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Abstract

This task contains studies pertaining to the intersection of poverty with social identities, and in particular the role of governance and political factors. The study “Do Gender, Caste and Political Affiliation Impact Public Accountability and the Quality of Poverty Alleviation Programmes? Evidence from Andhra Pradesh, India” identifies the impact of gender, caste and political affiliation on the governance of a large poverty alleviation programme in India in a context where local people are in a position to closely monitor the actual against the prescribed allocation of public funds. Using primary and secondary data on elections to the three-tier panchayat or local government (at the district, block and village), gender, political party affiliation and caste of the contestants together with social audit reports, the paper seeks to identify the factors that influence the quality of implementation of a large public employment guarantee program in India. Another study “Migration and local governance” focuses on Mali and Senegal in order to assess the contribution of migration on local governance. For the Malian case study, quantitative survey is coupled with ethnographic analyses, whereas only ethnographic investigation is implemented in Senegal. The study will analyse electoral results of the next Malian presidential and parliamentary elections (participation rates, positioning of migrants and their family in the electoral list). The plan is to implement an experimental design applied to Mali to explore the democratic transfer of norms by migrants through a randomized field experiment during the forthcoming national/local elections in Mali (in relation with 5.3). Another study on “Localized Power Structures, Conflict and Poverty” measures the degree of interdependence and direction of causality between the emergence of left-wing extremist power in parts of India during the last decade and the availability of publicly provided goods and services in such regions. The programme analyses the role of networks and elite capture of village structures and how the interaction of these factors impacts the availability of public goods. The programme on “the contribution of decentralised management of local natural resources” is a quantitative analysis applied to the Himalaya region (Nepal and India). This programme deals with the role of collective action to improve the management of village-level natural resources. More precisely, the question is whether and to what extent management of village forests by local councils has improved forest conservation in India (Himachal Pradesh) and Nepal. Complete data are available regarding the first of these two countries, and data will become available for the second countries during the coming years. A first series of analyses has already been conducted based on the Indian data and seem to suggest that *panchayaths* are not significantly more effective than state forest staff in conserving their forests, yet they are certainly not worse performing. This requires further analysis and confirmation in the light of the Nepalese experience, which has lasted longer than the Indian one. The programme on “How civil and political movements influence the development of urbanization”, for instance, the demands for rights and justice in specific urban contexts, the idea of Rights to the City. This programme is a comparison between India and Brazil. It highlights the interaction between stakeholders in both markets and government at the local level.

I. Women Political Leaders, Corruption and Learning: Evidence from a Large Public Program in India¹

1. Introduction

Political reservations for women offer prospects of diversity and other governance dividends (e.g. Page, 2007; Swamy et al., 2001). Yet, in settings where gender discrimination affects the attributes and attitudes of candidates for political office, female representatives are likely to assume office with less political and administrative experience. Thus, even if women political leaders were intrinsically more development-oriented than their male counterparts, extant disparities might initially blur and significantly delay the onset of governance gains.

Using cross-sectional survey data and a panel of official social audit reports, we present rigorous analysis of the impact of village council headship quotas for women on corruption and on the quality of delivery of a large scale, rural poverty alleviation program in India. Our paper is the first to shed light on how governance and corruption evolve from the time women elected leaders in reserved seats assume office (2006) and towards the end of their tenure (up to 2010) and thus as newly elected women leaders accumulate political and administrative experience. The timing of the relevant election overlaps almost exactly with the roll out of the public program (2006) and enables us to study short and long term program implementation with the characteristics of the village council (including the council head) unchanged. Specifically, we are able to demonstrate (a) whether newly elected women leaders in reserved seats initially perform worse; (b) whether they partly catch up, fully catch up or eventually outperform (male) leaders in unreserved seats and (c) the time it takes for such partial catch up, full catch up or overtake to occur.

Recent research has exploited the national policy of randomly reserving one-third of village council headships for women in India to study the difference in governance outcomes between male and female political leaders using *cross-sectional*, village council level data. In a pioneering study in the Indian states of Rajasthan and West Bengal, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) found that public investments in village councils with a female reserved head reflected the preferences of female voters, exemplified by drinking water and roads, more strongly. Others have questioned such differences in male and female leadership behavior (Rajaraman and Gupta, 2012) and its consequences for governance. Ban and Rao's (2008) study of four South Indian states found that "(village councils) *led by women are no worse or better in their performance than those with male leaders, and women politicians do not make decisions in line with the needs of women.*" Bardhan et al. (2010) find reservations of village council headship for women in West Bengal to be associated with a significant worsening of within-village targeting of public programs to disadvantaged households, and no improvement on other targeting dimensions. They interpret these findings as consistent with a more

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The authors would like to thank the Government of Andhra Pradesh, particularly Sowmya Kidambi and R. Subrahmanyam for vibrant discussions, for facilitating the survey and access to the audit reports. This paper has benefitted from interactions with and comments from Karuna Aakella, Jens Chr. Andvig, Robin Burgess, Dilip Mookherjee, K. Raju, Vijayendra Rao, Kunal Sen and participants at the International Growth Centre's (IGC) South Asia Growth Conference (Lahore, 2014), the IGC-Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) conference (2011, 2012), Centre for Policy Research conference (IIM, Bangalore), the International Growth Week (LSE, 2012), the Goldman School of Public Policy – JSGP conference (Delhi), seminars at the World Bank (New Delhi) and ISI (Delhi), the Journal of Public Economic Theory workshop on governance (Mysore) and NEUDC (Harvard). We are grateful to the International Growth Centre (IGC), the Planning and Policy Research Unit (PPRU) at the ISI, Delhi and NOPOOR grant for financial support.

complex hypothesis of ‘capture-cum clientelism’ which may be weakened by the election of politically inexperienced women into reserved posts.² Bardhan and Mookherjee (2012) formalize capture and clientelism in a theoretical model and speculate that such adverse effects of reservations may attenuate as women accumulate experience.

In an influential paper, Beaman et al. (2009) study voter prejudice and how exposure to women leaders (in first and second time reserved village councils) in West Bengal affect the electoral prospects of women candidates and the likelihood that women will stand for office. They also report cross-sectional survey findings on average investments in public goods in reserved and non-reserved village councils. Residents in female reserved village councils were less likely to have paid a bribe to be deemed eligible to receive various public program benefits or get a water connection. This was independent of whether the council had been reserved once or twice and parallels our survey but with different corruption findings. While Beaman et al. (2009) focus on the attitude and response of the electorate to first time or repeat exposure to women political leaders, we study performance from the start towards the end of tenure of newly elected women leaders and whether accumulating political and administrative experience impact on corruption and the delivery of a large poverty alleviation program.

To sum up, empirical evidence on the impact of gender headship quotas on the quality of public service delivery is ambiguous. Moreover, robust evidence on the impact of women’s leadership on *corruption* in public programs is very limited. Our research addresses this void and is of immediate policy relevance given the renewed global commitment to boosting women’s presence in political life (WDR, 2012) and the debate within India about whether to reserve state and national legislature seats for women or not.³

At the outset, governance outcomes may diverge because of systematic differences in the preferences of male and female political leaders. Early evidence from cross-country survey data attest to women’s greater honesty and commitment to ethical conduct (Dollar et al., 2001) and suggest that women, on average, are less tolerant of corruption than men (Swamy et al., 2001). Experimental studies also indicate that women are more risk-averse and thus less likely to engage in risky behavior than men (Eckel and Grossman, 2008; Flentschner et al., 2010). Juxtaposing these findings to political life would make women less willing to accept bribes or to indulge in corrupt practices provided that such acts are perceived as illegal. If political power is captured from the de-facto leader, which may be more likely under female headship, risk aversion could make female leaders more inclined to let public funds leak and avoid confronting and punishing pilferers. Thus whether, and the ‘channels’ through which female leadership impacts on corruption and governance in real world settings has yet to be convincingly unpacked.

2. Research Strategy

We identify the causal impact of female leadership on corruption over the tenure of the village council head by studying the interaction between the nation-wide policy of randomly reserving one-third of village council headships for women and the implementation of India’s most ambitious poverty alleviation program to date - the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) - in the state of Andhra Pradesh. First, using cross-sectional survey data we analyze whether corruption in program registration and the quality of program delivery differ by village council reservation status. Second, we use official audit reports covering a five year period to build a village-level panel dataset with in-depth

² Mansuri and Rao (2012), chapter 6, review research on the effects of political reservations for women in India.

³ In 2004, 8 per cent of India’s national assembly seats were held by women (Election Commission of India: http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/index.aspx). A 2009 constitutional amendment which increased reservation of village council headships for women to 50 per cent has been implemented in a few states.

information on corruption in program delivery. We can thus explore whether any early setbacks, evident in the cross-section, recede and improve through learning-by-doing and the accumulation of experience over the duration of women reserved council heads' time in office. Unlike any previous study, we measure a variety of corruption outcomes, including irregularities in the receipt of wage payments by beneficiaries (e.g. bribes and impersonations) and in material expenditures on program projects (e.g. ghost projects and bribes).

Our analyses of household survey data, in village councils within a sub-district, suggest that households in village councils reserved for women are more likely to have experienced corruption and sub-standard NREGA administration, particularly at program inception. Although this result does not hold for every program process, all significant coefficients point in the same direction. These conclusions hold both for processes for which the village council is primarily responsible and for those where responsibilities are shared with other program functionaries.

Turning to the audit panel data, which allow for performance variation over time, we find more irregularities in female reserved village councils at the onset of the program and a significant decline in irregularities with the duration of the female council head's time in office. This progress is not only remedial but involves rapid and complete catching up. Our results are robust to unobserved sub-district characteristics, overall time trends and district specific time trends.

We do not find evidence of reporting biases, gender stereotypes or differences in the probability of re-election of male and female leaders as alternative explanations for these results. However, the audit data indicate that sub-district level bureaucrats are more likely to be responsible for NREGA discrepancies in female reserved village councils, suggesting a greater vulnerability to bureaucratic capture in such councils. This vulnerability is likely to be exacerbated by women's political and administrative inexperience. Indeed, in instances where female heads have prior political experience and do not require assistance in executing their day to day duties, NREGA governance is significantly better.

Given that women's status in south India (viz. Andhra Pradesh) is relatively favourable, our estimates are likely to represent a lower bound of the 'costs' of political reservations: catching up may take considerably longer in settings where gender disparities are more deeply entrenched e.g. in large, north-Indian states. The variation in women's performance during their tenure highlights the importance of timing of measurement of relevant outcomes in efforts to evaluate the impacts of political reservations using cross-sectional data. Our study also highlights the need for more research addressing the dynamic aspects of political gender quotas in developing countries. These findings underline the need for capacity building and institutional support to reduce corruption and make women's political participation and affirmative action policies more effective.

3. Summary of Results

To sum up, our results, across both the household survey data and the audit data, suggest that female reserved council heads (sarpanches) accumulate experience through learning by doing which in turn, translates into governance improvements. These conclusions resonate with but also substantially nuance Ban and Rao (2008) and Bardhan et al. (2010) who have drawn attention to the potential negative implications of the political and administrative inexperience of women council heads in reserved seats. Providing the first rigorous evidence on the time it may take for women political leaders in reserved seats to become effective, we are able to show that catching up occurs quickly and is not just remedial but complete. We also point to the higher possibility and risk of capture of power in GPs governed by reserved female heads in the early days of their tenure.

We attribute these results to the lack of prior political and administrative experience of sarpanches. Substantive backing for this explanation is obtained from the audit data analysis which shows that as experience accumulates, governance improves. The explanation is also supported by results which suggest that sub-district (mandal) level bureaucracy are more likely to be held responsible for malfeasance in the program in GPs reserved for a woman sarpanch. While there is no effect of

experience on reducing bureaucratic capture of power per se, it is somewhat ameliorated in GPs where reserved sarpanches have had prior political experience.

Crucially, the progress made by women political leaders is not just remedial but involves rapid and complete catching up. Women political leaders do not perform better or worse than men once these initial, gendered disadvantages recede. Given the higher gender parity and female literacy in Andhra Pradesh relative to other parts of India, our estimates of learning effects and the time to catch up are likely to represent lower bounds.

II. Migration and local governance (Mali and Senegal)⁴

1. Introduction

The objective of this research project is to understand the political implications of migration and collective remittances for origin countries, taking Mali and Senegal as case studies.

There is an abundant literature on the economic impact of both migration and migrants' remittances for origin countries. By contrast, little attention has been paid to their political consequences with the exception of some studies on the Dominican Republic, Mexico and India. The literature addressing this question in African countries, and more specifically in Mali and Senegal, is virtually non-existent. Yet these two countries provide fruitful laboratories for examining the links between migration and home politics. Indeed, both have been strongly involved in long-distance migration to old Western democracies for several decades and migrants originating from these two countries are traditionally strongly involved in the provision of local public goods in their localities of origin. Moreover, both countries are young and still fragile democracies whose political and economic institutions are consolidating.

The sociological literature generally identifies four channels through which emigration is likely to affect homeland politics (Kapur, D. and J. McHale, 2005): (1) The 'absence' channel: (skilled) emigration removes (the most) productive individuals from the country, those who are (most) likely to advocate for good governance (reduces 'voice'); (2) The 'prospect' channel: the possibility to emigrate ('exit') offers the most productive individuals more bargaining power (increases 'voice'); (3) The 'diaspora' channel: emigrants can support political groups or social movements from abroad, and may be a channel for the flows of ideas; (4) The 'return' channel: returnees come back with new ideas and are likely to promote specific political objectives (accountability, transparency, etc.).

Obviously, these four channels are concomitant and not exclusive. Consequently, one of the main challenges of any empirical work is to describe all these mechanisms and to identify which of them matters more. To assess if migrants are involved in the political affairs of their origin country and, to what extent their political involvement induces changes in democratic institutions governance, we have engaged into an intense data collection combining both a quantitative and qualitative approach. Indeed and given the questions at hand, our research project is highly multidisciplinary in nature, and calls for qualitative and quantitative studies led by economists, political scientists and sociologists. Our research design is thus based on a mixed-method approach grounded in fieldwork that combines comparative case studies and more quantitative evidence using large scale representative surveys collected at the community and individual levels in Mali.

However, the work we have performed so far in the case of Mali is not in full accordance with what we committed ourselves to do. Political conditions in Mali have not allowed us indeed to perfectly stick to the planned research agenda. Our initial objectives were to couple quantitative surveys with ethnographic analyses in two or three Malian villages and to explore the democratic transfer of norms by migrants through a randomized field experiment during Malian national and local elections. However, an unprecedented security crisis began in March 2012. Triggered by a junta coup and worsened by jihadist attacks and Tuareg separatist insurgency, this crisis was finally interrupted by French and Malian military intervention in January 2013 and the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in June 2013 that paved the way for anticipated presidential elections in July and August 2013. During all this period, travel restrictions were imposed in the country for security reasons, which means that we have not been able to conduct neither the ethnographic field work, nor the randomized

⁴ Lisa Chauvet, Flore Gubert, Sandrine Mesplé-Somps, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, UMR DIAL.

field experiment.⁵ However, thanks to a long-lasting partnership with the Malian National Statistical Institute, we managed to collect several original quantitative datasets during year 2013, among which a nationally-representative household survey partly funded by the NOPOOR project (see below).

The first part of this report describes the project design and the datasets used in our research. The second part of this report lists and describes the contents of the various papers that have been produced or are about to be produced

2. Datasets and project design

Malian case study

In collaboration with the Malian National Statistical Institute (INSTAT), we had the opportunity to add several modules to a nationally-representative household survey conducted on a sample of 5,500 households (around 45,000 individuals) named EMOP2013. These additional modules were aimed at (1) measuring migration and return migration in Mali (*i.e.* counting not only Malians living outside their region or country of origin Mali but also returnees from abroad); (2) to investigating whether migrants and return migrants are more interested and involved in Malian political affairs than residents; (3) analysing if return migrants have different perceptions of Malian political institutions, and (4) investigating whether migrants transmit political norms to their family. The data collection process started in July 2013 and ended in December 2013.

We also took the opportunity of the anticipated Malian presidential elections to conduct a multi-sited election exit poll (July 28, 2013) during which were simultaneously interviewed:

- 229 Malian voters in Paris;
- 324 Malian voters in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire, the main destination country of Malian migrants);
- 780 Malian voters in Bamako (the capital city of Mali) and the Kayes region (located in the Western part of the country, and from which most of the Malian immigrants in France originate);

In all three countries, we used exactly the same core questionnaire with modules on respondents' main characteristics, respondents' perceptions on Malian democracy and institutions and respondents' electoral and non-electoral political practices. Modules for migrants have been added on their perceptions on democracy and institutions in host country, their connections with their homeland, including financial and social remittances. For voters in Mali questions have been asked concerning their past migration experiences, their connections with members of their household living abroad, and their responsiveness to advices or recommendations transmitted by migrants or other relatives.

We also analysed the 2009 municipal elections coupling electoral results with census data to explore the links between return migration and political outcomes⁶.

Senegalese case study

The analysis of the migrants' involvement in political affairs in Senegal is based on two datasets: a first one which was collected by the TIMME7 project and a second one collected during a multi-sited election exit polls during the last Senegalese legislative and presidential elections.

⁵ We schedule to implement this experimental design during the next Ivorian presidential elections (October 2015).

⁶ Nota bene: Nopoor project has financed partially the Malian survey representative at the national level EMOP2013 as well as two post-doctoral researchers. The first one has done fieldwork on two Senegalese villages where migrants are strongly involved in local governance. The second one has elaborated a methodological note concerning the experimental design. The remaining data has been financed by the French Research Agency (ANR, POLECOMI project <http://www.dial.ird.fr/projets-de-recherche/projets-anr/polecomi>).

⁷ The TIMME project (Terrains Interdisciplinaires et Multi-Sites : Migrants et Engagements). Cf. <https://sites.google.com/site/enquetetimme/home>.

Date from the TIMME project: Six Home Town Associations (HTA) created by and for Senegalese migrants have been selected. Then the chapters of those HTA in France, in Dakar, and in the villages of origins have been identified and parallel ethnographic fieldworks in the different chapters have been conducted by a team of French and Senegalese ethnographers. The last phase of fieldwork was realized by bi-national duos of ethnographers in Dakar and in the different villages of intervention of these HTAs. This combination of qualitative transnational data proved to be critical to develop a comprehensive accounting of migrants' transfers and produce original empirical material: cross-cultural analyses of the dynamics of cultural circulation between Europe and Africa.

As for Mali, two multi-sited election exit polls have been conducted during the last presidential and legislative Senegalese 2012 elections during which were simultaneously interviewed:

- respectively 354 and 199 Senegalese voters in France (Paris, Marseille) and New-York (during the first round of the presidential elections held in February 26, 2012);
- respectively 163 and 354 Senegalese voters in Paris and Dakar (during the legislative elections held in July 1, 2012)

The questionnaires of these exit polls are quite similar to the Malian ones but to some extent lighter.

From December 2013 to January 2014, Jean-Philippe Dedieu led an ethnographic fieldwork in Tambacounda, formerly known as Sénégal Oriental, a region of Senegal. His research question was to investigate the complex migration-development-nexus by interviewing return migrants who are or have been members of local governments and to understand better how their migratory experience has led to new governance choices. He conducted 20 in-depth interviews with mayors and members of Senegalese parliament. The preliminary findings of his research will be submitted by April 2015 to a peer-reviewed journal.

3. Scientific productions

Malian case study

1. Lisa Chauvet and Marion Mercier (2014) "Do return migrants transfer political norms to their origin country?" Evidence from Mali, *Journal of Comparative Economics*, forthcoming.

Abstract:

This paper explores the link between return migration and political outcomes in the origin country, using the case study of Mali. We use electoral and census data at the locality level to investigate the role of return migration on participation rates and electoral competitiveness. First, we run OLS and IV estimations for the 2009 municipal election, controlling for current emigration and using historical and distance variables as instruments for return migration and current emigration. Second, we build a panel dataset combining the 1998 and 2009 censuses and the electoral results for the municipal ballots of those two years to control for the potential time-invariant unobservable characteristics of the localities. We find a positive impact of the stock of return migrants on participation rates and on electoral competitiveness, which mainly stems from returnees from non-African countries. Finally, we show that the impact of returnees on turnout goes beyond their own participation, and that they affect more electoral outcomes in areas where non-migrants are poorly educated, which we interpret as evidence of a diffusion of political norms from returnees to non-migrants.

2. Lisa Chauvet, Flore Gubert and Sandrine Mesplé-Somps (2015) "Do contact with more (or less) democratic countries change migrants' political attitudes? Evidence using data on Malian migrants", forthcoming

Abstract:

This paper examines whether migration experience provides the opportunity for migrants to shift their political attitudes, and whether this leads to changes in their political behaviour. There are several channels indeed through which migration experience may change individuals' attitudes and behaviours, including their political ideas and actions: first, migration is often a means to access an institutional context favourable to the development and expression of political attitudes; second, migration is a process through which individuals generally increase their personal economic resources so that they may be tempted to adopt the values and ideas of the country that they perceived as being the source of this improvement. Third, migration exposes individuals to alternative media that can also trigger the adoption of new values and ideas. In the meantime, migrants may have limited contact with the host society and their political engagement be limited by both institutional and legal factors.

Using original data collected through multi-sited election exit polls during the last Malian presidential elections, in July 2013, we find that Malian migrants display different political attitudes than their fellow non-migrant citizens. More specifically, we find that their perceptions on Malian democracy and institutions differ from Malian non-migrants. The extent to which they trust (or distrust) Malian institutions is found to be strongly dependent on the country they reside in. This in turn leads to behavioural changes and to the transfer of new political attitudes to their country of origin.

We plan to finalize this paper before June 2015 and submit it to the *International Migration Review*.

3. Lisa Chauvet, Flore Gubert and Sandrine Mesplé-Soms (2015) "Are Migrants Agents of Democratic Diffusion? Evidence from a Malian case study", forthcoming

Abstract:

The objectives of this paper is first to examine whether Malian return migrants have different perceptions and political attitudes than Malian residents and whether families with migrants and return migrants have different political attitudes. In other word, this paper investigates the 'return channel' described by Kapur and McHale (2005). Returnees may influence local governance if they acquired new ideas during their migration experience and if their social and economic statuses make them able to influence theirs co-nationals. Consequently, when migrants come back to the origins country, they may import new political ideas and beliefs and may influence the co-nationals with whom they interact. However, if returnees tend to cluster in ethnic communities and have limited contact with the host society or if their political engagement is quite weak, the effect of returnees on political attitude in the origins country can be found ineffective. Moreover, their capacity to influence their co-nationals can be weaken be their position in the social hierarchy of their communities. Finally, migrants' newly acquired democratic beliefs and habits may weaken after returning home, if beliefs are conditioned by the environment. Using an original database that gathers information on migration, political attitude and other socio-economic characteristic of a sample of 4,505 households and 21,766 individuals, we implement household fixed-effect regressions using various indicators on political interest and conventional political participation: interest for public issues, voting, campaigning, etc. To address the issue of returnees' unobservable self-selection, we instrument the migration status. We show that individuals with a migration experience (returnees) tend to have different perceptions and behaviours, and that families with migrants (and to a lesser extent return migrants) tend to have different political attitudes.

Senegalese case study

1. Ilka Vari-Lavoisier (2014) Social Remittances as Mimetic Diffusion Processes: From Homophily to Imitation in Transnational Networks

Abstract:

International migrations participate in the circulation of ways of doing, speaking, and thinking. The concept of social remittances calls attention to the circulation of ideas, norms, and practices along migratory paths. Flows of ideas can impact significantly sending areas, and the institutional

environment of developing countries (Kapur 2010, 2014). The growing body of evidence documenting the consequences of social remittances raises questions about the mechanisms at play. How do norms and ideas circulate?

The analysis of original data collected in Senegal and in France in 2011 illuminates the conditions favouring social transfers. I analyse social remittances as diffusion processes within homophilous networks. These homophilous and transnational networks favour imitative behaviours. Studying how mimetic dynamics are embedded in social hierarchies elucidates migrants' propensity to act as decisive diffusers of social practices – and paves the way to conceptualize more broadly how social innovations circulate in contemporary societies.

2. Ilka Vari-Lavoisier (2015) "The circulation of monies and ideas between Paris, Dakar and New-York: the impact of remittances on corruption", Transnational Studies Initiative working paper, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, forthcoming

Abstract:

This paper shows how the conceptual framework of economic sociology can encompass and further conclusions produced by the scholarship investigating the migration-development nexus. A theoretical approach to economic sociology shows that migrants' financial remittances perform a transnational relational work critical to the circulation of ideas between continents. First, two transnational datasets collected in France, Senegal, and the United States (in 2011-2012) are combined. We show a strong correlation between social and financial remittances. Second, mobilizing ethnographic materials, this paper explores the channels through which migrants' monetary transfers can influence corruption. It is shown that ultimately economic transfers have a relational function. This analysis of the channels through which migrants' transfers impact the socio-political environment of their homeland contributes to a better understanding of the interrelations between tangible and intangible resources. The main contribution of this paper is to show how financial transfers are the channels through which social remittances circulate and are imposed.

The researchers involved in this project attend several conferences and disseminate the first results of this project in different seminars.

III. Localized Power Structure, Conflict and Poverty⁸

1. Introduction

This work is a contribution toward identifying the impact of “local” institutions on development-related outcomes both at the level of villages as well as the levels of households based on primary data collected by ourselves. We randomly selected 36 villages in the states of Maharashtra, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh—12 in each of these states—in India and these were the sites for our observation and data collection.

At least from onwards Acemoglu et al. (2001), the role of institutions—the rules and conventions underlying socio-economic interactions within a social unit—in affecting development-related outcomes has been a favourite theme of study among economists specializing in problems of development. Apart from taking institutions *in general* (and considering it as an outcome of the persistence of history as in Banerjee and Iyer, 2005 and Iyer, 2010) *specific* components of institution that have been studied include the prevailing tradition about property rights (e.g., Goldstein and Udry, 2008), exogenously induced participation of women in local level governance (e.g., Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004) etc. A substantial body of such works has been in the context of India.

The set of our research questions stems from what we perceive to be a gap in the conceptualization of institutions. Usually variations of institutions are seen in terms of *aggregate* features exogenous to the day-to-day functioning of the village society: examples being the existence or otherwise of bodies for local governance (called *panchayats* in India), existence or otherwise of a formal market within a village, degree of honesty (or transparency) in a country etc.

We reckon that such conceptualization of institutions is more *formal* in nature. Mere existence of a market does not entail what is commonly understood to be the central feature of a market economy—freedom to trade; mere existence of electoral bodies and rulebooks governing them does not imply the existence of democratic political processes (as has been explored and shown in numerous works on themes like vote buying or political clientelism: one recent significant example in context of India being Anderson et al., 2011). Therefore, we consider it to be more illuminating to measure the quality of institutions from data on *the day-to-day interactions of agents in the spheres of economy, society and politics*. The current research is geared toward that direction. The aspect of institution we focus on is the structure of multidimensional dependence in these spheres: whether such dependence is concentrated on a few “powerful” entities dominating over a large number of households or whether this is distributed in a sufficiently diffuse manner.

Moreover, our emphasis is on such dependence at *local* level: roughly at the level of the villages of interest and the neighbouring villages and town.

2. Research Strategy and Our Innovation

Note that given our research goal, we were to introduce an identifier for localized institutional variations and single out some channels through which such variations should work.

The basis for constructing our institutional variation is the multidimensional directed network where the primary nodes are the sampled households (HH hereafter) in each village (but such households can have directed links to households or entities like the village church committee or local credit cooperatives which would be outside our sample households). We gathered information on links the

⁸ Anindya Bhattacharya (Department of Economics and Related Studies, University of York), Anirban Kar (Delhi School of Economics and Centre for Development Economics) and Alita Nandi (ISER, University of Essex).

sample households have for help in spheres of day-to-day economic interactions (like whom the HH depends for getting productive inputs, for selling of outputs if any, for loans etc), social interactions (like whom the HH approaches for advices on family matters and disputes, religious matters etc) as well as political ones (like whom the HH accompanies to political events if any etc). Given this primitive multidimensional network we define various variants of consequent derived unidimensional *dependence networks*. The main underlying principle of these dependence networks is that a HH 'A' has to rely on another HH 'B' sufficiently strongly (in a well-defined way of which we consider a few variations) for day-to-day economic/social/political interactions and the converse is not true. Such unilateral dependence is represented by a directed link from 'A' to 'B'. An entity with sufficiently many such dependents, that is a hub in dependence network, is called a *local elite*. A village having at least one local elite is called an *elite village*. We call a HH which is dependent on a local elite a *client*. The institutional variations we consider in this work are in terms of these elites.

Therefore, the noticeable feature of what we call an elite village is that such a village consists of a small number of persons (in our data we find them to be usually less than four or five) who have control over a number of households in terms of crucial economic dimensions (like providing credit or employment) and very often these same persons dominate in the spheres of social interactions as well as in political arenas around the village. In many cases the village *pradhan* (head) happens to be *one* such person.

Given the rather lopsided structure of dependence one might expect a strong degree of extraction of economic and political rent by the local elites in these villages from such common persons. Moreover, dependence, presumably desired by the local elites, might be sustained by the level of development within the village remaining low as that would imply less empowerment of the ordinary villagers. Therefore, on average, we should expect the measures of development indicators in elite villages to have lower value.

For identifying the impact of the institution in elite villages, especially of local elites, we consider two channels through which this might have an effect at household levels.

The first channel we consider is that of allocation of work under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)⁹. It is well known that this is controlled by the village panchayat and therefore, the local elites, the persons wielding substantial lopsided dependence on them should have a good deal of power in determining who might get jobs under this scheme. Therefore an elite, who is likely to have a say in allocation of NREGS jobs, may influence the job provision of a client of his. He might furnish support to his client by providing him access to relatively more NREGS jobs not only as a tool of extending clientelism but also, perhaps, to ensure that the client gets resources to pay back any (informal) loans—in cash or in productive inputs—taken from the elite. Therefore, a client, controlling for other determinants, should have higher probability of getting NREGS jobs as well as more job-days than a non-client. We test whether this conjecture might be true using our data.

The second channel we consider is that of household investment in children's education. An elite village is expected to have a higher degree of arbitrary control by a few persons, lower level of development infrastructure and relatively higher degree of rent extraction by the elites. In other words, HHs in elite villages are expected to have less and uncertain control over returns from any directly productive activities. In contrast, returns from investment in children's education, which might also entail the children getting an opportunity to undertake future employment-related migration outside the village are not subject to control by these overbearing elites who dominate these villages. As HHs have a fixed volume of investible resources (if any), it follows that a non-elite HH head in such a village will invest relatively more in higher education of his children rather than on directly productive

⁹ As is well known, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is supposed to provide a maximum of one hundred days of unskilled manual work to each rural household (at a government stipulated minimum wage) on demand. We refer to the official website of this scheme -- <http://www.nrega.nic.in/netnrega/home.aspx> for details.

activities (like expanding business or raising livestock and selling its product etc).. Therefore, controlling for other plausible factors, a non-elite HH with some members studying in an elite village should spend relatively more in educational expenses than that in a non-elite village. We test for the presence of such an effect.

3. Summary of Results

At this stage (a more rigorous investigation of causality is still in progress) for analysing the effect of local level development indicators we isolated a few such indicators and tested whether the average values of such indicators for elite villages with that for non-elite villages. For identifying the household-level effect of clientelism on provision of NREGS jobs we constructed two types of suitable dependent variables—one indicating whether a HH has received job ever and another giving total workdays for a HH in the last 12 months and then ran OLS or probit regressions, as appropriate. Similarly, for measuring the impact of localized institutions on a HH's investment in education of younger members, we constructed a suitable average measure for such spending and ran OLS with the village characteristics—whether the village is elite or otherwise—as the main explanatory variable of interest. Of course, for all the regressions we used a bunch of appropriate controls.

We can summarize our findings so far as follows:

- Existence or otherwise of local elites—holding strong dependence in spheres of day-to-day activities from a sizeable number of households in a village—is an illuminating marker of the nature of local institution, especially localized power.
- Both elite villages (those consisting of at least one local elite) and non-elite villages exist in the three states in India to which we have restricted our data collection.
- Presence of local elites in a village is associated with relatively lower magnitude of development in the village in terms of several common development indicators.
- Clients of local elites have better access to NREGS employment than non-clients.
- Presence of local elites in a village increases a household's investment in education of the younger members of the household presumably substituting for investment in current and potential productive uses.

4. Policy Prescriptions

1. Since localized elites seem to consolidate their power through multifarious dependence relations on them *together*, our study brings home, in the context of India, once again the need of a holistic policy approach. This is in sharp contrast to the current “randomized policy trial” driven emphasis on small partial policy interventions. Our study goes toward reemphasizing a well-known textbook prescription:

“If, in our reformist zeal, we do not pay enough attention to the underlying economic rationale of pre-existing institutions and their interconnections, and try to hack away parts of them, we may not always improve (and may even worsen) the lot of the poor tenant-labourer-borrower, the intended beneficiary of the reform programme” (Bardhan and Udry, 1999, p. 111).

2. The second item of policy prescription stemming from our study is not novel: we find that a socio-economic structure dominated by a few elites having control over access to productive inputs, credit or land results in substitution of productive investments especially by the poor. Therefore, accentuation of more formal access to credit, land redistribution, increase in governmentally-provided inputs at affordable prices etc might not only increase investment in



agriculture but also should increase investment in non-agricultural productive activities in Indian villages.

IV. Local political institutions in developing countries: the role of new players

A large share of the world population relies directly and indirectly on natural resources for their daily livelihood. For instance, 1.6 billion people still derive a significant share of their daily income from forests (UNEP, 2014). Populations living around water bodies depend on rivers and marine ecosystems for food, monetary income and well-being. Improving the management of natural resources and finding ways to redistribute benefits is key in (1) improving the wellbeing of the poor, (2) lifting the poorest out of poverty and helping them enhance their capabilities and (3) ensuring a sustainable provision of ecosystem services which benefit to neighbouring inhabitants but also generate regional and global externalities.

Common pool resources tend to be overexploited (Hardin, Science 1968). This generates an environmental poverty trap. In open access settings, users of the resource tend to put too much effort in extraction and do not reap all potential benefits of natural resources, sometimes even totally depleting them. The Coasian approach has very much emphasized the role of a better definition of use and property rights as a solution to overextraction. In the nineties, Ostrom (1990), Baland and Platteau (1996) and others investigated the role of communities and show that communities, under some circumstances, can be as effective as precisely defined property rights.

Our contribution here intends to focus on the role of new players from local political institutions in developing countries. Problems of ownership and conflicts can prevent people from benefit from these resources and create barriers to development. Beyond the issue of ownership, a second challenge lies in the preservation of these resources. Policy should strengthen the preservation of the environment for all people depending on the natural asset base for their livelihood.

All three papers written under this research program investigate problems of ownership and preservation of common pool, renewable resources. Focusing on the role of new players from local political institutions in developing countries, the research hypothesizes that communities can act as guarantors and defenders of their own resources. To achieve this role, communities or societies can design sharing and conservation rules to overcome the 'tragedy of the commons'. The research also discusses conditions required for rules to be efficient. A well designed law can be circumvented by an elite group or vested interests. If the institutional pattern leaves room for appropriation of the policy benefits by a group of power wielders, it can lead to unintended consequences and even adverse impacts. Greater attention should then be dedicated to the institutional context of its implementation.

We structure our contribution in 3 papers and a new project which has been developed based on the preliminary findings of the 3 other papers. For each of the 4 projects, the remaining part of the deliverable is structured as followed: title, collaborations at stake in the project, abstract, policy implications, communications, status and finally data sources.

1. "Firewood Collections and Economic Growth in Rural Nepal 1995-2010: Evidence from a Household Panel"¹⁰

A household panel data set is used to investigate the effects of economic growth on firewood collection in Nepal between 1995 and 2010. Results from preceding cross-sectional analyses are found to be robust: (a) rising consumptions for all but the top decile were associated with increased firewood collections, contrary to the Poverty-Environment hypothesis; (b) sources of growth matter: increased

¹⁰ Joint collaboration between the CRED and the IED (Boston University): Jean-Marie Baland (CRED, University of Namur), François Libois (CRED, University of Namur) and Dilip Mookherjee (IED, Boston University).

livestock was associated with increased collections, and falling household size, increased education, non-farm business assets and road connectivity with reduced collections. Nepal households collected 25% less firewood over this period, mostly explained by falling livestock, and rising education, connectivity and out-migration.

Policy implications:

- a. In the Hills and Mountains of Nepal, we find that firewood collections are positively correlated to income. Income growth, *per se*, pushes demand for firewood up. Knowing and showing that firewood collection is a major driver of deforestation in this region, it means that pure income growth will threaten forests.
- b. Households do not react to changes in the price of firewood (the collection time). As forests get further depleted, we should not expect increasing cost of collection to limit the extend of deforestation.
- c. The type of growth matters. If growth is driven by households leaving livestock rearing and entering in non-farm businesses, then it is expected to reduce deforestation. The pure income effect of growth however does not modify occupational patterns of households and increases the pressure on natural resources.
- d. In Nepal, policy makers should not expect the pure income effect to be sufficient to push households in an energy ladder where they would switch from firewood to other sources of energy like biogas, kerosene or electricity. It is expected to happen for the top decile of the population but for the “bottom 90%”, demand for firewood will continue to increase.
- e. In the Hills and Mountains, the development of Community Forest User Groups (CFUG’s) seems to be a very effective institutional innovation to reduce firewood collection.

2. “Why are some Communities able to Preserve their Natural Resources while some Others Fail to Achieve it?”¹¹

This paper presents an analytical framework to understand why some communities successfully manage their renewable natural resources and some fail to do it. We develop a two-players, two-period non-cooperative game where a community can impose some exogenous amount of sanctions. We first show that rules preventing dynamic inefficiencies may exist even though static inefficiencies still remain. Second, apparently valuable resources can yield outcomes where players get a lower ex-post utility level than what they would have got in a game with ex-ante lower value resources. Third, inequalities reduce static inefficiencies but increase dynamic inefficiencies.

Analytical results:

- a. If the growth rate of resources is relatively large, it is easier for the community to enforce rules preserving the resource than rules trying to enforce an efficient extraction of the resource. In other words, given the ability of the community to monitor behaviour and sanction actors who are defecting, a large growth rate implies that small sanctions are enough to prevent users from extracting resources and leave it grow till the next period where all players might fight for a larger pie. If the value of the resource is large, it might be impossible for the community to prevent over-extraction within a time period.

¹¹ François Libois (CRED, University of Namur), CRED Working Paper, Centre for Research in Economic Development, University of Namur, 2015

- b. Changes in the value of resources should also be considered while improving community access to markets, or more generally when consequences of resource value boom on institutions have to be forecast. It is not surprising that a rising resource initial value makes conservation more difficult. Our model adds that if first period sharing of the resource is achievable considering a given level of sanctions, this equilibrium can never do better than an achievable second period sharing equilibrium. Moreover, the rise of the resource value has to be quite large to leave players better off in a first period non-cooperative extraction than in another achievable equilibrium with a lower resource value.
- c. Inequalities reduce static inefficiencies but decrease dynamic inefficiencies, especially if it is hard to prevent access of the smallest when the strongest does not harvest the resource.

Policy implications:

Assuming that one of the roles of communities in decentralized management is to enforce use and access rights to renewable resources, we show that

- a. Larger growth rate and value of the resource can lead to a change of equilibrium strategies and to a decrease of players' utility. It implies that external intervention resulting in a higher growth rate or value of the resource can have adverse consequences on receivers. Improved management of natural resources can actually make people worse off and threaten resource conservation. Climate change can also have non-trivial effect on resource conservation by modifying resource growth rate and investment possibilities. Apparently blessed communities might end up doing worse while disadvantaged groups will be able to mobilize their pre-existing social fabric to implement better outcomes.
- b. More generally, this paper also sheds light on the role of institutions when external aid is at stake. If institutions are very weak or very effective, any additional investment improves players' well-being. If institutions are moderately effective, external aid might be too much of a good thing. The instantaneous benefit of over-extracting might be too large for the sanctions of the community to be a real deterrent preventing inefficient harvest and use of the resource. External aid should then make sure to reinforce social structure, checks and balances and monitoring efficiency while trying to lift people out of poverty.

3. "Privatization of the Commons: Evidence from the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act in India"¹²

The Forest Rights Act adopted by the Indian Parliament in 2006 allows Schedule Tribes (ST) to claim property titles over forest land that they were occupied before 2005. A combination of a census of approved claims and of satellite images is used to document deforestation before and after the act. It appears that deforestation is very high in the 3 years before and the 3 years after the act was passed. It indicates that a significant share of approved claims is actually illegitimate. Another significant share of approved claims has been granted to households which deforested just before the act was passed. It

¹² Joint collaboration between the CRED, the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute (New Delhi, India) and the Ashok Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE, Bangalore, India): Jean-Marie Baland (CRED), François Libois (CRED), E. Somanathan (ISI) and Jagdish Krishnaswamy (ATREE)

can be interpreted as a sign of anticipation by households which were well-informed by the potential reform. The act was thus only partially successful in his aim to correct the historical injustice towards ST in India¹³.

Policy implications:

- a. Privatization of the commons is often presented as a mean to improve use and management of open access natural resources. However little attention is paid to the effect of the transition between open access and private ownership.
- b. The implementation of the transition is key both for the distributional impact of the policy and its effectiveness at preserving resources.
- c. With respect to resource preservation, we show that leaving time between discussion of an act and its implementation creates opportunities for households to behave strategically, clear land in anticipation of the act such that they demonstrate occupation of the land. It should be clear from the beginning that only old encroachments on forest can be legalized. Any uncertainty on the cut-off date incentivizes household to adopt behaviour which will reinforce legitimacy of claims.
- d. In terms of distributional impact, the Forest Rights Act was not successful. Few households effectively benefited from a property title despite the large number of old encroachments. This is both a consequence of a limited publicity of the act in the poorest regions and of unclearly defined boundaries of villages.
- e. Before giving individual titles, a first step might be to define clear village and hamlet boundaries, with the approval of local institutions and clear information of all potential users.

4. “Energy Use, Institutional Change and Environmental Externalities in the Himalayas”¹⁴

Can technology and institutions promote environmental conservation? We examine whether diffusion of energy-efficient technologies (electricity, biogas, improved cook stoves) and micro-institutions, i.e. community forest users group, impact forest conservation and carbon storage in Nepal. We combine three waves of household survey data (LSMS) with the census of the 17881 CFUG created in Nepal between 1988 and 2011 and satellite imagery (average NDVI). Controlling for a variety of year and location effects, preliminary analyses reveal that improved technologies and micro institutions improve forest cover¹⁵.

¹³ Administrative records of approved claims in Jhadol Thasil; 2001 census of India; Boundaries of Reserved Forest (Data from the Forest Survey of India); Remote sensing data; Land classification (30m resolution) based on 4 images bought by the IRS-LISS3 (Supervised classification using Erdas Imagine Software and Object Based Image Classification using eCognition software). Years covered : 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 ; Carroll, M.L., C.M. DiMiceli, R.A. Sohlberg, and J.R.G. Townshend (2004), 250m MODIS Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (MOD13Q1), 2010-2014, Collection 4, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, Day 289, 2003.

¹⁴ Joint collaboration between the CRED and the Sanford School of Public Policy in Durham (Duke University); Jean-Marie Baland (CRED), François Libois (CRED), Subhrendhu k. Pattanayak (Duke)

¹⁵ Data sources: Nepal Living Standard Measurement Survey – wave 1, 2 and 3 (Data from the Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics); Census of Community Forest User Groups (Data from the Department of Forest of Nepal); Data on casualties during the Nepalese Civil War (Data from the Informal Sector Service Center in Nepal); 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census of Nepal (data from the Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics); Municipality level yearly adoption rate of solar home system, biogas, improved cookstoves and hydro-power plants (data to be collected with the help of the Alternative Energy Promotion Center in Nepal); Remote sensing data: DiMiceli,

V. How civil and political movements do influence the development of urbanization?¹⁶

One of the principal avenues of the fight against poverty in emerging and developing countries has been the struggle for access and rights, through the mobilization of democratic and civic movements, in particular in the urban space, where several conflicting trends of economic and social development tend to meet. The emergence of the city and of agglomerations as principal tools and spaces of development has been well documented in the literature on economic geography and the spatial analysis of development. These urban agglomerations and peripheries, through their influence on the rural economy and their power of attraction as the economy grows, have been major attractors of poor people from rural areas, as is being developed in task 6.4 of the NOPOOR project (From rural misery to urban poverty: intra/intercity differences in poverty in India”).

We here back up our empirical and fieldwork based analysis with a selective study of the existing literature on social and civic struggles in the urban space, mainly in the Indian context. This does not mean that social movements have not played an important role in rural life; in fact, studies of the struggles of the Indian peasantry are extremely well documented, and Ramchandra Guha’s seminal work, the *Unquiet Woods*, is one of the most remarkable studies of this subject. We choose the urban space in the Indian context because in a complex democracy like India, the forms of struggle in the urban space holds many lessons for the analysis of the role of the state and public policy, and forces us to question, once again, the age old question of the nature of the developmental state in emerging countries, and for whom they govern.

In a collective volume, Zerah, Tawa-Lama Rewal, Dupont, (ed 2011) in the spirit of the UNESCO-MOST (Management of Social transformation) Programs in different countries, examine the problems of inclusion, exclusion and segregation in urban spaces in India. The study is written for both scholars and practitioners of development, who want to understand the tensions and contradictions in a fast growing emerging democracy, between the unequal impact of globalization and economic development on the one hand, and the struggle for the real exercise of civic and democratic rights beyond the purely formal rights of voting. This work follows a rights based approach to the question, and from a policy point of view, can enable policy makers at all levels to judge the right mix between economic, legal and political instruments as ‘tools of democracy’.

Megacity Slums (ed Saglio-Yatzimirsky and Landy, 2014) also examine in the contexts of India and Brazil (in a French National Research Agency project entitled SETUP) how the development and globalization of the Indian and Brazilian economies produced slums in megacities, how urban policies are made in these economies and how they can produce the processes of segregation and exclusion that one observes in these major emerging countries.

The fundamental shift of the base of Indian economy from rural agriculture to urban industrial production has some prominent and unique characteristics. The service economy took over the manufacturing sector and industrialization was uneven. Liberalization of Indian economy was gradual

C.M., M.L. Carroll, R.A. Sohlberg, C. Huang, M.C. Hansen, and J.R.G. Townshend (2011), Annual Global Automated MODIS Vegetation Continuous Fields (MOD44B) at 250 m Spatial Resolution for Data Years Beginning Day 65, 2000 - 2010, Collection 5 Percent Tree Cover, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, USA; Carroll, M.L., C.M. DiMiceli, R.A. Sohlberg, and J.R.G. Townshend (2004), 250m MODIS Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (MOD13Q1), 2010-2014, Collection 4, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, Day 289, 2003; Tropical Rainfall Measurement Mission Project (TRMM), *Daily TRMM and Other Satellites Precipitation Product (3B43V6 derived)*, version 7, Goddard Space Flight Center Distributed Active Archive Center (GSFC DAAC)

¹⁶ Basudeb Chaudhuri and Abhinandan Sinha

and the pace of industrialization process varied widely. Agriculture was transformed from peasant, subsistence agriculture to commercial, capitalist agriculture, accompanied by a transformation of many agricultural spaces into peri-urban, by changes in the share of agricultural activities in rural areas and the use of land.

The formation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) was a characteristic feature of this shift to industrialization, which led to a significant social re-engineering and became the epicentre of dynamic shift in Indian socio-political scenario. SEZ was the instrument of materializing the liberalization and capitalist market reform in the most aggressive and crudest form within a limited geographical area. In this report we present in a little more detail one of the collective volumes we survey to highlight some principal issues of this research. All the references here, along with several others, will be developed in a larger survey paper which will be an output of this section.

Jenkins, Kennedy and Mukhopadhyay (2014) 'Power, Policy and Protest: The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones' focus on several questions from which the political movement centering SEZs get reflected. They study the role of land acquisition in process of establishing SEZs, the regional economic and political context within which the development of SEZs is taking place along with analysing recent policy trends and assessing the role of state government response in shaping the nature and effectiveness of anti-SEZ activism. These include reforming land acquiring procedures and formation of more efficient mechanisms through institutions to address dissent, grievances as well as procedural inadequacies.

Endorsement of SEZs by the Governments varies over states. Andhra Pradesh was one of the most pro-active, with an unusual approach of equity participation, where Haryana was the least active, by investing in one, but the biggest SEZ only. Land acquisition methods by state governments have also been varied, with its participation being both direct and indirect. A popular term 'Haryana model' developed from the state's politically dominant landowning community and other influential landed community's common interests which greatly influenced the degree of government's participation in the land acquiring process. In Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, significant support of urban middle class and people from coastal regions who were increasingly becoming less dependent on agriculture facilitated a smoother procedure of compulsory land acquisition. The factors behind such influence give insight to the dynamics of anti-SEZ protests in India.

Most states faced different types of anti SEZ protests with different degrees. Two prominent trends emerged out of these anti-SEZ movements – one with co-operation of political parties while the other refusing to collude with partisan politics. The causes behind political alignment were mostly electoral opportunism of the mainstream parties in the local polity rather than any serious commitment or position over the policy. Institutions of rural governments like the Panchayat totally failed to stand up against the big business and political class nexus. Opportunistic support by political parties to the movement was solely motivated towards competing with its rival parties. This eventually discredited the whole movement shifting focus from basic issues of displacement, compensation etc. which originally was the crux of the matter. For example, BSP, a party of the untouchable castes that made a major impact in Indian politics, used the movement to cancel a SEZ project started by its rival. Her involvement changed the main demands and issues of grievances and weakened the whole movement. But the same party leader Mayawati, former Chief Minister of this very important state, herself went on to follow an aggressive facilitation of SEZs during her tenure in office. Interestingly, the same tactic was taken by Congress Party Vice President Rahul Gandhi against her, where Congress itself was the ruling party at the centre to pass the Special Economic Zone Act 2005 (SEZA).

In Andhra Pradesh, facing a fierce nexus between political and big business interests, the anti-SEZ protesters went on to contest elections on their own. Even after polling significant votes, their failure prompted them to support another political candidate next time. But this experiment also failed as the alignment by political parties was based completely on false assurances with sole objective of garnering votes for the time being.

But, if and when organized and strategized suitably to offer a credible threat of changing larger political outcome beyond a locality, protesters can gain the potential to influence the entire ruling class across the spectrum in their favour. This was a very important lesson learnt from states like Goa and Punjab, which later brought successful change in Land Acquisition policies of the States.

Stories of successful protests also had a different flavour. The complex social structure of different layers of identity helped the protests to gain a higher momentum. Mixing the issues of displacement with sentiments of isolation of the residents' identities and cultural practices brought considerable success. Threat of cultural isolation from inter-state labour migration was a key factor in garnering support for the movement. In Maharashtra, this tactic even went up to the extent of invoking religious sentiments which forced the Government to retreat, fearing loss of larger vote-bank. But this approach of appealing to identity and cultural sentiments failed to penetrate among the larger mass when they faced fiercely aggressive state propaganda machinery under the present Prime Minister of India, who was then serving as the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

This hurdle could be partially overcome by changing the focus on huge environmental degradations that were to be caused by the proposed SEZs. The protestors, who were able to identify the legal violations and malpractices during the clearances of proposed SEZ's changed the laws of the game. The environmental concerns credibly appealed to larger sections of society in the states like Gujarat and Karnataka.

In almost all regions, the network of NGOs and civil societies formed the axis of these movements. Protests failed where this network could not get co-ordinated and sustained. Not only when fighting independently, but these forces also played a decisive role when they aligned with mainstream political parties in some regions. This picture becomes clear while looking at the experiences from West Bengal and Haryana, where the political forces in opposition gained huge electoral success from anti-SEZ protests.

But one component was very common in the movements of all the states – which is the tactical use of legal weapons like public interest litigations (PILs). The intention of its use was manifold and the success was also of varying degrees. In Andhra Pradesh it led to the formation of new set of lawyers specialized in dealing with these types of cases. Tamil Nadu had to pass a special legislation to complete such judicial cases within six months. In some places like Gujarat, this weapon helped to increase the bargaining power of the displaced people where as in some other places like Karnataka, this could only delay the implementation of SEZs in its original proposed form. But in places like UP, Goa, Haryana and even some selected few in Maharashtra, this brought considerable success to the protestors by bringing them more compensation and even some cancellations of entire project.

The single most important contribution of the anti-SEZ protests was to bring the questions of inclusive, equitable development and justice at the centre-stage of society, which eventually forced the Indian state to rethink and reshape its land acquisition processes, through the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill of 2011.

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