents from intermediation has been re-invested in land. Kisanji bought 8.5 acres (3.4 ha.) of land in Jalna district that he rents out in a share-cropping arrangement of 50:50 for the cultivation of cotton and pulses (tur and moong). Another local rural elite, Ambey Maan bought less than a quarter of a hectare for INR 15 lacs (GBP 46,000) in the same village, a parcel of land in the neighbouring village for INR 15 lacs (GBP 15,306), and 5 acres (2 ha.) of land for agriculture also based on a share-cropping arrangement in Jalna district. He was resolute about not letting go of agriculture as a source of income. His land was acquired in wave 3 and the total cash compensation he received was about INR 152,75,000 (GBP 191,000). He spent nearly 70 per cent of the compensation amount on purchasing land. I discuss this tendency in more detail in chapter 9.

It was especially common among those who lost around 6-10 acres (2.5-4 ha.) of land to buy land for agriculture elsewhere, outside the village. All such landholders, without exception, are now in shareholding arrangements with someone local to the area where they have

bought land. Usually, new land is purchased in a village where there are kinship ties or networks. It is not possible to buy agricultural land anywhere and insert oneself into the agrarian economy. As a landholder from the dominant class who lost 9 acres of land said:

> I bought 8 acres [3 ha.] of land in Badnapur block, but it is hard to move or work there. People call us 'foreigners' ('*angrez*'). They leave animals in our field with standing crops at night. I have no power there.[122]

Sharecropping with a local resident of the village, either kin or someone from within one's social networks, thus, is the preferred option to retain income from cultivation. This speaks to the larger trend of tenancy observed in India: although there is a decline in the prevalence of leased-in land from 10.7 per cent in 1960-1 to 6.5 per cent in 2003-03, the more important qualitative change in many areas is that land is being leased-in from small to large landholders, and not from absentee landlords (Harriss 2013, 359)[123].

Petty construction enterprises, or the services of 'plotting' as it is called locally, is an important strategy of accumulation. In 2015-16 and during the follow-up visit in 2018, none of the landholders had received the 15% compensation land in Waves 2 and 3. A few landholders had just started to receive the 10-square feet of land from Wave 1. The 'plotting' business the local elites and some of the larger landholders of the dominant class described were delinked from the compensation plots they were to receive from MIDC. The burgeoning 'plotting' business – purchase and development of small parcels of land, ideally close to the highway – suggests a nascent micro-economy based on rental income. The plots were being developed for lease as commercial property. Nanasaheb (the co-opted Sarpanch), for example, has bought a 'hill' close to land earmarked for DMIC development; a conservative estimate of the size of the land is about 20 acres (8 ha.). He plans to develop the land into commercial plots in anticipation of the commercial activities that will develop when the industrial corridor begins to operate. Construction is, according to Parthasarthy (2015, 829), one way for the rural elites to enter the non-farm sector with 'low risk', particularly when the sites of construction are located in and around their village. In these cases, the local rural elites have undertaken the purchase and development of commercial

[122] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015
[123] There is variation across States: the trend holds for Bihar and is understood as tenancy no longer playing an important role in economic control for Rodgers and Rodgers, but absentee landlordism is on a rise in coastal Andhra Pradesh as observed by Ramachandran and others (Harriss 2013, 359)

land on their own; they provided the capital and have control over the land. They are not simply 'brokering' for large real estate companies or other private entities.
Since land was acquired by the state for a planned industrial area, the compensation amount was uniform for households from all socio-economic backgrounds. It is obviously the case that the ability to accumulate through compensation money is refracted through existing socio-economic inequalities, where those from lower castes and the marginal class would be proleterianised or, at best, semi-proletarianised in a precarious economy, as I show in chapter 9. What set apart the local rural elites from others of their own class, and the other classes, are commissions and extensions earned through their intermediation for the state. Wave 1 of land dispossession between 1999 and 2000 did not result in spiralling speculative land markets as has been observed in more recent cases of urbanisation in Gujarat (Sampat 2015), Rajasthan (Levien 2018) and a few other cases. As one of the wealthier landholders from the dominant class from this Wave said, 'Back then we did not know much. We made our house *pucca* [in cement] and bought a tractor. We farm on the remaining land. One of my sons has started a small garage'[124]

As mentioned above, in subsequent waves, the local rural elites began to negotiate better terms of incorporation for themselves. It is commissions and contracts earned, as well as occasional information on lucrative land investment, as additional 'compensation' for intermediation, that has made the landscape of accumulation undulating *within* the dominant class, launching more profitable trajectories for the co-opted elites.

For Sami (2012: 156) the overlap between farmers, local politicians and the local real estate lobby, in the case of conversion of farmland into commercial and residential property in Pune, is a 'participatory space' for rural, landed elites in liberalized India. With opportunities for accumulation stunted in a context of struggling agriculture, rural dominant elites try to carve out more dynamic spaces in the non-farm economy. This involves a mix of land rents, construction services, labour contracts (explained in the next chapter) and other 'gatekeeping' activities (Pattenden 2013).

For Levien (2018), opportunities to accumulate through petty real estate are, on one hand, the reproduction of dominance for a small number of already powerful and, on the other,

[124] Interview, Shendra, 10 November 2015

dispossession for most. Indeed, it is the case that the economy post-land dispossession largely reproduces existing inequalities.

What I am showing in addition here is that the range of opportunities for accumulation available to the local rural elites is primarily in the informal non-farm economy involving multiple enterprises and plural sources. Increasingly, the strategies of the rural elites to reproduce their dominance is becoming individualised, rather than the control of a resource base as a 'class'. This raises questions about their politics as a 'class' as their material interests get increasingly fragmented within the group. Pattenden (2013, 192), observing a similar individualisation in means of accumulation amongst the dominant class in Karnataka, raises an important question: if 'dominant class unity' is getting more 'fragile' in the neoliberal era. I will revisit this point and develop it further in the conclusion.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how a group of local actors – rural elites from the dominant class – are co-opted by the state at the time of land acquisition. Local rural elites are key figures in enabling the state-mediated land dispossession by brokering 'consent' and diffusing dissent. They are well placed to do so as repositories of key information on village politics and as local figures of authorities who can legitimise the project of 'development' across rural classes. That a layer of local rural elites is co-opted confirms what current literature already shows as highlighted in the third theme in chapter 2. In addition, I provided detailed sketches of local rural elites to trace the sources of their local dominance in rural society, which seem to reside in a diverse portfolio of non-farm income prior to acquisition, social and political networks beyond the village, and social legitimacy in the village.

I argued next that the rural elites first use their location in rural society to negotiate better terms of compliance – these are not just cash compensation, but incentives (key information that enables rents from land purchases elsewhere), concessions (getting additional compensation for crops), and extensions (water tanker contracts to serve the industrial area). The rural elites do this by putting up 'resistance' – performances of protest. Once the terms are acceptable to them, they begin the complex political task of 'consent' generation.

By lending their support to the state-led acquisition process, they serve as local assurances to the claims of 'development' made by the state. This strategy typically generates 'consent', or more accurately resignation, among the marginal and smallholder classes. To landholders of their own class, they legitimise potential benefits by appealing to their shared class status and get them to comply. The political task, however, is not all benign: I showed instances of rural elites using privileged local information on vulnerabilities to generate 'consent'.

Compliance with the process of land dispossession and the task of 'consent' generation on behalf of the state allows some to embark on new trajectories of accumulation or amass material benefits for existing enterprises.

The disproportionate gains that accrue to the rural dominant class through state programmes is a pattern common in post-independence India. This has been shown in the case of technological diffusion through the Green Revolution in agriculture (Dhanagare 1987), irrigation infrastructure in Maharashtra (Attwood 1985), and even a variety of rural development programmes in the State (Anderson et al 2015). Access to irrigation, crop subsidies, loans for non-farm activities have landed disproportionately in the hands of the local dominant elite and have been crucial for their accumulation through capitalist agriculture and lucrative investment outside of the farm. However, since this study has the advantage of analysing a drawn-out process of land acquisition for industry, spanning nearly two decades, it is able to provide a longer-term perspective on the responses of this class of landholders to their relation with the local state, other members of their class, and their longer trajectories of accumulation, which I will begin to unpack in the next chapter and draw out further in chapter 9.

Lastly, arguments made in this chapter have two theoretical implications:

First, I confirm the local rural elites work for the state, as the state also works for them at the moment of land acquisition. In that sense, I find the state is porous (Sinha 2013). The state does not and cannot work in isolation. It enables discretionary gains for the local rural elites, and for state officials within as well. I will return to the particularities of state-society relations more in the conclusion. Here, it is important to note the accusatory tone taken by other members of the dominant class, particularly medium and small farmers, in calling the

local elites 'agents', further indicates their immersion in the state apparatus at the time of acquisition. This immersion, however, does not have an enduring quality, as I will show next. In this chapter, the analysis confirms what other literature has found about these key actors, typically from the dominant class, in enabling land dispossession without broad-based development.

Second, as the reality of the 'non-farm economy' begins to unfold, the unequal gains made by the local rural elites begin to sever relations within the dominant class they belong to, as well as across different rural classes. The proximity of the local elites to the state, particularly its acquisition machinery (Collector's office and MIDC officials), is seen as a betrayal of trust and misuse of authority. The local rural elites are derogatorily called '*dalals*' – 'agents' and 'brokers' – of the state. The co-optation of local rural elites into the task of 'consent' generation then, on one hand, results in economic gain, and, on the other, a loss of 'social capital' (Levien 2015). This raises questions about class politics, including the 'coalition'-type housing development to which one of the elites above (Mule) aspires. I will return to this in chapter 8.

Chapter 7: Exclusion and Disenchantment – The Dominant Class Over Time

'A farmer gives land so that his son can sit under a fan.
And for that we need to enter the factory'[125]
– Maratha Farmer from the Dominant Class, Wave 1

In the previous chapter, I focused on the local rural elites and the role they play in generating compliance in their communities on behalf of the state. Observed at the time of land acquisition, relations between the state and rural elites appears to be one of mutual dependence. The full range of experiences of dispossession, as mentioned in chapter 2, unfolds gradually over time.

A picture of prosperity drawn by state officials and politicians in order to generate 'consent' and 'jobs', as mentioned in the previous chapter, featured amply in this case. The jobs promised were what is encapsulated in the term '*naukri*' in most of North and Western India. Parry (2013, 349) infuses the term with appropriate valence in defining *naukri* as a 'permanent and regular job that carries a monthly salary and is protected by legal guarantees against arbitrary termination' and, most importantly, 'confers *ijjat* ('honour') and is a major asset when it comes to arranging a marriage, raising a loan or resisting the unreasonable demands of one's boss. It's a 'proper job''.

In Aurangabad, as in other struggling agrarian contexts in the Global South, a 'proper job' is one that ameliorates the economic precarity that comes with agriculture – exposure to the vagaries of nature, reliance on credit to tide over the sowing season and dependence on waning state support prices. It involves direct employment by industry and constant presence on regular payroll. Permanent direct employment is a desirable qualitative aspect of a *naukri* because bypassing a contractor has a significant material effect. In 2009-2010, the difference in average per-day wage for those directly employed by industry and those employed through a contractor in Maharashtra was stark – INR 337.87 for those directly employed

[125] Interview, Shendra, 6 November 2013

versus INR 216.06 for a contract worker (GBP 4.50 versus GBP 2.80 respectively) (ASI report 2009-10, Table 5.5.1, p. 70). Furthermore, the average daily wage for *direct* employment masks an incredible gender bias – men's daily wage of INR 357.20 (GBP 4.70) versus INR 155.04 (GBP 2.05) for women. It is *naukri* the male dominant class farmers aspire to after giving up land.

The first set of industrial units in the S5IA began production in the mid-2000s. It was only towards the end of the decade that the first fissures in the relations between the state and the dominant class farmers began to emerge. Nearly a decade and a half later, the realities that unfolded for them have been far short of their expectations, particularly for the local rural elites. The quote above from one of the Maratha farmers from the dominant class is illustrative of the disjuncture between the expectation of a non-farm 'transition' and the reality of the socio-economic change.

I begin this chapter with a description of the labour landscape in the S5IA in the relatively 'labour friendly' State of Maharashtra. Using a concrete example from the industrial area, I show how private industries try to evade labour laws.

I then discuss how the dispossessed from the dominant class attempted to make 'claims' on the state to fulfil the promises made on jobs. I argue their politics of claim-making, starting with taking the promises of state officials seriously, shows their contextual understanding and expectation of relations with the state based on a history of patronage.

In the third and fourth sections I add to the literature on the growing reality of 'educated unemployment' among the rural youth and other axes of exclusion from social mobility.

Empirical material for the arguments here is based on the experiences of farmers from the dominant class who lost land in waves 1 and 2. With some time having passed, they exhibited far less enthusiasm about their future economic prospects in the industrial area and opportunities for social mobility in the non-farm economy. There are two important implications of the arguments:

First, the fissures that emerge between the dominant class farmers and the state have implications for politics directed at the state, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Second, the empirical evidence exposes the limits of the 'transition' thesis.

7.1 Shendra (Five-Star) Industrial Area – Labour Landscape

What does the landscape of employment look like in the S5IA, the industrial area on the 900 ha. of land from Wave 1, that I argue is different from a neoliberal speculative enclave?

In post-liberalisation India, most large-scale projects of industrialisation – Special Economic Zones, Export Processing Zones, industrial areas, industrial zones – have spawned limited permanent, regularised factory jobs. However, Maharashtra, with the most vibrant industrial sector in the country, one could argue, presents hope for the farm-to-factory 'transition'.

As mentioned in the introduction, Maharashtra's contribution to income from the industrial sector currently stands atop other states in the country. This does not map to an equally generative work landscape for labour – formal employment growth in industry has been tepid and organisation of work is dominated by informal and casual work. In 1960-61, there were an average 96 workers per registered factory (Maharashtra Economic Survey 2016). In 2014, the same number has gone down to 67 per registered factory. Meanwhile, labour hiring through contracting has increased as I will show here.

In terms of labour regulation, Maharashtra, particularly in comparison to other industrialised States such as Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, is considered relatively 'labour-friendly' (Mahmood 2018). Even though Maharashtra emerges as 'labour friendly' in a comparative sense, sub-national competition in the neoliberal era has consistently pushed for flexibility in labour organisation. Increasing casualisation of the labour force makes regular employment for large sections of semi-skilled and aspirational urban and rural youth frustratingly elusive. The market forces that generate casualisation, when combined with an ever increasing distressed and mobile rural reserve army of labour, makes work and labour debilitatingly precarious for the 'unskilled' manual labourers. This section is a brief engagement with the regulatory environment of labour in the State to illustrate one of the many ways in which industries circumvent legal-institutional safeguards, making the '*naukris*' Maratha farmers await not only elusive but, when available, incredibly precarious.

Under the veneer of 'labour friendliness', the push to dilute employment security in the private sector has been a relentless force in Maharashtra's political economy. The BJP-Shiv Sena coalition, as recently as 2015, attempted a wave of labour 'reforms' in concert with amendments to three Central labour laws to bolster PM Modi's 'Make in India' vision. The State of Maharashtra's labour department had proposed changing the firing clause in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 by increasing the stipulated firm size for exemption from state oversight. Currently firms with 100 or more employees need to seek government permission before dismissing staff from employment or shutting down operations. The revision proposed limiting this regulation to firms with 300 or more employees, which, in effect, would allow approximately 95 per cent of firms in Maharashtra to escape this regulation (The Economic Times, 4th July 2016). It further proposed that firms with 300+ employees could skip government approval if they paid fired staff 30 days' of pay for every year worked by an employee.

The proposal predictably received much enthusiasm and support from industry. The president of Indian Merchants' Chamber, Prabodh Thakker, welcomed the change of 'archaic labour laws': 'Archaic labour laws have hit manufacturing badly. Companies prefer to invest in countries with liberal labour laws. What is the point of labour protection without jobs?' (ibid) By mid-2016, however, the labour department jettisoned its attempts at changes, following opposition from Shiv Sena (one of the partners in the two-party coalition), as well as from the trade union affiliated with the powerful Hindu right-wing RSS. A year later the State revisited efforts to introduce the same amendments, proceeding more cautiously by tempering the pro-industry rhetoric. A stronger and more united opposition from trade unions and labour unions associated with opposition parties, including the CPI(M), the INC, RSS and Shiv Sena, prior to important by-elections in the State, silenced official voices in the ruling government that were rallying to introduce the amendments.

Labour legislations in the State and the contestations around diluting existing labour regulations generally indicate that the interests of labour find expression in formal politics in Maharashtra. However, capital-labour struggles on the ground surface a different reality. Using this very regulation around 'firing' in the S5IA, I show how laws are evaded by

industries, keeping formal, regular jobs to a minimum, and making those in limited regular employment, or 'permanent'[126] as it is referred to in the local vocabulary, vulnerable.

In the absence of official figures, it is difficult to provide exact estimates for regular, salaried jobs created in the S5IA. The most granular picture from official government documents I could access was that from the Maharashtra Economic Survey, 2016. From a table on industrial units by the MIDC, one gets the following aggregate picture: there are 7,499 industrial units in industrial areas created by the MIDC in Aurangabad that have generated 71,000 formal jobs (Table 8.10, 128). Such aggregate employment figures that lump together various categories of workers, and the different modes through which their supply is organised, are meaningless. The landscape of employment, including that of regular salaried work, comes alive more accurately from the evidence collated from both qualitative and quantitative estimates. I aim to provide such a picture here.

Some of the largest manufacturing units, in terms of land occupied and capital invested, are multinational companies – Siemens Ltd., Wockhardt Ltd. and Perkins Ltd. In April 2008, Siemens Rolling Stock Pvt. Ltd., 'a 100% subsidiary of Siemens Ltd.', set up India's first 'state of the art' plant for the production of railway bogies in the S5IA on 6.07 ha. of land in S5IA. The official website of Siemens India announced with much pomp that an initial investment of 200 crores would result in direct employment for 250 people and 'indirect employment for 1,000 people'[127].

On December 6, 2014, 250 employees of Siemens Ltd. took to the streets to protest the closure of the plant and termination of their services (The Times of India, 6th December 2014). According to the president of the workers' association, Pravin Patil, quoted in the above article, Siemens started putting pressure on employees to resign in the month of June. When employees resisted attempts of coerced voluntary resignation, jobs began to be slashed in August. The deputy labour commissioner of Aurangabad filed a case with the industrial court on account of 'unfair practices', as an industrial unit with more than 100 people requires government permission before shutting down. Siemens Ltd. countered by

[126] Interview with labour contractor, Shendra (Five Star) Industrial Area, 21 February 2016; Interview with landloser, Mangaoan, 16 December 2015

[127] Official company website: http://www.siemens.co.in/en/news_press/index/news_archive/apr_28_2010.htm

claiming that only 99 workers were on its official payroll, one short of the threshold. Following a drastic shortfall in demand for Siemens' production, the company had reported losses of INR 150-300 million (GBP 1.53 million) over the years. In 2015, when I conducted fieldwork in the villages in the area, labour contractors and labourers informed me the company had just resumed operations with a reduced workforce.

Legislative assembly debates over labour laws during key election times, such as above, typically show that political parties are 'pro-poor' and, therefore, aligned with labour, at least in the formal arena. Observed through the window of legislation, despite constant contestations, a 'pro-labour' policy bent seems to prevail in the State. However, everyday capital-labour disputes in industrial areas, such as the S5IA, show how increasingly mobile private capital controls labour and weakens its bargaining power in pursuit of profit. Formal, regular jobs are limited and a majority of the dispossessed, *including those from the landed dominant class, are excluded from it.*

7.2 Elusive Jobs

In this section, I chart the disjuncture encountered by farmers and landholders from the dominant class. It is this class that aspires to secure jobs that qualify as 'permanent'[128] factory employment, as mentioned above. In this section I will show their negotiations with the employment landscape in the S5IA, leading to an analysis of the absence of a clear 'transition'.

7.2.1 The ('Empty') Promise of Jobs

Each village had a general tale of *en masse* exclusion from factory jobs, as well as personal anecdotes of rejection and humiliation. The narratives usually began with the disjuncture between what they expected, based on assurances given by the state machinery, and the employment landscape in the S5IA.

[128] Interview with landloser, Mangaoan, 16 December 2015

As mentioned in the introduction and then subsequently in chapter 3, there was consensus over the need for a 'transition' away from struggling agriculture, and that the state was the right agent to bring about such change. Beyond projections written in English-language documents for elite policy circles and English-speaking media, it is the *promise of this transformation made on the ground by local state officials that enlivens claims* on 'development'. Referring to a local MLA Rajendra Darda's promise that rang hollow, an angry respondent from Wave 1 said, '"You have at best 5 people working in the field. When companies come, they hire 100 people. Boys will get jobs", the MLA had said. All lies, all lies'.[129] Narratives of frustration and neglect in this phase of dispossession typically featured politicians and state officials from the Collector's office: 'the Collector promised Bajaj-like development'.[130]

The rupture in the farm-to-factory transition in Wave 1 made the landholders in Wave 2 proceed cautiously. In a group discussion with four farmers from the dominant class in Maangaon, they told me how they had learned from the experiences of farmers in Wave 1 and knew that the local authorities' 'word'[131] was simply not enough. Landholders wanted a guarantee of jobs in writing and the local rural elites from subsequent waves made sure of getting assurances in writing. Getting a 'job letter'[132] was an important negotiation tactic amongst the rural elites of the villages in Wave 2. Landlosers among the local elites as well as medium farmers in the village from Wave 2 showed me 'job letters' written in Marathi. These letters stated the household had given land to MIDC for the DMIC and the factories in the S5IA+, including the ones that already existed, and would prioritise the bearer of the letter for employment – '**one male** from the household'. *Yet this official letter was no ticket to 'proletarian futures'* (Li 2011). As Ram Waghle, a local rural elite, showed me the 'job letter', he said emphatically, '50 boys applied to Perkins, not one got',[133] in case the hollowness of the promise was lost on me.

The belief in assurances made by state officials did not reflect naiveté on the part of the landholders from the dominant class. Instead it showed a deep contextual understanding of

[129] Interview, Kumbephal, 15 November 2015
[130] Focus Group Discussion, Shendra, 16 February 2016
[131] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 9 December 2015
[132] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 9 December 2015
[133] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

their own political history and calculated aspirations. There are at least three concrete reasons for this argument.

The first reason was referred to in chapter 3 in relation to the 'near consensus' among the dominant class, which I call the 'Bajaj Ltd.' effect. Bajaj Auto Ltd., referred to in the Collector's quote above, is an Indian automobile company that set up a manufacturing plant in the Waluj industrial area. Waluj is the state-planned industrial area that immediately preceded the S5IA and generated multiple plants that were relatively more labour-intensive than the assembly units common today. Bajaj also spawned off a number of ancillary industrial units in the industrial area and within the estates in Aurangabad town. Bajaj made the possibilities of 'transition' palpable to the dominant class. Stories of farmers' sons making a transition into factory jobs as shopfloor workers, electricians, and machine operators are etched in the collective social memory of the region. The state officials, embedded in the local context, are aware of this and evoke it to bolster the state's legitimacy as an agent of 'development', as is evident from the quote above.

The second reason is that landholders from the dominant class are aware of the importance of personal networks in accessing non-farm employment. It is households from this class that have been able to generate surplus from agriculture and invest in higher education for their sons – college degrees and technical education in engineering sciences., 'MIDC said factories will hire us', 'do you want your son to work in the field? Dream big'.[134] These were the farmers from Wave 1 who recalled state assurances and guarantees made verbally.

Third, verbal assurances made by state officials, and confirmed by local rural elites, such as the *Sarpanch*, mentioned in the previous chapter, are valid acts in the political process of claim-making in rural Maharashtra. The claims to jobs the dominant class farmers expected to make on the S5IA economy are clearly not enabled by a legal-formal contract with the state. The MID Act that provides the legal framework for land acquisition does not enshrine employment provision for the dispossessed as a guarantee. The Act does not make any provision to protect the livelihoods of the 'landlosers' in the form of 'rights' that can be enforced legally. The dispossessed farmers were expecting, thus, to demand jobs through established norms of patronage. In a processual sense, patronage is the 'extension through

[134] Focus Group Discussion, Shendra, 16 February 2016

informal, face-to-face contacts of resources acquired through state-sponsored systems in return for *public support*' (Attwood 1974, 236, emphasis mine). Informal relationships based on patronage have a long history for Maratha farmers in the State: peasants have relied on patronage to access new credit, improved seeds, education for sons in colonial Western Maharashtra (Guha in Piliavasky 2013, Attwood 1974).

In more recent times, patron-client relations drawing on caste solidarity with state officials have enabled claim-making on and access to state entitlements with varied results: to reverse exclusion from subsidised food grains available through the Public Distribution System (Rai and Smucker 2016) in some cases, and also to opportunistic ends by distorting rights-based rural employment through NREGA (Anderson, Francois, and Kotwal 2015). Viewing local state officials, particularly of the same caste, as local patrons is a mode of navigating economic and social change in rural agrarian Maharashtra. The rural local elites had allied with the state at the time of acquisition, legitimising the project, generating 'consent', and reducing frictions through tactical negotiations. The demand for factory jobs then was the latter-half of an instrumental exchange. It was, thus, only logical for the sons of local rural elites and other 'landlosers' who had qualified male family members to stake a claim on jobs that were emerging. This will become clearer later in the chapter when I elaborate on the case of Ram Waghle. For the farmers from the dominant rural class, including co-opted rural elites, however, the barriers to entry were many.

Once the factories started to arrive and operations began behind the imposing boundary walls, the process of navigating recruitment remained opaque. The process of accessing jobs, it turned out, was a black box. Several missing links were articulated repeatedly by respondents. News about where and when jobs were available never trickled down to the villages, nor did they know how to access information about vacancies. They had no network connecting them to human resources managers or supervisors inside the factory; no person of 'authority' who would introduce the 'landloser' as the rightful claimant to a factory job. Most of them did not possess the knowledge or skills to hold the kind of permanent factory jobs they had imagined. Even those who had assurances from the 'state' written on paper and necessary qualifications, such as the famed ITI training and engineering degrees, were plagued by the question of how to approach the impressive manufacturing factories that were emerging.

7.2.2 Jobs and Claim-making in the S5IA

In the planned industrial areas up until the 1970s, the state had an active hand in organising labour supply. It mediated between a relatively abundant supply of labour, on one hand, and capital, on the other. This was true of public-sector industrial units, but also the case in industrial townships that sprung out of private capital, such as the Tata Steel Plants. The steel plants of Bhilai, Rourkela, and Bokaro were archetypes of 'industrial urbanism' (Parry 2003), with the explicit goal of creating thousands of factory jobs. The channels through which jobs could be accessed, like district-level employment exchanges and open advertisements, were defined by the state. Inclusion of the 'dispossessed', despite these official state-mediated routes, was however neither immediate nor frictionless. Those seeking employment legitimised their claims through a contentious process of demanding a share in employment as 'locals' (as in Rourkela), Adivasi 'landlosers' (Bhilai and Rourkela), and as 'marginalised' Scheduled Caste (Bhilai). Even as labour markets developed for skilled and unskilled manual work in the factories, demand for work and access to employment were heavily regulated by rightful 'claims' to factory jobs.

In the first decade of Rourkela, for example, permanent factory jobs went to migrants from other States. The dispossessed Adivasis (indigenous tribes) from whom land was acquired were first employed as manual labourers in the construction of the plant and subsequently in unskilled shopfloor work for a full decade after the plant's existence. After the Central government ruling of 1968 that mandated that public sector jobs below a wage threshold (INR 500 per month) had to be filled by local candidates, the politics of Odia sub-regionalism and anti-migrant movement crystallised into directing steel plant jobs to 'autochthons' – articulation of autochthony through Odia sub-regionalism meant that the definition of local, indigenous was expanded to not just the Adivasis landlosers but lowland Odias who had moved from the coast in search of employment (Sanchez and Strumpell 2014). The politics of ethno-regionalism was instrumental for Odias to penetrate the formal employment channel and in changing the very nature of the labour force from primarily migrants to almost exclusively Odias in a decade. Ethnicity and autochthony have also been the drivers of class politics within the Rourkela steel plant, as articulated by the labour aristocracy of the most influential trade union, to the exclusion of the ethnic minority labourers (ibid).

The incorporation of local Scheduled Caste residents in the Bhilai steel plant was primarily through the means of reservations – applications through employment exchanges processed based on state-mandated quotas for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Given the 'pitiless competition' for permanent jobs in the plant, that Satnamis are a significant component of Bhilai's labour force is in 'large measure due to job reservation' (Parry 1999). In this case, politics to demand jobs was channelled through the realm of caste politics.

What one observes for public sector jobs is that despite official provisions for incorporating the 'dispossessed', claim-making was an integral part of being incorporated into the labour force. *The politics of claims was not just limited to the politics of 'landlosers' or the 'dispossessed' but drew on social structures of ethnicity, ancestry and caste.*

In the case of the private steel plant, TISCO, in Jamshedpur, the initial labour force comprised primarily of migrants from other States to occupy a 'heterogenetic' industrial city. TISCO espoused a recruitment principle that made jobs in the factory heritable; this was established in the early days 'as a means for Tata to stabilise a migrant labour force, in a private sector industry that called for continuous year-round production' (Sanchez and Strumpell 2014: 1290). Over time, however, establishing Tata ancestry and demanding jobs based on an industrial 'descent' was a product of active 'class' politics.

Even in the planned industrial areas at the height of state-developmentalism, while formal employment was relatively more absorptive of those 'dispossessed' locally, as well as the large mass of rural unskilled migratory labourers, accessing jobs was an active process of claim-making predicated on 'social structures' of family, caste and ethnicity. This, Sanchez and Strumpell (2014) argue, should be seen as 'class consciousness', even if it resulted in elitist labour aristocracies in the industrial behemoth of Jamshedpur and eliminated broad-base labour struggles.

The important observations on industrial employment and the farm-non-farm 'transition' from these cases of state-planned industrialisation are: first, active claims were made by the 'dispossessed'; second, claims were clearly directed at a reified entity – Tata and the state. In the case of the industrial area here, the S5IA, the amalgam of visible and active state planning at the time of acquisition, with the eventual takeover by multiple fragmented private industries, makes the entity at which claims must be directed ambiguous; as one

dominant class farmer from Wave 2 during the group discussion said, 'who would I ask for a job?'.[135]

S5IA and Claim-Making

This dilemma of claim-making and the sense of disenfranchisement amongst the dominant class is well-illustrated by an incident. Ram Waghle is one of the brothers of the Waghle household with 64 acres of land and lives in one of the hamlets of Maangaon. He has two sons; one has a job with Exxon Mobil in the Waluj industrial area, and the other works as an accountant in a company in S5IA. Between 8 acres (little over 3 ha.) of farmland he leases out in another village and contracts to supply water in tankers in the drought-prone region, he is one of the local elites who was at the helm of the type of elite-negotiations I discussed in the previous chapter. Given his large landholding, he initially organised a micro-resistance to negotiate a higher compensation rate with the state. Once co-opted, he helped generate 'consent' on behalf of the state. One of the extensions he received from the state in exchange for intermediation was a contract to supply water in the S5IA area (mentioned in the previous chapter).

When I interviewed Ram Waghle in his house, he showed me a letter with three signatures, including one from a 'big'[136] executive from the Mumbai office of MIDC and another from the Collector, and an official seal. The letter promised a job for the bearer of the letter and a 'technical training' centre especially for the dispossessed in the village of Maangaon. It was at first perplexing that he was so vocal about the hollowness of the promise of non-farm employment, given both his sons were employed by industries. To make sense of his repeated complaints about unfulfilled promises, I asked him an array of general questions pertaining to jobs in the S5IA. For every question, he had a pointed explanation: first, employment in factories had become increasingly precarious even for those who had been regularised, that is made 'permanent'.[137] Second, finding new jobs was becoming increasingly difficult for the locals. Third, sons of farmers like him (the dominant class) were getting technical degrees to move out of agriculture. His complaints, thus, were not

[135] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 9 December 2015
[136] Interview, Maangaon, 20 December 2015
[137] Same as above

just about his sons who currently held jobs. His indignation was at the state of non-farm jobs, *naukris,* in general, and the 'injustice'[138] the dispossessed in Maangaon had suffered.

A deeper engagement with the various strands of his interview indicates his tirade against the state for reneging on its promise of non-farm jobs was, in fact, about fractures in relations between local rural elites like him and the state. It is the inability to use the window of land acquisition as an opportunity to forge deep ties of patronage with the state that he, and other local rural elites, were lamenting, an argument I develop in greater detail in the following chapter and the conclusion.

As with other farmers from the dominant class, Ram Waghle's expectation was that local politicians would keep their 'word' and serve as links to private-sector resources, such as access to an opaque hiring process in the S5IA manufacturing units. A group of farmers from the dominant and rural elites, of which the Waghle brothers were a part, got together and contacted an MLA from the district, Haribhau Bagade, before the Assembly elections. Bagade is the visionary politician introduced in chapter 3 who, in the imagination of the farmers of the region, got the S5IA 'file passed' in the State Assembly. From Ram Waghle's narrative, it was apparent that at the time of land acquisition he had strong ties with Haribhau Bagade. He mentioned Bagade had made several visits to his house to consult him on the issue of land acquisition, and how he, in turn, had approached the politician for counsel and favours (putting in a 'word'[139]) on several matters during land acquisition and right after. On the issue of the impossibility of jobs, therefore, he was counting on his patron-politician.

Waghle and the temporary coalition of disgruntled farmers requested Bagade speak to the Human Resources (HR) manager in the Perkins Ltd factory, built on land acquired from their village. The HR manager, Mr. Suman Basu, I was told, was from West Bengal. MLA Bagade assured the farmers he would speak to Perkins on behalf of the 'landlosers' the next time he was in Aurangabad. Bagade and the manager Mr. Basu met at the luxury hotel in town, Rama International, popular with foreign tourists and corporate visitors on business: *'*they went to the hotel to talk. We waited outside. Who knows what they discussed but nothing happened. Our boys don't have the right degrees*'*.[140]

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[138] Same as above
[139] Same as above
[140] Same as above

Nanasaheb (the *Sarpanch* introduced in the previous chapter) was bitter about not being able to put his networks with local politicians and other elite connections to use in getting his son with an engineering degree a job. As mentioned in the previous chapter, his son had been offered a job in a multinational construction company's local office in town, which he turned down to manage his father's transportation business. Nanasaheb's biggest grievance against the state was that many developmental promises have remained unfulfilled, particularly that of jobs: 'my son has a degree in mechanical engineering. Even with all my MLA contacts, I could not get him a job in Perkins. They [MIDC] gave it [assurance of jobs] to us on paper, but the companies make all kinds of excuses. Waluj area was different'.[141] He was, in a similar vein as Ram Waghle, referring to his inability to access jobs by drawing on his links to state officials and social networks in the area. *It is the gradual dislocation they experience as local rural elites and the disentangling of their interests with the state that is at the core their concerns.* This has resulted in a series of litigation against the state and against each other, which I discuss next in chapter 8.

The key argument here is: not being able to utilise networks with the local state in securing permanent factory employment is perceived as a rupture in relations with the state. The authority with which the local state machinery acquires land wanes when it comes to negotiating with private capital on behalf of local rural elites. The question they asked me was why the state could not regulate private capital: 'tell me, why can't the politicians and the Collector that make promises **tell** these companies?'[142] I was asked a variant of this question in every study village.

The factories were billowing smoke and there were people working; however, as is often the case in the neoliberal era, the people that formed the labour force excluded the locals.

7.2.3 Taming Capital

Respondents from the dominant class told me about the explicit preference for non-local labour for jobs inside the factory. A labour contracting firm from West Bengal manages the

[141] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[142] Interview, Maangaon, 20 December 2015

labour supply for one of the largest multinationals in the S5IA. The supervisor for the force of 140 labourers who work on the factory floor explained to me how most of the labour in the S5IA was from other States – West Bengal, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu[143]. Discriminating against the locals in hiring, particularly skilled labourers that work on the shop floors and manual labourers inside the factory, is a common practice in neoliberal India. Barnes et al (2015) have shown this for automotive industrial units in North India. They argue that a flexible labour supply, comprising migrant labourers under a contractor, allows them to respond profitably to fluctuating demand in the global automobile supply chain. A migrant labour force managed by contractors keeps wages low, circumvents collective bargaining through trade unions and, outsources the monitoring of labourers. The big manufacturing units in the S5IA, including the labour contracted I interviewed here, was referring to an automobile plant.

Ram Waghle had his own analysis of the influx of migrant labour in the S5IA:

> These managers come from outside, like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, so they get workers also from their own States. It is also true that these labourers from outside take less money – say they will work for INR 140 (GBP 1.50) a day. We want INR 250-300 (GBP 2.75-3.30) a day. Why should we work for less than that? Our land went.[144]

After reflecting on his own explanation, he continued:

> there are some of us in the village who would work for that amount, you know there are people who really need to. But the companies won't take boys for any kind of work from our village. Maybe one or two. The Sarkar has cheated our village the most.

The 'we' in his analysis does not refer to male members of his household or those from the dominant local elite families; nor is he referring to the 'naukris' his or similar households aspire to when he used the INR 140-a-day jobs as an example. His observation on the overwhelming presence of labourers in most tiers and segments of work from outside the land-losing villages is a statement on the general trend of hiring migrant labourers through

[143] Interview, Shendra (Five Star) Industrial Area, 5 September 2018
[144] Interview, Maangaon, 20 December 2015

contractors in the S5IA companies and the inability of the state to regulate labour policies. The National Skills Development Corporation appointed ICRA Management Consulting Services Ltd. to 'independently' study the state of skills gap in the State in 2013 at the district level. One aspect of this study involved conducting interviews with key 'stakeholders', including industries. Employers were asked why they did not find the local labour pool employable, and their responses described the locals as 'complacent', 'indifferent' and unwilling to 'mould as per the employer's needs' (p. 144).

Another Maratha farmer from the dominant class who lost 12 acres of land in wave 2, but was not particularly connected to the circle of the more vocal elites, pointed out the irony of actively excluding degree-holding sons of the local elites: *'*they don't look at boys from our kind of background. If we go to MIDC, they tell us 'you are a millionaire ('crorepati') now. You got money from land, why do you need to work?*'*,[145] he said with a wry smile.

What then of the authority of the state, and its political legitimacy? As the dominant class begin to get excluded from the outcomes of 'development', the state begins to suffer from a crisis of legitimacy. The authority is then contested by the dispossessed farmers. I will show this in the next chapter.

7.3 Educated Unemployment

A body of anthropological and sociological literature on un- and under-employment among aspiring, degree-wielding Indian youth from previously socially mobile rural classes captures varying degrees of their exclusion from salaried jobs in the contemporary industrial landscape. The dystopic reality of chronic joblessness in urban and urbanising Indian towns has been theorised as 'educated unemployment' (Jeffrey 2009), 'thwarted aspirations' (Jeffrey et al 2008) and 'broken trajectories' (using Bourdieu, Levien 2018, 137). Cross (2009) finds further disenfranchisement amongst educated, degree- and diploma-holding men who are only able to find precarious contract employment inside factories. A misalignment between the kind of work promised by technical and vocational training and

[145] Group Discussion, Maangaon, 9 December 2015

what these young men eventually do in factories, and the workplace hierarchy within which they function, disillusion aspiring youth over and above dampening their return on material investment in education. Since investing in education for non-agrarian futures, as a long-term economic strategy (Ellis 1993; Berry 2018) or for social mobility (Cross 2009) through industry, is increasingly proving to be limiting, expectations are thwarted and trajectories are broken. What one finds here, similarly, are a devaluation of degrees amongst the aspiring youth, dashed expectations of social mobility, and self-*under*employment in the informal economy.

Industrial Training Institutes 'represent the legacy of Nehruvian central planning and nationalist projects of industrial modernisation. They were originally designed to equip young people for specific posts in India's public sector industries as welders, electricians and mechanics' (Cross 2009: 358). The number of ITI institutes in the State have been increasing since the 2000s and they have consistently operated at full capacity. In 2016-17, there were 846 institutes in the State with a capacity of 126,598 students and 117,246 students had been admitted (Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2016-17, p. 235). Compare this to the pale growth in rural non-farm jobs: between 1993-94 and 2009-10, the share of rural non-farm employment grew from 20.3 per cent to 20.6 per cent (Kumar et al., 364). To bring it closer to context, Aurangabad district alone has 11 government ITIs and five that are run privately, with a cumulative seating capacity of 2089. The NSDC study cited above found, on average, only 50 per cent of those getting an ITI degree find a job. Furthermore, it predicts between 2012 and 2022 demand for labour will primarily be generated in 'building, construction, and real estate', 'organised retail', and 'banking and financial services'. The diplomas from private educational institutions and technical degrees from the local university, that the sons of farmers from the dominant class have, are not adequate credentials for these growth sectors.

The Maratha farmers who had invested in getting their sons certified through ITIs have found these skills mismatched for the type of employment thus far demanded inside the factories in the S5IA. 'My son has done ITI. But they require higher degrees. How will we demand jobs?',[146] said Ram Waghle. Nanasaheb's (the Sarpanch) son has a civil engineering degree, but the automobile companies that have come up require mechanical engineers.

[146] Interview, Maangaon, 20 December 2015

Another dominant class farmer from Wave 1 recalled the assurance given by the regional officer of MIDC in-charge of land acquisition: 'Shinde told us that our boys would get ITI training, and we would develop like Pune. No ITI institute has been built for us to receive the training. So no one will look at us'.[147]

As formal regular employment becomes increasingly elusive, young men have to tread the 'self-employment' route. As of 31st December 2016, of the 36 lac individuals enrolled in the 'live register of employment and self-employment guidance centres' in Maharashtra, 2.2 lacs were ITI-trained individuals.

Table 7.1: Guidance Centre Enrolment vs ITI-Trained

Year	Employment and Self-employment Guidance Centre Enrolment	No. ITI Trained
2012	24,04,013	2,00,787
2016	35,73,255	2,19,871

Source: Annual Survey of Industries Report, 2016-17

As a Dalit activist Santaram Pandere mentioned, 'the fact that all the money will be spent on consumption means that living standards, for some, may increase. But **class** will not. None of the benefits will go to the local community. No one is demanding that the locals get jobs'.[148] For Pandere the promise of development in rural agrarian communities should ideally involve a shift away from agriculture into salaried jobs in factories. It is this shift that engenders social mobility: salaried jobs and associated education represent a higher social status in urbanising India. A strictly industrial proletarian status (linked to permanent factory jobs) is what he identifies as class. What one is seeing in S5IA+ instead, particularly among the educated young men in the dominant class, is a swelling of the self-underemployment in the informal economy. Young men, sometimes whole households, are using economic capital and social networks to move in and out of self-employment in providing services in the informal economy. Manoeuvring an informal economy of service provision (contractual water, transport and labour), and petty trade (shops, garages, small dealerships) involves stretches of underemployment or unemployment during cycles of recession. Moving

[147] Interview, Kumbephal, 3 November 2015
[148] Interview, Aurangabad town, 21 March 2016

between occupations also involves periods of being unoccupied and simply 'waiting' for opportunities.

Nanasaheb provided a similar assessment of the post-acquisition landscape for the Maratha farmers from the dominant class:

> Idleness has increased (*bekaari badh gayi hai*). Those who had little plots, they have mostly sold plots to meet expenses and are now working as labourers, here and there. Others have bought plots elsewhere, but even such people face a lot of problems. Most people cannot buy land in the same village because of the prices and a lack of availability. So you see, all kinds of people have become bekaar. Just wasting time. What can they do?[149]

He used the Hindi word *bekaari*, which literally translates to uselessness or, in the context of work, joblessness. However, what he is really referring to is not joblessness or unemployment but under-activity, a sluggishness in the economic space that does not allow young men to be gainfully occupied in permanent regular work. Those from the dominant class who have lost land are clearly trying to eke out a living and, when possible, avenues for accumulation. What he is pointing to is, in fact, the ways in which dominant class households, with sons with diplomas and degrees, but not enough land to depend on agriculture, and no pathway to transition into regular non-farm employment, are managing through a patchwork of cultivation on smaller plots of land and short-term erratic informal employment. This is the 'bekaari' Nanasaheb is referring to and the lack of 'class' Santaram laments.

Levien (2018) observes this in the case of the Mahindra SEZ in Rajasthan, which housed IT-ITES industry, a highly specialised service sector with demands for knowledge professionals. As mentioned in chapter 2, the service sector-fuelled growth in his case largely 'marginalised' all agrarian classes, underscoring 'the inequalities between the zone's urban (corporate and individual) beneficiaries and the village as a whole' (ibid, 132). I find this even in the case of an industrial area hosting manufacturing factories, which is widely

[149] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

thrown around in policy discourses as a more hopeful base for the farm to non-farm 'transition'.

7.4 Inaccessible 'Class' and the Sense of Exclusion

Of the 107 ha. of land in the possession of Wockhardt Pvt. Ltd., the company has set up the Wockhardt Global School (WGS) on 23 acres (9.3 ha.). The website of WGS promotes it as a 'non-profit social initiative' of the company to 'serve the needs of the local and international population'.[150] It is an 'independent' co-education day school where the medium of instruction is English and the curriculum at the primary and secondary-school levels are designed according to the International Baccalaureate programme that prepares students for higher education outside of India, particularly the United Kingdom. The school campus currently has three buildings, with shiny glass doors and French windows that reveal the interiors. It stands as a space of flagrant 'exclusion' from any hope of social mobility through education and subsequent professional salaried employment.

Figure 7.1: Wockhardt Global School

[150] http://wockhardtschools.com/

Contrary to its marketing claims, the school is not designed to serve the need of high-quality education or educational aspirations of the 'local' people; the locals living adjacent to the school are the various agrarian classes who gave up land for the S5IA+. Even the cash-rich local landed elites, such as the ones introduced in the previous chapter, who have the financial resources to pay the admission and school fees are deterred by the social capital one needs to access this site of 'social initiative'. I introduced Kisanji in the previous chapter: the farmer-businessman with a buffalo farm. As I walked out of his house after my second interview during my 2018 visit, his son, Shiv, recognised me from my previous visit. Upon swiftly exchanging pleasantries and updating him on the status of my doctoral project, he shot a question at me with urgency:

> Shiv: Have you seen the Wockhardt School? Would children from that school get into a good university in Mumbai? Or the UK, like you?
>
> Me: Yes, I did. It looks very big. Are they admitting children already?
>
> Shiv: Yes. But not our children. Nobody from the villages here can go. When they took our land, they made big promises. Now we cannot even enter the gate of the school. We don't speak good English like you.[151]

Shiv, Kisanji's second son, went to Marathwada University in Aurangabad and got a B.A. degree in history. He can read in English but cannot speak fluently. Following a string of unsuccessful job applications in Aurangabad town, he started to help his father manage his livestock and the non-farm enterprises they run collectively. His primarily responsibility is managing the 72-buffalo rearing business. He has two children of school-going age – a son and a daughter aged three and two respectively. He is keen both his children study in an English-medium school. He explained how he had filled up a form for the Wockhardt Global School: 'I think they must have just seen the form and thrown it'.[152]

The school, Shiv pointed out with deep and poignant self-awareness, is primarily for children of the 'manager-type'[153] in the S5IA and other middle classes from Aurangabad town. The adoption of the IB-curriculum is to cater to the 'international population', who

[151] Interview, Maangaon, 7 September 2018
[152] Same as above
[153] Same as above

are presumably the children of the non-Indian executives of the four multinationals – Wockhardt Ltd., Siemens Pvt. Ltd., Liebher and Skoda Ltd. The admission fee, according to my respondent, is INR 100,000 (GBP 1140), higher than the annual per-capita income of the district. It is, however, not an impossibly high amount for the newly cash-rich local elites of the dominant class. The barrier to school admission for them is not simply the admission fee. It is inadequate social capital and a non-alignment in social class that makes the school inaccessible to households like that of Shiv.

Levien (2018:154) uses 'social distance' to describe the constellation of social handicaps that separate rural residents from the formal knowledge-based jobs in the SEZ in his study area in Rajasthan. Similarly, in the context of the aspirational English-medium education, here the inability of someone like Shiv to admit his children to the school in the neighbourhood is a social distance resulting from their social location as 'rural'. That they belong to a rural social class, even if their economic resources and local political networks mark them locally as 'elite', make the hurdle to accessing this education formidable. 'Rurality' is a new axis of social exclusion that local elites and large landholders in the area are having to grapple with as a dominant caste in their agrarian polity. Through development projects like the DMIC, there is little scope for the fulfilment of aspirations of escaping rurality and to attain 'class' that Pandere talks about above.

The expectation of accessing the school, just like jobs, is based on precedence in popular collective memory. Between 1950 and 1970s, Western Maharashtra saw immense material prosperity in villages served by canal irrigation. One of the ways in which local Maratha elites legitimised their unequal material gains was by building English-medium schools that served a wider society in the villages, giving a broader pool of primarily large and middle farmers the opportunity to educate the next generation. Attwood (1974) shows how the politics around the board of the high schools was one of the arenas through which larger elite politics was accommodated and managed across other important institutions, like the co-operatives and local government councils.

State-planned development projects, it is expected, spawn opportunities and openings through which, even if not all, some of the upper and middle farmers are able to benefit. If the state mandated that its ally, private industries, accommodate some of the local families, then the development would have been more in line what the dominant elites had expected.

The underlying question in Shiv's queries to me about the school was what others had asked me: 'can the Collector and the politician not *tell* the companies?'[154]

The realisation that the ITI degrees are worthless has become a social fact in Aurangabad. With English-medium schools in physical proximity being socially inaccessible, young men are now gripped by the anxiety of watching the next generation being excluded from pathways of upward social mobility. The inaccessibility of English-medium schools in the urbanising villages, in this case, is thwarting aspirations even before they can be formed. The exclusion of children from the possibility of getting an 'English' education in the school built on what used to be their farms adds insult to serious injury of the fathers with degrees not being employed in the zone.

The chronic exclusion of the landlosers from the dominant class, including the local elites, from pathways of social mobility based on, among other things, their 'rurality' explains in great measure their need and desire to hold on to land. This becomes particularly clear from the case of Bhalerao Kakde, whose economic trajectory from agrarian livelihood, to labour contracting, and then back to land-based income discussed next.

7.5 Land for Land

In asking how the different classes used their compensation amount over time, I was able to observe a few trends. I asked those I visited for second or third interview why they had invested back in land. I shed light on the many economic and social uses to which land is being put. The arguments here are meant to engage with an important question posed by Levien (2013, 381) in relation to the cost of 'class compromise' in land dispossession. By class compromise, Levien implies getting the landowning class to give up land by accepting the terms of compensation offered by the state. This is fundamentally premised on the acquirer (the state) and the landowner agreeing on the exchange value of land. Even more fundamentally, 'a class compromise around land dispossession requires the farmers *accept the principle* of exchanging their land for a price' (ibid). Here I show how the dominant class begin to variously (re-)value land. I have already argued, in chapter 6, that cost to get the dominant class to comply is increasing for the state. One of the reasons, already

[154] Interview, Maangaon, 7 September 2018

discussed, is that the basis of compliance is shifting from hope of non-farm employment increasingly to material gain. A second reason elaborated here related to how rural classes are beginning to value rural land variously even in a context of agrarian crisis. The cost of compliance, or the cost of ‘class compromise’, for land dispossession will continue to increase for the state.

Many farmers, typically those who had about 6 acres (2.4 ha.) or more land prior to acquisition, spent a large chunk of their compensation money on land. Table 9.2 below shows how they replaced landholdings lost in land acquisition. There were multiple reasons for this.

Table 7.2: Land for Land - Compensation Money Spent on Purchasing New Land

Pseudonym	Farmer Caste	Total Land Pre-Acquisition (in acres)	Lost Land (in acres)	Remaining (in acres)	Bought Again (in acres)	Where	Rate	Share-Cropping	Grows	Got Paid (lac INR)	Spent (lac INR)
Datu Damle	Maratha	10	4	6	4	10 kms away	N/A	Yes	cotton, tur, makka, bajra	34	
Ram Waghle	Maratha	16	16		8	Badnapur	8 lacs per acre	self-managed with parents		136	64
Nana Saheb	Maratha	25	25		10+35 (hill)	Village	15 lacs per acre for the 10 acres			100	150
Kisan Kale	Maratha	15.5	14.5	1	8.5	Jalna	10 lacs per acre	Yes	moong, cotton, tur	123.25	85
Udhavrao	Maratha	9	9		7	Jalna	6 lacs per acre	self-managed with parents	cotton, bajra	76.5	42
Jagan Bagle	Maratha	8	8		6.5	30 kms away	30 lacs total	Yes		68	30
Mule	Maratha	24	24							552	
Ambey Maan	SC	6.5	6.5	0	3	Village	45 lacs			149.5	100
(same)					NA	Neighbouring village	15 lacs				
(same)					5	Jalna	40 lacs				
Bandi Thakur	OBC	18	18		60	Jalna	10 lacs per acre	Cultivate		414	600

Source: Author's fieldwork

A cohort of farmers for whom agriculture was the primary occupation replaced land acquired with farmland elsewhere. They attempted to replace land lost with new land of the same size, but that was a privilege that only the local rural elites managed. The others ended up buying plots of reduced size in a neighbouring village with familial networks. In Table 9.2, this group is represented by Datu Damle, Udhavrao, and Jagan Bagle, who bought land in villages as far away as the next district.

Without exception they have all moved to a share-cropping arrangement and continue to grow crops they were cultivating on the plots they had in their own village. Landholder Datu Damle is illustrative of this tendency to resolutely stick to agriculture. He owned 10 acres (4 ha.) of land in Maangaon and 4 acres (1.6 ha.) of his land got acquired. Without delay, he bought 4 acres (1.6 ha.) of land in a village around 10 kms away. He grows cotton, corn, tur (pulse) and bajra (coarse grain) through a share-cropping arrangement where 50 per cent of the produce is retained by his kin who looks after cultivation for him there. On the 6 acres remaining in his village, he grows sweet lime all year round. He used a portion of the compensation amount, previous savings from agricultural surplus and a personal loan to build a well on his farm. He explained the urgency of replacing land he had lost as follows:

> We are farmers. Nothing is possible without land. It has become impossible to grow cotton without the seed-buying loan at the beginning of sowing season, and to get a proper loan you need to show enough land as collateral. I need enough land in my name.[155]

The importance of land as collateral for crop loans and even loans to set up other businesses was highlighted by a few. Udhavrao, whose son is studying for a degree in commerce (B.Com) in a small college in the next village, assists with the household farm. I asked him why he bothered to buy more land if managing it as an absentee landlord was cumbersome: 'If he [the son] sets up his own work, he may need to show land for a loan. In any case, he has to have the knowledge of farming, you need land',[156] he said, sounding sceptical about the prospect of not having any land at all and depending entirely on non-farm income.

[155] Interview, Maangaon, 10 May 2016
[156] Interview, Maangaon, 15 December 2015

Similarly, Kisan Kale (the local elite with the buffalo farm) and Jagan Bagle have bought land and are engaged in share-cropping on a 50:50 arrangement. After his entire plot of farmland got acquired in 2010, Jagan Bagle opened a crop fertiliser shop along the highway. He also bought new land, almost of the size of the plot he lost, in a village 30 kilometres away. When I met him, he had been running the shop for five years. The fertiliser trade had generated a surplus only in 'some years'.[157] On his new land, he just about recovers costs from the share-cropping arrangement: 'just about make it',[158] he said.

To circumvent a sharecropping arrangement, which hardly generated surplus, some of them had parents or family members move into the villages where land was bought. This option came with other tribulations. Udhavrao indicated the difficulty of integrating socially in another village as an absentee landlord. He bought land 90 kms away in Jalna district and moved his parents there to supervise agricultural labourers. Initially, they rented a small house in the village but found it difficult to integrate. At the time of fieldwork, Uddhavrao explained ruefully, he lived in a small place on the farm. He would have liked to buy land closer to Maangaon but could not afford a plot large enough to cultivate efficiently. Ram Waghle echoed this plight: his lamentation of being called a 'foreigner' in the new villages was mentioned in chapter 6 in the discussion on accumulation by co-opted elites.
Even as the dominant class farmers have sons with degrees and small surpluses to set up businesses in petty trade and services, they have resolutely stuck to land on which cultivation is viable. Udhavrao explained his resolve to me as follows:

> I knew we would not get any other kind of work. We are farmers and we will have to remain farmers. What else will we do. I had to buy land quickly. I am still cultivating on the land here that has been acquired. You see nothing has come on my land. It has been many years...let MIDC come now, I won't give up this land till I get the 15% land-back.[159]

According to Datu Damle, those who were able to retain land or buy farmland elsewhere are hanging onto agriculture for good reason:

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[157] Interview, Mangaon, 10 December 2015
[158] Same as above
[159] Interview, Maangan, 15 December 2015

> The smaller farmers took maybe 1 acre in a nearby village and are just about surviving. The very small ones [marginal farmers] spent their money – they have expenses to pay for. *People like us* will stay in agriculture. So fifty-fifty.[160]

The 'fifty-fifty' estimate in Datu Damle's analysis represents an overall picture of the absence of 'transition' post land dispossession, where most of the dispossessed households have failed to move into stable regular non-farm employment. Land, after acquisition is, thus, not just a productive base but also an economic safety net when the landholders are excluded from other avenues of livelihood. The dominant class farmers, and even smallholders like Jagan Bagle, are clinging on to land. This tendency to cling on to land and farming is despite the agrarian crisis described in chapter 3. It is hardly surprising that given the limited opportunities for secure employment in the non-farm sector, farmers are trying to remain firmly grounded in agriculture.

Datu's explanation above also sheds light on the process of social differentiation that has followed land dispossession. The marginal class of landholders have been proleterianised, as I have shown in this chapter. As Datu said, they 'spent their money' on repaying loans, weddings and reinforcing their houses. Those who stay in agriculture are 'people like' Datu – the dominant class of farmers. Land in rural society has always been a marker of social status, but the ability to retain land, particularly in the village post dispossession, is a reinforcement of distinction and local dominance. Social status, here, thus indicates not just belonging to a 'class' of landholders but being able to retain class position and withstand the churnings in the agrarian economy.

There are other 'things' (Ferguson 2018) that the local elites are doing when they invest back in land. Nanasaheb and Kisan Kale have considerably expanded their non-farm enterprises post-acquisition, as mentioned in chapter 6. They are, however, continuing with cultivation on the side. In addition, both have retained land in the village. Land in village is about belonging, which Nanasaheb described as 'staying local'[161]: 'I obviously bought land in the village. I used to be a Sarpanch. I wanted land here because I'm local. Eventually this

[160] Interview, Maangaon, 15 May 2016
[161] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

land will be my son's'.[162] In those rare instances when the elite landholders could afford it, land in the village was about a sense of privileged status by maintaining land in place of residence. It was becoming a privilege to be able to maintain a position of dual belonging – land for farming and residence in the same village. Land, as commodity capital, was beginning to take new meanings. The entanglement of land with Nanasaheb's identity as a 'local' indicates his need to reinforce his local elite status. Following frictions within society as described in the previous chapter and their inability to secure factory jobs, elite Marathas are anxious about their local social dominance. Land continues to be important to remain relevant, even if cultivating on that land is not.

Then there is land as commodity capital for a variety of commercial uses in the future. Mule, Ram Waghle, Ambey Maan, and Nanasaheb are all plugged into a speculative rentier economy. Mule has bought land in order to sell it later for commercial purposes. He is also eagerly waiting to get the 15% developed-land back in order to set up a hotel along the highway. Ambey Maan is a young dynamic man and current president of the Youth INC for the Phulambri block of the district. He has been dabbling in the 'plotting' business (described previously in chapter 6 as local construction) since 2010. Before joining the INC, he used to work for the regional political party, the MNS. He rose through the ranks of the party and became an official local representative for the district. Ambey was close to Mule and maintained good relations with him. His connection with Mule and the other local Maratha elites in the village had served him well. When land was acquired in their village (Kaamgaon), he was been co-opted by the local elites, such as Mule. He in turn did his bit by brokering consent on behalf of Mule. He explained his story as follows:

> I was never good in studies, but I was very ambitious. I have wanted a TV in the house since 1991. I have even sold sarees in the local village fair. I was a local MNS worker since 2007. I got connected to the 'big people' [GP members and local Maratha caste elites] in the village. I started working as their agent helping with plotting around 2010.[163]

He was a Gram Panchayat member between 2010 and 2015 and his wife was the Sarpanch on the reserved quota for women at the time of my visit in 2016. He lost 6.5 acres (2.6 ha.)

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[162] Same as above
[163] Interview, Kaamgaon, 15 December 2015

of land. He immediately bought 5 acres (2 ha.) for his father to manage in Jalna district. He also bought two smaller plots of land – one in his village and the other in a neighbouring village – to develop as houses. He anticipates a spike in residential requirements for migrant workers that will follow the flurry of industrial activity in the DMIC and hopes to lease out houses on rent.

Mule and Ambey Maan, as others, were at the time of fieldwork, in 2016 and 2018, thriving in the 'economy of anticipation' (Cross 2015). In chapter 6, I discussed how Mule and Nanasaheb accumulated through land deals by virtue of their role in consent-generation. Their strategy for using land was simply to earn rents by selling at an appreciated value. What Ambey Mann is describing here, I argue, is qualitatively different. He intends to hold on to the land and rent it out. His aspiration is to remain economically relevant in the economy of the future. The purchase of land is not simply about gains through future appreciation in land value. Some of the elites are holding on to land not just to draw economic worth from commodified land but also for relevance in an economy where there are few other routes for them.

Harriss (2013, 360) cautions against overestimating the idea that 'land is no longer so important as the basis of status and power'. As described in previous chapters and here, the local rural elites have been adding sources of non-farm income to cultivation for at least a decade and a half. It is surplus from agriculture that allowed them to invest outside agriculture – in commercial shops, education, licenses for service provision, among others. Land acquisition for many of them has allowed them to intensify some of their non-farm operations, particularly petty trade and services. Yet they all invested a chunk of the money back into land purchases.

Sud (forthcoming) shows how the process through which land is converted into propertied commodity is, in fact, about state-making, social (re-)ordering and politics (Rassmusen and Lund 2018). I argue that commoditised land, as hotels and houses on rent, is a medium to stay relevant in the changing social landscape. If it was simply about material accumulation from capturing rents, then land in and around the village today would not necessarily be crucial in the portfolio of local elites. That the houses are given to labour from outside, or managers who come to work in the factory, are means of staying networked within the local economy as landlords, influential locals, and repositories of local knowledge and history.

For the local elites, land continues to be the medium to reproduce their economic dominance. They continue to be tenoned into niches of capitalist accumulation in the new urbanising economy through land. The case of Bhalerao Kakde, the dispossessed dominant class landholder who started Divine Power to supply labour, illustrates this well.

7.5.1 Clinging to Land: The Case of Bhalerao Kakde

Bhalerao Kakde[164], introduced briefly above, is a young entrepreneurial man in his late twenties. He belongs to one of the villages from Wave 1. When I first met him in 2016, he was a labour 'gatekeeper' – a contractor, as well as the leader of a labour union called Divine Power (the name of the organisation in Hindi, in fact, refers to power derived from a Hindu male deity). His dealings as a gatekeeper of labour were an exercise to insert himself in the non-farm economy while he waited for land.

In 1998, 6 acres (2.4 ha.) of land in his father's name was acquired, but Kakde's household was part of a larger joint household. His grandfather was alive at the time and, if one included land owned by his grandfather and two uncles, the Kakde household together lost 22 acres (9 ha.) of land. They used to grow *bajra*, a type of coarse grain, and tur *dal*, a variety of pulses that is a staple in the region. On a portion of the farmland they owned, they used to run a 'side business'[165] of mixing cement to make bricks. More than the loss of land for cultivation, he appeared to lament the loss of land that allowed them to make bricks and cement-mix – 'no-one wanted to give land, but we knew everyone would have to. Who would listen to us? The problem was that we could no longer run the brick business. We all had to find labour work.'[166]

When Kakde says he had to find labour job, he does not mean manual labour, though he used the same term – *mazdoori* – as used for manual wage labour. After acquisition, his household was left without any agricultural land, though they were not completely landless. That they had no agricultural land and no income related to agriculture, in his imagination,

[164] I had several meetings with him. I conducted three in-depth interviews with him, the first of which was in the semi-structured used for the systematic aspect of data collection. Over time, conversations with him became unstructured. He introduced to one of the four labour contractors I interviewed
[165] Interview, Kumbephal, 3 November 2015
[166] Same as above

meant that they had to all 'labour'[167]. He was still young at the time and a student. He focused on his studies and completed a bachelor's degree from a small university in Aurangabad. Kakde's father got a job as a site supervisor in a public sector company in town. He supervised the delivery of goods and payment of workers. The cash compensation for the land came in stages – first came the amount of Rs. 48,000 per acre (GBP 1730 per ha.) for the land, then a tranche for the standing crops and eventually a sum for the well. Kakde admitted that not everybody got compensated for standing crops and wells. With the compensation amount received, his father bought a tractor, even though he had no agricultural land left: 'he could not figure out what to do with the money, so he bought a tractor'.[168] Today, he leases the tractor out to other farmers in the area. The largest chunk of the compensation money was spent in marrying off two of his sisters.

Over time, as Kakde and his brother grew up, they started to run petty enterprises of their own. His elder brother opened a shop that sold lottery tickets. The venture did not last. Kakde tried to run a small business, selling mobile phones from a room in a building on the main road next to the national highway. When I met him first in 2016, he took me to his 'office'[169] space, the same room that used to be his mobile phone shop. The room was on the ground floor and there were two floors on top that were still being constructed – the stairway to the floors above and the floors themselves had exposed bricks. The floors above served as rooms that had been leased out to a labour contractor from Kolkata (in West Bengal) and some of his male labourers from rural villages and peri-urban areas in West Bengal. The land along the highway belonged to his family. He did not explicitly mention how or when he acquired the plot of high-value land along the highway that serves as the physical space for his ventures. I cannot confirm if this was made possible partly or wholly by the compensation money. It was purchased 'over time'[170] after their agricultural land was acquired. His mobile phone venture, however, failed because of 'too much competition'.[171] It was then that he started his second commercial undertaking – controlling the flow of labour through gatekeeping and unionising under the banner of Divine Power.

[167] Same as above
[168] Same as above
[169] Same as above
[170] Same as above
[171] Same as above

Accumulation through Labour Control

'Why did you start Divine Power?', I asked when he handed me his visiting card across his office desk. He responded:

> I had been seeing how people from our villages were not getting jobs. I mean those companies would not even look at us. I wanted to help people…you know, the small people. And it got bad…people from outside had come and put up union boards. They were all outsiders. I thought I should do something for the people here[172]

His response was infused with a moral imperative to protect the locals from getting marginalised. The 'local', in his case, was defined as the Marathi-speaking labourer from the Maratha caste, not just from landlosing households in his village but also from neighbouring villages and districts. While he never identified his union as limited to the Marathas, he did not have any members from the SC or Dhangar communities, which provided the largest chunk of manual labourers in the region, as explained above. When asked if he had Dalit labourers in his group, he said 'low caste people don't like to work for salaries in companies or through unions like mine. They prefer getting daily wage because they need to take ration home every day'.[173] What Kakde is implying reinforces what I have shown in the previous section: labour force and labouring are organised around and mediated through social institutions, such as caste and gender. At our first meeting, Kakde couched his gatekeeping services in the language of linguistic pride and subnational politics common in the State. Over time, he explained to me the economic logic of gatekeeping that he easily fit into because of his social status.

Kakde did not require major capital investment to commence operations as a gatekeeper of the swarms of labour required in the factories in the S5IA. What he primarily required was social capital – *networks* that could help him forge relationships with supervisors within various divisions of companies and plants in the S5IA, *authority* amongst those who seek desperately to survive through precarious employment as casual labour in the non-farm economy, and *links* that enabled his organisation to get registered with the local Labour

[172] Interview (2nd visit), Kumbephal, 6 November 2015
[173] Same as above

Union office. In 2016, he had about 140 active contacts with labourers, but not all were official members of Divine Power. The labourers had varied skills and were associated with him through different modes of gatekeeping. He had also built connections within the HR teams of a few companies in the S5IA.

In 2016, there were around 100 unregistered casual Hamali labourers grouped under Divine Power, manually loading and unloading goods from trucks that supply raw materials or collect finished products in the S5IA. These workers pay a fixed monthly fee. Divine Power also supplies workers who are employed on monthly contracts. At the time of fieldwork, he had supplied workers earning monthly contractual income at Gaps Power & Infrastructure Private Ltd. – a Mumbai-based company occupying 8.76 ha of erstwhile Kumbephal land. Some of these workers earn as much as INR 45,000 - 60,000 (GBP 515 to 700) a month. For this 'guaranteed income'[174] Divine Power collects a fee of INR 2000 - 3000 (GBP 23 to 35) monthly.

Divine Power acts as the front for labourers in all their negotiations with the employing company in the zone. Kakde claimed it is registered with the All Marathwada Kamgar Union (the Kamgar Uttarai Union). The office is located in a cluster of commercial establishments – a small branch of the State Bank of India, tea stalls, shops and small businesses – that dot the main highway. They form a layer of commercial activities, separating the residential part of Kumbephal from the highway. Kakde owns the land and the building in the commercial space.

The transition to gatekeeping activity was predicated on existing social relations and his place as a local dominant rural elite. As Pattenden (2011, 173) explains: 'class relations and processes of accumulation and immiseration are increasingly constituted by a less direct and less overt set of relations, amongst which village gatekeeping plays a significant role'. Even though the gatekeeping services Kakde provided through Divine Power allowed him to accumulate and reproduce local dominance, he did not prefer this work: *'*too much tension everyday', he complained. His trajectory took yet another turn when I revisited him in 2018, described in detail in chapter 7 where I discuss the multidimensional relevance of land for those who can afford to cling on to it from all rural classes.

[174] Interview, Kumbephal, 3 November 2015

Labour to Land

Right after my fieldwork in 2016, he received his 1000 sq. feet of developed land within the larger territory that makes the S5IA but lies behind the rows of factories and sheds. Kakde has opened a 'bar-cum-restaurant' in a single-storey building. The land that was returned to him was adjacent to the road and there was about 6000 sq. feet of land between the road and his property. He negotiated with MIDC and got the right to use it as a segue into his bar so cars could drive right into the entrance:

> I had to fight for it. I had to make applications, talk to people, make them understand and basically negotiate. It took time and money. Getting MIDC on board and getting license for liquor from the Excise department. It took me 6 months and 2 lacs to pay people and set up the bar.[175]

In 2018, at the time of my second visit, his bar had been in operation for almost a year and he spoke of plans of extending it by building another floor on the existing one. In the additional 6000 sq. feet space, he has been raising chickens as supply for his restaurant. He had a manager who handled everyday operations and guard dogs at the entrance. He was being able to turn in a good surplus as the only such establishment in the vicinity of the factories – workers and managers, all kinds of 'big and small'[176] men, visit his bar, as he explained. He made much more money than he had been through gatekeeping for labourers through Divine Power. Most importantly, since the everyday operations did not hinge on his personal networks and authority, it demanded less of his time for supervision: 'I don't have to deal with people, don't have to deal with police, or fight. It is relaxed. No hassle. In fact, I don't even have to go everyday'.[177] Between collecting rent from the building that he still leases out to the labourers from West Bengal, and the regular flow of surplus that the bar generates, he is able to focus on utilising his networks and acumen in land brokerage.

Kakde has intermittently been dealing with facilitating private land deals in the neighbourhood. The sporadic nature of his involvement is a result of how land markets work:

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[175] Interview, S5IA, 5 September 2018
[176] Interview, S5IA, 5 September 2018
[177] Interview, S5IA, 5 September 2018

demand and supply are contingent on external macro-economic factors (such as liquidity, information on future non-farm uses, like the DMIC), deals take time to materialise, and are not always successful in the end. Given that the income of the broker is based on commission earned from a successful deal, it is not possible for petty brokers like Shedke to rely solely on intermediation in land for income. In 2016 when I first met him, he had completed one land deal. The commission on 'smaller'[178] land deals of about one acre is about 2 per cent, and that on larger plots is, counterintuitively, smaller – as small as 1 per cent. Larger land deals tend to involve more than intermediary, dividing the brokerage amount into multiple parts. In cases where Shedke is a smaller link in the chain, the arithmetic of commission can work out to his share being smaller than what he earns from a smaller plot of land. In a good year, he earns as much as INR 2 lacs (GBP 2300) in commission from land brokerage. This, however, does not provide a regular flow of cash income.

7.6 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I showed how the dominant class largely shared an image of progress with the state. In materialising this image, the state co-opted key local elites in the process of land acquisition, and elites allied with the state. This alliance, however, was provisional. Over time, as the reality of a non-farm economy unfolded and fell far short of the progress promised, fissures began to appear in state-elite relations.

I showed its unfolding as follows:

Farmers who willingly give up land aim to 'exit' agriculture with aspirations of getting salaried employment. These expectations are based on two factors: their investment in education for sons, and their hope of drawing on political and social networks, particularly the ones they forge at the time of land acquisition. The dominant class farmers, including many rural elites, find they are excluded from the minimal salaried work in the manufacturing units that come up in the planned area.

[178] Interview, S5IA, 5 September 2018

The employment landscape in the S5IA has generated minimum salaried employment for the dominant class farmers. While the state acts with authority in facilitating land dispossession and regulates private industry selectively in matters of taxation and environmental degradation, it does not enforce labour laws as stringently. Private units are thus able to evade labour laws and maintain a flexible regime of supply of migratory labour through contractors. This is true not just for the manual labour work (as I will show in chapter 9), but also semi-skilled work. It is the semi-skilled salaried work to which the dominant class aspire.

In this labour landscape, the dominant class farmers find it difficult to make 'claims' to jobs to a reified entity, such as the state, though this authority makes its effect felt at the time of acquisition. The reality of limited opportunities for the dominant class in the non-farm economy shows the limits of the 'transition' thesis even in cases where the industrial space evolves into a productive manufacturing site. It is unsurprising then that those who are able to attempt to replace land acquired by the state with more agricultural land as close the village of residence as possible. The rush to replace land with agricultural land, particularly among the dominant class, is noteworthy in a context that is ridden with agrarian crisis. For most, capitalist development provides limited opportunities to diversify out of agriculture. Registering new uses of commodified land is analytically important to the study of the sociological concept of local 'dominance'. Land-based rural power has been understood in Indian sociology and political economy paradigmatically through 'landlordism': exercising economic control over lower-caste and lower classes through ownership of large landholdings in an agrarian economy. On one hand, it has been argued, that landlordism has been on a decline. On the other, inequality in land ownership is increasing. Even if caste-based hierarchy and land-based power are not neatly packed into traditional 'dominance' within the village today, it does not 'necessarily mean that economic and political dominance has withered away' (Harriss 2013, 361). Political-economic agency based on land ownership seems to matter even in the neoliberal era, and therefore, it is not simply the case that land has ceased to matter even if local power does not congeal around it in the traditional way. The rural elites in the sample rushed to replace land lost through dispossession because land continues to be economically and socially valuable.

A decade and half later, what one sees is what has been observed in the cases of SEZs and peri-urban commercial spaces siting more specialised sectors of the economy: devaluation

of degrees amongst educated youth. When the dominant class farmers are not able to use their political networks and alliances built at the time of acquisition to access employment in the S5IA, the state begins to lose its political legitimacy. It is this gradual erosion of legitimacy that characterises much of the political reactions to dispossession I observe in this case.

The disjuncture faced by the dominant class in the trajectories they envision for themselves generates frictions with the state, within the class, as well as, across classes, which I show in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Frictions in State-Society Relations Over Time

In chapter 6, I discussed how the local elites from the dominant class had complied with the state to forge 'consent' for land acquisition in local communities. Alliances with the state bore material fruit for many of the rural elites – contracts for servicing the industrial area, alleged information on future land acquisition plans, discretionary compensation for wells and standing crops, to name a few. Many took these episodic material gains as indication of an incorporation into a new economy that would allow for further accumulation and social mobility through non-farm employment. In chapter 7, I showed how those expectations did not materialise through the manufacturing-based economy of the S5IA. With the 'transition' to non-farm employment largely out of their reach, the same class of farmers began to get disenchanted with the possibilities of accumulation through their alliances with the state.

The purpose of this chapter is to further map the fractures in state-society relations by identifying the sources of tensions and axes of conflict that surface over time in this protracted process of dispossession and 'development'. This section builds on data from Waves 1 and 2 to show how conflict, even if absent in 'Manichaean terms' (Oya 2013: 1536) at the time of land acquisition, can surface as the state and rural classes settle into more mundane everyday relations of frictional capitalist development. The frictions of 'development' also seep into relations within rural society: within and across rural classes.

The narratives of the local elites from the previous rounds were variously critical, remorseful, and belligerent. Nanasaheb (the Sarpanch from Wave 2), as has been established in the previous chapters, was not complimentary about how the local state had handled the process of acquisition and the transition to securing 'proper' futures for the farmers like himself. When I interviewed him in his house, in line with the requirements of research ethics, I first introduced myself as a doctoral student, regurgitated my well-rehearsed purpose of study, and launched into my scripted consent clause for respondents. As I uttered the part about not feeling compelled to answer any question he did not want to, he cut me short and said: 'I will answer everything very well. I have a lot of knowledge and you should

know what really happens'.[179] Encouraged by his commitment to candour, I carried on with the rest of my ethics-mandated disclosure and assurances about anonymity: 'You can tell everyone what I said. I am not scared of anyone. People still come to me',[180] he rebutted, dismissing what must have sounded like the unnecessary paranoia of a young, inexperienced female student. Other local elites such as Kisan Kale (the farmer-businessman) and Ram Waghle, introduced in the previous chapter, kept filling silences and breaks in our interviews with 'ask whatever you want to. We [presumably landholders like him in his village] have no fear', 'nothing to lose',[181] and other such declarations.

The inflections above underscore the perceptions of the local elites on the process of state-led development, and, its main actor, the state. Through their interviews for this study, they wanted to ensure their (counter) narrative on the overstepping of authority by the state, reneging of informal contracts, and unfulfilled promises of transition were recorded as the 'factual' and 'honest' reality of what materialises over time. It is not that Nanasaheb has meticulously provided complete information on all my questions; when I triangulated information on his own assets and income from other sources, including his son, it was clear he under-reported his own wealth. However, Nanasaheb appeared to be open about his current relations with state officials. The candour he promised was in relation to his perceptions of the state. My presence was an outlet for the disgruntled landholders to express their anger over fractures in their alliances with the local state and the incomplete incorporation into a system of patronage in the new economic configuration.

The compliant 'brokers' of the land-acquiring machinery can be confrontational and oppositional to the same process and state actors over time. Furthermore, compliance and resistance are 'strategic alternatives which are both complementary and interdependent' (Attwood 1974, 227). Since rural classes are not homogenous, much less society, frictions along the state-society axis cannot be independent of intra-society tensions. State-society frictions are interlaid with frictions amongst elite groups across villages, as well as across individuals within groups who were allies at one point.

[179] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[180] Same as above
[181] Same as above -

In the first section, I focus on legal cases against the state. Litigation has been an important means for those with economic and social resources to contest the state, and more significantly, the vision of 'development' which falls woefully short of offering opportunities for material benefit and social mobility, as shown in the previous chapter. Instances of litigation presented here are expressions of a series of assertions, contestations, and claim-making: they demand 'rightful' claims to promised compensation and register unlawful practices by both local state authorities as well as industries in collusion with the local state.

In the second section, I focus on mass mobilisation for non-farm jobs that has been a defining characteristic of Maratha politics, not just in Aurangabad but in the State. The demand for reservations in government jobs for rural Maratha youth has sporadically erupted as mass agitations and Aurangabad is often the locational fount of these organised demands. I link this to the politics of land dispossession in the study area.

In the third section, I use observations in the previous two sections to theorise the particularities of dominant class politics in the region. I advance a notion of staggered politics to analyse the combined political reactions of those I have classified as the dominant class. The claims and tactics, on occasion, also extend to the smallholders class in the region.

In the fourth section, I show the nature of frictions that emerge within rural society – within and across rural classes, and in some cases within households.

The main argument of this chapter is that rural agrarian politics does not have to be evaluated as a co-optation-vs.-resistance binary. In doing so, we risk missing out on understanding reactions as 'politics' and, consequently, the possibilities they offer as modes to contest power or the threats they pose for progressive redistribution of resources.

8.1 Frictions with the State – Litigations

In this section, I highlight how the rural classes are posing a challenge to the state and the process of 'development' through legal-institutional means.

8.1.1 Litigations and the Local Elites

In study villages from Wave 1 and Wave 2, multiple dominant class farmers have filed legal cases against the state – MIDC, the Collector's Office, and even local politicians – after having 'consented' to land acquisition. Tussles over land ownership in most parts of India are mired in litigation. Through the cases presented in this section, I show how dominant class farmers, primarily the local elites, contest the over-stepping of authority by state officials.

Case 1: Contesting the preponderance of private capital and the heavy-handedness of the state

In 2007, a decade after land was acquired in Wave 1, MIDC invited expressions of interest and allocated plots to industries. Ajanta Pharma Pvt. Ltd., a Mumbai-based pharmaceutical company with seven manufacturing units, four of which are located across Aurangabad district, was looking to set up an SEZ. Since the company already had a footprint in the district, it expressed an interest in setting up a 'sector-specific' SEZ on 247 acres (100 ha.) of land in the S5IA. MIDC was keen to have this proposal approved by the Centre and allocate land in the S5IA.

For about half the 247-acres Ajanta sought – 131 aces (53 ha.) to be precise – MIDC did not have 'clean' and clear possession. The land was fragmented in 33 plots that belonged to different farmers from Wave 1. These farmers had not consented to the acquisition process and had not signed official certificates, called 'awards', stating the land had been transferred to MIDC and compensation has been accepted. Of this group of resisting farmers were Bhanudas Kakde, with 10 acres (4 ha.) of multi-cropped land, and his nephew Baban Kakde with 6 acres (2.4 ha.) of land.

In 1997, when the Collector's office first approached them, officials verbally informed them that 10 acres and 6 acres respectively – all of their farmland – had been earmarked for acquisition for an industrial area. They, along with other Maratha farmers whose plots collectively amounted to 131 acres, categorically refused to consent to acquisition. While Bhanudas' son-in-law (whose significance I will explain shortly) cited 'attachment'[182] to land and a 'peasant way of life'[183] as reasons for refusing, others with smaller plots of land (2-3 acres) told me individually that the compensation did not seem 'adequate'[184]. Moreover, the state had not engaged in protracted negotiations with this group. I presume this was because, after having faced an initial hurdle of resistance, state officials diverted their attention to the other 900-odd ha. that had to be assimilated for the S5IA. Officials from the Collector's office, after making cursory visits that simply provided the initial information, seemed to have retreated from open solicitation and no further official communication reached this group of farmers.

The ostensible status quo carried on until 2006. The group of resisting farmers continued to cultivate their land. MIDC, meanwhile, gradually acquired the rest of the land for the S5IA, started building infrastructure for an industrial area, and even allotted plots to industries around the farmland these farmers were rightfully cultivating as theirs. Around mid-2007, the unusual lull on this island of farmland in the S5IA was disturbed.

On 26th July 2007, the Ministry of Commerce & Industries granted formal approval to Ajanta Pharma Pvt. Ltd. to set up a 'sector specific SEZ'[185] for pharmaceutical manufacturing on 247 acres (100.43 ha.) of land in Maharashtra. S5IA was identified as the appropriate location for the proposed SEZ. MIDC Aurangabad formally confirmed *overnight* that land, as per Ajanta's specification and free of encumbrances, was available for immediate possession. What turned out to be the Achilles heel for the state was the series of legal lapses and regulatory oversight in trying to make this land available to Ajanta in a spectacularly short period of time. In doing so, the state undermined its legitimacy as a guardian of rights and an upholder of rules.

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[182] Interview, Shendra (Nathnagar), 16 November 2015
[183] Same as above
[184] Group discussion, Shendra (Nathnagar), 15 May 2016
[185] Correspondence was acquired through the Right to Information Act for the legal case. I accessed them through Advocate Vilasrao Sonwane

Correspondence[186] between Ajanta Pharma, MIDC, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industries reveals the allocation of land to the company did not follow formal rules strictly. Officials at the regional office of MIDC in Aurangabad had informally agreed to hand over the land Ajanta needed to set up its SEZ. Ajanta then applied formally to the Ministry at the Centre in New Delhi. The day MIDC Aurangabad received the formal approval from the higher authority, it drafted a formal letter transferring land for which it did not have titles. This is what the farmers and local news articles reporting on this litigation referred to when they said 'land was given overnight'.[187]

Bhanudas and Baban's plots demonstrate this well. Maps demarcating plots of land available for Ajanta and certificates claiming the plots were in possession of MIDC were prepared on 28th December 2007 at 11 am, as per official signatures on the documents. On the same day and at the same time, another document outlining the official hand-over of the custody of land was signed between an MIDC official and a land surveyor on behalf of Ajanta. This overlap demonstrates the maps and possession documents for approximately 100 ha. were conjured up in a day so Ajanta could be given land promptly. That the handover of the land was irregularly rushed was made clearer by the lease deed between MIDC and the company dated 27th March 2008. Passing on the custody of land (in 2007) before signing a lease agreement (in 2008) is in complete violation of official procedure.

The land in question was not in the possession of MIDC as it had not been acquired from the farmers. Ajanta realised this when it took possession of the land in late 2007, even before the lease had been signed. A meeting between the CEO of Ajanta Pharma, CEO of MIDC and regional officer of MIDC Aurangabad was convened on 5 November 2007 where Ajanta complained the State electricity board (MSEDCL) was unable to transfer the electricity lines to Ajanta because electricity bills amounting to 3.92 lacs, owed by the farmers to whom the land originally belonged, had not been cleared.[188]

To the group of dissenting farmers, there was no ambiguity that the land rightfully belonged to them. They had not signed any document consenting to acquisition and were in possession

[186] Correspondence was acquired through the Right to Information Act for the legal case. I accessed them through Advocate Vilasrao Sonwane
[187] Interview, Shendra (Nathnagar), 16 November 2015
[188] Letter I found from the case file of Advocate Sonwane

of paper titles. They had not accepted any compensation – cash or otherwise. Their land had not been fenced off – they had been tilling it, growing crops, and selling their harvest. Furthermore, MIDC had been developing land around their plots. The water supply pipeline that MIDC had provided to all other 'project affected persons' had circumvented their land: 'even MIDC knew the land belonged to us. Why else would they skip our land when building the water pipeline'[189] one of the farmers with a 3-acre (1.2 ha.) plot exclaimed during my group discussion with them. As far as the farmers were concerned, titling through practice, and not just through paper, indicated they were rightful owners of the land. They had registered their opposition to giving up land to the state and their continued ownership was both through legitimate state documents as well as their everyday practices (Scott 1986).

A year had passed since Ajanta Pharma had officially leased in land. With farmers still physically occupying land, the company had not managed to begin operations. On 3rd December 2008, following several complaints by the company, and presumably threats to give up the lease agreement, the Collector's Office decided to use force. The Sub-district Magistrate authorised the physical expulsion of famers using the police. Baban narrated the incident to me as follows:

> Around 500 police officers, accompanied by political leaders came to our farms and bulldozed standing crops. We had wheat, jowar, corn, vegetables and fruits like sitaphal, mosambi. My father in-law's land had sandalwood trees. Wells were levelled and electricity lines were destroyed. Farmers who had rushed to the site and resisted were arrested. The police put 28 men and 15 ladies in jail for the night.[190]

When the threat of physical expulsion from land became real, and men and women had been exposed to violence, Bhanudas and Baban decided to contest the heavy-handedness of the state in court. In arriving at this decision, they were bolstered by Bhanudas' son-in-law, Kalyan, who lived in Aurangabad town and held a permanent job as a line supervisor in a factory. Using his personal networks, connections, and the Right to Information Act, Kalyan put together a corpus of evidence of procedural irregularities that demonstrated how the state

[189] Group discussion, Shendra (Nathnagar), 15 May 2016
[190] Interview, Shendra (Nathanagar), 19 February 2016

had overstepped its authority, misused its power, and violated the law. Kalyan and Baban discussed these at length with me during my repeated visits.

For this group of farmers on the 131 acres of land, there had been no official notification, as is mandated under clause 32(1) of the Act. There had also been no consultation and negotiation over the compensation amount, as was documented in the petition to the High Court. Most egregiously, there was rampant forgery on compensation 'awards', the document that certifies 'consent' and shows in writing that the landholder has accepted compensation money. Kalyan displayed one document after the other before me:

> (Document 1) Look at the Punchanam – there is no date or the Divisional Officer's signature. And the thumb print that is supposed to be my father-in-law's is not his. It does not match![191]
>
> (Document 2) This award of compensation says that the plot was acquired based on 'agreement'. The agreement form is blank and there is one thumb impression that cannot be identified to anyone.[192]
>
> (Document 3): Look at this signature on the Punchnama. These are the Talathi and other people as witnesses whose land had been exempted from acquisition. The landholder's thumbprint is not there.[193]

As I was going through the documents being handed to me, Baban (the nephew), holding a map of the SEZ, chimed in:

> These SEZs require large contiguous land. The land was not contiguous. It had a road, two little streams. But look at this map that MIDC made for this company. It shows that all our land, wells, trees, water are available for them like one big land.[194]

[191] Interview, Shendra (Nathanagar), 19 February 2016
[192] Interview, Shendra (Nathanagar), 19 February 2016
[193] Interview, Shendra (Nathanagar), 19 February 2016
[194] Interview, Shendra (Nathanagar), 19 February 2016

The 131 acres (53 ha.) worth of topography had been flattened into two-dimensional grids. As Advocate Sonwane who represented the farmers in Court told me, 'all rules, laws and Acts were kept at bay by corrupt officials'.[195]

The legal case Kalyan and Baban filed was first fought in the High Court in Mumbai and then at the district bench in Aurangabad. For three years between 2008 and 2011, the two young men spent substantial financial resources and time on the case before the district court finally passed a stay order on Ajanta Pharma. The stay order prevented Ajanta from continuing operations on contested land. After further contestations, Ajanta withdrew the project, and the land was 'de-notified' as MIDC property and returned to the farmers in 2016.

Following the return of the land, farmers have variedly transacted land with the state as well as private players for different rates of compensation; some continue to farm temporarily, though that is increasingly difficult given most of the land has been converted to industrial use.

What Kalyan and Baban fiercely contested was the over-stepping of authority, and the use of force and deceit by state officials in separating them from their means of livelihood. In addition, the marginalisation of their interests at the expense of big corporate capital was also a source of friction and disenchantment with the state. It surfaced often in their narratives. Kalyan once said, 'think about the speed with which these government officials prepare all the paperwork for Ajanta. When we need a document for our land from the Land Revenue Department, they make us sit for hours'.[196]

Case 2: Contesting overstepping of state authority through institutional and extra-institutional means

Nanasaheb, the Sarpanch from the Wave 2 village and key actor in the generation of 'consent', had not limited his contestation tactic to expensive legal-institutional means. His contestation moved from the court to the factories.

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[195] Interview, Aurangabad, 20 February 2016
[196] Interview, Aurangabad, 20 February 2016

Nanasaheb had to file a legal complaint in the Mumbai High Court against the MIDC and the Collector's office to receive compensation for the sweet lime trees on his orchard and wells. He was promised compensation for all the crops and infrastructure on his land, but at the time of payment the Collector categorically refused - *'I personally moved the High Court and the Court ruled in my favour'.*[197] This was corroborated by farmers of both the dominant class and the smallholders who were critical of Nanasaheb's involvement in the acquisition process but, at the same time, in awe of his ability to challenge the state singlehandedly.

Following the ruling, when the Collector's office continued to foot-drag on the compensation, Nanasaheb's strategy was one of 'everyday resistance' (Scott 1985). Perkins, an engine manufacturing company that began operation in October 2015 in the S5IA of Wave 1, was scheduled to have a ceremonial inauguration earlier that year. Nanasaheb mobilised other Maratha dominant elites, those who had also not been compensated for standing crops and had litigated in groups, and caused unrest at the event, threatening to prevent the factory from operating peacefully: 'I asked villagers to congregate at the event. We stopped the ceremony ('*bhumi puja*') and caused havoc (*'toda-phodi aur bawaal'*)'[198]. At the time of interview, he was waiting to buy back the 15 per-cent developed land from MIDC. 'Until that land is given, I will not let any company come on Maangaon land. We will adopt militancy-like tactics at the Perkins inauguration if required'[199], he told me with resolve. Nanasaheb's economic resources and social networks as erstwhile *Sarpanch* allowed him to appeal to the judiciary as well as deploy 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985).

I asked him questions in chronological order, beginning with the land acquisition process. Reliving the development of the industrial area and subsequent changes sequentially, it was apparent how his disillusionment had set in over time. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, landholders from the dominant class discussed here headlined their narrative with deep disappointment in the state and state-led development. However, when Nanasaheb spoke of the actual process of acquisition and his own role in the process, he was self-congratulatory about his political work in brokering consent. He expressed a sense of accomplishment in helping the state with a complex process. Frictions with the state surfaced

[197] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[198] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[199] Same as above

over time as it became clear that the extensions and state largesse in the form of brokerage through private land deals and contracts were uncertain and short-lived. He couched this friction with the local state machinery in the language of 'unfulfilled promises of development'[200], particularly that of jobs, as mentioned in the previous chapter. He lamented that he could not get his son a job despite his political and social networks.

His reaction to failures on the part of the state to deliver on his promises, including maintaining networks of patronage, took the form of open contestation. Litigation and contestation were not simply about getting money for fruits crops. They were about contesting the legitimacy of the state.

Case 3: Contesting 'irregular practices' and navigating 'injustices'

Ram Waghle and his brother, the other co-opted elites discussed in the previous chapter, were also embroiled in litigation with MIDC and the Collector's office. At the time of fieldwork, he had an ongoing legal case against MIDC in Bombay High Court on grounds of 'irregular practices'.[201] MIDC acquired one of the plots of their large joint-family holding through a 'sale deed', that is outside of the official state-acquisition process, and gave a higher price to the landowner, a distant cousin of Ram Waghle. This was the trigger that led the two Waghle brothers to court: 'the state has done us a great deal of injustice',[202] he told me. With assurances of non-farm jobs for his sons still unmet and water supply contracts extended to him made void, his trust in the state machinery was entirely broken. MIDC was a rogue representative of the state, and more significantly, the local politician-patron Hairbhua Bagale had refused to meet his obligations.

Ram Waghle's case further illustrates how the state suffers from a crisis of legitimacy when its promises of 'development' begin to ring hollow and lucrative extensions, such as contracts, are left to the workings of private capital. What the elites then begin to contest is the authority of the state.

[200] Same as above
[201] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015
[202] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

8.1.2 Litigation and Smallholders

The cases described above are instances of local rural elites litigating individually. These were the more prominently discussed cases in the villages: instances of a farmer 'taking on' the state inspire awe amongst farmers, further highlighting and reinforcing the social dominance of these rural elites. Bhanudas, Baban, Nanasaheb and Ram Waghle, are those whose resources – both economic and social – made it possible for them to appeal *individually* to the judiciary. Litigation is a significant financial burden. For many local elites, hefty litigation expenses have diluted a large proportion of the material gains they made through land rents and other concessions. Ram Waghle and his brother, for example, spent INR 2,25,000 (GBP 2460) on litigation fees just in 2013. Yet these dominant class farmers are contesting the state through legal-juridical means. Beyond the three cases mentioned above, I recorded two other such cases across just two villages from Wave 2 of acquisition.

Litigation is draining not just on financial resources, but also on time. Furthermore, the intimidation of navigating the bureaucratic maze of legal paperwork makes the 'court' largely inaccessible as a recourse against violations by a powerful actor. One needs deep social networks to be able to put together a successful legal front. The contestation against Ajanta Pharma would not have been possible without the social connections and networks of Kalyan Dugle; an article in the local press reporting on this case aptly described Kalyan as the 'graduate'[203] son-in-law of Bhanudas driving the court case.

Farmers from the smallholder class in Wave 1 villages, however, have been taking their contestations with the state to the legal arena by pooling together economic resources and social networks. The approach to litigation and the content of the legal complaint for the smallholders class is different from those of the local elites: the smaller farmers file cases only after there has been a precedence – a 'political opening' (Shapiro-Garza 2013) – that helps them overcome the inaccessibility of the legal apparatus. Moreover, the claims they are making in court are fundamentally about survival and livelihoods, and less about a political counter to the authority of the state and private capital. These contestations reflect

[203] Adhunik Kisan, August 2013. I had the article translated into English by a professional

their struggle over land-based livelihood on which they are disproportionately more dependent than the local elites. Two cases illustrate this.

Once the Ajanta case was successful, a group of farmers who had lost between two and six acres of land got together to file a petition in the district court. They hired the same advocate as Bhanudas and Kalyan in case 1 above. They could not afford his fees but hoped to pay him once they won, they said. During the group interview, one of them said to me, 'If we buy land and don't grow anything on it within two years, they change the status of the land to non-agriculture. How come it is not the same for MIDC. It has been eight years, and nothing has come on our plots'.[204] The farmer quoted co-owned four acres of land with his brother. All four acres were acquired by the state. Their land is part of one of the S5IA plots where nothing has come up yet. Strictly speaking, the land was acquired under the MID Act which has no provision for returning unutilised land to original landowners.

The idea of justice they are appealing to is one of the clauses under the LARR 2013. The act of approaching the court to contest the state is indicative of how a precedence of success can serve as a 'political opening' (Shapiro-Garza 2013) for the small and marginal farmers to act collectively using means that are typically available to the more dominant classes of rural society.

Following acquisition, the two brothers bought 2 acres (less than a hectare) of land from a farmer in the village who was diluting a part of his holdings to finance his daughter's wedding. The other brother said 'we knew we would not get jobs. Farming is all we can do so we had to buy land. Now we want our old land back'[205]. The brothers and this group of dissenting farmers are perfectly aware that, even if they manage to get their vacant land back, they will struggle to cultivate it. With most of the S5IA covered in manufacturing factories and the ground water polluted by industrial waste, farmland around the industrial area is no longer suitable for cultivation. What their contestation reflects is a counter to their marginalisation in an idea of 'development' that seemed to have worked in the past for members of their class. They are now strategising to insert themselves in the 'non-farm'

[204] Focus group Discussion, Shendra, 15 May 2016
[205] Focus group Discussion, Shendra, 15 May 2016

economy in the only way they can: land rents. The hope of being able to re-sell the plots at their current appreciated market value is what they are after.

A second instance along the farmer-capital axis is the issue of ground water pollution by Radico Distillery mentioned in chapter 4. The court case filed in the High Court pit farmers against private capital and ruled in favour of the former i.e. farmers represented by the Gram Panchayat, an exception to general trend in India as described next.

8.1.3 Litigation and Rural Landholders

Nielsen and Nilsen (2014) have questioned the extent to which institutions like the judiciary can serve as a viable site of contestation for struggles over land. The record of the judiciary in India in defending rights of farmers, in particular *Adivasi* inhabitants, against land expropriation for mining and infrastructure projects has indeed been far from laudatory. The High Courts in India have a dismal record in adjudicating over what counts as 'public purpose' in cases of coercive land acquisition, siding overwhelmingly with ruling governments and the bureaucratic machinery (Nielsen 2011). Recently, in February 2019, the Supreme Court of India has undone decades of progress made in protecting *Adivasi* rights to forest land. The Court dismissed the claims of approximately 1000,000 forest dwellers to live in and manage forestlands under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (Scroll.in, 25 February 2019). Moreover, the complex maze of land laws criss-crossing jurisdictions across the central and provincial levels itself is a significant obstruction for justice for the rural classes by virtue of its ability to obfuscate what is 'lawful' in the context (Reuters, 10 July 2019). Yet, the recent portfolio of high-pitched and widely covered mass-mobilisations against land dispossession have deployed litigation as one of the many strategies of resistance. Appealing to the legal-juridical means is useful as a mechanism to cause delay in projects and draw public attention that is inimical to capitalists (Levien 2013, 364). This was the case for Ajanta Pharma described above.

Politics animated over time by litigation in the S5IA+ shows that, despite the disappointing performance of the judiciary, its potential to contest powerful entities such as the state and corporate capital should not be dismissed. The idea here is not to overstate the importance of the judiciary as an upholder of 'subaltern' justice. It is to highlight that civil society's preoccupation with the legal arena is not misplaced, as some have argued, and should

continue to demand attention in struggles against forcible land acquisition. The cases discussed above are not expressions of mass 'peasant' movements, much less 'subaltern' resistance. The perseverance with which landholders from both the dominant and smallholders classes have relied on the judiciary shows that an important means of contesting powerful entities, such as the state and private capital, is not at a distance from formal institutions but through them. Here, E. P. Thompson's insight serves as an important reminder: '…there is a difference between arbitrary power and the rule of law. We ought to expose the shams and inequities which may be concealed beneath this law. But ***the rule of law itself***, the imposing of effective inhibitions upon power and the defence of the citizen from power's all-intrusive claims, seem to me an unqualified human good' (Thompson 1975, 266, emphasis mine).

8.2 Mass Mobilisation and Claim-Making: *Naukri* and Identity Politics

Contestations *over time* do not just revolve around land. The disillusionment with 'development' over time has led to disquiet amongst the Maratha farmers, particularly from the dominant class, that sporadically finds expression in mass mobilisation and identity politics.

Material 'frustration' (Deshpande 2006) among the Maratha youth has become acute, since the decades of 1990 and 2000, as they have found their skills and training mismatched to the urban-based capitalist development driven by the service-sectors and IT industries. As I argued in the previous chapter, a majority of the young Maratha men from the dominant class have been marginalised in the manufacturing-based economy in the area despite having invested in technical education. They have had to resort to being self-*under*employed in the informal economy through kinship-based networks, restricting them to lower rung wheeling-dealing occupations linked to servicing the S5IA – small garages, petty labour contracting, cell phone shops. The gradual defection of the Marathas of Marathwada, and indeed many other parts of rural Maharashtra, from the Indian National Congress to the Shiv Sena and BJP, beginning in 2000, was a result of the first wave of disquiet. The 'ire' (Teltumbe 2016) of the Marathas is only brewing further and manifests intermittently in spells of agitation, some of which are violent.

The latest wave in August 2018, with Aurangabad and Nanded as epicentres, saw the burning of vans, vandalism, and violent mobs. Protests were triggered by 31 suicides by Maratha farmers in Marathwada, but the demands made by the young male agitators were for secure regular *non-farm jobs*. A congregation of Maratha youth from the Maratha Kranti Morcha gathered at a historic and significant public square in Aurangabad, called Kranti Chowk, on 24th July 2018. One of the young protesters stated in a TV interview (Mirror Now Interview, 12 August 2018):

> We want *reservations* because in the Maratha community, there are enough people with education but not the right jobs; and there are people who would like to be educated but because of lack of facilities they are not able to get educated.[206]

The spell of agitation sparked by the suicides of distressed farmers became a platform to draw attention to the plight of joblessness among the Marathas. Their demands were for reservations for the Maratha caste in government jobs and educational institutions. Only a few disjointed voices brought up the agrarian crisis in the region, issues plaguing farming more generally, or even farmer suicides – issues that were the ostensible sources of the protests. The demand for reservations represents the despondency of young Maratha men from rural farming backgrounds arising from not finding secure and stable employment matched to their education levels. Agitations by young men demanding jobs, not just in Maharashtra but other parts of India, are used reductively as evidence for the need to shift away from agriculture in the business media and policy discourse. Their disenchantment with 'transition' ironically breeds enthusiasm in policy circles for more and urgent land dispossession for industrialisation and urbanisation.

It is not unusual for the Maratha Kranti Morcha to harness incidents of individual distress or violation, such as suicides, into claims of collective victimhood of the Marathas. The instance above is thus not an anomaly. In July 2016, a 14-year-old Maratha girl was brutally gang raped, allegedly by *Dalit* men. The initial protests that had taken place in the district eventually turned into months of silent marches and rallies across the State by over 100,000 Marathas under the organisation of the Maratha Kranti Morcha. The demand for justice for

[206] TV interview clip

the young girl turned into claims of Maratha victimhood that had to be redressed through reservations in public jobs and educational institutions (Teltumbe 2016). The Maratha Kranti Morcha continues to organise different sections of the fragmented Maratha community, including urban middle-class professionals, such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers, under its banner to make clear and direct claims at the state.

Many of the young men in the villages I studied joined the marches in Aurangabad. The organisation of the Maratha Kranti Morcha draws young men from households of both the dominant class and smallholders class, even though the latter has fewer young men who would be eligible for the jobs being demanded. The discourse of Maratha victimhood that Maratha Kranti Morcha advances are amenable to the politics of young men from both these rural classes. Despite joining these marches, young men from study villages have not coalesced into vocal fronts to demand jobs in the S5IA. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ram Waghle petitioned the local MLA to speak to the HR manager at Perkins. I asked him why the dominant class farmers did not get together and protest to claim jobs after his effort to get the MLA to nudge the company manager failed: 'We don't have Maratha pride, no strong leaders',[207] he said.

While young men from the villages intermittently join the protests in town and marches across towns, they do not come together to make demands in their own village. The only instance of a 'coalition' was the provisional group of Maratha farmers from the dominant class that approached local MLA Haribhau Bagade to petition a local company on their behalf (discussed in the previous chapter). This isolated and short-lived attempt hardly qualifies as an agitation or protest. An important reason for an absence of local agitation by young men in the villages making concrete demands, such as jobs in the S5IA, I argue later in the chapter, is the gradual whittling away of social ties and solidarities within and across rural classes post dispossession.

The previous section on litigation and this on mass mobilisation together show how frictions in state-society relations develop over time as conflictual processes of capitalist development proceed.

[207] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

8.3 Frictions with the State: Staggered Politics of Land Dispossession

Land literature on the politics of land dispossession, as discussed in theme 3 in chapter 2, has tended to focus on mass movements against land dispossession. As a consequence, analyses are by methodological necessity based on politics at the moment of dispossession (the moment of land acquisition). I summarised this in theme 3 in chapter 2. The S5IA+ has not seen overt anti-dispossession struggles. Given the broad consensus on the content of 'development' amongst various constituencies of society, there was no mass movement against the state at the time and site of land dispossession. What I have described here instead is a form of staggered politics of land dispossession. It is temporally dispersed and normatively diverse. The contestations, even when observed through litigations and everyday frictions, draw from a diverse set of normative register – justice (through rightful compensation), overstepping of state authority, growing power of private capital, environment preservations, and identity (Maratha caste).

Four characteristics of the rural politics described above are noteworthy.

First, the staggered contestations *over time* are about the *content of capitalist development*, and the rightful place of the local elites in processes of accumulation. The 'bargaining' elites cited in the land literature and synthesised in chapter 2 are typically theorised as negotiating for a larger stake in land's subsequent commodification (Levien 2013). Observed over time, as in this case, the local rural elites are found variously demanding not just a larger stake in land commodification, but a deeper and more stable incorporation in trajectories of accumulation in the new local economies. Thus, while the rural elites in Aurangabad are litigating to get their *land* back, they are also filing court cases to protect their farm productivity against ground water *pollution* below their acquired land, and joining marches to demand *jobs*.

Second, frictions that surface over time are also fundamentally defined by contesting the legitimacy of the main development actor, the state. The contestation is directed at the state, the entity on which rural classes believe they can make claims, using legal-juridical means when possible and strategies of everyday politics when necessary. When both the actor (the

state) and the idea ('development') begin to suffer from crisis of legitimacy, challenges and contestations begin to define negotiations. The third point follows from this.

Third, frictions emerge not at the time of dispossession in reaction to a 'one-time' threat of expulsion, but from a crisis of legitimacy of the state and its vision of development *over time*. I illustrated the gradual shift from compliance to contestation amongst the dominant class and state relations. Nanasaheb's emphatic threat about not allowing any MIDC development on his land unless he gets the 15%-land back ('Until that land is given, I will not let any company come on Maangaon land' I quote above), shows how his trust in the state as a 'patron' begins to fade.

As for another example, a dominant class farmer from Maangaon (Wave 2) complained to me: 'When they needed us, they would come every day. Now MIDC and Collector's office do not even allow people from Maangaon into their offices'.[208] When the state ceases to honour its obligations, over time, in distributing the fruits of development more widely and mediating between the rural classes and private capital, there is a gradual erosion of legitimacy.

Furthermore, rural contestations are increasingly intended to counter the state's authority and the growing dominance of a state-capital nexus. The farmers pose this challenge at the risk of further damaging their fraying alliance and risking the 15-per-cent land back. It is, therefore, important to note that the intention, particularly that of local elites that appeal to the courts using significant personal resources, is to check the overstepping of authority of the state.

The increasingly combative predisposition points to a 'state' as an idea – a local patron – based on the long history of patron-client relations between the state and rural Maratha elites in the history of the region.

Fourth, the demands, claims, and issues of contention are drawn from different normative registers. The local elites actively co-opt into provisional alliances with the state not merely for brokerage and short-term gains, but because they view state-mediated industrialisation

[208] Interview, Maangaon, 15 December 2018

as a sustainable pathway of accumulation in the subsequent non-farm sector. In a rural economy where accumulation from agriculture has reached its limits for the dominant class, comprised of capitalist farmers and local rural elites, they hope to diversify their sources of economic surplus, as well as social and political capital. Reneging on discretionary compensation, service contracts, and information to harness land rents is seen as a non-compliance of informal agreement: narratives of neglect ('…great deal of injustice'[209] in Ram Waghle's words) and litigations on compensation as well as other clauses of the acquisition process surface as fractures in state-elite alliances.

These complaints are further conjoined with exclusion from non-farm jobs in factories built on land that belonged to the farmers ('…could not get him a job with all my MLA contacts', as Nanasaheb had said; 'companies reject candidates as soon as they see the boy is from Maangaon' I quote above). In addition, the growing power of the state-corporate capital nexus, on one hand, and the simultaneous sidelining of local elites and marginalisation of agrarian interests in general, on the other, is the source of another axis of friction ('overnight' handover to Ajanta; case on water pollution).

While they draw from different normative registers – rightful compensation, justice, capital-over-farmer, caste identity – they essentially challenge how the contemporary state's notion of development in reality generate little opportunities for the farmers.

In summary, it is a *crisis of state legitimacy* that causes frictions to surface between the dominant class farmers and the state. Expression of such dominant class politics is, thus, fragmented and piecemeal. It uses a diverse set of normative pins, and often surfaces long after the dust of land acquisition settles and the everyday anxieties of 'development' begin to brew.

8.4 Frictions within Society: Unequal Agency, Unequal Gains, and Trust

[209] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2018

After nearly a decade of land acquisition, or more in the case of Wave 1, the social landscape is marked not just by the fractures in state-society relations, but also frictions across rural classes and within social groups. There are at least two important reasons for frictions within society. First, *unequal power* across classes means different classes have unequal agency to negotiate with the authority of the state at the time of acquisition. Farmers with little agency *depend* on those with higher bargaining capacity, such as the local rural elites, to negotiate on their behalf. When the developmental promises fall short of expectations for the society at large, trust placed on those with higher bargaining capacity is fractured. Second, *unequal gains* that some local rural elites accrued, as described in chapter 6, through discretionary contracts and concessions exacerbates material inequalities both within and across classes, and in some cases, within households.

In the study area, there have been occasions when farmers across rural classes have formed provisional alliances to address a shared objective. In the previous chapter, I briefly explained how a number of dominant class farmers from Maangaon got together into a temporary coalition to lobby for factory jobs. The alliance was formed under local elite Ram Waghle who led the group to demand that Haribhau Bagale, the local MLA, meet the director of Perkins Ltd and ensure jobs for the dominant class youth with education. Similarly, Nanasaheb's roadblock on the day of the factory opening, described here, had the support of several medium farmers in the village. These examples, however, represent instrumental and temporary alliances in a larger environment of fractures in social trust and interdependencies.

A variety of different sources across the dominant and smallholders classes informed me that Ram Waghle and his brothers were the first to consent to the negotiated offer of 8.5 lacs-per-acre in the village. With their large 64-acres contiguous piece of land acquired for INR 8.5 lacs-per-acre, the state was in a position to enforce the compulsory nature of land acquisition under the MID Act on others. According to the other dominant class farmers of Wave 2, Waghle brothers' compliance with state orders fragmented the 'front' they had set up to negotiate with the state. The Waghle brothers were marked as nefarious state 'agents'[210] responsible for land dispossession. They were variously called 'drunkards'[211],

[210] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015, Interview, Maangaon, 17 December 2015
[211] Interview, Maangaon, 16 December 2015

'people who sit around'[212] ('*khaate-pite wale log'*), and 'not real farmers'[213] by members of their own class.

Within the Waghle brothers' family, however, there is fraying of familial cohesion following the dispensation of unequal land prices. The unequal distribution of concessions (compensation rates in this case) by the state within a group of landholders that were co-opted collectively engenders 'atomistic competition' that tends to weaken 'horizontal interdependence' (Attwood 1974) and cohesion within the community.

The contestation described in Case 1 created intra-class fault lines. That the *sarpanch* and *talathi* colluded with acquisition officers to forge signatures, that some landholders finally gave consent for personal financial gain, and some of the larger landholders sold off parcels of their land to local politicians and officers in MIDC for future rents, led to a complete disintegration of trust.

Frustration from unequal gains is not just limited to the same wave where each dispossessed household was entitled to the same 'compensation package'. Appreciating land prices and the progressive negotiations of the state, resulting in this appreciation, has caused incremental distress and feelings of relative marginalisation. Across all three waves, the larger farmers from the dominant class, spoke of injustice ('anyaya' in Hindi) that farmers from that particular wave faced. This injustice was mostly in relation to how the compensation was lower compared to the subsequent rounds of acquisition. As one larger farmer from one of the villages in Wave 2 told me:

> Kumbephal [from Wave 1] might be angry with us, but we are also angry with Kaamgaon [Wave 3]. Kumbephal was acquired in 1999. Obviously, we will get more because ten years have passed. But Kaamgaon…their land was acquired around the same time. How can they get so much more? We have more reason to be upset. No, no, Sarkar has been most unjust with us.[214]

[212] Interview, Maangaon, 17 December 2015
[213] Same as above
[214] Interview, Maangaon, 18 December 2015

> It is noteworthy that dissatisfaction was expressed over how compensation packages increased over time, spreading unequal gains in adjacent villages.

A third source of friction is that often the same compensation was offered for different types of land. As per official classification in the region, there are categories of land - Class I and Class II. The former is 'fertile' land in the hands of Maratha farmers. The second, Class II, is land that was redistributed to Dhangars and other groups classified as Scheduled Tribes and Nomadic Tribes at the time of land redistribution. This is typically lower quality land that Maratha farmers disparagingly call 'infertile'[215], 'poor'[216], and 'dirty'[217]. In Wave 3, a Dhangar-majority village with primarily Class II land was included in acquisition and received the same compensation as the Maratha-dominated village with Class 1 land. That the state did not distinguish between the two types of land and the Maratha farmers were given the same compensation as the Dhangars has intensified frictions, which currently takes the form of verbal lashing but is underlain by caste tensions.

One of the dominant class farmers gave his deeply troubling analysis of the post-acquisition trajectories of those from the marginal and landless classes as follows: 'Farmers have been ruined but the BPL people are enjoying life. They have actually got work. They go to the highway intersection ('*chowk')* and get work'[218]. The 'BPL' in the quote refers to those households that are classified as Below Poverty Line for the limited social welfare provisions by the state in the region. The labouring BPL households my respondent is referring to here are those from the marginal and landless classes in the study, comprising of mainly Dalits and Nomadic Tribes. I discuss their struggles with dispossession in the next chapter. Here, I wish to highlight the deepening of regressive tendencies amongst the dominant class towards those they subordinate.

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[215] Group Discussion, Kaamgaon Panchayat Office, 17 December 2015
[216] Same as above
[217] Interview, Bidkin, 10 December 2015
[218] Interview, Maangaon, 15 December 2015

8.5 Conclusion: A Crisis of Legitimacy of the State and its Vision

To theorise the politics of agrarian classes from the dominant caste in a co-optation-versus-resistance framework is to set up a false binary. Critique of a dichotomised understanding of rural politics is not new. As Rudolph and Rudolph (1987, 333) had said of rural politics in India:

> The literature on "peasant" studies depicts agrarian producers, particularly "middle peasants" (small owners) as either passive or revolutionary. These contradictory polarities ignore the vast middle ground between acquiescence and revolt that peasant mobilizations have occupied under varying historical and objective circumstances. Incremental change redistributing resources and power has been the characteristic form of social change in India and is more typical than passive support of the status quo or revolt eventuating in revolutionary transformation.

The staggered, piece-meal political reactions of farmers from the dominant class, including powerful rural elites and a few from the smallholder class, shown here, illustrates that rural politics does not have be co-optation-versus-resistance binary. The empirical evidence here demonstrates that reactions of farmers from the dominant class should not be dichotomised along the co-optation-as-brokers and overt-powerful-resistance line. What we find instead are staggered, piecemeal political relations using multiple tactics and drawing from diverse normative registers.

As initial extensions such as contracts and other forms of privilege from the state were withdrawn and/or dried up in this case, rural classes began to sense disillusionment. The frustration and anger of the landholders from the dominant class has not been just about the erosion of state patronage but has also been directed at the state's idea of 'development' – a political-economic configuration from which they have found themselves marginalised and, increasingly, excluded. Local rural elites, in particular, used legal-juridical means to contest the state. The repertoire of tactics of the local elites has not been limited to making use of expensive institutional means as that of litigation. Contestations in the study area, for example, have moved from the court to the factories. They have also surfaced as demands made through mass mobilisation.

The demands across litigations, everyday politics, and mass mobilisation for jobs are simultaneously claiming better terms of incorporation into trajectories of accumulation and survival, as well as, establishing a counter to state authority. The demands surfaces as a form of staggered politics over time. It is a *crisis of state legitimacy* that causes frictions to surface between the dominant class farmers and the state. Expression of such dominant class politics is, thus, fragmented and piecemeal. It uses a diverse set of normative pins, and often surfaces long after the dust of land acquisition settles and the everyday anxieties of 'development' begin to brew.

The nature of rural politics noted here – contestations with the state around terms of incorporation as well as the state's alignment with capital at the expense of farmers, particularly dominant elites – is grounded in the social structures and political history of Aurangabad. It emerges from:

- a legacy of state-elite relations involving patronage-based alliances;
- how the elites are located today;
- a revival of claim-making based on Maratha identity.

I also show how there are frictions both across and within classes. The loss of legitimacy of the local rural elites within their class, as mentioned above, limits the possibilities of the kind of social cohesion necessary to make class-based demands, as the Marathas have in the past in relation agricultural subsidies and loan waivers. It also curtails the possibility for the dominant class in this region to come together for co-operative initiatives, whether related to pooling land for real-estate development or other commercial activities. The most politically dangerous manifestation of within-society frictions is the reactions of the dominant class farmers over the few from the marginal class who have earned the same per-acre price for their 'inferior' land as them. This is symptomatic of the deeper social anxieties amongst the dominant classes. It problematically manifests in politically regressive tendencies: to reiterate what a farmer from the dominant class said, 'Farmers have been ruined but the BPL people are enjoying life. They have actually got work. They go to the highway intersection ('*chowk')* and get work'[219].

[219] Quoted within chapter in section 8.4

Chapter 9: Conclusion

‘Madam, you just write one thing: people like us are fine.
The poor people, they are in worse condition’[220]
– Bhalerao Kakde, Dominant Class ‘Landloser’

Land is being drawn out of agriculture for the DMIC in Aurangabad as I write this conclusion. Till date there has been no organised mass resistance against it.

Aurangabad has a history of charged Maratha politics. Dominant class farmers have organised mass movements to demand state support in agriculture (Omvedt 1981). They coalesced to challenge upper-caste Brahmin dominance in Maharashtrian society which, by independence, resulted in the displacement of Brahmins by rural Marathas in the Indian National Congress (Zelliot 1970). They have also mobilised violently against Dalit assertions (Gupta 1979). Conspicuously, land dispossession since 1997 for the S5IA industrial area and then subsequently for the extension of the area into the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor has proceeded without organised opposition. The aim of the thesis was to shed light on this puzzle.

Industrialisation in Aurangabad, particularly the case of the S5IA, is significant for the contemporary literature on land dispossession. The literature laments systematic empirical evidence on cases where the possibility of a ‘transition’ to non-farm jobs can be explored. In neoliberal India, projects of urbanisation and infrastructure development have primarily involved planned commercial estates, cities, SEZs that have resulted in economic landscapes for highly specialised knowledge-intensive industries. The S5IA provides an instance of favourable conditions for a ‘transition’ to industrial employment, as the industrial development itself closely followed what policy frameworks of ‘modernisation’ theories, as well as what heterodox economists favouring state-led industrialisation in present-day context prescribe. The economic and social outcomes of industrialisation, however, has largely marginalised most dispossessed families across rural classes, including educated

[220] Interview, Shendra Five-Star Industrial Area, 5 September 2018

sons of dominant class landholders who are theoretically best-placed to make the transition to industrial jobs.

In this concluding chapter, I hope to synthesize arguments made thematically, responding first to the three research questions that formed the research agenda. I will then highlight a glaring omission in this thesis which I hope will inform future research. Lastly, I will discuss the wider implications of my findings for debates on contemporary industrialisation, inequality and land.

9.1 Main Arguments

In the introduction, I outlined three interlinked questions. Here I will summarise my arguments as responses to those questions.

1. How does the state facilitate land dispossession across villages without meeting with stiff opposition?

Aurangabad district is rural, agrarian, and 'backward'. The agrarian economy of the district has received relatively little state support in terms of irrigation infrastructure, rural electrification, and crop subsidies compared to other parts of the State. With an absence of adequate infrastructure combined with a drought-prone ecology, Aurangabad has been gripped by an agrarian crisis since the late 1980s. The public discourse of 'backwardness' has promoted and kept alive a strong current of sub-regionalism. These structural and political factors come together to forge a 'near-consensus' (Nielsen 2010) over state-intervention in promoting 'development'. This consensus can be observed across various sections of society – dominant class farmers, social activists and political parties. I showed this in chapter 3. The state of the economy and the politics of sub-regionalism are important structural and political factors that do not make the context of Aurangabad entirely hostile to land dispossession.

The second important factor is the role of the state itself. The politics of sub-regionalism and the 'near-consensus' (Nielsen 2010) are harnessed by the state to intervene through 'planned' development projects. This led to the development of three state-planned

industrial areas in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. State-mediated 'industrialisation' is seen as legitimate in the area. Furthermore, the contemporary state driving the process of land dispossession, in this case, is more than a broker acting on behalf of capital. I argued this in chapter 4.

The state is not sans ideas and visions and acts with a degree of autonomy from private capital. It regulates and penalises private capital (polluting ground water; not paying villages taxes) but also strategically allies with it for the larger goal of capital accumulation (bending official rules to make land available; not intervening in the implementation of labour laws). Dispossession is a coercive process that hinges on making rural classes comply. The contemporary state observed in this case, I find, aims to balance the project of land dispossession with a minimum level of legitimacy. In this it is aided by the legacy of state-dominant class relations in the State.

State-Maratha elite alliances have historically been at the core of rural development in Maharashtra and served agrarian dominant class Maratha interests well. In the case of land dispossession in Aurangabad, the state co-opts a core group of local rural elites. Co-opted local elites reduce social frictions in a contentious process, such as land dispossession, by legitimising the projects of 'development' to the wider world and by performing the political work of 'consent' generation. Beyond the incentive of short-term material gain, local elites actively comply with the process with the expectation of forging alliances and securing political networks for longer-term accumulation. I showed this in chapter 6.

The Maratha farmers in Aurangabad harbour ideas of development and progress. As a further expression of sub-regional politics, they constantly compare the state of the agrarian economy, economic transformations, and political representation in Aurangabad with that of Pune in Western Maharashtra. Pune has been a site of agrarian vitality since the colonial period. A combination of capitalist development in commercial sugarcane production and representation of rural interests in formal State-level politics propelled Pune as an emblem of Maratha prosperity and dynamism. The landed Maratha farmers of Pune have benefited disproportionately from this growth. This aspiration, what I call the 'Pune complex', has infused 'industrialisation' and concomitant non-farm opportunities with legitimacy. This is further reinforced by the fact that previous state-planned industrial areas in Aurangabad have been relatively generative economic spaces and absorbed dominant class Maratha farmers

in mid-skilled factory jobs. The real possibilities of social and economic mobility through industrialisation is part of the collective social memory of the dominant class. I discussed this in chapter 3 and 6.

A regime of dispossession in neoliberal Aurangabad is sustained through a more complex phenomenon than what is understood through coercive practices of the state for private speculative capital. Agrarian crisis, politics of sub-regionalism, a collective social memory of industrialisation accommodating larger sections of the dominant class in the past, and local rural elites who expect to forge long-term alliances with the state come together to propel this process over time.

2. What kind of economic transitions come about when the state mediates industrialisation in the neoliberal era?

The S5IA developed as an industrial area that eventually sited manufacturing units. Given the socially differentiated society of Aurangabad, the economic trajectories are variegated. The classes of dispossessed who have been incorporated into the industrial area are not the dominant class but the landless and the marginal class. Their incorporation through casual work, however, is tenuous, making their lives desperately precarious.

The landless class is mostly comprised of SC households. They were socially removed from the process of land dispossession. As mentioned in chapter 5, most of them had very little information about accurate compensation rates. Even before land was acquired in 1997, many had moved into non-farm manual labour in town. The S5IA opened up opportunities for informal manual labour closer to their villages but securing work has been a daily struggle for them. They operate in labour gangs that are organised around caste and gender, and work is made deeply precarious by conflict and competition with other registered and unregistered Hamali workers. Exceptional cases among them, who had marginal landholdings and lost land to the process of industrialisation, feel doubly disempowered.

Those who started with marginal landholdings have been rendered landless. They continue to remain at the margins of the new economy. Life for them has seen more continuity than change: there is a *sameness* to their precarity. Politics of land dispossession, thus, have to take into account larger questions of agrarian change.

The smallholders class is resolutely clinging on to farmland. Most of them have seen an overall decline in their landholdings but they all replaced lost land with more agricultural land. They are clinging on to agriculture as their main source of occupation. This does not represent a romantic Maratha peasant (*shetkari*) identity but a pragmatic assessment of their economic opportunities. Within this class, it is important to mention, there are rare instances of accumulation through land rents or brokering in the burgeoning land market. In my sample, one Maratha landholder, who is also active in local politics as a party worker for a regional party, managed to diversify his sources of income.

If there was one social grouping that could realistically aspire to a 'transition' to factory employment, it was a fraction of dominant class households that had invested in education. This grouping within the class has experienced a complete disjuncture between expectations and the reality of 'development'. The manufacturing plants that the S5IA sites, operating within the forces of neoliberalism, overwhelmingly employ labour that is 'not local'. The Maratha youth (such as Kisanji's son Shiv mentioned in chapter 7) who have technical degrees were particularly optimistic about factory jobs. They have found themselves excluded from factory employment and concomitant social mobility. The Maratha youth are variously self-employed in the informal rural economy, a type of under-*self*employment.

The elites actively co-opted into the process of land dispossession and drew further members of the dominant class into an idea of development they believed was co-produced with the state. The dominant class-state alliance, however, turns out to be provisional and fragile. Chapter 7 traced how the legitimacy of the state suffers from a crisis over time. This has implications for dominant class politics.

The possibilities following state-mediated manufacturing development in the neoliberal era continue to draw relatively more optimism in various academic and policy circles but remain under-studied. State-planned manufacturing industries in the neoliberal era, while relatively more generative of low-skilled employment than high-technology industrial corridors, do not produce drastically different economic trajectories for the local dispossessed communities. It is hardly surprising then that the rural Marathas, particularly the youth, are drawn to the regional parties, such as the Shiv Sena and MNS, that make claims based on autochthony and linguistic identity.

3. What kind of political responses does land dispossession engender between the state and rural society, as well as across different sections of society?

Resistance at the moment of land acquisition is absent in this case of state-led dispossession. Frictions between the state and rural classes – the dominant class and to a lesser extent the smallholders class – begins to surface over time. I find a form of staggered politics of dispossession, which begins to surface after the dust of land acquisition settles.

I found a host of litigations challenging irregularities in the application of formal rules of the land acquisition process. The litigations were primarily led by local rural elites, but there were also instances of farmers from the smallholders class pooling together resources to file court cases. As argued in chapter 8, the narratives of various respondents reflect a deeper contestation: these contestations are, in fact, about the content of capitalist development and the rightful place of rural classes in it. When the state ceases to honour its obligations, over time, in distributing the fruits of development more widely and mediating between the rural classes and private capital, there is a gradual erosion of legitimacy. The contestation is directed at the state, the entity on which rural classes believe they can make claims. The politics is intended to counter the state's authority and the growing dominance of a state-capital nexus.

The combination of litigation, agitation on factory sites demanding compensation for fruit crops, and the acts of joining marches to demand jobs shows the growing disquiet amongst the rural classes. The demands, claims, and issues of contention draw from different normative registers. I understand these frictions – contestations using legal-institutional means, everyday politics, and organised movements – as staggered politics. Given that these are not struggles against expulsion at the moment of land acquisition, should they qualify as politics of dispossession? While the contestations are not against the act of dispossession, they most definitely represent the politics of the dispossessed classes. Moreover, if such frictions are framed as politics of the dispossessed classes, and if these connections are explicitly drawn out in public discourse, it may increase the cost of incorporating dominant classes into subsequent rounds of land acquisition.

By drawing attention to the politics of the dispossessed classes over time, I hope to push land literature beyond the co-optation-versus-resistance binary.

There are three other extended observations on the politics of the dispossessed classes. First, land dispossession leads to disruption of cohesion within and across classes. This poses a particular problem for the local rural elites. The role of brokering consent, as Nanasaheb performed, was based on the legitimacy he had as a local village figure of authority. Given the frictions within society, the local rural elites are also suffering from a dilution of legitimacy. This raises questions about the possibilities for the dominant Marathas to mobilise as a class as they have in the past. It also poses doubts about their prospects of coming together to build co-operative style housing, or other such initiatives, as some of the local elites are hoping to do.

Second, the local elites actively co-opt into provisional alliances with the state not merely for brokerage and short-term gains, but because they view state-mediated industrialisation as a sustainable pathway of accumulation in the subsequent non-farm sector. Compliance with land dispossession allows for fragile state-rural elite relations. It is the gradual dislocation they experience as local rural elites and the disentangling of their interests with the state that is at the core of many contestations.

Dominant class anxieties can manifest in dangerous and regressive political reactions. It has been shown that institutions that oversee social welfare programmes, such the NREGA and PDS, in Maharashtra suffer from elite capture (Andersen et al 2011). The anxieties of the dominant class, as pointed out in chapter 8, may manifest in further preventing the functioning of social welfare programmes. The PDS and NREGA in the study area have a skeletal presence to begin with. Anxieties and frustrations that are reflected in the quote from the dominant class farmer about the 'BPL people' thriving while farmers are struggling (chapter 8) are alarming in general, but more so in a context where the Marathas are known to have mobilised violently against Dalits.

Third, I want to make a brief observation on the politics of the landless Dalits and the marginal class that depend solely on wage labour. Solidarities amongst the labouring groups in the S5IA are pivoted on caste. Labour organisation may have a different character in the town of Aurangabad, a topic for future research. In the rural area, as I showed in chapter 9,

labour gangs are organised along caste lines – the unregistered manual labourers are from the SC-Maang caste; the women all from the Dhangar caste; the registered manual labourers semi-proletarian Marathas.

9.2 A note on the Labourers from the Marginal Class

As mentioned in the introduction, the study focuses on those that owned and lost land, with an emphasis on the negotiations of the dominant class. A formal analysis of the marginal class in the region is a glaring omission. Based on observation and the limited sample of interviews conducted, including their narrative would only make the struggles of the rural classes more acute. It would, at the same time, shed light on current labour organisation for informal manual work, which is what the individuals from the marginal class are involved in. A brief note on the under-represented sub-sample of those who were either landless or had marginal landholdings is thus warranted.

The marginal and landless classes were peripheral to the negotiations that took place at the time of dispossession. As mentioned in chapter 5, with marginal landholdings and lower-caste status, they are at the margins of the 'consent' generation process. The dispossessed individuals I focus on from this class is a group of women from the Dhangar community (Nomadic Tribe). They have been entirely proleterianised, although not without first striving to cling on to their marginal landholdings. They are involved in precarious manual labour and, for this incorporation into the 'non-farm' economy, they are entirely dependent on Maratha caste contractors. Another group of manual labourers, Dalit men who belonged mostly to the landless class, operate as a labour gang. The manual labourers through this mode of incorporation into work find their material situation just as precarious as before. This – the continuity in their economic marginality – I argue is at the core of their ambivalence on land dispossession, which when combined with a 'near consensus' (Nielsen 2010) among the politically influential dominant class, civil society and political parties, results in acquiescence on their part. Precarity of livelihoods for wage labourers in India has been amply documented (Harriss-White and Gooptu 2001; Pattenden 2011). What I show in addition is the continuity in this precarity across marginal farming and wage labour. The two classes of manual labour are engaged in deeply precarious work. While their precarity is gendered, there is a continuity in their vulnerabilities in pre- and post-dispossession

livelihoods. Their livelihoods in the informal economy are made further precarious by minimal social safety nets. While some households had PDS cards, NREGA was entirely absent.

A systematic analysis of precarious informal labour arrangements in the factories, largely comprising migrant labourers under contractors, is an important extension to the study. It will not only rectify the skewed emphasis on the landholding Maratha landholders dispossessed through the phases of land dispossession, but will also provide empirical material on labour arrangements in an 'ideal-type' industrial area.

9.3 Broader Implications – Late-Industrialisation and Capitalism in Contemporary India

What I observe through this case of land dispossession has wider implications for issues not just of relevance to the political economy of India, but also to the larger debates on late industrialisation in the Global South. Debates in the field of development studies and development economics underwent a shift since the 1980s, moving away from questions of state intervention in the processes of industrialisation in developing societies and focusing instead on 'market reforms' and 'market failures' in the Global South. This coincided with the growing hegemony of, what is known as the, 'Washington Consensus' in the international policy circles: as Seguino (2017, 1) says '[g]one was the attention to the arduous task of industrialisation in countries with limited assets – physical, human and otherwise'. In the last decade, the debate on the process of industrialisation, is beginning to resurface. The justification for active state mediation in industrial policies has resurfaced amongst a number of heterodox economists in light of experiences of late-industrialisation in developing societies of the Global South in the 21st century. Rodrik (2004, 1), for example, argues that '…it is increasingly recognized that developing societies need to embed private initiative in a framework of public action that encourages restructuring, diversification, and technological dynamism beyond what market forces on their own would generate'. This thesis makes an opening into providing a grounded understanding of late-industrialisation and provoking further questions on nature of state intervention in an era of globalisation and industrial labour.

First off, it shows that the processes and policies driving industrialisation in the neoliberal era are diverse. Foreign capital in infrastructure development (the latest waves for DMIC) co-exists with the more traditional involvement ideas of state-planned and administered industrial area for domestic private and multinational capital. Secondly, it shows that even when manufacturing is emphasised as an industry that can generate more broad-based employment and upgrade skills incrementally, advancement in technology is rapidly displacing semi-skilled human labour on factory floors. Thirdly, the integration of domestic and multinational firms in global markets makes manufacturing plants vulnerable to neoliberal forces that demand flexible supply of labour. This ensures that an enormous reserve army of migratory rural labour is available for exploitation, maintaining atomistic competition amongst local and migratory labour forces. While arguments two and three on labour are not based on systematic analysis of labour currently included in the factories, I am making these preliminary observations based on interviews of the dispossessed landholders who were excluded (cited in the thesis), as well as interviews with two labour gangs and labour contractors. The labour arrangements in this context demand further exploration, as it will add to the renewed interest in processed of late industrialisation in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

There are two other implications for the political economy of India in specific that I would like to highlight.

9.2.1 Implications for Inequality

The opening quotation of this chapter eloquently summarises the post-dispossession outcomes in Aurangabad. Bhalerao Kakde is the dominant class farmer who turned to labour contracting after his land was acquired and has now given that up to set up a bar on the developed plot that was returned to him. During my last visit in September 2018, Kakde summarised economic and social transformation through the first quote above.

The purported purpose of state-mediated ‘industrialisation’ was to address uneven development in the State. Targeted development interventions were meant to shrink gaps across regions in Maharashtra. If one uses aggregate metrices as the statistical offices of the state do – contribution to state’s industrial income, GDP per capita in the district, electricity

consumption – one finds slight convergence in the last two decades. For large sections of the dispossessed, this study shows, regional 'convergence' has little meaning.

At one end of the spectrum, the marginal and landless struggle to eke out a living in precarious conditions. For the marginal classes, as mentioned above, the vulnerability to de-peasantisation in an agrarian economy results in a continuity in their state of precarity across agrarian and non-farm livelihoods. This is particularly troubling given that the 'urbanising' rural areas have seen a gradual withdrawal of social welfare programmes, like NREGA and PDS. On the other end of the spectrum are the dominant class farmers. A few local rural elites (Mule and Nanasaheb) have made spectacular material gains from land rents.

9.2.2 Implications for 'Land'

In chapter 7, I showed how nearly all dominant class farmers, and a few from the smallholders class (typically with more than 6 acres) used a large chunk of their compensation money to purchase agricultural land. A privileged few were able to buy it in their village. The rush to replace land with new plots of agricultural land, particularly among the dominant class, is noteworthy in a context that is ridden with agrarian crisis. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the reasons for this are varied – they are both economic and social. If this is indeed the case, as I have argued in the previous chapter, then subsequent rounds of land dispossession may become more contentious.

This study on changing rural livelihoods and state-society relations will speak to similar processes of land dispossession underway in other regions facing an agrarian crisis across India and the global South. The findings, I hope, can be applied to inform theory on contemporary capitalism in India, and other parts of the Global South.

Appendix A. List of Respondents

List of Semi-Structured Interviews – This forms the sample for the 'rural classes' in chapter 5 and subsequent analysis			
Pseudonym	***Rural Class***	***Place of Interview***	***Date(s)***
Respondent 1	Landless	Kumbephal	3 November 2015
Respondent 2	Landless	Kumbephal	3 November 2015
Respondent 3	Landless	Kumbephal	3 November 2015
Respondent 4	Landless	Kumbephal	21 February 2016
Respondent 5	Landless	Maangaon	3 March 2016
Respondent 6	Landless	Maangaon	15 March 2016
Respondent 7	Landless	Maangaon	15 March 2016
Respondent 1	Marginal Class	Kumbephal	2 November 2015
Respondent 2	Marginal Class	Kumbephal	2 November 2015
Respondent 3	Marginal Class	Kumbephal	2 November 2015
Respondent 4	Marginal Class	Kumbephal	3 November 2015
Respondent 5	Marginal Class	Shendra	6 November 2015
Respondent 6	Marginal Class	Shendra	6 November 2015
Respondent 7	Marginal Class	Maangaon	16 December 2015
Respondent 8	Marginal Class	Kumbephal	18 December 2015
Respondent 9	Marginal Class	Maangaon	16 February 2016
Respondent 10	Marginal Class	Maangaon	16 February 2016
Respondent 11	Marginal Class	Maangaon	16 February 2016
Respondent 12	Marginal Class	Shendra	19 February 2016
Respondent 13	Marginal Class	Shendra	21 February 2016
Respondent 14	Marginal Class	Shendra	21 February 2016
Respondent 15	Marginal Class	Shendra	21 February 2016
Respondent 1	Smallholder Class	Maangaon	15 February 2016
Respondent 2	Smallholder Class	Maangaon	15 February 2016
Respondent 3	Smallholder Class	Maangaon	15 February 2016
Respondent 4	Smallholder Class	Kaamgaon	16 December 2016
Respondent 5	Smallholder Class	Kaamgaon	19 December 2016
Respondent 6	Smallholder Class	Shendra	16 February 2016
Respondent 7	Smallholder Class	Shendra	21 February 2016

Nanasaheb	Dominant Class, Rural elite	Maangaon	18 December 2015
Kisan Kale	Dominant Class, Rural elite	Maangaon	16 December 2015; 7 September 2018
B. Mule*	Dominant Class, Rural elite	Kaamgaon	16 December 2015
Nanda Lele	Dominant Class, Rural elite	Bidkin	7 November 2015
Datu Damle	Dominant Class	Maangaon	15 May 2016
Ram Waghle	Dominant Class, Rural elite	Maangaon	18 December 2015
Udhavrao	Dominant Class	Maangaon	10 December 2015
Jagan Bagle	Dominant Class	Maangaon	15 December 2015
Ambey Maan	Dominant Class	Kaamgaon	19 December 2015
Bandi Thakur	Dominant Class	Kumbephal	25 September 2015
Bhalerao Kakde	Dominant Class	Kumbephal	3 November 2015; 6 November 2015; 5 September 2018
Respondent 1	Dominant Class	Kaamgaon	11 December 2015
Respondent 2	Dominant Class	Kaamgaon	11 December 2015
Respondent 3	Dominant Class	Kaamgaon	15 December 2015
Respondent 4	Dominant Class	Maangaon	15 February 2016
Respondent 5	Dominant Class	Maangaon	3 March 2016

* Not in the sample village; cited in the thesis but not included in the rural class sample

'Elite' Interviews – Government Officials, Activists, Journalists, Politicians			
Name/Pseudonym	***Designation***	***Place of Interview***	***Date(s)***
Mumbai-based Journalist 1	Journalist (Scroll.in)	Mumbai	16 August 2015
Mumbai-based Journalist 2	Journalist (freelancer on rural issues)	Mumbai	26 August 2015
Ulka Mahajan	Activist, NAPM	Mumbai	27 August 2015
Vijay Deewan	Activist, NAPM member	Aurangabad city	Multiple (host)
Subhash Lomte	Labour Activist	Aurangabad city	3 November 2015

Mr. Ram Bhogale	Industrialist, ex-Chairman of CMIA	Aurangabad city	3 May 2016
Narayanan	Chairman CII; President Endress+Hausser	Waluj Area	10 May 2016
Masood Siddiqui	Retired, Naib Tehsildar, Collector's Office	Aurangabad city	11 December 2015
Bureaucrat 1	Land Record Office	Aurangabad city	28 January 2016; 18 February 2016
A Shinde	Ex-Land Acquisition Officer, ex-regional head of MIDC, Aurangabad; current MTDC head	Aurangabad city	28 February 2016
Senior Bureaucrat	Town Planning Authority	Aurangabad city	20 February 2016
Advocate Vilasrao Sonwane	Advocate	Aurangabad city	20 February 2016; 21 February 2016
Subhash Wagh	Talathi, Karmad	Karmad	18 February, 2016
Santaram Pandere	Dalit Activist	Aurangabad city	21 March 2016
Rajpal Singh Rathod	Congress Party Worker, Businessman	Aurangabad city	21 March 2016
Jayajee Suryawanshi	Activist	Aurangabad city	22 March 2016
Nishikant Bhalerao	Activist, Independent Researcher, Editor Adhunik Kisan	Aurangabad city	8 March 2016
Vijay Parijay	Block Development Officer	Aurangabad city	17 May 2015

Other Interviews			
Name/Pseudonym	***Designation***	***Place of Interview***	***Date(s)***
Kalyan Dugle	Key respondent on Wave 1	Aurangabad city	Multiple
Sanjay Patwade	Sarpanch	Shendra	15 May 2016
Sudhir Mule	Sarpanch	Kumbephal	10 April 2016
Respondent 1	Large Landholder from Banjara community	Bidkin	25 September 2015
Respondent 2	Landless from Banjara community	Bidkin	25 September 2015

Labour Contractor 1		S5IA	6 November 2015; 5 September 2018
Labour Contractor 2		S5IA	16 December 2015; 7 September 2016

Group Discussions

Group 1: 16 February 2016 in Shendra (Wave 1 villages); 9 Maratha landholders

Group 2: 15 May 2016 in Shendra (Wave 1 villages); 5 Maratha landholders

Group 3: 9 December 2016 in Maangaon (Wave 2)

Group 4: 17 December 2015 in Kaamgaon Gram Panchayat (Wave 3); 11 male landholders

Group 5: 13 Male Dalit labourers

Group 6: 7 Male Maratha labourers

Group 7: 7 female labourers from Dhangar caste

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