The Messy Politics of Land Acquisition in West Bengal

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Land acquisition for the purpose of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) started to unfold at an accelerated pace across India since 2005. West Bengal, a state in eastern India, has not been an exception to this trend. The politics that emanated out of this acquisition in West Bengal is irreducible to a singular struggle between land grabbers and land losers at this given contemporary moment. I argue that land acquisition politics in West Bengal is messy, because of the way the history of changing property relations, their governance by the State and its attendant power relations, constantly produce and reproduce current-day land politics. Thus land politics stands at the nexus of the messy articulations of power across time. This also produces multiple responses around the land question. Throughout my dissertation I show how power works through property to produce current day messiness in land politics. The main finding in this dissertation is how the communist government in West Bengal has attempted to occlude the history of land reforms which it implemented in 1977, to materialize land acquisitions in 2006 by using colonial logics of power. By using such logics, the government treated the land holders and users as a "subrace" that needs to be civilized towards industrialization. This it did through a politics of forgetting the past reforms wherein agricultural relations were deemed as primitive, invisibilized the existent lived agricultural realities and affordances of land and used the technology of violence or threat thereof to subordinate those elements of the

"subrace" that resisted. A related finding of this dissertation is that as the government tried to make the past disappear, it always reappeared, as the sedimentations of past relations of land reforms always interfered with the process of occluding the past. This reappearance of the past happened through stakeholders making claims, resisting for their rights in the language of entitlement and indignation because of the past history of reforms. Thus land acquisition standing at the dialectical interplay of sedimentation and absencing of the past produced a messy politics, which was always contested making the process of acquisition highly fragile. This research contributes towards showing how history shapes contemporary processes, it denaturalizes property to show how property relations are produced, not given and are highly contested. This work contributes to the land grabs literature to show how land grabbing unfolds in a populous part of the world and takes a historico-geographical view of the emergence of land politics in a part of South Asia. It also contributes towards understanding how power relations work, and how the simultaneous sedimentation and erasure of power create a messy politics.

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Introduction: The Messy Politics of Land Acquisition in West Bengal

This dissertation interrogates the messy politics of land acquisition in India. It particularly analyzes the land question in West Bengal, a state in the eastern part of the country. Land acquisition started to unfold at an accelerated pace, post-2005 across India. West Bengal has not been an exception to this trend. Such acquisitions were part of a State-mandated land assembling activity for the purpose of creating Special Economic Zones for industrialization and real estate development. However the politics that emanated out of this acquisition is irreducible to a singular struggle between land grabbers and land losers at this given contemporary moment. I argue that land acquisition politics in West Bengal is messy, because of the way the past history of property relations in Bengal and its attendant power relations constantly produce and reproduce current-day land politics. Thus land politics stands at the nexus of the messy articulations of power across time (Moore, 2005). This dissertation will therefore trace the evolution and transformation of property relations in Bengal. It will specifically look at the role of the State in grounding these transforming property relations in order to govern society. This work will then situate the contemporary land politics in West Bengal against this history of changing property relations and therefore power relations within the nexus of State-society relations.

The Context

Land acquisition is not new in India. Land has been acquired since the British times and continues to happen in post-independent India (Levien, 2013; Lobo and Kumar, 2009). Soon after independence, a modernizing Indian State started acquiring land for the purpose of industrialization and building dams (ibid). This modernizing thrust was in part a product of elite vision, to catapult India to the ranks of other modern societies in the world (see Ray and Katzenstein, 2005; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). The Indian National Congress which constituted the national government, was historically an elite clique with close ties to industrialists[1], but later began to absorb socialist elements. These elements made economic justice a central issue in the party (Chibber, 2006; Ray and Katzenstein, 2005). This meant that the party and therefore the government was internally divided, supporting multiple interests. There was no unified ideology of progress within the party (Chibber, 2006). It was however Nehru's vision of social democracy with dual focus on development and poverty alleviation that gained dominance (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005). However the path towards modernization and the "will to improve" (Li, 2007) through land acquisition for infrastructure and industrial development was not easy. There was resistance from agricultural capitalists who saw land acquisition as a threat. What complicated the issue was that the Congress party needed these rich farmers to exercise clientelist relations with peasants and secure the support of the latter to build its own mass base. Thus through hegemonic projects of development which included 'accomodationist' policies (Bardhan, 2001), like guaranteeing non-acquisition of

[1] In 1939 for instance, under the leadership of the Congress party, the National Planning Committee was organized. This was dominated by industrialists with close ties to the party (Chibber, 2005; 2006).

farmland were pursued. The Nehruvian vision of modernization, meant however unproductive land had to be acquired and brought within the scope of rationality and modernization (Gidwani, 2008; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). The 1894 colonial land acquisition act was adopted to acquire such 'unproductive' lands for industrialization and building dams (Levien, 2013; Lobo and Kumar, 2009). However with this thrust towards modernization through land acquisition, there were casualties. The acquisition of land, even for the purpose of development fosters exclusions (Hall et al., 2011), and that according to some scholars are at the heart of tensions and dilemmas of development through acquisition (ibid).

India was plagued by such dilemmas. The 'unproductive' lands that were acquired were often in poorer tribal areas or areas where there were poorer peasants (see Levien, 2013). This meant that their consent had to be acquired. The State ""educate[d]" this consent" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 259). The Nehruvian logic of modernization, played out through a mission of civilizing the peasants and tribals, which was a paternalistic stance (Chibber, 2006). The dominant discourse that was mobilized towards that end was that land acquisition was necessary for national development and poverty alleviation, and that their "sacrifice" was required (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005; Baviskar, 2001; 2005; Padel, 2009). Land acquisition continued displacing people and livelihoods, as in many cases resettlement and rehabilitation were not adequate (Levien, 2013). By the 1960's it was clear, that the social base of growth was narrow (Hasan, 2000). Struggles around the land question arose (Baviskar, 2005; Levien, 2013a; 2013b). Some framed the issue of dispossession as a case of outcastes or Dalits being disproportionately affected (Guru and

Chakravarty, 2005). Others framed it as a case of a lack of environmental justice (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005).[2] NGOs and human rights organizations also developed like the People's Union for Civil Liberties or more peasant based organizations like the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti. These organizations in many cases forged transnational alliances to fight their cause (Guru and Chakravarty, 2005). Further during this time, many political parties and social movements arose from within the Congress Party system (Kothari, 1967) including Jan Sangh, Swatantra, Socialist and Communist parties but which still had close connection with the party (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005). Finally there was the rise of more vehement forms of insurgent consciousness: the rise of Naxalism. The insurgent Naxalite movement arose and gathered strength around issues of land reforms in the 1960's and 1970's (Banerjee, 1980; Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2009). Naxalism has since expanded its area of influence; significantly broadened its constituency; and changed its tactics. The movement now exists in 20 of India's 28 states. In the process, Naxals have emerged at the front of popular resistance in central and eastern India against land appropriation by the state and private development industry, justified in the name of 'economic development'(Ray and Katzenstein, 2005).

By 1991, the pace of land acquisition was relatively slower. However after the economic reforms in the wake of the debt crisis were implemented, there has been acceleration in the rate of land acquisition. Particularly after the passage of the Special Economic Zones Act (SEZ) of 2005, there has been rampant grabbing of land by the State. It is no longer 'unproductive' land that is being grabbed, but fertile agricultural land is being taken away

[2] This was particularly the case with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the River Narmada Movement), which was a movement against grabbing of land by the State to build the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

for SEZs (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011; Levien 2011; 2012, Da Costa, 2007). Further this land grabbing must also be understood in the context of high pressure of population on land, which means that land is not readily available. In this context various scholars have registered a shift in State ideology, discourses and political culture, stating that there is greater predilection of the State towards jettisoning its welfare activities and poverty reduction programs (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005; Bhagwati, 1993; Hasan, 2000; Kohli, 2007). Many have claimed that given the structural conditions of the political economy in India, there has been an obsession with growth (Bhaduri, 2007). International capital has been welcomed with open arms and the SEZs have become the sites where global capital is being spatialized as part of a new accumulation strategy (Walker, 2008; Jessop, 1990). What has unfolded in a recurring manner is agitation, most of them peaceful but many violent ones (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005). It is against this context that this dissertation wants to seek an understanding of the politics of land acquisition within SEZs in West Bengal, a state in eastern India.

Land Acquisition in West Bengal: Adopting a Historical Approach Towards Understanding Messy Land Politics

West Bengal is located in eatern India having the fourth largest population in the country. Its population is 91.28 million (Census of India, 2011). It is a densely populated state, with the population density being at 1028 persons per square km, while the national average is only 382 persons per square km. The rural population far exceeds the urban population with 68.13% of the population living in rural areas (ibid). Geographically the

state covers several physiographic regions, wherein there are the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan region in the north and the fertile Gangetic plain dominating the central and southern part (ibid). In terms of political boundaries, the state shares an international boundary with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. It lies next to the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim and Assam (See Figure 1). Historically West Bengal and Bangladesh constitute an ethnic-linguistic region (MedLibrary.org, http://medlibrary.org/medwiki/West_Bengal). In fact West Bengal and Bangladesh was a unified region under British rule, but were separated out based on religion during the partition of the country by the Britishers in 1947. Bangladesh became East Pakistan and eventually gained separate nation-statehood in 1971 (ibid).

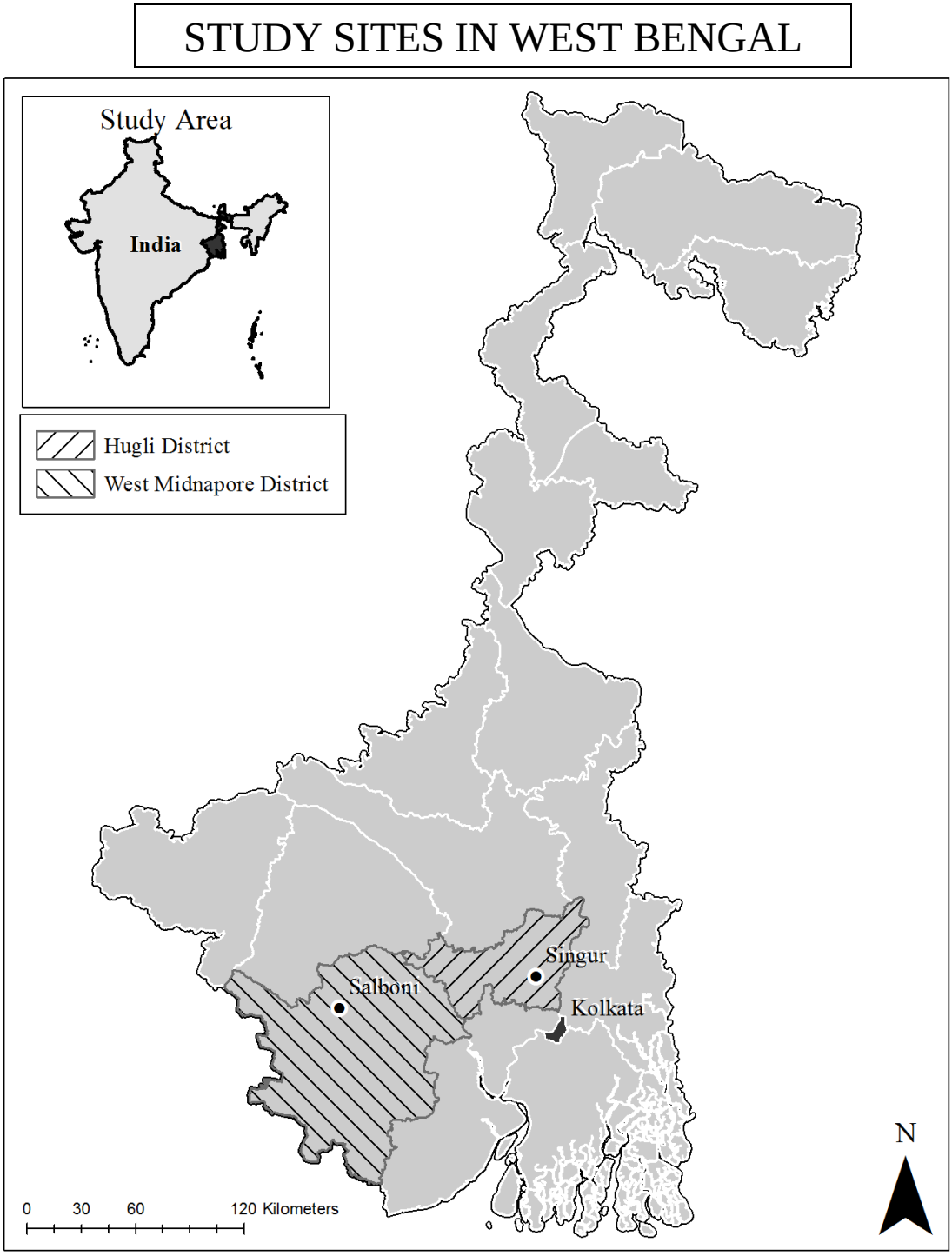

Figure 1. Study Sites in West Bengal

Agriculture is a major economic activity in West Bengal and is the sixth largest contributor to India's Net Domestic Product (RBI, 2011). The relative importance of agriculture in the Bengal economy and the fact that fertile land is being targeted, make the land acquisition politics very interesting. Along with West Bengal, several other states having fertile lands and high pressure of population on land have adopted land acquisition policies. West Bengal often is compared almost derisively with other states as a 'lag' state where nothing works, and the fact is attributed to its historical arc of politics. This dissertation is therefore concerned with understanding this politics in order to parse out the messiness in land politics.

The broader trajectory of land acquisition that has unfolded in India, can also be mapped on to West Bengal and yet not. This is because West Bengal has a very interesting colonial and post-colonial history centered on property relations. It is that history that needs to be understood and interrogated to specifically understand the contemporary politics of land acquisition in Bengal in the wake of SEZ creation. This history is ever present as a palimpsest that has shaped land politics in Bengal. Particularly the colonial search for a revenue solution and the land reforms of 1977 has left its imprints on the contemporary politics around the land question in Bengal.

The relationship of ownership and tenancy centered on land was established by the British. In 1765, the British East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal (Guha, 1963). This is a revenue and administrative area, which the British procured from the Mughals (ibid). However the British found the revenue structure and the tenurial system that was closely articulated with it confusing (Bose, 1986). Thus started the British

endeavor to get the revenue collection system right (Guha, 1963). They tried several experimental policies around land to gather revenue, but they ended up in serious failures. The most notable of these experiments was the "Farming System" (Guha, 1963). There were distinct logics which drove this search for a fixed solution to the revenue problematic. These logics were that of political economy, space and race. The British were also strongly led by Locke's moral-economic vision on issues of private property (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). In 1793, the Permanent Settlement of Bengal was adopted to give proprietary and revenue collection rights to a category of landlords and tax farmers called zamindars. It also established land owning peasants or tenants or sharecroppers as ryots who were to be subordinated by the zamindars. Thus the institutionalization of the Permanent Settlement established the "rule of [private] property" (Guha, 1963). This property then became a "*dense transfer point for relations of power*…..endowed with the *greatest instrumentality*: *useful for the greatest number of maneuvers* and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (Foucault, 1990, p. 103, my emphasis). It was through the relations of property, that the British tried to create State spaces and subjects of rule (Moore, 2005). Further through the relations of property the relations of domination, subordination between zamindars and ryots were established and normalized. This had serious effects. It led to massive exploitation and a crisis in the social reproduction of peasants that created a situation of involution in rural areas (Bose, 1986). Peasant resistance against landlords became commonplace in Bengal (ibid).

It was within this architecture of property relations, that the communist Left Front government which came into power in 1977, wanted to introduce land reforms. They wanted to remove the all vestiges of the British-established feudal relations around land (see Mishra, 2007). Here again property became a "dense transfer point …of power" (Foucault, 1990, p. 103), as this government under the leadership of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), wanted to rearrange property relations so that it could establish spaces and subjects of rule. However the communists had to work within certain structural constraints of the capitalist and democratic form of the State (Jessop, 1990). It strategically implemented land reforms which would principally not really challenge the already sedimented "rule of property" (see Bhattacharyya, 1999; Basu, 1992). What the communists principally focused on was tenancy reforms called "Operation Barga" (Kar, 2011). However, the implementation of both the minimalist land redistribution measures and Operation Barga was subverted because of the provincialized nature of village politics, where negotiations, clientelism and caste-based advantages became key (Williams, 1999; Bhattacharyya, 1999). It was through such politics that some farmers and farm workers benefitted from reforms and others did not. However the outcome of the reforms was mainly twofold: an imaginary was produced that the communist government cared for the poor (Kohli, 1989), and the CPI(M) party began to dominate every aspect of village life to form a "party society" which also made the party and the government unpopular (Chatterjee, 2009).

The political economy of India changed quite drastically in 1991. West Bengal became a major site for the attraction of global capital as a result of rescaling of State powers

(Brenner et al., 2003). The communists now faced a major conundrum: on the one hand it had to go on maintaining its rule through facilitating the accumulation process because of structural pressures, on the other hand its history of interventions in land and the "care" it showed towards the rural poor was becoming a problem. I argue in my dissertation, that the communists adopted and implemented the SEZ model of development with both stealth and swiftness (Jenkins, 2011; Kennedy, 2013), precisely to get rid of the 'stickiness' of past reforms (see Sinha, 2004). Further I argue that the government adopted colonial logics of power to decisively ground the SEZ policies which included a "politics of forgetting" this past (Fdernandes, 2004). Property or the attempt to transform existing property relations to capitalist ones again becomes a "dense transfer point.. of power", through which the communists wanted to establish spaces and subjects of rule. The politics which resulted were messy.

I call this politics messy because, current day politics *is a product of the intersection of different bundles of property relations and their complex evolution within specific conjunctures conditioned by shifting political economic structures*. As the property relations were materialized, power relations through property were materialized as well. This was done through the attempt of creating spaces and subjects of rule through property (Moore, 2005). However power relations through property got sedimented in an uneven manner. For instance, the Permanent Settlement led to peasant resistance and the reforms led to unpopularity of the communist government and its strategy of creating an Orwellian State through a "party society" (Chatterjee, 2009). The past legacy of the Permanent Settlement, the attempt to ameliorate conditions around land through reforms,

reappeared in contemporary land politics. This reappeared in the way and alacrity with which the communists tried to implement the SEZs and how the colonial logics of power were used to precisely forget the past. This had varied effects and produced multiple positions of stakeholders of land around the issue of promised jobs and compensation and also generated resistance. Landscapes therefore become the sedimentations of power, wherein temporal regimes of power exercised by the state with their material and discursive strategies come together to reconfigure each other, to produce an uneven terrain of rule, territorialization, subject production and struggle (Moore, 2005). This then forms "an entangled landscape" with "knots" (Moore, 2005, p. 4), with messy responses corresponding to the messy articulations of power.

This dissertation brings together information from various sources including the archives, key informants and secondary sources. I accessed the archives at the Centre for the Studies of Social Sciences in Kolkata. It was particularly a dissertation written by a student, Dayabati Roy, which was very productive for me. Her original research archived at the Centre, provided a lot of information towards my understanding of the land situation in Singur. I did not subscribe entirely to the arguments made in that dissertation, but that text to me was very useful in gleaning information towards making my own arguments. It was at this institution that one of my key informants was present: Professor Partha Chatterjee. Over a sustained interview, I could gather a lot of understanding from him about the land question in West Bengal. Informal discussions with other scholars working at the Centre also helped me understand key social issues around socio-cultural stratification of caste in India. Another key informant was a professor and activist who I

met at The Ohio State University and then later in Kolkata, who became a gatekeeper and another major informant in my work. I briefly visited Singur and Salboni, where local activists and government officials offered a lot of information. Other key informants include journalists, professors, activists and government officials who I met particularly in Kolkata and Salboni in 2012-2013. Apart from the material archives and key informants, I gathered a lot of the fodder for my research from secondary sources and from the internet archives constituted by blogs and activist websites like SANHATI. The latter site assisted me in drawing out information particularly on Salboni. Media reports, both online and that gathered in Kolkata, also constituted a major source of data and more specifically clarified things up for me. The data thus collected form these various sources form the foundation of the narrative of my dissertation. However I would like to make a disclaimer: I have selectively used the information from these various sources, including my key informants. Thus wherever appropriate, I have acknowledged my informants. However the ideas that animate this dissertation is attributable to these multiple knowledge encounters I have had across time.

Dissertation Chapter Plan

The dissertation is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter discusses how private property was institutionalized in Bengal by the British colonizers. This chapter is divided into two distinct parts. The first part discusses the logic of the colonizers behind establishing private property. The second part discusses how power was exercised discursively and materially through private property in order to govern the colonial

society of Bengal. In this chapter I argue that political economic, spatial and racial logics of the British propelled a search for a permanent solution to the revenue collection conundrum that they faced. This eventually led to the establishment of private property. It was through the institution of private property that the three logics of the British were realized. Once property was established, it became the main instrument to organize society, which had profound impacts on land labor relations in Bengal, including being generative of a crisis of social reproduction amongst the peasantry. In the second chapter, I begin with how this crisis of social reproduction, led the communist government in West Bengal to institute land reforms in 1977. In this chapter, I argue that the land reforms were never radical enough to significantly alter the social conditions of the peasantry. This was because the communists had to work within a capitalist and democratic form of the State which imposed significant restrictions on what could be done vis-à-vis land reforms. I also argue that land reforms got diluted at the village level, because of how its implementation was always articulated with issues of social intersectionality. Thus the implementation of the reforms was always vernacularized, wherein some benefitted and others did not. The third chapter discusses the contemporary land acquisition process in Bengal. In this chapter I argue that the rescaling of State spaces and the growing salience of the sub-national scale in attracting global capital, is key in understanding how a communist government had to jettison its past policies of reforms and embrace land acquisition for capitalist development. I further argue that this embrace of acquisition had to be done with great haste as well as stealth in order to stave off the 'mistaken' history of land reforms. The communists amongst other things did so

by adopting colonial logics of power to implement land acquisition. Through these three chapters the overarching argument, is that property has always been a "dense transfer point….of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 103). It is in and through property that the State has historically tried to govern society. However power was always exercised unevenly through the property regimes. The contemporary land acquisition is a product of these messy articulations of power. Particularly, the simultaneous sedimentation of past power relations around reforms and the constant effort by the State to render them absent, produce a complex land politics in West Bengal.

Chapter 1: The Establishment of the Rule of Property: Permanent Settlement and its Effects

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the colonial history of making private property in Bengal, in the eastern part of India. In particular, the paper will set out to establish two primary issues: what kind of logics led to the establishment of the "rule of [private] property" (Guha, 1963) and how this rule of property organized social (natural) relations around land. The paper argues that the rule of private property is driven by political economic, spatial and racialized rationales of the British. These rationales received the support of liberal intellectual thought. With the establishment of property rights, property itself became a "dense transfer point …of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 103). The becoming of property as a vector of power becomes possible as the political economic, spatial and racialized goals of the colonizers were realized through the establishment of this rule. A more anatomical analysis reveals how the rule of property does so: for instance it defined subjectivities of the colonized and organized material relations around agriculture which were acutely hierarchical and served British interests. Particularly through the organization of material relations, not only did repression and exploitation of peasants by landlords become commonplace, but they also got normalized. This contributed to the realization of the political economic, spatial and racialized logics of the British. However

since property acted as a relay of power, there was simultaneous relay of resistance: i.e. resistance against the oppressive relations which had become constitutive of the objective conditions of rural social relations. In sum, exploitation inherent in the rule of property then configured socio-natural relations around land in a specific manner that historically produced massive exclusions, manifested through agricultural crisis and concomitant crisis of reproduction of peasants and their "endemic" resistance (Bose, 1986). This situation then provides the conditions of possibility towards interventions in land in the post-colonial period aimed towards being more inclusive through land reforms.

The first part of the chapter engages with the land revenue system before 1793. In this part I explicate the logics that led up to the Permanent Settlement of 1793. I indicate that in establishing the Permanent Settlement, past hierarchies of rule around land were invoked. The second part specifically discusses how the Settlement was discursively and materially implemented. This part does not explain the immediate effect of the Settlement but deals with the longer history of the effects of the Settlement (up to independence from British rule) on the Bengal economy and rural agrarian structure.

The Revenue Conundrum

The East India Company with full support of the British Crown wanted to leverage itself to a position of territorial controller of India. While many attempts were made towards it, what is of interest is that in 1765 the Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal (Guha, 1963). The Diwani is a revenue collection cum administrative unit within the Mughal dynasty, placed in charge of an administrator called the Diwan (See Guha, 1963; Dutt,

2001). The problem that confronted the Company was inability to generate a regular flow of revenue that was essential in the establishment of an empire (Guha, 1963). There were material reasons for the inefficient generation of revenue. The East India Company encountered a landscape where the revenue collection system was closely articulated with the land tenurial system (Bose, 1986) i.e. the way property was owned or held and used. To the Company therefore the land tenurial question was at the center of their ruminations on what form of revenue collection institution should be established (Guha, 1963). However there was a lack of knowledge on the existing uncodified and customary property laws; and the agrarian system with its rules, rights and conditionalities were confusing to the Company officials (ibid). What emanated out of this ignorance and confusion were a series of experimental policies to collect revenues, including Hasting's 'farming system' (ibid). This was a quinquennial land settlement, which brought the Company officials together, along with revenue collectors (who had to bid to collect revenues), actual tillers or ryots and land in an arrangement towards revenue collection(ibid). However the coming together of these relations around land, created tremendous contradictions, including over-extraction of revenues even in drought years which culminated in the famine of 1770 (ibid) that killed a third of the population of Bengal (Dutt, 2001). The experimentation failures and the pressing need to generate revenues, conditioned the search towards a permanent solution. The search for a permanent solution was conditioned by several logics to which the paper will now turn. Here we see three articulated logics: the logic of political economy, the logic of space and the logic of race. These three logics are neither discrete from each other nor completely

determine each other (Werner, 2011) but they do come together around the revenue/land settlement issue at this colonial moment, to effect the consolidation of colonial rule in India.

Logics

Political Economic Logic:

The urgency with which a solution was sought to the revenue conundrum was strongly guided by a political economic logic. The Company had the need to generate income because it was responsible for its own financing (Gidwani, 1992). This was a major reason behind searching for a robust revenue system (Gidwani, 1992; see Sarkar, 1983). Therefore, 'fixing' the revenue system was seen as crucial in the broader organization of a mercantilist political economy within which the Company was inserted (1757-1813). To be specific, the wider determinations of a mercantilist economy created an imperative to get the revenue system right in Bengal, as the wealth through taxation could be channelized by the Company to buy commodities at subsidized rates that it would then trade to make more profits (Dutt, 2001; Sarkar, 1983). Further, the institutionalization of a revenue system would have crucial knock-on effects: for instance, this would stimulate the monetization of the economy in Bengal and integrate Bengal with the global economy (see Bose, 1986), thereby helping in the trading activities of the Company and enabling their monopolization. Resolution of the revenue problematic was also a necessary condition for the health of future political economy. Fixing the revenue issue would prove propitious later, becoming the staging ground for the expansion of capitalism

centered in Europe (McIntyre, 2011). Marx points out that the "beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India…..characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. Th[is].. idyllic proceeding(s)…[is] the chief moment(s) of primitive accumulation" (Marx, 1976, p. 915). Thus even though in Bengal, colonialism predates the rise of capitalism in Europe (Sarkar, 1983), the obtaining of the Diwani of Bengal by the Company, the attempt to mend the revenue situation is indeed a form of primitive accumulation (that is unlike the classic forms of primitive accumulation in England with enclosures, dispossession and transformed agrarian relations (see McIntyre, 2011)), that become the constitutive moment for the rise and expansion of capitalism in Europe (Marx, 1976, see p. 874-75). For instance, the resolution of the revenue issue did monetize the economy (Bose, 1986). This continued monetization helped in the consolidation of British capitalism (Sarkar, 1983) through enabling colonizers to buy raw materials from farmers, as well as constituting the market for capitalist goods (Sarkar, 1983; Pomeranz, 2000 as cited in McIntyre, 2011). To be more specific, with the fixation of a compulsory revenue rate, the peasants who were part of a dominant subsistence economy would need money to pay the revenues, thereby converting subsistence products into commodities for exchange and putting them into circulation. With the gradual weakening of the subsistence economy peasants were also being forced to buy British commodities (Luxemburg, 1913, p. 446). Moreover because the revenue was fixed, the procurement price of raw materials could be kept relatively depressed, helping British industries (Bose, 1986). Thus the political economic logic was the driving force in the search for a permanent solution.

Spatial Logic

The search for a permanent solution towards revenue collection was intimately tied to the Company's goal of controlling the land area of Bengal which would then pave the way for controlling the subcontinent. This was the territorial logic of the colonizers. Territory is a space of control and thus power (Elden, 2013 as cited in Kearns 2014 of Elden 2013 review; Brenner et al., 2003) which entail the symbolic and material control over social relations in a given space(Brenner et al., 2003). There can be state controlled territories. These territories then represent the state's "spatiality" where boundaries and frontiers are carved out within which the state can exercise its power, called State spaces in the "narrow sense" or State spaces in the Euclidean sense (ibid, p. 6). The Company was also trying to exercise power over the territory of Bengal. However, this territorializing logic of the Company required concerted effort. The territory of Bengal was not something which naturally belonged to the Company (Brenner et al., 2003), nor was it fixed and already present (see Agnew, 1994 "territorial trap"). The Company definitely did not simply preside over the "containerized" territory of Bengal with all its social processes; neither was the Company a static institution (ibid). It was dynamically engaged in a process of territorializing through trying to lock in a land settlement. The act of territorializing is a political act (Elden, 2013 as cited in Kearns 2014 of Elden 2013 review; Brenner et al., 2003). The Company's efforts towards institutionalizing a particular revenue system, was an attempt at territorialization: a political project of making the space of Bengal an object of exercise of its sovereign authority, i.e. a space

imbued with the power to dominate (Elden, 2013 as cited in Kearns 2014 of Elden 2013 review). It was the beginning of the exercise of colonial statecraft itself, to create State spaces that would then reinforce the Company's sovereignty (Brenner et al., 2003). Therefore this spatial logic was territorializing i.e. about political control over a given space and its social relations through the production of the territory (Brenner et al., 2003). But the Company was not merely trying to territorialize through the search for a permanent settlement, it was a project of spatial governance to produce specific geographies of colonial rule (Brenner et al., 2003). The revenue settlement was important as it would engender a particular form of socio-spatial arrangement (Elden, 2013 as cited in Kearns 2014 of Elden 2013 review) that would be propitious for rule. Therefore the settlement was a strategy to foster a specific spatiality of socio-economic processes: the settlement was geared towards creating a "[S]tate space in the integral sense" (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 6, 9-10). State space in the integral sense means that technologies of power are used to restructure the socio-economic relations in territories, places or at given scales that facilitates governance and control (Brenner at al., 2003). However, this process may not be confined to a fixed scale at all. More broadly therefore, trying to produce a State space in the integral sense is about producing geographies of State's rule over socio-economic processes, which can be territorial but can also be extra-territorial (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 6) and therefore multi-scalar (ibid, p. 7). Thus the spatial logic, was the logic of manipulating geographies of rule vis-a-vis the revenue settlement.

This exercise of producing geographies of rule is historically and geographically definitive (Elden, 2013 as cited in Kearns 2014 of Elden 2013 review): in other words

context matters. This is where the logic of political economy articulates with the spatial rationale (Arrighi, 1994). As Arrighi noted, "historically, the strongest tendency towards territorial expansion [and control] has arisen out of the seedbed of political [economy]" (Arrighi, 1994, p. 35). Bengal was seen as a space of disorder where there were disorderly natives committing disorderly acts around land and had their own 'strange' social relations around farming (this is explained later in the paper, see under section: "racialized logic"). Political control therefore was an attempt to create a space of order and "security" (see Foucault, 2009, see "spaces of security", p.11), to engage with the randomness and unpredictability (ibid). The revenue institution would then be a technology used to guide conduct (Foucault, 2000e) of population around land and normalize them which in turn would ensure security (Foucault, 2009). This would in effect facilitate a space of "circulation" of money and commodities (ibid) that would help in the expansion of the Company's mercantilist activities. This spatial logic would also help with issues of circulation in future political economy. The spatial domination would later prove to be inevitable for facilitating British capitalism, as India would become the major repository of raw materials or "forces of production" and the site for the realization of surplus value i.e. market (Marx, 1976; Luxemburg, 1913; see McIntyre, 2011). The history of colonialism and its expansionary logic (as manifested through global territorial domination) has been connected with the crisis of capitalism (Harvey, 1975). British rule in India, in fact was considered necessary to maintain the pace of accumulation of British capital (Sarkar, 1983) and deal with its periodic crises (Harvey, 1975; Luxemburg, 1913). Therefore the central concern as of now was to manage the population and its relations to

land/nature (see Li, 2014). This would prove crucial later on as cheaper raw materials could be obtained because of fixing the revenue issue. The monetization of the economy would help in commercialization and establishment of markets as has been discussed before. Thus for the "accumulation of capital", realization of surplus value and to reproduce capital social relations, this spatial logic was germane. Luxemburg prophetically states, that imperialism i.e. "the competitive struggle of capital on the international stage for the…conditions of accumulation" (Luxemburg, 1913, p.343), was about territorial domination to facilitate capitalist political economy, but that the crucial linchpin in this process was to "fight a battle of annihilation [in my view, not annihilation but to engage with the limits] against every historical form of natural economy that it encounters, whether this is slave economy, feudalism…" (Luxemburg, 1913, p. 349). Thus the colonial logic to figure out the taxation process, was indeed to limit the 'random' native relations around land, to introduce commercialism on a grand scale, which required both the political (spatial) and economic (political economy) aspects to be synchronized together (Luxemburg, 1913, p. 349). The spatial logic would eventually help in the "spatial fix" (Harvey, 1985) to facilitate the accumulation process, and the point of departure was to deal with the revenue problematic. This domination over space and its social relations was meant to articulate sovereignty, sociality, political economy and land/space/nature to create a "singular… space" (Kearns, 2014 reviewing Elden, 2013) of colonial rule.

Racialized Logic

Race is a socially constructed phenomenon that is undergird by the rationale of division and hierarchy amongst various groups based on certain attributes or their provenance (McIntyre, 2011), which then seem organic and non-mutable. This naturalization itself unfolds due to a political process (Arnold and Pickles, 2011, p. 1614, McIntyre, 2011). This section will discuss the political process of racialization of the Bengali population, indicative of the racial logic of the British behind the quest for a permanent settlement. As enumerated earlier, the British found the existing history of land relations and its articulations with revenue bewildering (Guha, 1963). This confusion propelled them to search for order: to seek an order in socialnature i.e. an order between land and society, that will permit the management of social relations around land (see Foucault, 2009). This order would then create the space of security that would ensure the security of revenue collection, secure a proper circulation of population, money and commodities (ibid). This obsession with order in nature and the social body was quite strong as it was synergistic with the imperial visions of dominance of political economy and of spatial rule (Gidwani, 1992; 2008; Foucault, 2009). Thus ordering land and its social relations were germane in producing the condition of possibility for the consolidation of British rule (Gidwani, 1992). In fact more globally, the issues of management of population in relation to the economy and political rule were important issues in the metropole as well (see Foucault, 1978, p. 25). The British used racial codes to justify the ordering of a disordered landscape.

The British saw the Bengali landscape as 'disordered' and 'wasteful', which in itself is a racist imaginary (Gidwani, 1992; 2008; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). The Hastings-authored 'farming system' or the quinquennial land settlement was a failure. In this settlement the Company through auctioning would confer rights of collecting revenue to the highest bidder every five years. This led to inflated speculative bids (Guha, 1963). These revenue collectors would then exploit the actual tillers of the land i.e. tenants (ryots) to the hilt to extract maximum revenue (Guha, 1963). This system therefore created its own series of contradictions: a) the tenants were over-exploited to extract maximum revenue (Guha, 1963), even in years of drought (Dutt, 2001); b) the tenants did not receive incentives to improve the land therefore productivity declined (Guha, 1963); c) the revenue extracted would find its way to England without being returned to bolster local agricultural and other economic activities (Dutt, 2001). Under the oppressive conditions of taxation within the farming system, many peasants simply abandoned their lands. These contradictions revealed the weaknesses of the Company administration and culminated in the famine of 1770 (Guha, 1963), killing a third of the population in Bengal (Dutt, 2001). However the failure of the settlement was not blamed on the exploitative policy set up by the British (though Hastings drew the ire of many company officials (Guha, 1963)), but was blamed on the poor Bengali peasants.

Here the racial logic worked, wherein the British discursively defined Indians as "inscrutabl[e]" and "civilizational[ly] infantil[e]" (Mehta, 1990, p. 429). Thus the confusion of the British about the revenue system and their failure in managing the revenue landscape was blamed on Indians because they were inscrutable and

civilizationally inferior. Inscrutability is not simply prone to not being known or understood i.e. it is different from "[in]comprehensi[bility]" (Mehta, 1990, p. 442). Incomprehensibility means that the subject who is trying to comprehend is responsible for the incomprehensibility, while inscrutability designates that something cannot be understood at all and does not critically question the method of inquiry used or who is doing the inquiry (Mehta, 1990, p. 442). Thus in inscrutability, the object which has to be known is shown as inherently strange (Mehta, 1990) which has to be therefore more intensely/forensically known (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). This was a racial politics of turning around the ignorance of the British as a matter of problem with the Indians! This racialized vision of inscrutability, laid the grounds for trying to manage and control the natives without requiring their consent, because consent can never be forthcoming from an "inscrutable" population. The logic of inscrutability therefore forecloses any possibility of knowing whether the population is rational enough, which then clears the grounds for considering them as "inanimate objects….[that] must be represented precisely [because] they cannot give authority on their own behalf" (Mehta, 1990, p. 442). This creates the conditions for intervention (Mehta, 1990) without consent.

The logic of "civilizational infantilism" (Mehta, 1990) also justified this requirement for intervention without consent. What was taken as given was that apart from Indians being inanimate unknowing objects, they were civilizationally inferior due to their cultural attributes (Chatterjee, 1993) and in case of Bengal, Bengalis lacked culture due to the wasteful/inefficient cultural-economic behavior of Bengalis around land! These cultural differences were taken as given, natural and determined by space and environment (see

Moore, 2005). This validated the exercise of moral and political authorship by the British to civilize, an infantile lot. Thus "nature and natives" had to be civilized in accordance with the requirements of empire (Moore, 2005, see p. 13). This civilizational enterprise could only happen through regulating property, therefore finding a land settlement, which would bring order.

These racialized logics of the British did not just happen on the tabula rasa of empire building, but had a longer history in Europe; therefore the ideas of race in Europe did get imbricated with ideas of race in India (see Stoler, 1995). Foucault, in "Society Must Be Defended" (1997) traces the genealogy of races. Race in Europe was initially about "struggle" or "contradiction" or "war" amongst the races (Foucault, 1997, p. 58-59). This idea of struggle of races emerged out of the concrete historical and political context in Europe. The struggle of races had their roots not in Machiavelli's or Hobbes' ideas but secreted in the context of aristocratic and popular dissent against the royalty which then continued to take the form of a binarized division based on ethnicity, linguistics, political conquest in the seventeenth century (Foucault, 1997). However this social construction of race centered on the notion of struggle amongst races, became more biologized and philologized that impacted multiple issues such as study of medicines, population and even nationalist struggles (Foucault, 1997, p. 60). This biologization and historical differentiation became foundational in creating ideas of superior and inferior race (and not simply a matter of groups struggling), but "it is a splitting…into a superrace and a subrace" (Foucault, 1997, p. 61). This bled into statecraft which took on a virulent form in the state of Nazi Germany (Foucault, 1997). This idea of splitting the human race into

its “obverse and the underside” (Foucault, 1997, p. 61) was power-laden, because it constructed a norm as to how the subrace, was to be defined, in what ways the subrace is a threat to the natural order of social life (Foucault, 1997, p. 61) and in what ways the subrace must be managed. In case of the British, the defining tropes that they used to identify the Indians as a subrace who required being civilized, framed the norm that a permanent settlement was required to manage this disordered, inscrutable and civilizationally infantile subrace which was a threat to the ‘natural’ order (Gidwani, 1992). Thus installing a permanent settlement was a mission to engage with inscrutability, a civilizing mission “to rationalize the hierarchies of privilege….. to.. provide the psychological scaffolding for the exploitative structures of colonial rule” (Stoler, 1995, p. 27). The racialization of colonies and the colonizers marking themselves as a superior race was tethered to racial biopolitics (management of population based on racial differentiation) (see Foucault, 1978; Stoler, 1995), that served the previously mentioned political economic and spatial interests of the colonizers.

Seductiveness of Locke’s Moral Economic Vision

The three logics mentioned above guided British intellectuals, to search for a permanent solution to the revenue problematic (Guha, 1963). These intellectuals were deeply influenced by the historic weight of intellectual liberal thought, as propounded by Locke (see Heynen et al., 2007). Locke’s theories of property proved to be very seductive to these intellectuals because his ideas, not only guided to some extent the logics enumerated before (especially the logic of political economy and racialized logic), but

provided a solution in private property that was propitious for British rule permitting the materialization of the three logics. Locke propounded not just a laissez faire or market logic, but it was a morally conditioned economic logic centered on property (Locke, [1690] 1952 as cited in Heynen et al., 2007).

He clearly stipulated why private property was necessary and who should own property (ibid). According to Locke, those who applied labor to improve land, transformed the land into private property (Locke [1689] 2005 as cited in Li, 2014a). Land that was not privately owned was "waste" and was incompatible with value (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1626; Nast, 2011). We see reverberations of this notion of waste embedded in the racialized logic mentioned above. Further he articulated private property with the flourishing of commerce and the generation of wealth, i.e. private property led to expansion of commerce and wealth generation. This justified the extension of market and property logic to structure society (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1628). The establishment of private property would thus convert waste (lands and wasteful subjects) into value (equals wealth), and pave the way for modernity (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1626; Nast, 2011). Here value and modernity were mapped on to each other.

As mentioned earlier, land not privatized was considered as waste. Locke attached a moral angle to 'waste' land, considering land that was waste was socially regressive and therefore morally impermissible. He stated that waste land was not that which was divinely ordained or meant to be (Baka, 2013), because it symbolized disorder, "unrul[iness] and [was] improper" (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1627). Thus he placed a mantle of moral obligation to change that waste into value: the transformation was

considered an ethical act, supported by divine command (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). In effect property ownership was a moral act. In order to transform waste into value through private property, certain kinds of conducts vis-à-vis individual owners were necessary (ibid). Therefore Locke's notion of property with its moral scaffolding targeted the conduct and behavior of property owners, trying to produce as norm that property owners were morally responsible for generating value (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1627). While Locke professed "universality" and "political inclusi[vity]" because humans were born free and equal (Mehta, 1990, p. 427, see also 429), this universalism disappears into the fog of conservatism when he inserts socio-cultural/anthropological qualifiers to certify how and under what conditions and more importantly by whom can this freedom be experienced (Mehta, 1990). To the question of who can hold such property, it was always upper class subjects or subjects with proper culture who could be property owners. He justifies this by stating that, it was "natural" and divinely ordained that, such be the case (Mehta, 1990, p. 432). This class and cultural bias thereby justified the creation of hierarchy, where one group belonging to the proper class and culture could hold property and the other not. The group which did was the proper moral subjects who could then convert waste into value. This whole logic of hierarchy and division justifies not only racism of the super race and subrace kind, but also supports the whole "edifice" (see Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1633) of capitalist society where power is based on the relations of property (ibid; Mehta, 1990). Thus Locke's liberal logic had a strong racial and class subtext which was attractive to the British (see Gidwani, 2008 on the illiberal

rationality of liberal thought). Locke was of course a product of his times and was deeply influenced by the unfolding of racism in Europe (Mehta, 1990; McIntyre, 2011). Locke's philosophy achieved ideological domination amongst the British in India. The question is why was Locke's ideas so attractive for the British? Concatenating the ideas of wealth, value, modernity and morality through the instrument of property, a strong disciplining element emerges through Locke's logic (see above): it normalizes owners of private property into subjects who are 'correct' citizens because they are individually rational, and have the internal responsibility to make land valuable (Mansfield, 2004) therefore ordered. So Locke does focus on behavior and conduct (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1628) of the property owner. This rational and disciplined subject then mediates the control of nature i.e. land can be managed through this rational disciplined subject to prevent its degeneration into waste land (see ibid). This disciplinary subject that emerges then will be the mainspring of wealth generation and morality in society. *This logic of the disciplined subject (ibid),* as naturally arising through private property, was seductive to the British who found that the disordered landscape with the disordered peasants could be disciplined through private property with its *disciplined owner,* who because of the moral compulsion of preventing waste, will discipline those who work under him. This would then help the British to order society to generate wealth for the colonized economy, as well as help in spatial control (i.e. create a "[S]tate space in the integral sense" (Brenner et al., 2003). Further, because these disciplined subjects could not be anybody but were those with superior culture and class, the British realized that people higher up in the societal hierarchy in Bengal should become the disciplined subjects.

Thus Locke's ideas of property with its moral economic norms were vigorously taken up, to organize Bengali society (see Polanyi, 1944 on how liberalism and its logics become a "militant creed" p. 143). Permanent solution to the revenue problem was sought in private property, as private property with its disciplined subject, will enable management and annihilation of waste, create a moral society and pave the way for modernity. Finally, Locke's moral economic logic was attractive in the search for a permanent solution, as it condoned the racist civilizing mission of the British to restore order in the name of morality. The British ideologically and discursively signified themselves as exemplifying order and the colonized exemplifying disorder, and therefore the latter should become the object of control and management of the former via property (Gidwani and Reddy, p. 1626). Locke's ideas provided a solution in private property that would support the three logics: that of political economy, spatialization and racism.

The Imbrication of the Logics:

The colonial thrust towards finding a revenue solution, stands at the intersection of the three logics: revenue as a means to smoothen political economic circulation, as a means of spatial control, and as a means to exert racial control and civilize and modernize the inferior colonized and racialized bodies (see McIntyre, 2011; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011; McIntyre and Nast, 2011). All of these logics were ultimately geared towards establishing the rule of the British. Thus there was never a singular logic of power but several logics imbricated with each other, each of which arising from the specific historical and geographical context of colonial rule (Moore, 2005, p. 8).*These logics in their coming*

togetherness led to the adoption of Locke's principle of private property to deal with the revenue problematic: that was considered the optimal solution. Private property would then remedy the situation of indolent Bengali peasants and their predilection towards rendering land waste (given that many peasants simply abandoned their lands during the farming system (see Guha, 1963)). In fact when the Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, introduced the principle of private property, he did so by declaring that a third of Bengal was rendered as waste because of the Bengali peasant disposition (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1629).

However when private property was adopted as the solution to the revenue collection problem, who would be conferred private property was not only guided by Locke's logic of hierarchy based on class and culture, but was also guided by the principle of indirect rule or diarchy (Mamdani, 1996). In diarchy, the logic was that the existing order should be preserved to facilitate "decentralized despotism" of the colonizers (Mamdani, 1996, p. 18). The British following the political principle of diarchy firmly believed that reliance on local institutions was necessary for self-preservation of rule (Guha, 1963). Despite the confusion of the British with the revenue landscape of Bengal, they did understand and identify the broader hierarchies (see McIntyre, 2011) that were in place around land: to identify *the disciplined subject of Locke's vision*. They therefore invoked this existing system of hierarchy, to institute higher class, caste men as property owners. This created the insidious effect of exacerbating social differentiation (ibid; Mamdani, 1996) in this case the British would exaggerate particularly caste-class differences. These upper class and caste men were then taken up as allies to consolidate their own rule (in the spirit of

diarchy as well). So the rule of property sanctioned the creation of hierarchies based on selective invoking of past hierarchies, showing how the colonizing state "spatializ[ed]….unequal rights" (Hudson, 2011, p. 1665). Therefore there was never a clean break from the past as the colonial power searched for and reinstated existing "vertical topographies of power" (Moore, 2005, p. 174). This might seem paradoxical, given that the British thought that Indians were civilizationally infantile. Apparently, some amongst the Indians i.e. the higher class, caste men could still be of use to consolidate their own rule! Thus existing hierarchies were used to service its political economic, spatial and racial logics of power (Werner, 2011).

The Permanent Settlement of Bengal (1973): Property as a "Dense Transfer Point …of Power"

The sedimented outcome of the experimental cogitations around land conditioned by the three logics, and the constant guidance of Locke's moral economic visions led to the establishment of the *Permanent Settlement of Bengal in 1793* (Guha, 1963). This settlement was a legal design to solve the problem of revenue collection and was introduced by the Governor General of Bengal, Lord Cornwallis. In this Settlement, the political economic, spatial and racial logics came together to create the "rule of [private] property" (Guha, 1963, see book title). This rule then served as a mode of regulation (Arnold and Pickles, 2011), organizing socio-economic life in Bengal, which in turn produced myriad effects. This rule of property was secreted in and through the Permanent Settlement of Bengal of 1793.

According to the Permanent Settlement, the revenue that was to be collected from land would remain fixed. Given the traditional powers of the landlords and Mughal era tax farmers (Sarkar, 1989), the British were convinced that the revenue settlement should be made with them (Guha, 1963; see also Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). The Settlement created a "superordinate category of landlords and tax farmers" collectively termed as zamindars (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1629) who had two significant rights: the right to collect revenue and ownership rights of all land from which they collected revenue (see Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). This conferring of revenue collection and ownership rights upon zamindars, reflects Locke's vision on how class should act as the qualifying factor, doing the work of gate keeping on who gets to have ownership thus responsibility around land. Further by bestowing property rights to zamindars, the British were attempting to forge a "class alliance" (Watts, 2015) with them, that would assist them in indirectly controlling social relations in rural areas centered on property. This again was in consonance with the principle of diarchy, and the constitution of a 'group of natives' who will facilitate the dispersal of British "despotism" and rule (Mamdani, 1996). The objective of the Permanent Settlement was to initiate capitalist development in agriculture modeled on England; ironically the Settlement from its inception had a strong feudal-like quality to it (Guha, 1963). This is because it established zamindars as a center of power in rural social relations, while making ryots or renters i.e. actual peasants tilling the land, their subordinates (see Guha, 1963; Bose, 1986). This reeks of the feudal system of relations in Europe between landlords and serfs. The feudal like nature of relations established by the Settlement comes through strongly as, the most pernicious aspect

about the Settlement was that even though the revenue to be collected and paid to the Company remained fixed, the zamindars had great freedom to extract as much rent as possible from the ryots or peasants (Sarkar, 1983). This legislation of Lord Cornwallis, though highly controversial (Guha, 1963), framed the broader contours of current property and agrarian social relations in Bengal.

Property as a "Dense Transfer Point… of Power"

This specific property arrangement was an outcome of the power-laden interventions of the Company that would mould specific kinds of social relations around land and its resources. Drawing from Foucault's analysis in the *The History of Sexuality: Vol I*, I want to make the claim that property became a significant relay of power. Foucault in his study of sexuality and discourses around it envisaged that sexuality itself was a nexus of power relations, thereby becoming a vector of power that had significant effects like shaping discourses and practices of sexuality in Europe (Foucault, 1978). I draw inspiration from this idea to claim that private property as established through the Settlement became a "*dense transfer point for relations of power*…..endowed with the *greatest instrumentality*: *useful for the greatest number of maneuvers* and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (Foucault, 1990, p. 103, my emphasis). A forensic analysis of the Settlement legislation reveals that it was a means to actualize the logics mentioned before. This is because, private property under the control of zamindars was meant to become the generator of a 'good society' (akin to Locke's moral society): a society where there is proper political economic circulation, a society

under the spatial rule of the British, and property also becoming a tool to manage the civilizationally infantile subrace of Bengalis. Crucially, private property threw up the *disciplined subject* of Locke: the zamindars, the disciplining of whom will enable the realization of the three logics. Thus property and the internal social relations (that between zamindars and ryots) were key in the transformation of waste lands and wasteful dispositions (of ryots) into something of value (Guha, 1963; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). Thus private property which was "security" of land ownership was an imperative (Guha, 1963, p. 17), to foster arrangements propitious for creating spaces and subjects of British rule: i.e. State spaces and State subjects (see Moore, 2005). Throughout the course of British rule in India, the question of maintaining their rule was key. Thus there was always an obsession towards population management, management of nature, management of the economy and to align such management with structural imperatives of political economy and maintenance of political domination (Li, 2014b). Thus property became a very important instrument of the transfer of power, towards realization of the three logics geared towards rule.

Philosophically speaking, the reason why property could be "endowed with the greatest instrumentality" and therefore become a vector of power (Foucault, 1978, p.103), is because property in land is not a mere thing/nature/piece of land to be owned (see Mansfield, 2004). What are intrinsic to property are the social relations through which land is controlled, accessed and used. Property therefore operationalizes a mode of governance (see Arnold and Pickles, 2011) of nature, society and economy. Thus property is intrinsically a socio-natural relation (Mansfield, 2004). The fact that someone

owns land it is not an absolute right, this ownership has to be socially and legally accepted, there are duties and obligations which come with it, therefore there are always interdependencies (Mansfield, 2004, see crisp summary of legal scholarship of Carol Rose, MR Cohen and C B Mcpherson; see also a review of "progressive property" scholars in Blomley, 2013 including that of Joseph Singer, Laura Underkuffler, John Christman, Carol Rose, Daniel Maldonado, Gregory Alexander). The Permanent Settlement does not confer absolute right to the zamindars, but these rights have been given by the colonial State, and include duties and obligations towards eliminating waste and creating a good society. Further property right does not just include the zamindars, it includes the State who has given the right and expects revenues in return and it includes ryots who are subordinated to the zamindars. Permanent Settlement therefore establishes private property as a social relation. What is key here is that in property a single person owning land is never involved (zamindar), there are others who have an interest in it, the state can intervene (Blomley, 2013) and zamindars are put in a relation with ryots. Property is fundamentally conditioned by the social structure (Mansfield, 2004). For instance zamindars could hold property because of the past legacies of hierarchy and the British uptake of the same logics of hierarchy. Thus right of property always exist in a social context, it is never universal, complete or separate from other social beings. In other words, it never has an abstracted existence, and is part of the social not removed from it (ibid). For example, a property owner has to be legally and socially accepted. In fact the Permanent Settlement was the legal architecture, that legitimized and made socially acceptable zamindars as land holders (see Mansfield, 2004, ideas drawn from

there). In the same vein, if the institution of property establishes social relations marked by contradictions, it can have deleterious impacts on the social and natural landscape. In case of the property relations established by the Settlement, it will be seen later that there was unprecedented oppression of ryots by zamindars that led to social unrest and crisis in the social reproduction of the peasantry. Such contradictions were not confined to colonial times. For instance, in Bengal and elsewhere a change in the regime of property relations to convert land into a force of production for capitalist privatization has impacted social lives and institutions which are articulated with property (Mansfield, 2007; Heynen et al., 2007). Such dislocations also happened in Bengal when this current regime of property as established by the Settlement, underwent transformation to establish capital social relations i.e. formation of enclosures (see Marx, 1976). In West Bengal this remaking of property relations, had a tremendous disciplinary effect on people (Mansfield, 2007), that led to tensions in the very process of capitalist property making. Such contradictions in property relations are well documented in the Marxist, neoliberal nature and land grabs literature. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss that literature. *In sum it can be said that precisely because property is a social relation and not a fetishistic object, the institution of property can be used as an instrument to transform socio-natural relations around land*. Property therefore becomes a dense transfer point of power, power that materializes the triple logics of rule to create State spaces and State subjects. Relatedly, property as a relay of power engenders (as a social relation), circuits of discursivity and material practices that have actual effects: effects of both consolidating British rule and its subversion and engendered concentration

of wealth and widespread occurrence of poverty. The Settlement in Bengal, instituted the rule of property through the figure of Locke's disciplined subject's (i.e. zamindars) interaction with the ryots. The dominance of the zamindars over ryots, was key in the establishment of a good society, this relation of domination and subordination and its normalization established the rule of property. However since property is a relay of power it is also a relay of resistance (Foucault, 1978). The Settlement established a highly contradictory relationship between zamindars and ryots, which led to continual peasant unrest. In the next few sections I will show, how i.e. through what discursive and material relations around property was there an attempt to "disposing things" in the right way (Foucault, 2000e, p. 211) towards a good society and how that produced resistance.

Discursive Circuits of Power: Race, Hierarchy and Discourse

The Permanent Settlement established a hierarchy of relations through property i.e. zamindars who should subordinate ryots. The British were following the Lockean vision valorized this hierarchy (Guha, 1963) to produce a good society. The zamindari class was meant to be the perfect intermediary between the colonial state at the top and the ryots at the base (ibid). The zamindars therefore were Locke's disciplined subject, while the actual tillers of the land, ryots, were considered as undisciplined, "unruly" and "improper" (Gidwami and Reddy, 2011, p. 1627). If one looks at the figure of the zamindar, it is an upper class and caste male bodied person. What is paradoxical here is this: the British in India tried to civilize the natives by trying to dismiss as useless the previous social relations around land and revenue collection, and yet they consolidated

and gave force to the existent hierarchy, by depending on the upper caste, male feudal landlords and tax farmers to maintain political economic (Omvedt, 1982) and territorial control. Another grave paradox in the establishment of this hierarchy, and which I have explained before while discussing diarchy was: the British sought to collaborate with the zamindars (and other native elites) despite their racist ideology that the natives were irrational, primitive and need to be civilized. This was because they wanted to maintain a system of rule through native elites. However the trope of "inferiority" (see Gidwani and Reddy, 2011, p. 1628) vis-à-vis the native elites do not disappear, they just take on a slightly different form. The elites were still inferior, but were the first amongst the inferiors! In fact the collaboration with zamindars, was one "across boundaries of stigmatizing racial difference" (McIntyre, 2011, p. 1508). The British still considered themselves as a superior race, while the native elites were not quite there to equal that superiority (see Stoler 1995, p. 102 on "fictive Europeans").

Despite this strong racial distinction between zamindars and the British, the establishment of the Settlement generated a strong field of discursivity that "act[ed] as grids for the perception and evaluation of things" (Foucault, 2000f, p. 232). The discourses around this hierarchy are important to note as that had perceptual, evaluative and material effects. Zamindars were discursively constructed as rational entrepreneurial, interested in maximizing agricultural productivity through employing labor efficiently and having the right disposition to be allies of the state. These subjectivities of the zamindar then formed the referent against which the ryots were described or indexed (see Stoler, 1995 on the subject of comparing subjectivities across space): irrational, lazy, 'parasitic (Guha, 1963,

see p. 122), greedy and morally corrupt (see Guha, 1963). Here apart from the racial division between the British and the natives a new division is set up amongst the natives, between elites who are considered as the disciplined subject of Locke: the correct "citizens" and the subalterns who are the undisciplined ones who therefore must be subordinated and are mere "subjects" (see Mamdani, 1996, distinction between "citizen" and "subject").

These codes or descriptors were technologies of power (Foucault, 1978) having clear effects (discussed below). One sees that the codes are based on cultural differences, which are seeable but also based on unseeable traits such as psychological traits (see Stoler, 1995). These descriptors were of course essentializing and a form of "ethnic absolutism" (Gilroy, 1990), wherein differences are essentialized in and through cultural and behavioral registers. Thus these epistemologies or ways of knowing conferred certain "cultural competencies,…proclivities, psychological dispositions, and cultivated habits" (Stoler, 1995, p. 8). These were therefore imbued with ideas of morality and superiority/inferiority, based om indelible socio-cultural and behavioral schisms (Stoler, 1995).

This kind of discursive signification of subjectivities had the material effect of justifying who could own property, who could be allies of the British (see Guha, 1963) and who therefore was the correct citizen (Stoler, 1995). This logic of division amongst the natives can also be traced back to the internal divisions within European society between the noble classes and others (Stoler, 1995). Thus the British indeed were influenced by this phenomenon and we see this strongly appearing in Locke when he introduces cultural

qualifiers in who could own property. The outcome of such discourses was that zamindars became legitimate land owners who could take "care" of their property (Guha, 1963, p. 18). The British also figured that property would be the linchpin through which certain interests/incentives amongst the Zamindars could be instituted that was close to the interests of the British (Guha, 1963).Further the entrepreneurialism (see Foucault, 2010, on the entrepreneurial subject) of zamindars would lead to the management of ryots and nature to produce an ordered society. While implementing the Settlement the, British also hoped to strengthen the 'natural' nexus between the Zamindars, money lenders and traders which would encourage more investment and improvement in land (Guha, 1963).This discursive construction of subjectivities of zamindars, molded the circuits of power that did create the condition for zamindari allegiance to the British as obedient subjects (see Guha, 1963). Zamindars therefore have historically been the "most loyal of bulwarks" for the British (Sarkar, 1983, p. 2).

These discourses of subjectivities were an attempt to normalize property relations around land. Thus these knowledges of subjectivities were in itself a "mechanism" of power that constituted the "grid of intelligibility of the social order" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Through the discursive differentiations, or categories, it enabled the hierarchical organization of the rural landscape of Bengal. In other words power circulated in and through these distinctions that enabled the structuring of social life (Foucault, 1978). This organizing principle emanating from property relations became the grand truth (Foucault, 1978) that did legitimate British rule for some time i.e. created state spaces and state subjects. Thus property was not a thing to be owned but was a dense relay point of

power, which served to legitimize British rule through normalizing (see Stoler, 1995) land relations in Bengal, such that these relations in a slight modified form still continue today.

Material Circuits of Power: Rural Social Relations and Practices

The establishment of the Settlement did not just generate a strong field of discursivity that "act[ed] as grids for the perception and evaluation of things" (Foucault, 2000f, p. 232), but it was productive of material conditions and practices in virtue of the social relations embodied in the Settlement. The Permanent Settlement was basically an instrument to "commodif[y]" the rural economy (Watts, 2015) of Bengal, in line with the strong intention to initiate political economic circulation and in the process create a state space (and subjects) of rule. The alliance with zamindars in Gramscian terms can be seen as how a classed, casteised and gendered group (zamindars) were "absorbed…[into a] historical bloc" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 168) i.e. the unity of native elites and colonizers. As seen earlier this "ensemble" was not given but produced and was "complex" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 366), because of the racial distinctions the British posed between themselves and the elites. This "absorption" was about materializing political economic, territorial and racial domination of the British. However this could not be just achieved through the concentration of power with zamindars. The efficacy of this historic bloc as a major source of power and superiority could only be worked out if this bloc could establish ""leadership"…….this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power" (see Gramsci, 1971, p. 57). The fact is that the establishment of the property

relation through the Settlement would unleash a lot of oppression by the zamindars (see below), but that alone did not establish the power of the zamindars and indeed that of the historic bloc as a whole. The "hegemony"[3] (Gramsci, 1971, p. 207) of zamindars was established through the normalization of material relations and practices i.e. "ways of doing things" (see Foucault, 2000f, p. 230) around land (engineered by the Settlement), which led to their political and economic leadership. The material relations and practices had tangible effects of disciplining ryots, and acquiescing to the leadership of zamindars (see Foucault, 1995). In this sense zamindars did not just hold power and were the exploiting class (caste) (see Marx, 1976). Power was also diffused (see Foucault, 1978; 2009; 2000e; 1980c), i.e. ryots were not just persons on whom power was exercised, but power was circulatory, with ryots being the vectors of transmission of power. In other words power worked through the "conduct of conduct" (Foucault, 2000e) in and through everyday material relations and practices that had the effect of normalization (Foucault, 1978).The paper will now turn to the "grounded geographies" of land relations (Moore, 2005, p. 12) to see how power squeezed through property produced spaces of state control, produced the spaces of domination (domination involving oppression) and hegemony (domination without force) of the historical bloc and in a feedback loop re-established and reinforced property's rule (or not) (Guha, 1963).

Material Relations and Practices around Land

The Permanent Settlement, interacted with the complex material realities of Bengal (Bose, 1986), producing "uneven" and inconsistent outcomes, with differentiated abilities

[3] My reading of hegemony is that it is domination without the use of force/coercion/oppression, but is always backed up by it (see Gramsci, 1971).

of peasants to reproduce themselves, (including the occasional specter of famine, the "structural violence of permanent scarcity" (Watts, 2015)) and improper use of land. There was also resistance, which will be discussed towards the end of the paper. Before delving into the material relations and practices, the paper will discuss the complexity in the actual existing relations, to show that the simplistic division which the British made between zamindars, ryots and even money lenders was beguiling as the reality was complicated.

The Complexity of Actually Existing Relations

The complex of reality of Bengal meant that agricultural dynamics did not work the way it was envisioned by the British (Guha, 1963). Firstly, the British imagined that zamindars would have a symbiotic relationship with money lenders and traders that would lead to increasing land productivity through increased circulation of money and commodities.[4] In many cases zamindars did have a symbiotic relation with money lenders and traders, but in many cases the zamindars themselves were money lenders or traded in grains (Bose, 1986). The credit structure was closely connected therefore to the class structure (ibid).

Secondly, everywhere zamindars were not the powerful class in the agrarian landscape (Bose, 1986). The failure to recognize this was because of the failure of the Company to recognize that the pre-Company land revenue collection arrangements did not align with the actual way in which land was held (ibid). The nature of social differentiation was complex and defies simplistic division (ibid). For instance, in North Bengal and extreme

[4] Money lenders especially played an important role in connecting the Bengal market to the international commodity market, provided credit for subsistence agriculture and domestic crop trading as well as credit for protecting farmers against domestic market conditions (Bose, 1986).

southern deltaic part of Bengal large entrepreneurial farmers called jotedars and chakdars became very prosperous through clearing and cultivating virgin lands. Here these rich farmers wielded power, even though they are not the traditional zamindar figure. The jotedars of North Bengal would employ adhiars (i.e. local name for sharecroppers) or hire landless agricultural laborers to till the land. The chakdars employed bhagchashis (local name of sharecroppers) and agricultural laborers to farm the land. Usually the powerful farmers would wield influence over the sharecroppers, through providing finance for cultivation (even through loans), deciding on the crops to be grown, contribute to the social reproduction of sharecroppers through lending grains. However they would extract high interests on loans. The jotedar-adhiar relation was particularly highly exploitative and north Bengal was perhaps the most unequal and polarized society (Bose, 1986). In the western plateau region (i.e. the forested area or jungle mahal), were occupied by tribals (Santhals, Bhumij, Mahato etc). Here it was the non-tribal usually Brahmin (upper caste) traders/moneylender, locally called "dikku" (a derogative term for outsiders used by tribal populations), who expropriated the best lands from indebted tribals and extracted high "produce rent" or dhankarari (Bose, 1986, p. 17). These figures of power had exploitative relations with tribals, which had profound impacts on them especially during the notorious Bengal famines (Bose, 1986). Thus the jotedars, chakdars and "dikkus" exercised a lot more influence that the super-ordinate category of zamindars, and in some cases the zamindars may altogether be absent, due to presence of other intermediaries or revenue collectors of the state.[5]

[5] Here I have excluded the agrarian relations of the plantation system of Himalayan Bengal in the mountains of the north (see Bose, 1986).

Thirdly and finally, in the rest of Bengal (i.e. western and eastern parts), the powerful class of zamindar emerges but the neat categorization which the British made between zamindars and ryots, was much more messy on the ground. In these parts there was a lot more "prismatic" peasant differentiation (Watts, 2015). Here the zamindars had demesnes (called Khas land) which usually would be cultivated by landless laborers, and there were small peasant farmers owning or renting small plots of land called the ryots (Bose, 1986). The zamindars that collected revenue would exercise control over the villages and dominated these peasants. In many cases the zamindars would also become the local money lenders (Bose, 1986). Here the class and caste hierarchy was very collinear (Bose, 1986). These zamindars were members of higher castes and class who would not even engage in any form of manual labor on their own demesnes, so were the "bhadrolok" (respectable gentry) (Bose, 1986). While the actual farmers or ryots who expended manual labor, and belonged to the lower agricultural castes like the Mahishyas, Sadgopes and Aguri and were the "chotolok" (plebians) (Bose, 1986; see also Bardhan, 1982). Alongside the zamindars and peasant farmers/ryots there was a large group of the rural proletariat who were the landless agricultural workers, usually belonging to the lower castes like Bagdis and Bauris or would be tribals like Santhals (Bose, 1986). The class structure at the lower end of the class hierarchy was marked by fluid boundaries (Bardhan, 1982). For instance, a wage worker could become a sharecropper or bargadar (local name for sharecroppers) too, or a ryot could also become a bargadar or a wage worker or even hire laborers (ibid). Another complexity is alongside the zamindars many of the relatively richer ryots or moneylenders or traders became prosperous farmers,

amassing huge lands.[6] Thus in this region of Bengal two groups were powerful the zamindars and the prosperous farmer elites (Bose, 1986).

However, despite the complexity of rural class structures, what was true was that the Settlement which was a legal compulsive force (Scott, 1976), normalized the logic that classes which owned or controlled land, i.e. had land concentration could become the disciplined Lockean subject. So despite the rural social complexity of relations, the zamindars and rich peasant elites (of eastern and western Bengal), jotedars of the north Bengal plains, chakdars of deltaic Bengal and "dikkus" of the western plateau area, became the class in which political economic power resided. For convenience this paper will club this group of people as the zamindars and jotedars. The paper will now discuss the nature of material relations and practices to show how property became a relay point of power.

Materialities of Relations and practices around Land: Property as a Vector of Power

Permanent Settlement was not only introduced upon a complicated agrarian landscape with myriad forms of social differentiation (Bose, 1986), but that it was operationalized on a subsistence economy which soon after started being connected with the global commodities market (Bose, 1986). Further what influenced the material relations and practices around property, were the relations of agricultural production, credit arrangements, and the nature of articulation with global capitalist economies (ibid). It is to that the paper will now turn to show, how property became a vector of power.

Due to the Settlement, the zamindars could extract very high rents and pay a fixed share of it permanently as revenue to the colonial state (Guha, 1963). The peasants therefore

[6] Discussing this is beyond the scope of this paper.

had to have enough money to pay the high rents. This led to a greater monetization of the economy because of this "inelastic" need to have cash for rent. However since the size of plots were small, and enough additional crops could not be raised to pay rent, farmers had to get out of a subsistence mode and sell their products to raise money for rent (Bose, 1986, p. 57). The relations of production and the excessive rents that zamindars/jotedars charged from ryots, contributed to the latter's poverty. Further the input and crop sharing arrangements between zamindars/jotedars and sharecroppers (bargadars/adhiars) were predisposed towards the former. This led to the poverty of sharecroppers (Bose, 1986). This is a generalization, as the situation varied geographically across Bengal. For instance, if ryots or sharecroppers had substantial bits of land, the power dynamics between zamindars/jotedars and ryots/sharecroppers would be different (Bose, 1986). The credit institution and articulation with international markets also played an important role in the relations and practices around land. The domestic market was linked up with the international market. This made the domestic economy prone to the fickleness of the international capitalist economy. This link was through the credit and product market (Bose, 1986).[7] The credit and product markets were closely articulated: for instance, in years of lower exports from India, the amount of money available to creditors to lend would be very lean. These articulations between the domestic/international markets and credit had consequences on agrarian relations (Bose, 1986). Farmers often needed credit to grow crops (especially export crops like jute) or even pay the rent (in cases where there

[7] Credit was one mechanism of linkage with the domestic market. The credit flow in the domestic economy was determined by not only state policies and domestic banking policies, but was connected to the export-import firms and banks listed in London, who dealt with raw materials exported from India including jute (Bose, 1986). The product market was another modality of linkage with the international market. Grain prices in the domestic market responded to the prices in the international market (Bose, 1986).

were no grain loans or crop sharing arrangements with zamindars and jotedars in lieu of rent respectively). As mentioned before the credit structure was closely related to the class structure. While loans were advanced to the peasants by zamindars, jotedars, prosperous elite farmers, traders or money lenders (moneylenders are called mahajans), the farmers had to sell their crops even when the prices were depressed (due to fluctuations in the domestic and international markets) because of the repayment imperative (Bose, 1986). For poor peasant farmers and even landless agricultural laborers who needed loans, there was hardly any institutional security as there were no forms of financial institutions/banks to replace the traditional creditors (ibid). These loans were necessary for paying off rents, litigations, house repairs, buying draught animals, paying off labor, for other socio-cultural obligation including celebrations and feasts (Bose, 1986; Scott, 1976). With the articulation of the domestic economy with a volatile global market, the traditional creditors faced crisis in liquid funds available to lend due to the changing vicissitudes of the global market, to which credit flow was tied.[8] Credit flow was also impacted during the World Wars when exports dipped. These in turn impacted agrarian relations, i.e. those between ryots-landless workers and zamindari-jotedari-rich peasant-trader or the traditional money lenders. These relations became more exploitative and oppressive (Bose, 1986), as more interests were charged on loans. Often however the traditional moneylenders or mahajans became so exploitative, that they started litigations against those who could not repay loans. Not surprisingly, many zamindars, jotedars and prosperous farmers who received rents from ryots, decided to enter the credit business to

[8] In other words the ability of creditors to offer credit was connected to the commodity market. If there was a crash in the market, the money available for offering credit decreased (Bose, 1986).

offer cheaper loans to ryots so that they could at least pay rents! Further, the market deepening also made credit lending profitable for these new entrants to the credit market (Bose, 1986). The farmers were willing to borrow money from the landlords to get reprieve from the oppressive mahajans (Bose, 1986). What is astonishing is that during the famine of 1943, the colonial government decided against revenue forgiveness, which not only immiserated peasants, but pushed them into more debt. This gave rise to massive rural indebtedness (Bose, 1986) which led to the production of subjectivities of debt which worked through moral injunctions that the peasants were at "fault" for incurring debt, therefore should "honor" debt repayment (Lazzarato, 2011, p. 30). Therefore through the moral technology of shaming and responsibilization written into the "memory …and conscience" (ibid, p. 40), of the debtor, the debtor-creditor relation became a ""predat[ory]"…. "extractive"" relation (ibid, p. 29). There was a double bind of indebtedness, as these same zamindar and jotedar moneylenders offered patronage (through financial help and grain loans) so that the peasantry writ large could socially reproduce themselves and mitigate risks (Bose, 1986; see Wolf, 1969). The outcome was that it led to massive accrual of power particularly by the bigger zamindars and jotedars (Bose, 1986) and the establishment of clientilism. At the same time, the choices available to poor peasants and laborers in terms of expanding the frontiers of agriculture and breaking the ties of dominance, was not there as there were hardly any land available with the pressure of population on land being very high. Moreover the prospects of increasing productivity were lower, as the sizes of the farms were small (Bose, 1986). Added to this were the social institutions of subinfeudation as well as inheritance

arrangements that led to smaller farm sizes (Bose, 1986). Opportunities for alternative forms of employment were also absent (Sarkar, 1989, p. 111).

The institutionalization of the Permanent Settlement, gave enormous prerogative power to charge rents, while keeping revenues fixed (Sarkar, 1989). This transformed some of the "social" and natural/"technical" "arrangements" (Scott, 1976, p. 3, 5) that existed in the past. For, instance due to the Settlement land could not be left fallow as there would be no revenue forgiveness (Guha, 1963) that existed during the Mughal era. Therefore those kinds of "insurance" mechanisms dissipated quickly (Scott, 1976, p. 7). This was part of what Scott (following E.P. Thompson) called the "moral economy" of peasants (Scott, 1976) was under threat albeit not totally. This (in a non –idealized/non-romantic sense) (Watts, 2015) was the "subsistence ethic" (Scott, 1976, p. 2) which was a shared community sense that there should be minimal economic justice, a basic "safety first" ethic (Scott, 1976, p. 11) that would allow for peasant survival (Scott, 1976). The Settlement was successful in engineering particular kind of land, production and labor relations (See Scott, 1976, p. 7) to exacerbate the levels of exploitation, because it started off commodification of the rural economy (Watts, 2015). To be specific, the particular relations of rent and usury, which were highly exploitative, evolved because of the Permanent Settlement which allowed the concentration of land in the hands of zamindars and jotedars and giving them the prerogative to charge exorbitant rents (see Sarkar, 1989, p. 111). This had knock-on effects, as it impacted debtor-creditor relations. Thus the zamindari/jotedari class, in virtue of having property and controlling access to credit and inputs, gained domination over peasants through exploitation. At the same time the

relations of power were exercised through patronage for the reproduction of the peasantry. Thus the practices of rack renting (Sarkar, 1989), charging exorbitant interests on credit and the practices aimed at fulfilling the "subsistence ethic" through loans for social reproduction of farmers, all made property a dense transmission site of power. It was because of the Settlement that the peasantry was dominated and exploited. However, since power is also diffused, the relations/practices of exploitation as well as patronage got re-enacted repetitively (see Butler 1990; 1993 see performativity of power) to govern conduct of peasants to mold their subjectivities and "interpellate" (Althusser, 1970) their identities (for example, subjectivities of the 'poor peasant', the '"disposable" peasant' (see Giroux, 2014) 'the shameless debtor') such that these relations got normalized. These relations and practices formed a normative complex, a "sociospatial circuit" (Pratt, 1999, p. 218) of power that impacted "social behavior" (Wright, 2006). This normalization of relations and practices, led to the "materializ[ation]" (see Butler, 1993, p. 32) of the disciplined peasant and "construct[ed] the social fiction" (Butler, 1990, p. 279) that such property relations were 'natural'. Thus in the playing out of the social relations of property, power got simultaneously concentrated in hierarchies as well as dispersed (Moore, 2005).). This entire exercise of power through property in the service of the Company's political economic, spatial and civilizing ambitions marks a spatial expression of colonial power itself (McIntyre and Nast, 2011). However the "unequal symbiosis in social relations" in Bengal (Bose, 1986, p. 99), impeded subsistence abilities of peasants, producing vulnerabilities (see Scott, 1976). This provided the conditions of possibility of resistance. It is to the issue of resistance that the paper will now turn.

Resistance

The setting up of a hierarchy of relations around land meant, that while zamindars and jotedars enjoyed power, status and economic wellbeing, there was always the 'other' the exploited ryot who can never be the Locke's disciplined subject. The material outcome was exclusion, poverty of the riots who were in a grip of "necropolitics" (Mbembe, 2003; see also Hudson, 2011, McIntyre and Nast, 2011) particularly during the periods of crises like famines, where many were reduced to Agamben's "bare life" (Agamben, 1995). However wherever there is power there is resistance (Foucault, 1978). Resistance is not external but immanent to power (ibid). Hence property not only became a relay of power, it became a relay of resistance. Resistance arose in relation to the oppressive relations and conditions around agriculture in Bengal, where the crisis of the social reproduction of the peasantry was quite acute (see Bose, 1986). However resistance, in Bengal did not occur evenly across space, but they occurred as "mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in society" (Foucault, 1978, p. 96). Thus the ryots were not mere "artifact[s]" (Heyes, 2007, p. vi) of power, but resisted against it. Particularly the normalization around property relations operated on a "slipper[y]" plane, such that a "counter-conduct" emerged (Foucault, 2009, p. 201). Further, the resistance was not just against normalization, but also against zamindars/jotedars.

Opposition by peasants was quite common and "endemic" in India especially by the nineteenth century, because of oppressive social relations in agriculture (Sarkar, 1983, p. 2). The resistance was an attempt to restore a semblance of "moral economy" ethics (see Scott, 1976, p.9) to demand for needs for self-reproduction (Scott, 1976; see Polanyi,

1944). There were agrarian movements across Bengal against zamindars (Sarkar, 1983). Many of these were imbricated with issues of caste and religious struggles as well (ibid). Some were imbricated with nationalist struggles (Bose, 1986). The decade of the 1930s and 1940s were a period of intense agrarian crisis and struggles (ibid). The issues of these struggles were centered on "no-rent" on government lands or around improvement of conditions of sharecroppers and ryots (ibid). Resistances emerged during 1942 in Medinipur, because of nefarious hoarding activities of the landlords in the wake of a scarcity in rice production. Similarly during the Bengal famine of 1943, there was paddy looting and destruction of property as an act of resistance (ibid). The exploitative relations between jotedars and adhiars in North Bengal led to the famous Tebhaga struggle of 1946-47. The struggle was centered on "terms of exchange" (Bose, 1986, p. 175) between jotedars and adhiars. The adhiars demanded two-thirds of the share instead of sharing half of the produce (Bose, 1986). However the Tebhaga movement could not become widespread, because of the suppression of peasants by zamindars in other parts of Bengal (Bose, 1986).

In the face of such resistance, the British as a sign of "paternalistic benevolence" (Sarkar, 1983), but more so to maintain their hegemony took several measures to ameliorate the conditions of the peasantry (see Bose, 1986). For instance, there was the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 that imposed limits on the amount of rent that can be appropriated and guaranteed security against eviction. This was in response to the struggles of 1870s and 1880s (Bose, 1986). The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1918, prohibited transfer of land to non-tribals without the consent of the District Collector. This was in light of the historical

marginalization and alienation of lands by tribals (Bose, 1986). There were legislations to reign in creditors, such as, the Bengal Moneylenders Act of 1933, the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act of 1936, the Bengal Moneylenders Act of 1940 (Bose, 1986). The Floud Commission was also set up in the latter part of 1930s to suggest reforms that could improve agrarian social relations (Sarkar, 1989). Thus property became a relay of resistance, against which measures were taken up by colonial rulers. However the conditions around land did not transform much and this would then become the basis of land reforms in the post-colonial phase.

Conclusion

History has a remarkable importance in the analysis of the current land acquisition unfolding in India. Gramsci, one of the prominent conjunctural analysts considered the present as never having a 'pure' existence detached from the past. In the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci describes and analyzes particularistic historical unfoldings (Gramsci, 1971; Thomas, 2011). It is through that, that Gramsci constantly refers back to history to acknowledge "temporal and spatial 'dislocations' [that constitute] modern historical experiences" (Thomas, 2011, p. 283). What this means is, the present is always insinuated with differentiated nature of past struggles and politics of social forces, their attendant practices and ideologies (ibid, p.284) in response to specific spatio-historical conditions. Gramsci therefore was concerned with the concrete dynamism of the social groups, their relations across time that produce the present (Gramsci, 1971; Thomas, 2011). Given the resistance of the present to being 'self-referential' (Tomas, 2011, see p.

282), it is important too, that for understanding present day land acquisition and its politics in the context of West Bengal, it must be located within a rich historical light. This paper has tried to establish the historical legacies of the current state of land relations in West Bengal. It showed how to the Permanent Settlement established private property which then became a "dense transfer point of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 103) with very uneven effects (Watts, 2015). This evolution of this architecture of the Settlement happened within the colonial conjunctural moment, wherein the Settlement sought to ground British rule. The contribution of this paper is thus two-fold; it provides knowledge of the framing principles of property relations in Bengal. The paper helps to understand how the Settlement organized socio-natural relations around land, through what discourses and practices and to what effect. That is going to be useful to understand how the past has shaped "modern historical experiences" (Thomas, 2011, p.283) around the land question (i.e. land acquisition). Therefore, the current day messy land politics of acquisition is a product itself of the complicated history of property relations around land. The other contribution is that this paper denaturalizes property relations in Bengal to show that the relations are not simply there but produced through historical processes (Li, 2014). The Permanent Settlement was an exercise of writing out power onto space through property (Moore, 2005). It established private property which became a "dense transfer point of power". It made possible the arrangement of socio-natural relations around land in the service of British rule. Finally, the power relations that property generated produced the truth of property, while the truth of property became a relay point

of power and resistance to produce or not the power relations of property (Foucault, 1980c, p. 133).

Chapter 2: Land Reforms in West Bengal: Seeing (Not) Like a State (of Reforms)

Introduction

The architecture of land relations created by the British was preserved after Independence in 1947. Thus the same system of power, privilege, exploitation and exclusions persisted (see Mitchell, 2002; See also Gadgil and Guha 1995; Bardhan, 2001). A major attempt to break the power matrix of the landed class took place in West Bengal through land reforms. West Bengal has often been an 'exceptional' state,[9] in post-independent India, because land reforms were introduced and implemented under the aegis of the communist Left Front government: one of the few states in India to do so (see Sarkar, 1989 on West Bengal being ranked second after Jammu and Kashmir in the redistribution of ceiling surplus land called vested land; Hanstad and Brown, 2001 for success of Operation Barga).[10] The West Bengal government therefore has been hailed for scripting a story of progress for the rural poor. Yet the success of the reforms has been moderate. Despite being communist, the government did not sufficiently challenge the existing private property regime or the specific class (caste and gender) relations that was established by the Permanent Settlement of 1793. It slightly reworked the hierarchies around private property, but kept the logic of hierarchy sufficiently intact. I want to problematize that by

[9] Here I am using "state" to indicate the space of West Bengal. I will use the capitalized form, i.e. "State" to indicate the political institution governing society.

[10] West Bengal has 3.3% of India's arable land but has redistributed 20% of the total above-ceiling land in India, and has redistributed land to 46% of total land beneficiaries in India (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001, p.4).

asking: *why and how did the communist government keep the existing regime of private property and related hierarchies (class, caste and gender) sufficiently intact, while proclaiming to revolutionize land relations.* Here I use the phrase "sufficiently intact" as the Left Front government did introduce changes that tinkered with the hierarchy around land, but did not annihilate hierarchies or revolutionalize and radically socialize land relations (see Basu, 1992). In order to answer the question, I propose a two-fold multi-scalar connected argument: the first one is relatively brief and is connected to land reform policy introduced at the scale of the West Bengal state , while the second one is longer and is connected to land reform implementation at the scale of the villages. Firstly, I argue that the Left Front government at the scale of the West Bengal state had to work within a capitalist and democratic form of the State which did not permit the introduction of radical reform policies. Secondly, I argue that the dilution of radicalism of reforms has to be also understood by looking at how social categories of class, caste, gender and clientelism are wrapped up around implementation of land reforms. Though there were meta-policies and strategies of implementation at the scale of the state, at the scale of the villages, land reform implementation was always locally/culturally inflected as it was refracted through situated social categories, therefore were always practical and synergistic with village conditions. This resulted in the preservation of local hierarchies of power. So while there were unitary/meta set of technologies of rule to implement land reforms, as proclaimed/introduced by the state government, the actual technologies of rule employed were more flexible and varied across space (see Moore, 2005). Thus there were disjunctures (and not) between stated goals and the meta-strategies, and the actual

strategies used to inscribe land reforms across space. Particularly, the disjunctures should not be seen as an outcome resulting from 'improper governance of reforms', but that 'improper governance' is part of governance around land reforms itself, as governance is 'provincialized' (see Chakrabarty, 2000; see Moore, 2005). The overall impact of both working within a capitalist, democratic State grid and using vernacular technologies of rule was that neither was the past private property regime or the logic of hierarchy around it sufficiently challenged. This analysis will further ground how property is a "dense transfer point.. of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 103). This is because in an attempt to 'modify' social relations of property, the Left Front government did try to create State spaces and docile subjects of rule (see Moore, 2005) through specific means. This attempt at management of the social spaces of West Bengal via trying to destabilize the "rule of property"(and not) (Guha, 1963) is in itself an exercise of power/rule.

Background of legislations and actions towards land reforms

The oppressive and exploitative relations engineered by the Permanent Settlement fostered stagnation in agricultural productivity, which became a defining feature of the agricultural landscape in West Bengal (Rogaly et.al, 1999; Bandyopadhyay, 2003). There have been several analyses of this stagnation in the literature on West Bengal's agrarian situation and there are two principal reasons attributed to this stasis: the inequality in agrarian structure of social relations with a concomitant inequity in the allocation of land and other resources, attributed to the legacies of colonial rule (Bose, 1993 cited in Rogaly et al., 1999). The colonial legacy, led to the massive concentration of land in a few hands,

which also translated into unequal access to agricultural inputs and cheap credit, forming a barrier to the introduction of technical improvements in land (Bose, 1993 cited in Rogaly et al., 1999; Bandyopadhyay, 2003; Sarkar, 1989). The second reason that is given is a purely technical one: the inability of groundwater irrigation to expand because of elite competition, which inhibited cooperation required towards expansion of groundwater irrigation (see Boyce, 1987 as cited in Rogaly et al., 1999). The lack of adequate irrigation facilities too is a product of colonial rule. The British did not introduce too many irrigation and drainage schemes which could have helped agriculture in the state (Bose, 1993 cited in Rogaly et al., 1999). Combined with this stagnation in agriculture, there was a huge influx of refugee population from Bangladesh, which in itself is a legacy of the British planned partition of Bengal at the time of independence. This in-migration of refugees led to a massive increase in the demand for food (Kar, 2011). However the agricultural growth and food production was incommensurate with the overall population growth (Boyce, 1987 cited in Rogaly et al., 1999). The crisis in food security is particularly well captured by the phrase "ship to mouth" and reflected the overwhelming dependence on imported food under PL 480 rules (see Bandyopadhyay, 2003). The introduction of the Green Revolution in the 1960s to improve agricultural productivity and instill food sovereignty on a national scale could not be adopted on a large scale in West Bengal because of the unequal social relations which impeded adoption of technical inputs (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). Meanwhile peasant unrest was beginning to smolder in North Bengal, where land relations were particularly oppressive between local prosperous farmers (jotedars) and sharecroppers (adhiars), a legacy of the

Permanent Settlement. A radical peasant movement thus started in Naxalbari against the incumbent landlords (jotedars) in 1967 called naxalism (Kar, 2011). This movement was led by far-Left radicals who followed Mao's ideology of engineering a peasant-led revolution against the state and exploiting classes. Initially the movement aimed at a) resisting oppressive landlords in the countryside, with particularly sharecroppers demanding their rights and b) demanding a progressive redistribution of agricultural land amongst the landless peasants using the trope of 'land to the tillers' (Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2009; Jaoul, 2009; Verma, 2009; Lieten, 2003; Banerjee, 1984; Basu, 2001). It was against this background of stagnation, crisis and unrest (see Bandyopadhyay, 1995) that several legislations were passed and steps taken to reform land relations.

Here again one sees that property becomes a "dense transfer point.. of power" (Foucault, 1978, p.103), through the introduction of reforms. What I am more interested in is how that relay of power through property particularly work when there is an attempt to transform property regimes (and not) to ameliorate the situation of crisis and stagnation. Overall there were three temporal phases of land reforms in West Bengal. *The paper is concerned with problematizing the third and final phase of reforms*, which are considered to be the most robust in changing the agrarian landscape in Bengal and carried out by the Left government. What follows next is a brief review of the first two phases of land reforms.

Brief History of the First Two Phases of Land reforms

The first phase of land reforms was from 1953-1966. In this phase the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 (Bandypadhyay, 2003; Roy, 2013; see also Dutta, 1988 as cited in Roy 2013 and Hanstad and Brown 2001; Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Sarkar, 1989) was passed. This act was aimed at abolishing intermediaries like zamindars and jotedars (Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Dutta, 1988 as cited in Roy 2013 and Hanstad and Brown, 2001) who were historically in charge of collecting revenues from the peasants or ryots (the people who were renters or owned land) and sharecroppers or bargadars since colonial times, in addition to having proprietary rights over the lands from which they collected revenue (See Guha, 1963). This act brought the actual tillers of the land (i.e. ryots and bargadars) in direct relationship with the State vis-a-vis revenue payment, by abolishing the zamindari system. Further the act had important stipulations on proprietorship of land. The zamindars or jotedars could only own land that was 'personally cultivated' (using agricultural wage workers) called khas land (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Khas lands were the demesnes. A ceiling was imposed on how much khas land could be held and owned by an individual zamindar: the ceiling was 25 acres for personally cultivated land, and 20 acres of non-agricultural homestead land. The excess land above ceiling was to become land vested in the State for redistribution to the landless. However the implementation of the act was shoddy, and zamindars and jotedars engaged in infractions to avoid excess land above ceiling from becoming vested land. This was done through illegal transfer of land titles of the land above ceiling to relatives, friends and non-existent persons. These were called the benami lands (Bhaumik, 1993 as

cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Roy, 2013, p. 36; Dutta, 1988 as cited in Roy 2013 and Hanstad and Brown, 2001; see also Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Sarkar, 1989). Moreover the 'personal cultivation' provision of the act was misused by zamindars and jotedars, to evict bargadars (claiming farmlands on which there were bargadars as personally cultivated land) especially those who did not have proper legal documents to show that they were bargadars (Dutta, 1988 as cited in Roy, 2013 and Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Banerjee et al., 2002). In order to prevent the creation of benami lands, the State passed the Land Reforms Act of 1955. This act prohibited the creation of benami lands, and bargadars were offered 'protection' of their rights by law. With the passage of this act the zamindars and jotedars preemptively evicted bargadars, which led to a surge in the number of agricultural laborers (Roy, 2013, p. 36; Dutta, 1988 as cited by Roy, 2013, p. 36, see also Hanstad and Brown, 2001).

The second phase (1967-1977) saw an invigoration of State-led peasant mobilization against landlords. This happened with the United Front regime coming to power in 1967 and 1969 (Bandyopadhyay, 2003; Roy, 2013). The United Front was a conglomerate of Left and Center-inclined parties (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001), with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) becoming the lead party. The CPI(M) was born in 1964 (as a breakaway faction of the Communist Party of India (CPI)), and was ideologically oriented towards establishing a State under the control of the proletariats following a Marxist intellectual-political tradition, with strong influence of Leninist and Stalinist thought as well (see Basu, 1992; Bhattacharyya, 1999). They believed in the stagist transition from capitalism to socialism to communism (Bhattacharyya, 1999). The

coming of power of the United Front coincided with the Naxalite movement and accompanying peasant unrest. These conjunctural events catapulted the land reform issue to the mainstream of state politics. For the United Front, land reforms were an important political-ideological goal, hence they were keen to implement it and reform agriculture (Bandyopadhyay, 2000; Hanstad and Brown, 2001). It is crucial to note that the State under the United Front did not support the Naxalites because of their extremist and anarchist vision (see Banerjee, 1984).[11] During the reign of the United Front, land that was above-ceiling was forcefully taken away from the zamindars by the government under the leadership of Harekrishna Konar of the CPI(M), who was the Land and Land Revenue minister. He called for redistribution of the same (Basu, 1992). This was called the "Konar recipe" (Bandyopadhyay, 2000, p.1795; Hanstad and Brown, 2001). The "Konar recipe" was considered an action outside of both the law and bureaucracy (Basu, 1992). Konar started a semi-judicial campaign to expose the benami transactions of zamindars, which had resulted in the State having vested lands to the tune of 300, 000 acres only which was just 3% of total cropped area (Bandyopadhyay, 2003; Basu, 1992; Roy, 2013). The illegal transactions were exposed by sharecroppers (bargadars) and agricultural laborers, who acted (and were encouraged to do so) as the main witnesses (Bandyopadhyay, 2003, p. 881) and provided verbal evidence, as written evidence was

[11] It was impossible that the CPI(M) led United Front support the naxalites, who wanted the annihilation of the democratic state. Thus the United Front government working with a democratic State framework, did not offer support to the naxalites, even though there was some degree of overlap in ideologies (particularly those around land). The "resolute revolutionary" Hare Krishna Konar (Bandyopadhyay, 2000, p. 1795) acted strategically to avoid directly participating in the naxalite struggle, instead he wanted to draw peasants out of that radical movement and offer them land in alternative ways (Bandyopadhyay, 2000).

not required (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Bandyopadhyay, 2000).[12] This campaign led to the recovery of huge bits of fertile land which then got vested in the State for redistribution (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). These acts under the guidance of Konar, was the CPI(M)'s response to the apathy of the Congress party in the State in implementing the reforms strictly, and to curtail benami transactions that had prevented the state machinery from taking over surplus land above ceiling.

However this strategy of the United Front regime, was deemed to be unconstitutional and outside the remit of democracy and law. Hence the government was promptly dismissed by the Congress government at the federal level. Following this dismissal, a revanchist politics (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001) was initiated against the bargadars and agricultural laborers. The landlords with cooperation from the Congress party evicted, ostracized and even inflicted violence on the bargadars and agricultural laborers (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). In 1969, the United front government was re-elected and headed by the CPI(M). The government tried the same strategy of taking away land as they did in 1967 i.e. the replay of the "Konar recipe", and was dismissed once again by the Congress at the center (Basu, 1992). The fractious politics of land "grabs" by the United Front led to 600,000 acres of extra land being vested in the State between 1967-1970 (Dutta, 1988, p. 28 as cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001; Bandyopadhyay, 2007; Bandyopadhyay, 2000), but was also accompanied by politics of retaliation by landlords and the Congress party who reclaimed vested land that promptly came back under the control of landlords (Bhaumik, 1993, as cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001).

[12] Here an Emergency era law was strategically used that permitted oral testimonies instead of written depositions (Kar, 2011).

Legally, there were some changes that were made to the Land Reforms Act of 1955 in this second phase: the ceiling was now prescribed not for an individual zamindar or jotedar, but was imposed against family holdings of landlords. So now the ceiling was 12.35 acres of irrigated or 17.39 acres of unirrigated for a family of up to five people and was 17.29 acres of irrigated and 24.12 acres of unirrigated land for larger families (Roy, 2013). Further, the West Bengal Acquisition of Homestead Land for Agricultural laborers, Artisans and Fishermen Act was passed in 1975. This Act was targeted at agricultural laborers aiming for them to have title holding over homestead plots of up to 0.08acres, instead of having to rely on the pleasure of landlords for residing in such plots (Bhaumik, 1993 as cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001). During both the phases of land reforms, laws were passed but nothing substantive changed on the ground for poor marginal farmers or ryots and bargadars (see Roy, 2013). The only positive thing that happened was some bit of above-ceiling land got vested in the state due to the above-mentioned "Konar recipe".

The Land Reforms of 1977 (Third and Final Phase)

The CPI(M) and its Left allies were elected to power in 1977. This is when the third phase of land reforms began. Four main parties now comprised the Left Front government: the CPI(M), CPI, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and All India Forward Block (AIFB) (Chakrabarty, 2011). The CPI(M) gained the hegemonic position within the Left Front government, and in fact this party has been the dominant force around land reform politics since 1977.

The Left simply reactivated abeyant laws around land reforms that were on paper but never fully implemented (Banerjee et al., 2002; see Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Legally there were two new changes brought to the land reforms legislation: ceilings were imposed on religious institutions, charitable trusts, plantations and fisheries (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001, p. 15; Bhuamik, 1993 cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Further there was clearer legal definition of what "personal cultivation" meant to prevent the misuse of this clause[13] as was done before (Hanstad and Brown, 2001). This paper is not so much interested in the legislative nitty-gritties of the reforms but is more interested in critically analyzing its policies and the actualization of the same. This part of the paper will question: why were the reforms of 1977 not radical enough to especially challenge the existing private property regime? Why were the hierarchies around land kept sufficiently intact?

In order to address these issues, this paper will first outline the broad goals and policies of the land reforms of 1977. This will be followed by enumeration of data and a brief discussion to show that the reforms were never complete. The paper will then provide an explanation as to why that is the case. In doing so the paper will lay out two connected arguments: First, since the Left Front government was inserted in a capitalist democratic form of the State, its policies could not challenge the existing property regime and change it. Second, the everyday implementation of the reforms and the nature of village politics

[13] Thus "personal cultivation" meant not just land owned by the landlord and cultivated by wage workers, but the land had to have a member of the land holders family cultivating it, a substantial portion of income should emanate from agriculture and that a member of the owner's family should reside in proximate location to the land held (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001).

meant that the actual technologies of rule that were employed to implement reforms at the local scale were highly situated, which served to keep existing power relations intact.

Broad Goals and Specific Land Reform Policies of 1977

According to the Left, the fundamental national issue was the agrarian question. Almost in unison, the proclamation amongst all Left parties (irrespective of whether they were radical or moderate) was that there has to be a concerted effort to engage with and get rid of feudal-landlords, moneylenders and merchants. Comprehensive reforms were envisaged as a necessary way forward (Harriss, 2013). The hegemonic Left party within the government, the CPI(M,) was keen to encourage peasants and the proletariat to be engaged in a political struggle towards communism and to increase their class consciousness by engaging the lower classes in development-related contestations (Williams, 1999). Thus, when the Left Front came to power with the CPI(M) at its helm, it created a lot of excitement that the class struggle has been revived (Bhattacharyya, 1999). Benoy Konar, a leader of the peasant union of the CPI(M), referring to the budget stated "please don't take trouble to look for a revolution in the pages of this budget….*You will get revolution*…..in the struggle of the millions of Bengal's workers and peasants who will use this budget …to take to the peak their fight against billionaires and the owners and the landlords, they will intensify class struggle" (WBLA, 1977, as cited in Bhattacharyya, 1999, p. 206).

Apart from the goal of transforming the agrarian structure through class mobilization, the Left had other goals which included inclusion of the poor in access to agricultural inputs,

cheap credit, improving wages of agricultural workers to increase their bargaining power with landlords, participation of people in rural governance, empowering women and lower castes and tribes, to improve the productive capacity of land, improve market penetration, trade, commerce, expand literacy, health care and education (Bandyopadhyay, 2003; Kar, 2011). These broader goals were quite lofty geared towards socio-economic transformation (Kar, 2011).

The Left then tried to give the goals the strength of force, through writing out specific land reform policies. These policies were: a) There would be an effort made to uncover additional above-ceiling land that were still held by zamindars/jotedars, which would then be vested with the State for redistribution. The inquiry and identification process would be carried out through a semi-judicial process, that would involve village workers associations and local self-governing bodies called panchayats; b) Sharecroppers or bargadars would be legally registered under "Operation Barga" (starting in 1978) (See Bandyopadhyay, 2007, p. 61-62 as cited in Roy, 2013, p. 37-38). The bargadars would have to pay 50% of their produce to the landlord, if the landlord supplies inputs (plough, cattle, manure, seeds etc). If the bargadar supplies the inputs then the payment to the landlord is 25% (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001). The surprising issue here is that the national government policies only stipulate that bargadars pay 20-25% of their produce to the landlord (who provides the inputs), but the state government had a different formula (ibid). There were stipulations in place to ensure that bargadras were not easily evicted. In addition, non-tribals could not become a protected bargadar on a tribal-owned land. This was meant to course correct the historic disadvantages of tribals who have been

victims of subterfuge politics and forced to give up land rights (Hanstad and Brown, 2001); c) Sharecroppers or bargadars and those been redistributed vested land (i.e. pattadars: title holders, with patta meaning title) would have access to credit in order to sever connections with traditional creditors: the village money lenders and zamindars who exploited poor farmers by offering very expensive loans. This was aimed at enhancing resilience of these farmers, including bolstering their bargaining power (see Sarkar, 1989, p. 6); d) Fixed titles for homestead land would be conferred upon sharecroppers, agricultural workers, artisans and fishermen, to the tune of 0.08 acres. These lands (which originally belonged to richer landlords) were already under occupation by the aforementioned constituencies, hence the giving of homestead titles (pattas) would legalize the occupations (See Bandyopadhyay, 2007, p. 61-62 as cited in Roy, 2013, p. 37-38); e) Another issue to note here is that disadvantaged members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs and STs) would be given preference in the allocation of vested and homestead lands. Such lands could not be transferred/sold to members who were non-SC/STs (Hanstad and Brown, 2001) ; f) Programs will be in place to develop irrigation facilities such as tubewells and dug wells, subsidized by the State to facilitate multiple cropping and improve the economic status of farmers.; g) Subsidies towards land development would be given over to those assigned vested lands; g) The pre-existing revenue system would be revamped, with the new revenue regime imposed on land owned or held above a certain market value. The revenue itself would be charged on a "progressive rate" (Roy, 2013, p. 38 citing Bandyopadhyay, 2007, 61-62), which meant that those with very little land holding (small and marginal farmers) would be outside the

pale of revenue valuation and collection; h) Poor and marginal farmers who were engaged in distress sale of land would get the alienated land back, with the caveat that this provision would not be in effect if the distress sale is made to another poor or marginal farmer; i) A "food for work" program was implemented to construct rural infrastructure. This program was targeted towards pattadars who received vested land and other poor small, marginal farmers and bargadars. The program was meant as crisis assistance, i.e. to be a source of subsistence during crisis, which would then prevent the poor farmers from alienating or mortgaging their lands against loans to richer farmers (See Bandyopadhyay, 2007, p. 61-62 as cited in Roy, 2013, p. 37-38).

Success and Failures of Land Reforms: Problematizing the Incompleteness of Reforms

The land reforms of 1977 did have its successes but also generated intense debates on the degree of that success. The paper will turn to discussing the successes and the debates, following which there will be problematization of the partial nature of reforms. There have been some positive changes in rural social relations (Roy, 2009). For instance, the strong zamindar-jotedar hold over village life has been broken because of land reforms (Roy, 2009). The landlord-money lender alliance also has been weakened (Lieten, 1992). The share cropper and the landless benefitted to some degree, but it was geographically highly differentiated (Kohli, 1987). The power relations between agricultural laborers and landlords have changed significantly (Roy, 2009). The bargaining power of laborers vis-à-vis landlords has increased (Lieten, 2003; Rogaly, 1999). More generally, the

traditional patron-client relations, which are the legacy of the Permanent Settlements exclusionary effect, have withered (Williams, 1999). In fact the crisis in social reproduction that had become commonplace since the Settlement, has been mitigated such that "depeasantization [was been effectively] discontinued" and proletarianization stopped (Lieten, 1992, p. 119).

In terms of caste and gender issues around reforms, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have benefitted the most by receiving homestead lands (Roy, 2009). 56% of the beneficiaries of vested lands have been SCs and STs (Kar, 2011). However this reform was blind towards gender-based land rights (Basu, 1992). At a social level, the state has witnessed greater rationalization of the caste system with abolition of untouchability, more power given to women in other spheres and greater literacy (Rudd, 1999; see Bakshi, 2008). However some groups were more mobilized than others. The table below indicates that approximately 58.6 % of rural households has benefitted from the reforms (Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Many have claimed that crop productivity has enhanced (Webster, 1992) by 28% (Banerjee et al., 2002), along with greater access to credit (Bardhan et al., 2013). Politically, local self-governments have been strengthened, empowering people and increasing their "social capital" (see Banerjee, Gertler and Ghatak, 2002; Bardhan, 2004, Besley and Burgess, 2000).

Land	Land Reform Statistics
Net Arable Land	13.34 million acres
Ceiling-Surplus Reform	
Declared Surplus Land	1.37 million acres
Vested Surplus Land	1.28 million acres
Redistributed Ceiling-Surplus land	1.04 million acres (7.8% of arable land)
Households that Received Ceiling-Surplus Land	2.54 million (34% of agricultural households)
Tenancy Reform	
Land Covered by Tenancy Reform (Operation Barga)	1.1 million acres (8.2% of arable land)
Tenancy (Bargadar) Beneficiaries	1.49 million (20.2% of agricultural households)
Combined Ceiling Surplus and Tenancy	
Total Land Covered By Ceiling-Surplus Distribution and Tenancy Reforms	2.14 million acres (16% of arable land)
Homestead Plot	
Households Receiving Homestead Plots	0.296 million (4% agricultural households)
Total Beneficiaries Under All Reforms	
Total Beneficiary Households Under Ceiling-Surplus, Tenancy and Homestead Plots	Up to 4.316 million (58.6% of agricultural Households: some households received benefits from more than one aspect of the reforms, therefore the actual number of households benefitting from reforms is lower than the figure here)

Table 1. Land and Land Reform Statistics

Source of Table 1: *Hanstad and Brown, 2001, p. 8 (slightly modified table). The original data has been obtained by Hanstad and Brown from Government of India Ministry of Rural Development, annexures XXXII and XXXV; Government of West Bengal, tables 5.21, 5.22; and Census of India 2001.*

The account of successes seems that the reforms did have positive impacts on the rural landscape. While that is the case, what has also happened is that there have been active debates around the actual success of the reforms. These debates have unfolded across multiple sites involving many actors including those between farmers and the State, but also amongst experts, theorists, academics and statisticians (see Li, 2014). Scholars critiqued the reforms, mainly because they saw that the reforms engineered limited "mobilization and incorporation of the lower classes" which led to the State apparatus being used in a limited way to introduce reforms towards political economic and social mobilization. (Kohli, 1989, p. 96). Some trenchant critiques have been that the reforms were actually a class compromise (Rudra, 1981), because the policies of the Left were not radically different from that of the erstwhile Congress government (Rudra, 1981). The kisan sabhas (peasant organizations) were blamed for not allowing radical feudal ties to be broken through effective reforms (Lieten, 1992). Others claimed that the reforms were part of an election calculus not intended to bring substantive changes to the agrarian structure (Bhattacharyya, 1999). Some called the reforms a clever "illusion" (Mallick, 1990; 1992), blaming party leaders for not initiating substantive reforms. Others critiqued the reforms, because the distribution of homestead lands caused more fragmentation of land in the state (Roy, 2009). Some scholars have pointed out that CPI(M) party's politics of exercising excessive control over rural life through the medium of reforms in itself precipitated rural social differentiation. This was because the CPI(M) itself produced these differentiations, based on those who supported it and those who did not (Bhattacharyya, 2009).

There are many who have questioned the correlation between the rise in agricultural productivity and the success of the reforms (Rogaly et al., 1999, see for review on the subject). Thus the opinion is that the reforms alone have not been a causal factor in the enhanced productivity of agriculture (ibid), but that the success must be situated within the context of other changes like extension of irrigation systems (Harriss, 1993), changes in the agrarian structures due to green revolution, the expansion of agricultural markets etc (Rogaly et al., 1999; see Rudd, 1994; see also Harriss-White, 1999). That is the increase must be located within an arena of a conglomeration of forces and institutional interventions that are in operation (Rogaly et al., 1999). There have been questions raised on the nature of statistics presented by the State to convince the population, that there is a positive correlation between reforms and agricultural productivity. This is because many believe that the data and its statistical treatment was replete with errors and oversimplifications (Rogaly et al., 1999).

The overwhelming opinion which emerges from these debates is that the success of the reforms is partial (Harriss, 1993; Kohli, 1987). These debates foreshadow the fact that life in rural Bengal has indeed transformed since colonial times, but not enough. This 'lack' of proper transformation requires problematization, which the paper will now do. Taking cues from these debates, I would like to draw attention to three important issues embedded in the policies that points towards a dilution of radicality of reforms. Firstly, the reforms never aimed at full redistribution, in that sense it was "limited" (Sarkar, 1989; Banerjee et al., 2002). Even though assigning of vested lands and homestead lands were part of the agenda, focus was placed simultaneously on ameliorating tenant conditions.

Secondly, the proprietorship of property is actually valorized more, because the share of rent that the bargadar had to give the landlord was 50% (in situations where the landlord supplies inputs). While the federal government suggests that bargadars pay up only 20-25% of the produce as rent (see Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Thirdly, given the past history of the "Konar recipe", why was the land reform policy not about replicating the recipe? Paradoxically, the rhetoric of the CPI(M) party around reform policy has been fiery. For instance, Jyoti Basu talked prescriptively that reforms should unleash the "creative energies of the people and take [them]….out of…..destitution" (Jyoti Basu at West Bengal legislative Assembly, quoted in Sarkar, 1989, p. 57), while launching a critique on the earlier avatars of reforms as an opposition party leader. Why did that rhetoric not get crystallized in the policy such that creative energy through full land ownership can get unleashed? Why did radicalism have no place in the reforms of 1977 i.e. why was the angularity in dealing with land reforms softened? The rest of the paper will attempt to answer these crucial questions. There are two related arguments presented to answer the questions. Firstly, since the Left Front had to operate within a capitalist democratic form of the State, the reforms (especially the policies) could not take on a radical form. Secondly, the radicality has been dissolved due to the intersectional social processes at play in the implementation of reforms at the scale of villages, where the technologies of implementation are highly parochial and situated. This has led to the preservation of local hierarchies of power that have led to the reforms being limited in its implementation. These parochial technologies of rule should not be seen as exceptions but are part of the broader secular technologies of power around reforms.

Dilution of Land Reform Policy by the West Bengal State: Working Within a Capitalist Democratic Form of the State

Conceptual Anchor

In this part I argue that the limited scope of the reform policies (and practices) can be attributed to the Left Front government working within the mold of a capitalist democratic form of the State. In order to address the dilution of land reform policies at the scale of the state government, I want to start with understanding the nature of the West Bengal State. The West Bengal State is an "integral [S]tate" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 239; See Jessop, 1990, p. 4, 10 on "relational" theory of the State). Being an "integral [S]tate", the distinction between state and civil society (or society) is a false division.[14] This means that the West Bengal State is dialectically connected to i.e. have an internal relationship with civil society, such that a neat separation between "political society" (here "political society" is used in the restricted institutional sense: i.e. the administrative divisions, legislative or judicial divisions, see Gramsci, 1971, p. 261) and "civil society" is not possible (see Gramsci, 1971, p. 208, State as "political society + civil society"). Moreover since, an "integral [S]tate" means this inability to separate the political from the civil, it follows that both these realms unfold together, constantly co-producing and reinforcing each other (Gramsci, 1971).In other words, the two are dialectical, since they do not collide with each other, destroy or externalize each other, or simply are piled together, rather the political and social have this tendency of being so interconnected that they are a unity, where both are present (as being "coextensive") and absent (as exclusive realms) (Thomas, 2011, p. 176, for analysis of Hegelian dialectics and the

[14] In this sense the colonial State was "integral" too.

process of "sublation"). Such an understanding of the State is germane in understanding why there was dilution of land reforms, as this leads to my argument centered on the form of the State.

Due to this interdigitation with civil society or society at large, the "integral [S]tate" always embodies and reflects larger societal processes (see Jessop, 1990; see also Poulantzas, 1978). States have particular "forms" (Jessop, 1990, p. 10). Form here is understood as a "regime"/structure or specific kind of arrangement of the State (ibid). Since the State is "integral", the form of the State emerges in dynamic relation to the operative societal processes (Jessop, 1990). In other words, the form of the State evolves based on what sorts of power relations and struggles amongst various social forces get 'condensed' in the State (see Poulantzas, 1978, p. 123). The form of the state in turn also determine what sorts of relationships of power and struggle will get 'condensed' into it on an ongoing basis (see Jessop, 1990; Poulantzas, 1978, p. 123). This 'inscription' of power and struggle is not a simple process (Poulantzas, 1978, Foucault, 1980e), it involves multiple relations undergoing "adap[tation], reinforce[ment] and transform[ation]" (Foucault, 1980e, p. 142). Therefore in a capitalist, democratic, casteised and patriarchal country like India, the State has a capitalist democratic casteised and gendered/ patriarchal form. There can be multiple forms of the State based on the power relations and struggles that get secreted into it. Here I am discussing only the capitalist and democratic form, as they are central to my argument on the dilution of the reforms in this part of the chapter. The West Bengal/Indian State is a materialization and

reflection of those processes, because of the State's intimate connections with society.[15] It is beyond the scope of the paper to understand and carry out a genealogical analysis of how the democratic capitalist form of the State in India and West Bengal has evolved. Therefore it follows logically that the State's power and domination is never already given and natural, as the power resides in the social (Foucault, 1980c, p. 121; 2000h, p. 345) and gets congealed in the State (Foucault, 1980f, p. 97; Foucault, 2000h, p. 343). The West Bengal State therefore is a "codification of a whole number of power relations that render its functioning possible." (Foucault, 2000a, p. 123).

Due to the "form" of the State there are certain predilections that get etched into it, i.e. the State has certain predispositions (Jessop, 1990, p. 10). Due to the given form any political party, even a communist one, which forms the government cannot escape the imperatives (Basu, 1992) which arise out of the biases inherent in the state (ibid). The Left Front government could neither. What this simply means, is that in a form of the State which is both capitalist and democratic, these constitute the structuring conditions within which a government has to function. Hence the Left was responsible for preserving and creating new opportunities for capital accumulation, which includes managing and configuring "the balance of forces" (Jessop, 1990, p. 122) between capital and labor in order to ensure the continuity of accumulation. This is because of its specific structural position/connection vis-à-vis capital social relations (Jessop, 1990, p. 117; Poulantzas, 1978, p. 19). Despite being communists, the Left did not really have the

[15] It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss how the processes get etched in. Very briefly, it can be said that the processes are etched in through various conduits and connection points between the State and society, through practices at the interface of State institutions and society and even the State personnel are part of society who reflect and even represent societal processes (Poulantzas, 1978; Jessop, 1990).

ability to introduce radical reforms that would hinder accumulation and antagonize the capitalist class (see Basu, 1992). The West Bengal State being an "economic manager" (Kohli, 1989, p.102) had to work within the logics of the economic system in which it was embedded. Moreover functioning within a parliamentary democracy meant that not only did it have to operate within the framework of electoral politics by appeasing all sections and classes of society to get elected, it also had to adhere to constitutional provisions, respect the territorial structure of the State i.e. the division of labor between the federal and state government (ibid) and ensure that all sections of society are able to participate in the political process (Jessop, 1990). This meant that the Left had to adopt a politics of compromise and accommodation (see Bardhan, 2001) and to expand the scope of the policies to be more inclusive of wider social forces including the bourgeoisie (Basu, 1992, p. 25). Thus due to the democratic compulsion, radical class solidarity with the oppressed classes had to be jettisoned (Basu, 1992).

Contingent upon the capitalist democratic form, relations of power and struggles amongst various forces (capitalist-labor, democratic groups), their respective interests constantly get congealed into the West Bengal State.[16] The State becomes a platform for struggle (Jessop, 1990). Thus working within the structuring conditions mentioned above, and given that there are conflicting and contradictory capitalist and democratic demands/interests that the Left-led government always had to face, it engaged in "strategic" maneuverings (Jessop, 1990, p. 9) making tactical choices to deal with these

[16] Due to the capitalist democratic form, only certain kinds of relationships of power and struggle got 'condensed' into it (see Jessop, 1990, for how inherent bias in the State form allows certain relations between forces to get crystallized; Poulantzas, 1978, p. 123. Here "crystallized" is a term used by Foucault, 2000e, p. 212).

plethora of interests and struggles. It was through such strategic calculations and choices, that the Left gained "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 263). Hegemony involves balancing, coordinating various interests (of profit, rule, territorial domination etc see Li, 2007, p.287, foot note 22 in "Introduction" chapter), selecting in certain interests, excluding other interests, involving compromises and concessions (Hall, 1986, p. 14-15). It is through this process that contradictions were 'absorbed' (Thomas, 2011, see chapter 5 and 6, see Gramsci, 1971 on "historical bloc"). So the Left government had to constantly engage in strategic calculations which meant that introducing radical reforms that will antagonize various groups, bring in 'disorder' of the kind the "Konar recipe" did was off the table. In sum it was just not the structuring conditions of form of the State that led to deradicalization of reforms, it was also about making active strategic choices within the structural bounds (Basu, 1992) of the form of the State. The paper will now show concretely the government's actions (policy and practice), that shows that within the capitalist democratic form of the State, land reforms got deradicalized.

Capitalist State Form

The Left had to represent itself as a party that was reliable and dependable for all constituencies (not just the poor classes). Further it wanted to assure that it was going to deliver economic growth and ensure material well-being of its population. So it became more of a social democratic party than a communist party, though it professed a communist ideology (Basu, 1992; Kohli, 1989). This was its strategic choice. Being social democratic, it believed in reforms than radicalism (Basu, 1992), allowing for minimal redistribution and following the course of developmentalism within a capitalist

democratic system (Kohli, 1989, p. 99). Concomitantly this meant that it did not really critique the fundamental principles of the legacy of uneven land distribution, that it had to water down its demand/goal for 'land to the tiller' or its promise of weakening landlords substantially and empowering the land-poor classes (Bhattacharyya, 1999).

Being part of a capitalist State, the Left had to undertake reforms within the structural constraints of an underdeveloped capitalist economy where there was massive class polarization (Basu, 1992). More broadly, it also had to strive for finding a place for West Bengal in the global capitalist economy (ibid). Given these limitations, it focused on issues such as wanting to achieve higher agricultural productivity, through the policy of redistribution. In 1983, the West Bengal Planning Advisory Board was set up to articulate redistribution and growth, particularly crop productivity. However the focus was more on tenancy reforms than redistribution of land (see Kohli, 1989). This means that the Left realized that doing away with the existing structure of relations around property may not serve the goal of enhancing accumulation. Hence not only did it not focus on radical redistribution, but the big zamindars and jotedars were not really always its target: it targeted absentee landlords (Kohli, 1989). The strategic calculation of wanting tenancy reforms was that it wanted the small and marginal farmers to support it, while at the same time not antagonize the bigger landlords (Basu, 1992). Even in its redistribution policy it focused on redistributing small plots of land, which being uneconomical actually do not target the "land hunger" issue at all (Basu, 1992, p. 36). Further cooperatives were not promoted in the name that farmers experience greater security in land ownership (which of course it did not vigorously encourage) (Basu, 1992).

It followed a developmentalism agenda, which was a strategy to enhance the space for smooth circulation of capital, and was not about challenging capitalism (Kohli, 1989). It is less so about challenging propertied classes, as that is the basis of the capitalist social relations itself (Ibid). Not surprisingly, it followed through the reforms the developmental strategy, by making redistribution never the sole focus of the reform policies. The focus was also on fair pricing of products, reducing taxes, debts, rents, supplying seeds, irrigation and market deepening. The reforms therefore were not solely about radical redistribution but were about developmentalism (Kohli, 1989). This developmental predilection in reforms was well aligned with the developmental State at the center (Chibber, 2006) for at the national scale the prevailing ideology of the State was that there should be capitalist development with socialist features, to ensure equality and the provision of social security (Lieten, 1992). By towing a similar line but proclaiming to be radical was a part of the Left Front government strategy. The Left Front did not want to be an 'island', following different economic rules.

Some believe that the CPI(M) within the Left Front adopted a Leninist strategy of "dual-stage" revolutionary strategy, which was about first allowing the forces and relations of capitalism to develop, leading to a higher level of economic development followed by the development of socialism (Basu, 1992, p. 28). This in part got reflected in how the party did not investigate how radical land reforms can get sufficiently aligned with a capitalist economy. Within India's partly unitary and party federal structure of rule, provisioned by the Constitution, states have freedom in crafting their own agrarian policies. However the CPI(M) did not explore how radical principles could be internalized within reforms

(Basu, 1992).The party turned a blind eye to issues of exploitation within the capital social formation (ibid). For instance, the party did not address the question of how surplus was being extracted through production in agriculture, but focused instead on "parasitic lifestyles" (Kohli, 1989, p. 100) of zamindars and jotedars! This stance, is not about questioning production relations, but about questioning consumptive behavior. It is thus a jump from focusing on structural issues to behavioral issues. Through the policies and practices, it is not surprising that it did not sufficiently engage with the problems of agricultural wage workers (Basu, 1992). Further at the scale of the state, Kisan Sabhas or farmer's organizations across the state was opened up for peasants and rich farmers, i.e. for all classes from the rich to the poor, which indicated that its reform goals was not about class conflict (Kohli, 1989) and instilling a class consciousness of struggle as it had claimed in its lofty goals mentioned earlier. This is indicative that in its policies and broader practices across the state the CPI(M) and the Left in general were not against propertied classes (ibid), being more interested in facilitating the interests of multiple classes (Basu, 1992). It needed a broad coalition of classes to support it since it functioned within a democracy (Kohli, 1989). It could not promote radical reforms, but had to take care of multiple class interests and facilitate material wellbeing within the West Bengal space economy.

Working within the framework of a capitalist State, the Left behaved like a true "economic manager" (Kohli, 1989, p. 102), encouraging economic growth, trying to engage with the shortfalls in productivity, trying to generate employment, prevent flight of capital and most importantly woo landlords (Kohli, 1989). It was interested therefore

in facilitating the accumulation process; create the conditions necessary for the circulation of capital including raising agricultural productivity via land reform policies. This was in synergy with the accumulation process (see Parenti, 2014). This was also geared towards managing the peasant unrests that had historically marked the Bengali landscape, by trying to raise more generally the standard of living and economic well-being of the farming population (see Parenti, 2014). Thus the dilution of land reform policy and practice at the state level was a strategic exercise to create the spaces of economic security, by controlling the spaces of "circulation" of money, food and commodities (Foucault, 2009, p. 13). It was therefore managing a plethora of "events" (engaging with social relations in agriculture in a luke warm manner, dealing with issues of increasing productivity and food security, poverty etc) generated by individuals and populations within a context of a capitalist economy with socialist features (Foucault, 2009, p. 20; Chibber 2006).

The West Bengal government therefore became an apparatus of economic security within a capitalist form of the State, regulating the economic "milieu" as a whole (Foucault, 2009, p. 20). The idea of risk becomes important here. The government being part of the security apparatus was trying to manage risks: risk of peasant revolution, food insecurity, low productivity and the risk of losing its political base (see Foucault, 2009). It is no wonder that the reforms were not about massive redistribution but more about tenancy and other developmentalist aims. It was a particular kind of "economy of power"(Foucault, 2009, p. 67) that operated within the context of the capitalist form of the State. This economy of power was a strategic step by the Left to reproduce itself as an

economic manager, by interventions in land such that land itself becomes the major bulwarks of the accumulation process. A speech by the then Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu reported in a local paper clearly reflects this "economy of power" geared towards circulation and risk management within a capitalist social formation: "this …[is] not a socialist country, that its socio-economic life ..[is] regulated by the capitalist system. Hence, ….[the]State government would have to proceed with a policy and programme within the constraints of a capitalist system and coexist with capitalists and landlords." (People's Democracy, 10th July, 1977, as cited in Lieten, p.21).

Democratic State Form

Working within the largest democracy in the world, the Left government had to adhere to democratic norms and not overturn the parliamentary form. Historically the communist parties in general were skeptical of democracy. However they witnessed the legitimacy of the State, the Congress party and the capitalist classes with this political system. From 1950 onwards, the parliamentary form achieved acceptance amongst the communists. The communists, including the CPI(M)in their emerging years engaged in non-parliamentary forms of mobilization. However these were not popular. Winning the elections in 1967 and 1969 was a major source of encouragement to adopt the parliamentary democratic regime, and that victory led to the side-tracking of using non-parliamemtary means (Basu, 1992). During the rise of the naxal movement, a lot of far radical members left the CPI(M) to join the naxals. The party was in a bind as to whether to suppress or not the movement (i.e. when it was part of the United Front). The suppression would have led to criticism within the party, while working with the naxals

was also not a strategy as it would be dismissed by the federal government. Thus as a policy the CPI(M) decided to follow the parliamentary form (Basu, 1992). However towing the parliamentary form and yet following the "Konar recipe" did not prove to be propitious for the Left, because the CPI(M) and others who were part of the United Front was dismissed twice, as soon as they started taking away land from the landlords. This experience of dismissal by the Congress at the center meant that it fell completely in line with the parliamentary system (Basu, 1992; Kohli, 1989). What they followed was "parliamentary communism" (Basu, 1992, p. 7). Once in rule the CPI(M) and the other Left coalition partners in the government firmly worked within the boundaries of parliamentary democratic form of the State, realizing that radicalism will not work (Bhattacharyya, 1999).

The democratic form of the State has dictated a territorial structure with a division of powers between the states and the center. The Constitution provides more law making powers to the federal government (Basu, 1992). There are also issues of sharing of financial resources between the states and the federal governments. The Left therefore has to work within the framework of this division of power provided by the democratic parliamentary form of the State. The specific relationship which the West Bengal state government has had with the central government has been fraught sometimes even confrontational (ibid). In 1983, proposed amendments to the land reforms legislation of 1955 was passed by the state government. However a diluted version was approved by the President after five years (Basu, 1992). This indicates that the Left did not have total ability to craft land reforms, which might be vetoed or amended by the center. Further,

the financial relations were a major source of contention between the West Bengal State and the center. The State receives funds from three main sources: taxes obtained by the federal government, funds allocated by the Finance Commission and through the yearly or five-year plans (Basu, 1992). However the full share of funds was not always received, creating tensions within the structure of the State as a whole. The fraught financial relations with the central government formed a "feasibility frontier", as the State did not have adequate financial resources to carry out full reforms (Kohli, 1987; 1989). For instance, at one point the federal government did not offer funds for 'food for work' scheme, claiming that the state was not using the previously given funds towards the same (Basu, 1992). Instead money was redirected by the federal government for National Rural Employment Program and the Rural Landless Employment Generation Program (Basu, 1992). Such disciplining of the state government and redirection of funds into other welfare schemes by the center had an impact on the grounding of the reforms (ibid). As discussed before, the state government could not replicate the 1967/69 land grabs, as working within a parliamentary system, those strategies would mean certain dismissal by the central government which was Constitutionally empowered to impose President's Rule (Lieten, 1990; Kohli, 1989). The Left therefore redirected its efforts towards cooperation with the federal government, but such cooperation was interrupted by confrontational politics at various moments in time (Basu, 1992). The Left however has always invoked the concept of "its hands were being tied" by the center to deflect political attention towards its own failures in governance (se Bhattacharyya, 1999).

The democratic form of the State imposes the logic of elections as being an internal aspect of governance of people. The CPI(M), the dominant party of the Left could not alone win elections. It needed coalitional support (Basu, 1992). Despite leading the government the CPI(M) had to work within the limits imposed by its coalitional partners (CPI, RSP, AIFB) and vice versa. This meant that calculations around land reforms had to be calibrated and recalibrated in response to internal struggles within the government and political parties itself. The most important source of contestation was based on ideological grounds that then translated into contestation over policies and practices of rule. For instance, the CPI(M) wanted to develop the forces of production by removing the vestiges of feudalism through reforms and ideologically maneuver the working class before creating the transition to socialism (Basu, 1992; Lieten, 1990). This ideology was not acceptable in toto to the other partners. The outcome was that there has been a dilution of reform policy as an outcome of the complex of relations amongst the forces within the State as a whole.

Being part of a democratic State structure, the goal of building a mass base was one of the most powerful goals for the CPI(M). The party followed the principle of "democratic centralism", i.e. once top party leaders are chosen, they exercise top-down authority which has to be followed throughout the capillaries of the party organization (Basu, 1992). This mode of disciplining within the party had implications upon the strategies of the party to build its mass base (ibid). The impulse of building a consolidated mass base became very strong once the party came to power in 1977. There were strong signals from the centralized leadership, to build up a vote bank a critical base of mass support

(Bhattacharyya, 2009). Accordingly, electoral strategies were devised to garner votes (Kohli, 1989). In many cases the CPI(M) had to water down its revolutionary strategies in order to be in line with a parliamentary competitive democracy where there was a need to get approval by the electorate (Bhattacharyya, 1999). However this emphasis on creating a mass base, perverted the reforms itself, as the way reforms were implemented would be contingent upon the calculation of winning votes. This amongst other things meant that supporting the party was a very important way in which the poor could have access to resources around reform programs. Those who did not support the party would not get the same access. The party for instance engaged in this politics of access through rural institutions intimately connected to land reforms like the panchayats (local self-government) and other institutions (Bhattacharyya, 2009). This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in and through my second argument. This politics of differential access accelerated rather than curtailed social differentiation based along the axis of who supported the party or not (Bhattacharyya, 2009). In practice this led to disruption of reforms.

Conditioned by the democratic form of the State, a "reason of the state" or "raison d'Etat", i.e. a rationality or principle of operation, emerged within the CPI(M), that democratic politics was crucial for rule: this became the party's underlying logic, feature and its goal (Foucault, 2009, p. 286; see Dean, 2010). This was a strong rationality that allowed the CPI(M) to reproduce itself and reinforce its domination through a specific "art" of politics (Foucault, 2009, p. 257-258). This art of politics was guided by the reason of aligning with the democratic fabric of the "integral [S]tate." This art of politics

involved creating distance with respect to revolutionary reforms; build up a broad base of support that was antithetical to a radical class struggle and evolution of a class consciousness.

Capitalist Democratic Form and Policy: End Summary

Working with a capitalist democratic form of the State, the Left could gain hegemony by strategically managing multiple interests. Accordingly, the government always had to engage in "strategic" maneuverings (Jessop, 1990, p. 9). Therefore the State itself became the arena of "strategic elaboration" (ibid, p. 9). Hence, reform, not revolution was pursued. Therefore the reforms have been criticized for being more of a politics of practical management, of "middleness" and of trying to diffuse agrarian tensions (Bhattacharyya, 1999; Webster, 1990; see Lieten, 1990 for diverse opinions on reforms). The capitalist democratic form of the State posed structural imperatives within which the Left government had to work, which meant that a number of radical steps were defenestrated. Furthermore, because of this form, capitalist and democratic interests also got internalized in the State. The Left Front government therefore had to make strategic calculations, selecting certain interests and selecting out others, to carve out land reform policies. As Nikos Poulantzas wonderfully states how policies are products of both structural limits and strategic calculations, that always make the process of policy making so dynamic and ever-evolving: "Thus policies are the outcomes of not only the structural imperatives, how certain interests are filtered and represented, how the representatives of the various fractions are present within the state, the materiality of the apparatus (including which apparatus is subordinated to which apparatus) will determine the

selection of certain interests, the way priorities and counter-priorities are established in line with conjunctural imperatives, …policy is continually constructed out of accelerations and brakings, about-turns, hesitations, and changes of course." (Poulantzas, 1978, pg 136).

It was within this capitalist democratic form of the State, that the Left not only framed a diluted land reforms policy but decided to engage in specific technologies of power (Foucault, 2000e), i.e. set of secular strategies, to implement them. This indicated the Left's "will to improve" as a "trustee" to mend socio-agricultural relations albeit within the constraints of the State form (Li, 2007, p. 4). The Left, particularly the CPI(M), engaged in an "art of government" to manage the agrarian economy and provide the conditions for the social reproduction of the peasantry (Foucault, 2000e, p. 221; see also p. 201, 207, 217). However it was also an art of government that was geared towards establishing the rule of capital and its political power and to inscribe the landscape of Bengal with its dominance. What this meant was to regulate the "disposition of things" (Foucault, 2000e, p. 208), i.e. to regulate the disposition of "men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, and so on; men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, and so on; and finally men in their relation to those still other things that might be accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, and so on." (Foucault, 2000e, 208-209). The management of the "disposition of things" was strategically aligned with the need towards capitalist accumulation and democratic dominance of the party. The next part of

the paper turns to the broad technologies of power, the strategies that were deployed to influence the "disposition of things" that was required to consolidate its rule, i.e. produce state spaces and subjects of rule (Moore, 2005):strategies of land reform implementation.

Meta-Technologies of Rule Towards Implementing Land Reforms

This part of the paper will discuss the broader technologies of rule i.e. calculations (Foucault, 1980e) that were introduced by the Left, to ground the land reforms. A discussion of these strategies is necessary to give a sense of how the strategies of rule *actually followed* at the village level were always situated, thereby producing disjunctures (and not) between them and the meta-strategies devised to implement the reforms. Four meta-technologies of power were adopted: the technology of camps, the technology of propaganda to popularize the reforms, the technology of using the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs: local self-government) as a crucial institution in identifying and targeting the poor for land reforms and the technology of distributing agricultural credit and inputs at cheap or subsidized rates. In this section the discussion will be mainly focused on the camps and PRI, as propaganda and redistribution of credit and subsidies happened through these two sites.

These technologies of power are indicative of a biopolitics (Foucault, 1978), of fostering and managing life. The production of knowledge (epistemology), gathering data (empirics), visibilizing and intimately knowing the population is a very important instrument through which biopolitics can unfold (see Foucault, 1978; see discussions on Foucault's notion of biopolitics in Ettlinger, 2011; Dean, 2010). Further crucial amongst

these biopolitical technologies of power, is to cast a gaze, an occularity, on the population for control (Agrawal, 2005). Therefore this involved knowing, understanding and bringing a landscape under a panoptic gaze via dispersal of sites of power through local self-government (Agrawal, 2005). It is to those secular technologies of power that the paper will now turn. It might be important to note that these broader strategies were introduced on a landscape where the land tenurial situation was very complicated and there was a lack of proper cadastral maps and records (see Lieten, 1992) with clear information on tenancy, leasing, and customary rights (Borras, 2007).

The Technology of Camps and Propaganda

Three types of camps were introduced to materialize the reforms. First, there were the initial camps to raise consciousness and to assess ground realities of the needs of the poor. This idea of initial camps was heavily influenced by Paulo Ireiri's thesis of consciousness raising i.e. "conscientisation" to be trailed by action. These were the initial places where there was planning about how things were to be done (Bandyopadhyay, 2003).These camps were definitely not Agamben's notion of camp where the homo sacer was being produced through the exercise of the sovereign's right over life (Agamben, 1995; 1998). In other words these camps were not the sites of "exception" (Agamben, 1998, p. 17) where "bare life" emptied of agency were produced, but rather these were sites of the empirical and biopolitical, following Foucault's idea of biopolitics (ideas also obtained from Melissa Wright's colloquim "Mystical Modernity, Mapping Neoliberalism and Mexico's "Disappeared"on 27th March, 2015 at The Ohio State University). For instance, these initial camps became the sites of deliberation, between administrative

officials, bargadars and landless workers. This was aimed at identifying the problems of registering bargadars and how to effectively remedy them. The problems which the bargadars mostly faced for instance, was the fear of retaliation from zamindars and jotedars if they tried to legally register their names. As has been mentioned before, such politics of retaliation did happen during the two early phases of the reforms. Moreover the bargadars felt that the revenue courts had a predilection towards land owners and therefore would not really want to register bargadars. Hence bargadars wanted the revenue tribunals to travel to their villages and set up camps for openly registering bargadars in full public view. Thus the village-based spatiality of the registration camp and the advantage of occularity that such camps would provide were greatly emphasized as source of empowerment. This was because the camps would now be visible and bargadars will have the will to register without fear, instead of trying to register on their own volition by traveling to the courts. Furthermore, this open setting would ensure that the registration camps also became the sites of "collective action" to prevent bargadar intimidation (Hanstad and Brown, 2001, p.35, also based on their interview with D. Bandyopadhyay, previous West Bengal Land Reforms Commisioner). The camps therefore were sites of not just management of individual peasants but management of population and thereby life itself. Thus these were the camps where the needs of the peasants were assessed, recorded (empirical) and then managed (biopolitics). These biopolitical camps were meant to not show the power of death of the sovereign but to bring the population (life) into the sphere of management, "to invest life through and through" (Foucault, 1978, p. 139).

Secondly, there were the registration or Barga camps. These camps were meant to register bargadars. Operation Barga got implemented in 1978 with registration of bargadars in the village camps. The village camps seemed like the State had traveled to the villages "to invest life through and through" (Foucault, 1978, p. 139)! Even before the camps were set up, several other procedures were followed, namely gathering information on who had to be registered or given vested land. Beneficiaries themselves, peasant organizations (Kisan Sabhas)[17], grassroots members of the CPI(M) party, students, youth organizations and local self-government bodies or the panchayats (explained below) were deeply involved in the process and were part of the implementation structure (Lieten, 1992, p.130; see Bandyopadhyay, 1980). Part of the technology of power that was used here was that the revenue administrators gathered information on the spatial location of bargadars via settlement records and this was supplemented by information from the peasant organizations (Dutta, 1988, p. 45 cited in Hanstad and Brown, 2001). This constituted a semi-judicial process of gathering information (Hanstad and Brown, 2001). This empirical information formed the foundation of biopolitical management. After the gathering of information was complete, the following evening barga camps were set up at a public location. The visibility of the camps made the larger social project of the reforms legible. This was followed up by propaganda about the reforms which included dissemination of information of the process and benefits of reforms to beneficiaries including how funds brought together from Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment

[17] These organizations have been historically supporting the communists and some of their demands like 'land to the tiller' found its way into the Floud Commission of 1938 (Lieten, 1992, p. 130; Kar, 2011, Sarkar, 1989).

Programme (NREP), Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) and other central and state welfare schemes, would be directed to them for improving agriculture (ibid; Sarkar, 1989). This was followed by bargadars making claims and the administrators would verify those claims (ibid, p. 47). Then registration certificates were issued quite speedily (Hanstad and Brown, 2001) that could be used by bargadars to claim access to credit, subsidies and poverty-amelioration schemes (Hanstad and Brown, 2001).

The barga camps were followed by "re-orientation" camps where revenue administrators met with a few villagers to discuss problems with the ongoing registration process and reassess and revise the same (Hanstad and Brown, 2001). Thus across all these camps, individual subjects (poor land-deficit villagers) were enrolled through their own participation in the biopolitical project of land reforms which was pitched at the macro societal scale (ideas from Ettlinger, 2011, see explanation of the relationship between disciplinary and biopower as explicated in Foucault's work on p. 546). Thus "biopolitical regulation of populations…[are inseparable] from individualizing technologies [of]…disciplin[ing]" (Mansfield, 2012, p. 589) as seen in these camps.

All the camps were also sites of making people see and be aware of how the 'distant State' worked (Gupta, 1995). In the past, the bureaucratic structure in the villages had a hierarchical relationship with poor villagers, implementing programs in a top-down manner (Webster, 1992). Not only were the bureaucrats conservative, but engaged in a form of 'elitism' that alienated villagers. These bureaucrats at had strong links with local elites (ibid). This form of functioning was termed "rock departmentalism" (Minhas

Report on Panchayat, 1973 cited in Webster, 1992, p. 134). The forming of these camps was an attempt to defetishize the State, through villagers viewing and being witness to how the State worked through embodied practices (Gupta, 1995; Bhattacharyya, 1999). The villagers through these camps got to know about their rights and entitlements, understood how bureaucracy (and corruption) works. This inculcated political awareness, making people to some extent politically conscious (Bhattacharyya, 1999).

The Technology of Panchayats and Redistribution of Agricultural Resources

The Left was aware that land reforms alone would not work (see Lieten, 1992; 2003). Hence apart from the nine-point agenda of the reforms (see goals of reforms), there was a need felt towards political empowerment and mobilization (Roy, 2013). Therefore the land reforms were supported by the strengthening of local self-government or the three-tiered Panchayati Raj system (Lieten, 1992; 2003). The Panchayati Raj institution (PRI) was a corollary to the land reforms.[18] The Left government strengthened the moribund three tiered panchayati system in 1978: gram panchayat at village level, panchayat samiti at block level and zila parishads at district level (Lieten, 2003). In 1978, elections were held to these local bodies (Roy, 2013). The election of members to panchayats was based on party politics. The panchayats were responsible for identifying beneficiaries of reforms (Lieten, 2003; Sarkar, 1989) along with locating ceiling-excess land (Bandyopadhyay, 2007; Sarkar, 1989) and spreading awareness around the reforms

[18] The federal government had instituted the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee to look into issues of decentralization of governance in 1957. This committee suggested a three-layered system of local self government. The previous Congress-led dispensations had passed legislation in this regard to establish decentralized system of governance (West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957; Zilla Parishad Act 1963; West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973 (this act made the previous acts moot and proposed a reformed architecture of self governance)) (Roy, 2013, p. 39). The panchayats were initially established in 1964. However these bodies were in effect quite weak as they hardly had much power or even the required financial support to carry out its functions (Roy, 2013, p. 39).

program (Sarkar, 1989). The panchayats did this in conjunction with other peasant organizations (Hanstad and Brown, 2011) and in collaboration with the State machinery (Sarkar, 1989). They also decided the dates when barga registration camps could be set up (Hanstad and Brown, 2011). Thus the reforms process was democratized (Lieten, 2003). The panchayats (particularly the panchayat samiti) was entrusted with the task of cooperating with bureaucrats to redistribute vested lands (Sarkar, 1989). They were also responsible for 'targeting' poor sharecroppers and assignees of vested lands, and act as mediators so that they get access to cheap credit, subsidies, minikits (agricultural inputs (see Bardhan et al., 2009)) and crisis mitigation programs (food for work), that would contribute towards poverty reduction (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2004). The PRIs were governed by the logic of people's participation in political economic matters at the village level (Roy, 2013; Webster, 1992). The rationale behind people's participation in government was that not only will it be an empowering process, but that local problems and issues would get the attention they deserve, on account of the PRI (ideas, drawn from Sarkar, 1989). On another level the PRI was also about increasing the scope of the State's territorial reach (Gidwani, 2008), through multiplication and "dispersal" of nodes of governance, and bringing the area of West Bengal under the panoptic gaze of the State itself (Agrawal, 2005, p. 101, also see Introduction, see Part II of book). This pluralization of governance nodes would then contribute towards consolidating the Left's mass base in villages (Lieten, 2003).

Outcome of the Technologies of Power

Indeed there were village-by-village campaigning carried out during Operation Barga (1978 and 1981) (Banerjee, et al., 2002). Party workers, Kisan Sabhas, other peasant organizations, bureaucrats, sharecroppers, assignees of vested lands and students all worked together to register tenants and assign vested lands (Kohli, 1989; Kar 2011). 8000 camps were held in all (Kar, 2011). The bureaucracy was brought closer to the villagers (Bhattacharyya, 1999). 1.2 million sharecroppers were registered in 3 years (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). By 1993, 65% of 2.3 million tenants were registered (Banerjee et al., 2002). There was a 28% rise in crop productivity (Banerjee et al., 2002). More importantly this entire process led to greater politicization of the masses. The poor were more aware of their rights and participated in the political life of the village (Bardhan et al., 2009). With this I turn to my second argument on why there was a dilution of reforms. Here I claim that despite these meta-strategies, the actual micro practices and technologies of power that were used to implement them were always provincialized and situated. This led to the preservation of local hierarchies of power. Thus disjunctures (and not) happened between stated goals and the meta-strategies, and the actual strategies used to inscribe land reforms across space. Particularly, the disjunctures should not be seen as an outcome resulting from 'improper governance of reforms', but that 'improper governance' is part of governance around land reforms itself, as governance is 'provincialized' (see Chakrabarty, 2000; see Moore, 2005).

Intersectionality and Localized Techniques of Rule: Dilution of Reforms in the Villages

The paper will now engage with the social categories and processes and technologies of rule that led to the implementation of land reforms in villages. I am not claiming that camps were not held or that the PRIs did not do their part in the implementation of reforms. However the question is: who got to register in the camps, who were left out and why? Or why were the panchayats not effective enough to ensure that everyone at the village level who could be beneficiaries were properly identified and helped?

This part of the paper will claim that land reforms unfolded through intersectional social categories and the axes of power associated with those categories. This resulted in reforms being materialized through technologies of power such as through alliances, antagonisms and negotiations. True to the notion of the "integral [S]tate", a State that unfolds together with civil society, the implementation of land reforms happened not only through politicians, bureaucrats and CPI(M) cadres, but involved the beneficiaries themselves, peasant organizations and student bodies. Indeed this shows how at one level, the State enrolls everyday people to materialize larger societal projects of governance (Ettlinger, 2011). The crucial point here is that, the reforms were grounded across multiple spatial nodes and did not involve registration or handing over title deeds at spatialities of offices of the local administration. The reforms unfolded through numerous camps, through panchayat meetings and within the interstices of everyday village life. This kind of capillarized unfolding has effects. For instance, as the reforms were grounded by multiple actors, the social intersectionality of these actors mattered.

Further the technologies of rule to materialize the reforms were always locally inflected. Thus what emerged were multiple actors using situated strategies to implement the reforms, resulting in their dilution (and not). Thus as Poulantzas states, "We must ….grasp [the]…strategic field and process of intersecting power networks, which both articulate and exhibit mutual contradictions and displacements….This strategic field is traversed by tactics..[which] intersect and conflict with one another "(Poulantzas, 1978, pg 136). I will try to grasp the "strategic field" of social processes through which the reforms were written out on the landscape.

Well know political scientist and an expert on Indian politics Atul Kohli has praised the CPI(M) for its strong organization and party leadership, which he claims has been crucial for the CPI(M) and indeed the Left as a whole to consolidate their bases in rural areas. He particularly points out two important issues that has contributed to the CPI(M)'s penetration in rural West Bengal. Firstly, since the CPI(M) organizationally follows democratic centralism, with leaders at the center deciding strategies/positions on issues and which are adhered to right down the ranks (and is mandatory to do so), lends the party and its functioning coherence. Secondly, the party is extremely disciplined. The leadership is shared by the party, Kisan Sabha and the parliamentary body (i.e. the government leaders from the CPI(M)). This sharing of power has discouraged factionalism, even though there are divides along the axis of age, urbanity or rurality amongst party leaders (Kohli, 1989). This kind of disciplining and coherence around land reforms and other issues has led to the consolidation of the CPI(M)'s rural base (ruling West Bengal for 34 years). As per Kohli's interpretation, the secular strategies adopted to

ground the reforms should then have been very smoothly implemented with all members of the party in the rural area, the Kisan Sabha and other CPI(M) affiliated organizing working like a well-oiled machinery. However that is not the case as the debates I had discussed on land reforms indicate. Further, even though the perception is that a communist party strictly follows communist principle and are deeply interested in mobilizing the poor classes and instilling class consciousness, in reality issues of local politics, caste, religion, gender did matter to the party cadres and leaders. Thus the implementation of the reforms was always socio-culturally inflected and situated (Williams, 2001). In fact the implementation was always practical and synergistic with village conditions.

I am not trying to claim, however, that in implementing land reforms 'anything goes', or not trying to point out towards a relativistic politics and privileging the local. The implementation of reforms *always occurred within broader frames of the party's policies and structural constraints.* Firstly, being communist there were guidelines that ideology was important that class struggle and the progressive politics that lift the poor from the margins (and accord them respect and dignity of life) was important (Chatterjee, 2009). Secondly, even at the local level the secular strategies of the camp, engaging in propaganda, establishing panchayats and redistributing agricultural resources had to be done. I am merely claiming that the implementation was never uniform, as the local mattered in that implementation and thus the reforms remained limited in its scope. Thirdly, even at the local level the form of the capitalist democratic State exerted pressure. The reforms had to be diluted to enhance circulation that facilitates

accumulation. There was also the pressure of maintaining and consolidating its electoral base through reforms. In fact, the CPI(M) state committee introduced the notion of "parichalan"/control, to establish its electoral base, particularly emphasizing that party cadres should colonize village institutions. Kohli was correct here, as the party showed the discipline of penetrating the panchayats, for instance. This meant that panchayats would function like an arm of the party and villagers would internalize the party ideology (Bhattacharyya, 1999). This in part reveals the influence of Soviet-styled communism/authoritarianism in party functioning (Basu, 1992). However the paradox is that there was a lot of flexibility in how that was achieved. In sum, the unitary strategies mentioned before: camps, propaganda, panchayats and distribution of resources were grounded, but the modality of grounding varied because of reforms being intersectional with class, caste, gender and clientelism and associated flexible technologies of rule and were varied across space.

Intersectionality and Flexible Technologies of Rule: Dilution of Reforms (and not)

Conceptual Anchor

The point of departure of my analysis, in this part, is intersectionality and flexible technologies of rule. Intersectionality emanated from critical legal studies, anti-race and feminist scholarship as a reaction to the projection of a "universal" subject of oppression in the field of anti-discrimination law (Cho et al., 2013, p. 791; Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). Intersectionality is theoretically dynamic that brings into its fold multiple axes of social relations and attendant power relations (Cho et al., 2013). It understands how

marginalization or not occurs at the nexus of social relations i.e. through multiple ways (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho et al., 2013) instead of occurring along singular axes of class, race, gender etc. The ontological premise behind this is that no social relation is fixed and hermetically sealed but are shot through by other social relations. Therefore every social relation is dynamic, getting co-produced at the intersection of other social relations of power. Thus the theory pays attention to power in its multivalent form, to understand how similarities and differences in marginalization/empowerment are produced through power along multiple axes (Cho et al., 2013).

Intersectionality, however does not focus merely on the subject (Cho et.al, 2013). The criticism has been that the theory abstracts from processes or structures that produce inequalities (Carbado, 2013; Cho et al., 2013). Intersectionality does not separate the subject from the objective conditions, but considers their articulation (Cho et al., 2013). This is because the interlocking social categories mentioned above are generated within this grid (Carbado, 2013, p. 814). Accordingly, the textured context i.e. the plethora of structures, institutions, discourses and practices, through which the matrix of socio-power relations gets instantiated are analyzed. Thus the focus on the context brings to light not singular but imbricated "structures of subordination" (Cho et al., 2013, see p. 179; Crenshaw, 1991) which generate specific embodied experiences (Valentine, 2007). This produces multiple overlapping subjectivities, making certain populations more privileged and others oppressed (Cho et al., 2013).

In my analysis, I will show how the land reforms were institutionalized at the local level by being intersectional with class, caste, gender and clientelism. Particularly the issues of

differences and similarities within the social categories/processes and axes of power that is internal to it (Cho et al., 2013) is crucial in who gets empowered and not vis-à-vis land reforms. Thus through looking at the implementation of reforms via intersectionality, it situates the phenomenon of reforms directly in a field of power. Therefore experiences of empowerment and marginalization around reforms (i.e. who gets registered as a sharecropper/or not, who has access to inputs/or not, who is identified as a beneficiary for land redistribution/or not) is a product of villagers experiences within the nexus of social relations of class, caste, gender and clientelism. In addition, in my analysis I will show how power works through negotiations, contestations and alliances. This then puts the spotlight on the technologies of power that are used and which emerge from within this field of social intersectionality around reforms.

Power works in complicated ways in and through the social categories and processes mentioned immediately before. I will attempt to understand how power is directed towards its "object, its target, its field of application….the places where it implants itself and produces its real effects" (Foucault, 1997, p. 28). Thus practices around land reforms are infused by power and have produced effects like rendering the reforms (in)complete. Power operates across the axes of social difference in and through *technologies of power*. *Technologies of power are calculated actions,* governed by rationalities, and have certain goals (Foucault, 2000e p. 211; 2000f, p. 225-226, 230-231; 1980f, p. 101). These situated material and discursive techniques contours spaces and subjects of reforms, which are nothing but the effects of power (Moore, 2005, p. 5). I therefore argue that by looking at social intersectionality around reforms and the technologies of power that are used, one

would be able to understand why the reforms got diluted, and how situatedness matter. Thus land reforms in itself should not be seen as a grand system, relaying grand projects of rule through camps, propaganda, panchayats and redistribution of resources. It should be understood as how this societal project of rule got refracted through a diverse array of contextualized social relations and axes of power, their corresponding 'apparatuses"/technologies (calculations/strategies), to show the workings of a truly "ethnographic state" (Dirks, 2001).

The question then arises is that where do these technologies of power which suffuse the intersectional processes arise? They arise not just from the grand societal policies of reforms but from the everyday, across diverse sites and institutions, i.e. in the granularity of social life (Foucault, 1978, p. 141). Foucault mentions that governance (and the technologies) emanates across multiple sites and scales that cannot be and are not reducible to "transcendent singularity of Machiavelli's prince" (Foucault, 2000e, p. 206). In the same vein, the strategies that are embedded in reforms arise within the family, the village and its social life, the sites of production in villages, within institutions of caste, the panchayats i.e. in the capillaries of society (Foucault, 2000e, p. 206). Thus the implementation of reforms has to be seen in a more provincialized light (Chakrabarty, 2000).

In order to tap into social intersectionality around reforms and the calculations of power, I want to look in to the everyday spaces of village life to understand the dilution of reforms (and not). I want to see how intersectionality and technologies of power are "entangled in the single site [of West Bengal] yet [producing] multiple spatialities" of

reforms (Moore, 2005, p. 7). This requires evantalization. Evantalization is a process of exploring a multiplicity of causes/events that are there (Foucault, 1980c, p. 114; Foucault, 2000f, p. 227) that are amenable to causing effects (Foucault, 2000a, p. 116). It is a process-oriented analysis (Foucault, 2000f, p. 227) that is able to see the relationships amongst forces and strategies deployed around governance (Foucault, 2000f, p. 226) and how these are guided by specific social process (see Foucault, 2000c, p. 225). One final conceptual point that has to be made is that looking at social intersectionlaity and technologies of rule to see how reforms were partial, the disjunctures between what should be and what actually is implemented should not be viewed as the lack of proper governance of reforms. Rather these disjunctures, are not an external other of proper governance, but rather they are central part of governance itself, as governance is refracted through the prism of situated intersectional social processes and therefore are flexible relations of rule (see Moore, 2005).

While discussing intersectionality and technologies of rule around reforms through evantalization, I would like to make two important clarifications: a) Firstly, My analysis is drawn from the narratives, analyses and studies of village politics across the state of West Bengal often exemplified through village-level case studies. This has helped me get a sense of the localized relations of rule. I have erased out names of specific villages, blocks and districts, as I did not feel mentioning them were necessary. b) Secondly, these studies are not solely about land reforms (and its politics at the exact moment of implementation) as some are more generally tilted towards studying rural institutions, everyday politics including politics of governance around welfare and redistribution,

electoral politics, relations between local and state politics etc. I found such studies to be useful, as even though they may not always discuss land reforms, they do engage with the mundane politics of redistribution in some form or the other. To the extent I found that these analyses give a good sense of the politics of land redistribution, I have included them in this paper. Further land reforms are not just the act of redistribution of land or registration of tenants per se, but it is a broader temporal program, in other words it is a process, of supporting those who have been given land, so that the reforms engender prosperity. Hence I found discussing the politics of redistribution germane, as it speaks to the land reforms process too.

Social Intersectionality and Technologies of Rule around Land Reforms

Intersectionality and Technology of Rule of Class-Based Alliances and Negotiations

The Land Reforms Minister in the 1977 CPI(M) led Left Front regime stated: "The achievement in….distribution of vested land has not been satisfactory though highest priority was assigned to this job." (Benoy Krishna Chowdhury, Land Reforms Minister quote of 31 March, 1982, cited in Sarkar, 1989). This was said in reference to panchayat samitis failing to do their duty of redistributing land to the landless (Sarkar, 1989). What this quote shows is that the actual processes of reforms have to be problematized to show how everyday socialities have led to the dilution of reforms.

It has been widely claimed that the reforms altered class relations. However that may not be the case always. The phenomenon of alliances (*explicit or implicit*) has persisted in the politics of reforms. It is a sort of a politics of forming groups, which in Bengal is called

the politics of forming "dols"/groups or factions (see Lieten,2003; see also Williams 1999). Such alliances have mostly formed centered around the CPI(M) and those who support it (Lieten, 2003). Those who supported the party benefitted a lot from the reforms (Bhattacharyya, 2009). Class-based alliances have developed. For instance, the middle caste-class peasants, have supported the party and have formed alliances with the CPI(M) similar to the Congress-zamindar alliances (Basu, 2001; Rogaly, 1998). What has happened as a result is that there has been a reversal of power structures, with the "parasitic class" or the "built-in "depressor"" (Thorner, 1956, p. 16 as cited in Harriss, 2013) of zamindars and jotedars being replaced by middle and rich peasants (Bandyopadhyay, 2003, p. 881). This has transformed the 'objective' condition of the agrarian structure, wherein the middle class-caste peasants have simply displaced the zamindars to occupy the top hierarchy in rural social relations (Basu, 2001, p. 1333; Rogaly et al., 1999; Harriss, 2013).

This kind of an alliance building has a longer history: For instance, while criticizing the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Bill, Benoy Krishna Chowdhury and Bankim Mukherjee, members of the Opposition, placed a note of disagreement on the legislation, stating that the way the legislation was being designed it was meant to seize land of even the richer farmers, so they stated "the object of agrarian reform is to eliminate all sorts of feudal relationships in the land and not to impose new barriers upon the cultivating owners owning fairly large holdings…[who are]…*entrepreneurs*… the Bill has refused to distinguish between Jotedar and a cultivating owner owning fairly large holdings and thus has unnecessarily encroached upon the rights of the cultivating owners." (cited in

Sarkar, 1989, p. 66, my emphasis). Thus here the middle classes are being viewed as entrepreneurs, which is a positive value judgment about the class. There have been important effects of this kind of practice of alliance building. For instance, the panchayats and Kisan Sabhas are headed by these middleclass-caste peasants, and the poorer bargadras or wage workers do not find adequate representation within these bodies. The upshot is that often times the land reform programs are not adequately implemented (Kohli, 1989). This means that the issue of higher wages and sharecropper registration get marginalized (Basu, 1992). The rationality behind this practice of creating an alliance with the middle class and caste peasants is that electorally the Left Front government was interested in debilitating the power of the traditional Congress Party in West Bengal (Kohli, 1987) and therefore stuck at the roots of its support base. Hence this was a strategic alliance electorally. Another rationale, guiding this logic of selective class-based groupism was to maintain the power of property and a class of entrepreneurs i.e. the middle class and caste farmers, as owners. This would in turn enhance proper economic circulation amenable to bolstering the accumulation process, without really challenging the idea of property as power. This notion of property as power is synergistic with capitalism, where property is the material basis of power. Thus the idea that, middle class and caste peasants could be at the helm, shows how this group began to be viewed as the class to replace the landlords and be entrepreneurial subjects (Foucault, 2010) in a capitalist economy.

In some cases, class-based alliances were formed between the CPI(M) and zamindars. The rationale guiding this practice of alliance was social capital. Those party members

who already knew the local elites, had good relations with them, avoided debilitating their power. In some cases, zamindars allied with the CPI(M) to evict sharecroppers and pattadars and get back their lands and sometimes illegally selling them if it was not profitable to hold onto them (Roy, 2009; Lieten, 1992).[19] The CPI(M) party cadres themselves overturned the reforms, evicting sharecroppers and homestead land holders (Roy, 2009). There were practices of identifying capitalist landlords as the 'enemy' of the people, so as to render them peripheral, but only symbolically not materially. This again shows signs of implicit cliquishness (Bhattacharyya, 1999). Thus even though through discourse and propaganda the zamindars were verbally targeted, the attack was only confined to the plane of discourse and rhetoric and sometimes token oppositional protests without effectively dislodging this class (Bhattacharyya, 1999). This practice also meant that individual sharecroppers did not want to legally register to maintain good relations with landlords who were still were powerful, or because the sharecroppers were unwilling to break the past patron-client relations (Lieten, 1992).

The overall rationality, driving this class-based alliance was to not really create a fissure amongst classes, but to support landed property and even appease the poorer classes. This would be propitious for both supporting the conditions of accumulation and election calculus. Even though the party helped to precipitate a modicum of redistribution, it was still able to garner support from a bigger group of classes (Bhattacharyya, 1999). Both the two architects of land reforms: Hare Krishna Konar and Benoy Chowdhury, knew that even if the slogan was 'land to the tiller', during both the United Front and Left Front

[19] Eviction was also taken up by some landlords as well, independently acting but with the support of the CPI(M) (Lieten, 1992).

regimes, there was no move towards effective abolition. Konar suggested that the current social arrangements were so complicated that abolishing landlordism/tenancy would give rise to covert means of control, therefore regulation not abolition was necessary (Bhattacharyya, 1999). No substantial land was in fact grabbed or redistributed from 1977 onwards. The lands that were grabbed during the "Konar recipe" implementation were redistributed more in the 1960s (see Rogaly et al., 1999 for a discussion in the literature). This alliance speaks to the CPI(M)'s goal of working within a capitalist democratic form of the State.

Another case of alliance with existing power structures was between lower level administrators and zamindars with which the former had deep connections. These administrators would not turn up at the Barga camps and were not willing to be seen as part of the land reforms project at all. An interesting quote here of the Land Reforms Commissioner stating "You yourself heard the [junior revenue officers]…that..[they]…were not associating themselves with the Operation Barga." (Sarkar, 1989, citing the Commisioner, p. 186).While other administrators displayed interest in being involved in the reforms process, but never took concrete action to implement them (Sarkar, 1989, p. 186). The practices of administrators of not being part of the reform process are governed by their elitist logic and the logic of collusion. Since they had social connections with the zamindars, they were not willing to be part of a process of undermining zamindari rights (Kohli, 1989).

The calculative practice of sidelining radical class conflict in favor of a peasant unity, was carried out through the Krishak Sabha (Bhattacharyya, 1999). The CPI(M) engaged

in “complex manoeuvres, calculated shifts and poignant rhetoric” (Bhattacharyya, 1999, p. 281) to do so. Thus practices of negotiations and complicated maneuverings amongst the classes became quite common at the site of the Krishak Sabha. It became a vehicle to negotiate tense situations between landlords, sharecroppers and agricultural laborers. There would be occasional symbolic strikes for the increase of wages for wage workers but nothing beyond that (Bhattacharyya, 1999). Negotiation was adopted as a key practice, because the Sabha’s membership was opened up to farmers of all classes, including the middle class farmers. The latter quickly started wielding power (as mentioned before), because of the supportive spirit of the CPI(M) towards them. Further non-farming middle classes were also inducted into the Sabha. These members also had a strong voice. Thus the needs of bargadars and wage workers were not paid so much attention to (ibid). There were members within the Sabha who opposed the dilution of reforms. Against this, negotiatory discourses were unleashed to stem such oppositions. For instance several reasons were given for the dilution of reforms. Firstly, the 1960s land grabs was considered a mistake and that it could not be replicated without consequences including destabilizing the economic order and the proliferation of subterfuge politics of benami transactions. Secondly, the class polarization has decreased since the 1960s, so it would really be difficult to identify the “parasitic class” any more, and popular opinion against them has whittled. So targeting big landlords was no longer an option. Finally, the amount of land vested in the State was too little to be redistributed (Bhattacharyya, 1999).

The nature of these negotiations indicates several rationales guiding these practices. Firstly, it is the rationale of order and the anxiety towards maintaining that order that negotiations became a key practice in the Sabha. Disorder was thus jettisoned. The logic of fostering social co-existence by forging agreements (Chatterjee, 2009) became important. Secondly, it was the calculation of 'truth making' (Foucault, 2009, p. 273), which is about influencing minds, dispositions and practices of people to achieve specific goals (ibid) which were both economic and electoral goals, as mentioned before.

Intersectionlaity and Technology of Rule of Caste

Caste solidarities played an important role in who received benefits from the reforms (Chatterjee, 1982). The practices of solidarities were governed by the strategic calculation of caste, its politics of 'purity' and its politics of difference. The caste-class location of party workers and leaders mattered, as they would favor those belonging to the same cultural-economic location. Middle-class-caste leaders would spare middle/richer class-caste peasants from land seizures (Rudd, 1999). People who belonged to the same caste group or showed party support have benefitted more and are part of the CPI(M)'s target group (Williams, 1999). The political ideology and the history of the Left in issues of mobilization did matter, but the Left's functioning always was in articulation with cultural-moral issues. Hence the CPI(M) never really challenged the hierarchical casteised society, giving rise to these exclusionary policies (Rudd, 1999). This issue is confirmed when studies have shown that the relationship amongst different groups and local party leaders, was contingent upon the socio-cultural rank and identity of the groups and the party leaders (Basu, 1992). Thus political ideology of communism

was entangled with socio-cultural hierarchies, to produce effects such as some benefitting from the reforms and others not (Rudd, 1999). Particularly, as Basu (1992) points out that the SC, the untouchables or Dalits (1/4 th population of the state) was a strong base for the CPI(M) while the tribals had a more uneasy, ambiguous relation with the party (Basu, 1992). Often lower class-caste members were disciplined by specific relations of patronage (Rudd, 1999).

While there are reports that SC/STs are well represented in Panchayats, what Rudd (1999) found was that certain groups within the caste system was actually better represented. Moreover, representation in panchayats of SCs/STs did not mean actual control of resources (so many lower castes were represented formally but not rendered actual control (Roy, 2013, p. 210). This impacted the way the lower castes had access to resources that were part of the reforms process. But giving representation and not control (which is a kind of tokenism), is imbued with social meaning of dignity, particularly to those caste groups who are historically marginalized (Rudd, 1999). They can circumvent the impure ritual status through political representation (Rudd, 1999). Being part of the CPI(M) party would therefore mean that they were of a higher cultural status because the cultural landscape from which the party leadership and even the party as a whole evolved had moral values of being "auster[e]" and "clean" (Rudd, 1999, p. 269). The membership in the party afforded them the opportunity to go up the purity ladder and become like the members of the higher castes and be associated with the qualities, moralities, ideals and norms of higher social positions (Rudd, 1999). Apart from a caste rationale working behind representation without substantial power, there was also the

rationale of elitism and superiority which worked against the lower caste members, who have historically being marginalized in the sphere of education. In a paternalistically condescending attitude (Roy, 2009), the poor, lower caste and women members were considered unsuitable as leaders because of lack of social capital and knowledge. This is because the enlightened leaders who were the 'real' leaders were mostly men of higher caste which also coincided with a higher class position and education. The operative cultural and discursive signifier that led to such discrimination was the notion of "bhodrolok" (patriciate) and "chotolok" (plebians) (Roy, 2013). The structural inequalities often led to upper caste, richer men being panchayat leaders and this had an effect on who benefitted from the reforms (Lieten, 2003; Webster, 1990; Young, 2000). The politics of reform implementation and who benefitted from them have been intimately tied to issues of caste. Though the importance of caste division is present in Bengal, it has never taken on the form of identity politics of North India. This phenomenon has been termed as "Caste-in-limbo" (Samaddar, 1994, 56-59). However caste is still mobilized. Caste still forms the basis of a "truncated or fragmented community" (Chatterjee, 1997, p. 84) in Bengal, that becomes a bearer of identity, that has a signifying role in so-called class politics or electoral politics of the CPI(M). This is not to claim that land reforms did not benefit the lower castes or that the lower castes were not mobilized. They did and in many cases they became more assertive about their political and economic rights (Roy, 2013).

Intersectionality and Technology of Rule of Capturing Panchayats (Red Panchayats) and Clientelism

Guided by the logic of "parichalan" or control i.e. the logic of almost complete control of villages for the purpose of vote-bank politics, panchayats often converted into red panchayats (Kohli, 1989) completely colonized by the CPI(M). For instance, all panchayat decisions were made within sub-committees of the panchayat, quite insulated from popular participation (Bhattacharya, 1998; Roy, 2009). These sub-committees were controlled by local party committees (Lieten, 2003). All final decisions of panchayats were supervised by party members at local and state level (Bhattacharyya, 1999). The poor, SCs/STs who did show up for village meetings of panchyats did not actually participate in any decision-making process as the decisions were made by the party (Chatterjee, 2009). When there is overwhelming dominance of panchayats by one party, a lot of accountability decreases. Thus often the refrain is that the PRIs have not done the duties they are made responsible for (Chakrabarty, 2011). In such conditions, the implementation of reforms also gets skewed. For instance, a study revealed that reforms were poorly implemented in a CPI(M)-dominated area, and better implemented where there was political party rivalry, as more accountability was demanded (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003; 2004; Chatterjee, 2009).

This process of colonization of the panchayats, led to massive clientelism and corruption with people being discriminated against in the implementation of reforms based on party affiliations (Chatterjee, 2009; Lieten, 2003). Patron-client relations were now with the party usually headed by a "bhodrolok" or gentry who had a strong influence in

panchayats (Rogaly, 1998; Lieten, 2003, p. 114; Chatterjee, 2009) and who would patronizingly look after "chotoloks" or plebians (see Bardhan, 1982). Thus the phenomenon of patronage within the panchayats came to be quite commonplace (my readings of Chakrabarty, 2011). This patronage politics over all was well-oiled, as through this network, conflicts were arbitrated; maneuvers of co-optation of those who were more confrontational about issues of governance delivery were carried out (Dasgupta, 2009, p. 81 cited in Chakrabarty, 2011). This clientelism was extended to those who supported the party (see Bardhan et al., 2009), and this would impact how people benefitted from the redistribution process of reforms. The poor and those who are marginalized did benefit, but on the conditionality of clientelism (ibid, p. 57).

This sort of clientilist political practice is guided by history of clientelism in Bengal's polarized landscape. It is also driven by the logic of creating factions/groups or "dols" (Lieten, 2003). Thus certain groups will be offered 'doles' over others. There was the rationality therefore to create a kind of "political society", where the underprivileged had to compete for and negotiate their "claims" through informality rather than legality of "civil society" (Chatterjee, 2004; Williams, 1999). Furthermore these panchayat leaders often took on the position of the traditional patron in the village, given that they controlled the disbursement of development funds (Williams, 1999). . Development work that was done by the panchayat members was not an 'objectivized' help but was about personal politics and was offered as 'help' to certain constituents, when it is actually a duty (Williams, 1999). Therefore those who needed help had to do it through claims (Williams, 1999, p. 2360. The panchayats became a machine for doling out "personalized

benefits" (Williams, 1999). So there was partisan politics and patronage, and this has been interpreted as part of politicization of the panchayat (Williams, 1999).

Intersectionality and Technology of Rule of Gendered Reforms

What is going to be taken as progressive reforms get more complex when the gender question is raised (Basu, 1992). The CPI(M) party could not escape the patriarchal norms in society. The reforms were gender-biased. Women's claim to property was marginalized as land redistribution and registration was accorded to males. The male party leadership (usually urban educated) was not interested in the gender question around land (Basu, 1992). The male-biased reforms enhanced gendered inequalities, as women did not receive ownership rights (Basu, 1992, p. 9). In all the struggles around land, the hegemonic figure of oppression is the male, even though women are part of these struggles (Rao, 2008; Agrawal, 1994; Roy, 2009; 2013). This sexism reinforces the gendered norm that women 'belong' in the inner domain of the family (Chatterjee, 1993). It also gives a sense that women are not full beings therefore conferring individual rights was problematic (Rao, 2008). Therefore not being complete, they were to be relegated in the sphere of reproduction. As Basu (1992) states that women are considered as the sites of holding culture and were more important in maintaining kinship connections and policing the boundaries of caste. Given this gendered normativity, according land rights to women seem 'odd'. Since land rights have historically been a source of power, prestige, privilege and status, it must therefore be denied of them (Rao, 2008). The system of dowry has justified the male inheritance around land, and dowry receipt has been used as a means to accrue land in the families that brides go to (Gupta, 1997).

Further the class-orientation of the party, was highly masculinist as it subverted the idea of multiple differences that can exist within the category of class. The women's wing within the party could not significantly impress upon the party the issue of women's property rights. In fact women's organization at the grassroots level did not have the sufficient degree of autonomy from the CPI(M) to always assert the rights of women (Basu, 1992). They themselves were sidelined due to strong democratic centralism exercised by male leaders. The party just used women as instruments for electoral mobilization (Basu, 1992). A conference organized by The Center for Women's Development Studies, found landless tribal women to be the most disadvantaged. As one woman stated: "it is all good to give pattas to our husbands. But if they leave us, we become landless again." (as stated in Basu, 1992, p. 63). In 1979, a conference of women panchayat members demanded joint title on land (Agarwal, 1994). This demand paradoxically exemplifies the internalization of patriarchal norms, as full title for women was never demanded. Joint pattas were considered only in 1994-1995 (Bandyopadhyay, 2003), and so far women constitute 3.5% of total pattadars (Datta Ray, 2004). This has in part led to feminization of malnuitrition (Basu, 1992).

Against Binaries

In the above analysis of village politics around reforms, I am not trying to purport that there is a formal regime of party politics emanating from the CPI(M) leaders at the state level, and that policies get refracted through informal village politics, thus producing a binary division between the two. This narration is not about binarization between formal

and informal politics. Some subaltern school scholars have made the distinction that there are two 'domains' of politics: one formal, modern and elite (state/party politics) the other informal, traditional and subaltern (village politics) (see Chatterjee, 1984; see also Chakrabarty, 2000). By focusing on provincilizing technologies of rule, I am not stating that the two domains are in a sort of a 'confrontation' (between formal state/party politics and traditional village politics) (Roy, 2013, p. 2). The analysis here is against binaries to show, how formal policies made at the state level/party level in West Bengal, touchdown differently across the state. This is because the policies are in dialectical interaction with local conditions, wherein state level politics and local politics co-produce each other, thereby both co-evolve. They are not just 'entangled' or 'dependent' (Roy, 2013, p. 5) on each other but are internally connected such that they cannot ever be disentangled. The upshot is that politics around land reforms become a process of emergence.

Conclusion

Despite being communists, with so-called strict party discipline and organizational-ideological unity, there were contradictions within the CPI(M) on the idea of communism itself. The way the reforms were implemented was highly differentiated over space, depending on local imaginaries and political-economic-cultural situations (Williams, 2001), where the state's rule combined with varied localized histories of power and relations of forces (Moore, 2005). The "[m]icropractices through which relations of rule work", resided not only in a systemic rationality, but also in and through relations at multiple sites that had very specific outcomes (Moore, 2005, p. 11, see also 11-12.). Here

there were multiple subjects (raiyats, bargadars, agricultural laborers, party cadres, panchayat members, bureaucrats, farmers's organization i.e. krishak sabhas etc), invested in diverse value system, their social intersectionality, with specific practices and localized forms of rule but working within the abstract ideas of reforms, always imbricated with local histories of power and unfolding forms of power (see Li, 2014; Mitchell, 2002) emerging that have led to preservation of hierarchies. This has led to a complex process of play of power relations, maneuvers, negotiations, ruptures with varied effects.

The end result of the establishment of reforms has been several. These are: a) the establishment of hegemony of the Left, particularly the CPI(M); b) the establishment of the perception that despite the pathologized reforms, the Left was concerned about the poor. The Left was able to revive the safety first" ethic for the peasants as part of the moral economy logic (Scott, 1976, p. 11). The issues which concerned the poor were politicized (Kohli, 1989). This had psychological effects wherein confidence was built up amongst the poor, they stopped feeling left out, became more independent relative to the servile past, which were all important along with material gains (Kohli, 1989) ; c) paradoxically the Left was also viewed as corrupt and autocratic; and d) the experience of reforms and even panchayats have been highly differentiated spatially, which has contributed to diverse subject positions around land. One effect related to the feeling that the Left being autocratic needs to be elaborated.

The control of panchayats and the patronage links through it, the CPI(M) party became like an efficient machine able to sweep through village life (Chakrabarty, 2011). It was through the panchayats that the panoptic gaze of the party was exercised that helped

CPI(M) to fortify its rural support base. The party cadres through their "intimate" knowledge of village life, its members and its problems, exercised power: i.e. monitored and regulated social life (Agrawal, 2005, p. 93). The panchayats were Bentham's panopticon, making visible, casting its power of occularity on village life (Agrawal, 2005). It was through the panchayats that critical decisions were made by party members, and it became an effective institution of party control. In addition, the party subordinated every village institution, its members settling family disputes, being present in schools and community meetings. As Chatterjee elegantly states, "In West Bengal, the key term is "party". It is indeed the elementary institution of rural life in the state- not family, not kinship, not caste, not religion, not market, but party. It ……mediates every single sphere of social activity…..Every social institution, such as the landlord's house, the caste council, the religious assembly, sectarian foundations, schools, sporting clubs, traders' associations…..have been eliminated, marginalized or subordinated to the "party"." (Chatterjee, 2009, p. 43). Nothing much could evolve without the permission of the party cadres. Further extortions started (Chakrabarty, 2011). For instance, the party would ask for "illegal taxes" (Chakrabarty, 2011, p. 302, citing farmer interview in the Tehelka Magazine) for weddings, or to carry out mundane tasks of house repairs. If there was resistance there would be violent politics (Chakrabarty, 20110. This reeks of Stalinist dictatorship (see Basu, 1992) and an emergence of an Orwellian State. This established a "party society": a society of "clientelism…of permanent dependence" (Chatterjee, 2009, p. 42).. The State was thus present in and through the CPI(M) cadres in the interstices of everyday life (Gupta, 1995, p. 375). However the "production" of this party society was

"partial….perpetually haunted by its ontologically uncertain double" (Butler, 2003, p.7) i.e. resistance. This resistance however was quashed with the technology of violence. CPI(M) employed criminals called harmads, to perpetrate violence to bring people in line (Walker, 2008; Chakrabarty, 2011). For instance, due to this overwhelming dominance, a usurpation of sorts, followed by reports of corruption too, there was a more generalized sense of suspicion, lack of trust of the party and the institutions that it tried to subordinate thus eroding their moral position. What is starker that created a sense of mistrust is that they did it in the name of the people, especially the poor whom they wanted to socio-economically uplift and afford dignity (see Chatterjee, 2009, p. 45). Further this kind of party-society always have potential dangers that certain practices and assertions, including authoritarian ones could be made which totally is at odds with the democratic framework of the country (Bhattacharya, 2009, p. 69; Chakrabarty, 2011) which at the same time can foster radical pushback to match this authoritarianism.

Chapter 3: From Reforms to Acquisition: The Politics of Rendering Land Investible in West Bengal

In 2006, a village in the eastern state of West Bengal, Singur (in Hugli District), was convulsed by violent agitations between some farmers/farm workers and the local State, which was trying to acquire land for the NANO car factory to be owned by TATA Motors. This was part of the attempt of the ruling communist government to attract capital investments and make West Bengal globally competitive. Hence Singur was demarcated as a Special Economic Zone, where global capital could spatialize itself (Harvey, 1985). The immediate effect was that some of those who were confronted with the prospect of land dispossession now challenged both the State and capital by organizing through the Save Agricultural Land of Singur Committee (SALC) (Roy, 2009). Significantly this committee was purportedly supported by a once-obscure radical militarized communist group called the Naxalites. The Naxalites, who follow Mao's ideology of leading a violent peasant-led revolution against the State and the exploiting classes, saw a political opportunity in this popular resentment against the State's development trajectory (Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2009; Jaoul, 2009; Verma, 2009; Lieten, 2003; Banerjee, 1984; Basu, 2001). However, this was not a singular struggle between hapless land losers and oppressive land grabbers. There were many land losers who supported the State and capital. This story is my point of departure, in trying to

understand a key paradox: Why did the communist government of West Bengal, which facilitated land reforms in 1977 (albeit partially) to help the rural poor have land security, was grabbing their lands to create Special Economic Zones? What has changed and why? In other words and following Li (2014a), why and *how did land in West Bengal come to be "investible"?* The paper sets to unpack this question.

Land acquisition or grabbing is a common feature in the global South. Land grabs have accelerated with the irruption of environmental, food, energy and economic crisis at the global level (Borras et al., 2011). It has resulted in the transformation of agro-ecological environments, existing property and labor regimes, having adverse consequences for environmental, livelihood and food security (White et al., 2012; Borras and Franco, 2012; Peluso and Lund, 2011). In response there has been a surge of resistance (Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck, 2011; Bello 2009). Taken in this light that land grab is not unusual, the West Bengal case becomes another story of land grabbing. However what is interesting in the West Bengal case is its past history of land reforms and that the regime of land acquisition goes against the very kernel of that past!

The paper will first engage with the analytical body of thought of Marxist provenance, to show that while the economic moment of enclosure formation is understood in terms of the law of value of capital's originary moment or in terms of crisis in the reproduction of value, the political moment, particularly the role of the State is neglected. Further such theories are pitched at high levels of abstraction that elides the messy realities on the ground. By addressing these blindspots, this paper will then put forward its argument. The argument is two-fold. Firstly, because of rescaling of certain State powers to the

West Bengal State, the State was now responsible for attracting global capital. However the communist government's past history of land reforms and encouraging bargaining power of labor, made the creation of the conditions for accumulation challenging. In this context the Special Economic Zones model of growth was implemented with alacrity to get rid of the inertia of the past. The second argument deals with the intricacies of the exercise of State power to materialize the Special Economic Zones. I argue that colonial logics of power were put into play to particularly amongst other things forget the past history of reforms. For each of the two arguments made, the paper will substantiate each with evidence.

Analytical Prompts: Marx and Harvey- Building on their Explanations

There are several explanations in the Marxist body of intellectual thought to explain such land enclosures. Marx called this land grabbing as primitive accumulation. Marx envisaged primitive accumulation as the process which separates "immediate producers" (Marx, 1976, p. 874) from their means of production. This is a necessary condition that establishes capital social relations. Through primitive accumulation, land is appropriated, permitting the land and the "means of subsistence" (Marx, 1976, p. 874) to be converted into capital. Those who are dispossessed become "free" to become wage workers, a process called proletarianization (Marx, 1976, see p.928). Labor and capital are then brought together for the purpose of capitalist production. Marx considers primitive accumulation therefore as a phenomenon that unfolded in the period that "precedes capitalist accumulation" (Marx, 1976, p. 873). Hence he calls this 'primitive', as it is in

capitalism's "pre-history" (Marx, 1976, p. 875). Marx emphasizes more on violence and extra-economic forces as facilitating this process. He writes "In actual history, it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, *force* play the greatest part" (Marx, 1976, p. 874, my emphasis). Thus economic means (taxation etc) are not really foregrounded as having a central role in land appropriation. The role of the state in facilitating primitive accumulation is mentioned (Marx, 1976).

This universal theory with its claim that proletrianization occurs is problematic (see Bryceson, 2002 and Brass, 2008 who complicate this notion of proletarianization). As Bernstein (2004) noted that hardly few rural people can be called pre-capitalist (see Negi and Auerbach, 2009b). For instance, in the Singur case mentioned above, being a semi-rural space, there are many farmers and farm workers who are also wage workers. Therefore, the classic sense of separation of the immediate producers from the means of production may not be witnessed, as there are many who are already in a dual economy i.e. work as wage workers and also cultivate land.

Importantly David Harvey offers an explanation underscoring the "crisis of overaccumulation" (see Harvey, 2003, p. 61; 2007) as being causal towards this kind of phenomenon, which he considers as being one aspect of imperialism (Harvey, 2003). He calls the concrete ways in which imperialism as a whole plays out as 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003, p. 67). Dismissing the fact that primitive accumulation occurred at the beginning of capitalism, Harvey claims that it is ongoing and uses the appellation accumulation by dispossession (Negi and Auerbach 2009b). *Under contemporary capitalism, accumulation therefore happens not only through production*

but also through dispossession (Harvey, 2003). The latter becoming more important, and involves "fraud", "violence" and "predation" (Harvey, 2003, p.144; see Marx, 1867 [1991]).[20] The overaccumulation crisis, causes capital to find or create an 'outside' (see Luxemberg, 1913) that will help avert that crisis by constituting new markets in labor and other commodities (Luxemberg, 1913).[21] He considers this outside as being non-capitalist or a particular sectoral sphere within capitalism itself (Harvey, 2003; see Ashman and Callinicos, 2006). It is here that 'predation' is unleashed through privatization, commodification, formation of all kinds of private property rights, imposition of taxes, credit etc (Harvey, 2003, p. 145). Harvey says therefore that accumulation through actual production and accumulation through dispossession are internally connected parts of the contemporary accumulation process. Politically, he urges therefore for solidarities to be built up between those who get dispossessed and the labor struggles in the sphere of production (Harvey, 2003).

This concept is stretched to include almost everything that dispossesses, therefore is not confined to land acquisition (Ashman and Callinicos, 2006; Fine, 2006). This catch-all concept therefore has been applied to explain multiple things: real subsumption (Buck, 2009)[22], creation of 'enclosures' in urban areas (Blomley, 2008), the formation of private property, intellectual property rights (Andreasson, 2006; 2001; Blomley, 2008 as cited in Negi and Auerbach, 2009b), commodification of nature (Heynen and Robbins, 2005 as cited in Negi and Auerbach, 2009b), imperialism and the role of "extra-economic"

[20] Thus Harvey, expands on Marx's ideas of violence, to explain accumulation by dispossession.
[21] Harvey is greatly influenced by Luxemberg's idea that capital needs an 'exterior' to resolve its crisis. This exterior according to Luxemberg was the non-capitalist sphere which provided the market for labor and commodities and resolved the crisis of underconsumption (Luxemberg, 1913). Harvey rejects the underconsumption theory, and substitutes it with the crisis of overaccumulation (see Harvey, 2003).
[22] Real subsumption is the increased exploitation of labor through mechanization (Marx, 1976).

aspects (Glassman, 2006 as cited in Auerbach, 2009b) etc. Many Marxists have expressed frustration with this analytical dilution. It has implications for how one is to understand the land question considering that multiple issues are subsumed under a singular category. It then becomes a "contingent" question whether accumulation by dispossession includes primitive accumulation (Negi and Auerbach, 2009a, see p.89) or not. However the clarity is necessary due to the pressing issue of land grabbing in the global south that needs to be addressed under the agrarian question (Negi and Auerbach, 2009b, see p. 100). Others state that the welter of issues such as privatization, commodificaion etc is not removed from the land question, because the problematic of land underpins all of them (see Fraser, 2008 as cited in Negi and Auerbach, 2009b). For political reasons, the "generic" processes that Harvey describes, should be separated from land acquisition (Negi and Auerbach, 2009b, p.101), to theorize a robust politics of change which helps connect class struggles to struggles around land (Negi and Auerbach, 2009a, p. 90). In light of these reasons and the fact that primitive accumulation is indicative of how the conditions for exploitation in the sphere of production are constituted, there has been a call to revitalize the concept of primitive accumulation (Ashman and Callinicos, 2006; Negi and Auerbach, 2009a;b).

My point in bringing up these theories and the debates surrounding them, is to say that whether one chooses to call land grabbing primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession, really depends on the scholars ontology, the research questions that need to be addressed and the particular epistemological stance taken. In my view, Harvey signals the raft of forms land acquisition can take, from privatization to commodification

of nature which is very incisive. Both Marx and Harvey point out that the abstract process of capital social relations is key in understanding land grabbing. That is very useful, and is applicable to answering the question I raised in my paper. However in both Marx and Harvey, I find two major deficiencies that I want to address in my paper and therefore answer my question. Firstly, Marx is not very clear about the role of the State in land grabbing. While Harvey establishes the structural relationship between the State and capital, but there is a lack of rigor in discussing the dialectical nature of interactions between capitalists and State managers including State officials and politicians (Ashman and Callinicos, 2006; Levien, 2013).[23] There is no engagement of complexity of interests amongst state managers and businesses, their connections and disjunctions (Ashman and Callinicos, 2006). As Ashman and Callinicos (2006) points out that capitalists are trying to accumulate and State administrators are trying to legitimize their rule, it is important to understand therefore how and why these goals intersect (or not). Relatedly, Harvey emphasizes too much on the 'capital logic', i.e. capitalists are seen as almost all powerful. In addition the focus on "predation" and "opportunism" (Negi and Auerbach, 2009b, p. 102; see Goodman and Watts, 1994), obscure the role of state officials and their modernizing impulse (Ferguson, 2006). It also presents capital as an ineluctable force that will engender dispossession, casting a sense of hopelessness. Secondly, both Marx and Harvey bracket off dynamic social relations that unfold across multiple scales and context. They do not engage with the "untidy" (see Ettlinger, 2004 "untidy geographies") practices, discourses and power relations across scales (Katz, 2006). It is a problem of

[23] There is indeed a tension in Harvey's work, where on the one hand he emphasizes dialectics, which is about processes and relations (Harvey, 2003; 2007), but on the other hand he there is erasure of the same (Ashman and Callinicos, 2006).

metanarratives with its refusal to explain mess (Wright, 2006) and its predilection to paint an aggregated abstract picture. As Ben Fine (2006) observes, that Harvey's (and Marx too) theory is too generalized, it is all about logics and tendencies, but with little explanation of how within concrete contexts and through concrete means the internal contradictions of capital are resolved and how that gives rise to external contradictions. It is in this context, some scholars have carried out empirical research to show diverse embodied experiences that are there around this phenomenon (Ayelazuno, 2011). I take cues from both Marx and Harvey, but in light of the gaps in their theorization, *I integrate their narratives of the accumulation process with the concrete political moment*, i.e. the role played by the West Bengal State, particularly the communist government headed by the CPI(M) in this land acquisition. Further, I will engage in a situated analysis (see Haraway, 1991) of the land question to see concretely how this "internal colonization" through "predatory growth" (as some call it) works (see Walker, 2008, p. 557 and 558 respectively).

Argument

In order to answer the question why and how land is rendered investible (or not), I argue the following: The policy of creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs) by a communist government, has unfolded in the context of rescaling of State spaces in response to creating conditions for accumulation (Brenner et al., 2003). This has made West Bengal State a main actor in attracting global capital. However as West Bengal is created as a site for management and governance to render it investible, it is constantly rendered non-

investible by the inertia of its past: policies of reforms (from the rural sphere) and labor militancy (from the urban sphere), both being a legacy of it social democratic approach to governance (see Sinha, 2004). *I argue it is the 'fragility' of this situation, that Special Economic Zone policies were adopted with vigor to overcome the 'stickiness' of the past (see Sinha, 2004)*. I also argue, that once the SEZ policies were put into practice, colonial logics of power (Werner, 2011) were employed to further accumulation through the SEZs, having varied effects (see Dean, 2010). These colonial logics of power included a strategy to forget the past[24] (Fernandes, 2004), invisibilize existing social relations around land (Scott, 1998) and engage in coercion if necessary. In this paper through this understanding I will show how property is a "dense transfer point… of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 103). As it is through the changing property regime, the State tries to produce State spaces and subjects (who will acquiesce to land acquisition) and employs strategies that enables (or not) an erasure or absence of the past, i.e. a land where history is deliberately forgotten: forgotten to materialize capitalist social relations of property.

In the first argument where I discuss how rescaling has unfolded at the sub-national scale, I have heavily relied on Loraine Kennedy's understanding of how the rescaling process has happened at that scale. I particularly draw on her understanding of how rescaling in India is a product of structural factors as well as the role played by political actors and institutions. I extend her more general analysis to West Bengal, not only to show how structure and the role of political agents are important, but how the past plays a significant role in this restructuring process. Particularly, I have tried to sow how the

[24] This is not to claim that colonial logics of power were not used in the past by the State government. I am more interested in understanding how these logics are used to forget the past and further the logics of capital.

historically situated relations between the communist government and farmers and labor impact rescaling. In this sense I am adding another layer of complexity to Kennedy's general argument on the trajectory of State space making in India.

Theoretical Anchor: The Framing

In trying to fathom how the West Bengal State became a major actor in attracting global capital, the concept of State space and State rescaling are key. State space is not conceived wherein there is a static sovereign authority that has control over a well-defined and bordered space as container, with its social and economic processes (Agnew, 1994; Brenner et al., 2003). This conceptualization is termed as the "territorial Trap" by Agnew (1994). The term State space can be broadly conceptualized as geographies of rule which are produced (based of broad interpretation of Brenner et al., 2003). There can be State spaces in the "narrow sense" (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 6). These are bounded spaces or territories or specific "spatiality", where boundaries and frontiers are present that are under the control of the State (ibid). This spatiality or territorial structure is not given, it has to be produced i.e. borders, boundaries etc. have to be etched out through territorializing processes (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 6). These are State spaces in the Euclidean sense. However State spaces can be conceptualized in the "integral sense" or non-Euclidean sense, which are about States actively generating a particular form of socio-spatial arrangement/configuration that is advantageous for rule (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 6, 9-10). This involves "intervention" involving restructuring socio-economic relations within territories or without, i.e. restructuring of relations at or across scales

(Brenner et al., p. 6) that is facilitative of exercise of State power. Thus to reiterate, a State space in the integral sense is about producing geographies of rule using technologies of power/calculations that are deployed to arrange socio-economic relations at and beyond scales. State space in the integral sense subsumes State space in the narrow sense, as territorialization or producing a particular kind of "fixed" (territory) spatiality is one aspect of State intervention (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 9). In the Indian case therefore, there is a "scalar organization of [S]tate spaces" (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 5), between the federal State and the local State of West Bengal. Each therefore has overlapping geographies of rule wherein which both deploy strategies to redesign socio-economic processes propitious for rule. However these State spaces are not static or given. They get constantly produced. As Lefebvre has incisively stated, that State space is about producing a space (in relational sense) of rule (see Brenner et al., p. 9). This production happens due to rescaling of State powers, wherein rescaling of State powers is a technology to produce new geographies of rule (Brenner et al., 2003). Rescaling of powers of the State, which involve politics of producing scales, is driven by the accumulation process. It is to that explanation the paper will now turn.

Capital attempts to suspend its contradictions to allow further accumulation to proceed. This leads to qualitative transformation (dialectically) in the social world (Cox, b). This is what makes the capitalist system dynamic and expansionary both economically and geographically (Harvey, 1975). The accumulation process is not only a social process, but it has geographical attributes that are necessary to it rather than contingent (Cox, c). In other words the accumulation process is a socio-spatial one. The imperatives of this

process and its inner contradictions produce all manner of socio-economic and geographic transformations. To be more specific, as capital tries to suspend the contradictions it faces, it will look towards mobilizing new cheap labor forces elsewhere; or search for cheaper raw materials; or will attempt to exploit geographic differences to accumulate even further etc (Cox, e; Harvey, 1985a; 2001; 2007). Similarly, the problem of overaccumulation can lead to the search for new spatial fixes (Harvey, 1985a; 1975). As a result of all this, values may not flow through the existing fixed facilities and social infrastructures (Cox, d). It can become congealed in new factories, cities, infrastructures in new industrial spaces or in the newly industrializing countries which provide a competitive edge over the former spaces. Enabling accumulation in the new spaces can lead to the creation of new physical and social infrastructures (Cox, d). This also logically means that political economic activities are constantly realigned and reorganized across various scales. Thus scales get constantly produced termed as the "political economy of scale" (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 5 for a summary citing the works of Swngedouw, Smith, Brenner and McMaster and Sheppard).

This restructuring of political economic processes means a concomitant transformation in the scalar division of labor of States, or a scalar transformation of State spaces (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 5). Thus the territorial structure of the State is not fixed. In other words the division of labor amongst various scales of the State is not static and already given. They are produced and undergo constant changes as a result of the accumulation process.[25] For

[25] Here I am considering the accumulation process as being central in the creation of a new scale division of labor of States, as that is germane to my argument. I believe that a gamut of social processes, that are not related to t he accumulation process (or tangentially connected) can also lead to a change in this scale division of labor of States. However that kind of an analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.

instance, because of the "political economy of scale", in the case of Western Europe it has meant that the sub-national scale, particularly the urban sites are becoming the sites of accumulation.[26] These urban spaces are now becoming the spaces of competition, and there is a concomitant reduction in welfare activities emanating at the national scale (Brenner, 2009, p. 129 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). However, this does not mean that the accumulation process automatically subordinates spatial organization to its own logic. This is a deterministic view much like the "capital logic" of Harvey that I had mentioned earlier, where only capitalists are seen as agents!

This production and subsequent changes that occur at various scales are the result of a play of power amongst various forces (and is struggled over) (Brenner et al., 2003, p.5, 9; Kennedy, 2013). For instance, in the West Bengal case, the central State in the context of an accumulation crisis and the changing spatial division of labor (Kennedy, 2013; Harvey, 2001; 2007), rescaled the powers of industrialization to the sub-national scale. Thus rescaling was an "accumulation strategy" (Brenner, 1998, p. 1). Thus the State space of both the federal State and West Bengal was produced, with new geographies of rule emerging across scales. To be more precise, with the accumulation crisis as capital flows got restructured, it enhanced the competition amongst countries to attract investments. Various businesses and political elites pushed India towards neoliberalizing its economy. This has meant that neoliberal policies have been adopted that has led to the dismantling of barriers to trade and capital movement. Part of the process of being competitive has been to construct the sub-national scale (contra the national scale) as an

[26] This has happened due to post-Fordism, and the flexibility in the production process that has happened (see Brenner, 2009 as cited in Kennedy, 2013).

important site for the attraction of global capital (Kennedy, 2013, p. 3).This made West Bengal a major space for the destination of global capital. This rescaling of State space meant that the West Bengal State now had to discipline, arrange, restructure and manage socio-economic relations that were conducive to capital investment. Here the sub-national scale of West Bengal then evolved as an important center for accumulation within this larger frame of rescaling State spaces in response to the contradictions of capital (Brenner, 1998).

Such rescaling, whereby the sub-national space is reconfigured for the purpose of integrating them into global capital circuits has been termed as "glocal fixes" (Brenner, 1998 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). Such glocal fixing involves bringing together and producing certain territorial configurations, amenable to capitalist investment (Kennedy, 2013). Thus the sub-national space emerges as the new space of regulation (Kennedy, 2013, p. 4; Brenner, 1998 cited in Kennedy, 2013; Brenner et al., 2003, p.10; Smith, 2003) for this glocal fixing. This means that certain state scales become more crucial than others in recreating the condition of accumulation and this is called "relativization of scale" (Brenner et al., 2003). So the West Bengal State space now became a crucial space of regulation for the reproduction of capital social relations relative to the national State space. However this has never meant that the national State is not important. The federal State in India is still crucial in this process despite local states assuming importance (Poulantzas, 2003). This is because the federal State is responsible for designing the national space for the circulation of capital, as this space is an internal aspect of the

"capitalist spatial matrix" as it is the "political expression of an enclosure at the level of the State as a whole" (Poulantzas, 2003, p. 72).

With West Bengal now becoming the new space of regulation and management, it has to compete with other states to attract capital. Thus the accumulation process creates its own geopolitics, where geography becomes the object of struggle (Harvey, 1985a). The construction of new scales as a site of regulation, governance and management for the purpose of accumulation is always a contested process (Brenner et al., 2003; Brenner, 1998). There are specific political geographies which emerge as a result (Brenner, 1998). However which forces are involved in these struggles and why is historically specific and not given or immutable (Brenner, 2004, p. 43). The production of the scale in itself is very tenuous, never complete and marked by 'fragility' (see Brenner et al., 2003, p. 16). In case of West Bengal, the rescaling was not without its problems. The rescaling was always very fragile. This is a crucial point, because I argue that this is fragile because of the past history of land reforms and labor militancy, both of which are products of democratic socialism of the communist government. Further I argue, it is precisely this 'stickiness' of the past that interfered with the proper materialization of Bengal as a glocal fix. This then led to the uptake of the Special Economic Zone policy with vigor. To reiterate the past history of reforms and labor militancy supported by the communists created contradictions in the rescaling process. Thus the "infrastructural power" of the State (Mann, 2003, p. 55), i.e. its ability to materialize and ground regulations, to create a homogenous space after the image of capital (Lefebvre, 2003) was always ruptured (ibid, p. 87). This provided an exigent requirement to implement the SEZs.

Before I discuss the actual rescaling that took place that facilitated or not the enmeshing of Bengal with the circuits of global capital, I would like to mention a few caveats on applying this theory of State space and rescaling particularly to the West Bengal case. These theories of rescaling of the State cannot be applied in its full form to India/West Bengal, as India's political economic history is different from the core countries of advanced capitalism. In Europe, it was the breakdown of the Keynesian welfare state and the Fordist economy that was instrumental in the rescaling process; however that is not the case in India. The welfare State based on the European-model is non-existent in India, because most Indians do not work in the formal sector, a major requirement for the survival of the welfare State through taxation of such population. Instead a majority of Indians (90%) are in the informal sector. There are welfare schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme or the Public Distribution System that targets the poor. These are examples of a developmental State and not the welfare State of Europe that was an outcome of a settlement that arose as a result of political struggles. Further there is no one unitary market for India, as there is vast regional disparities in income, prices and taxes. Further there are differential labor markets that have prevented unification in markets across India (Kennedy, 2013, p. 11 and her discussion of Melchior's, 2010 findings). In brief the context of India and Western Europe is different. However some of the theoretical coordinates can be applied to the West Bengal case, but sensitivity to context is necessary (Kennedy, 2013). That is what I will be doing in the next section. Further, the privileging of the urban space as the site of rescaling and fixity of capital (Harvey, 2001) has led to neoliberal urbanism, which has been vastly studied in the

geographic literature on urbanism. However rescaling in the West Bengal case has not only meant that the urban. i.e. Kolkata (the capital city) is privileged as the site for the redirection of global capital, but that fertile farmlands in rural areas become the sites of global capital as well. That complicates the story, and this story is different and also similar to the analysis of neoliberal urbanism. In this paper I will show how the dynamics of power to produce spaces of accumulation in rural Bengal come together with its history of reforms, to produce a vibrant and messy politics.

In the rescaling literature, globalization is considered as the hegemonizing process that sets off rescaling with subsequent localization, where the local becomes an important site for global capital, but always not as consequential as the globalizing processes (Swyngedouw, 1992 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). This is a non-dialectical view. The local is important and significant, as it contributes back to the globalizing process (Paul, 2005 as cited in Kennedy, 2013, p. 11). In my analysis, I will focus on the local (West Bengal) but in relation to the national and global scale as well, particularly how West Bengal became a "scalar fix" (Smith, 2003, p. 229) and how this fix was always fragile. In other words my analysis will be contextualized (see Brenner et al., 2003).

State Space Rescaling: The Background towards Neoliberalizing of the Economy and the Production of the Sub-National Scale of Accumulation

The land acquisition politics cannot be understood without a sensibility that the scale of the West Bengal state has become salient in the attraction of global capital. This was not happenstance, but involved a dynamic process of production. The salience of the West

Bengal State as a major actant in attracting global capital is attributable to the rescaling of State powers. This has come about directly as a result of the accumulation process undergoing spatial reconfiguration globally (within and without India). Political action in response to the transformed spatial logic of accumulation resulted in the corresponding transformation institutionally at the scale of both the national and local States i.e. the changing territorial structure of the State (Kennedy, 2013, p.1). In terms of political action, various actors have precipitated the transformation. Hence the spatial rescaling of powers is not attributable solely to the accumulation process (economic activities in the strictest sense) in the formal sense, but has been the outcome of the accumulation process subordinating political action. Such political actors include: various members of the political class at the national and state scale, individuals and groups, private companies, development agencies and economic associations across scales (Kennedy, 2013, p. 2). The Indian State and its relation with the national space economy have changed since the neoliberal reforms of 1991. Prior to 1991, the Indian State had the role of managing economic activities, crafting policies of development for the space economy of India through planning. This is part of the legacy of the independence struggle (Kennedy, 2013), and the attempt to forge an ideological unity and a national identity vis-à-vis the Indian nation state. This was an attempt to secrete an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) around the idea and space of India. The Indian Constitution provides for a partly unitary and partly federal system, however the powers of the central State are greater than the states. This was buttressed continuously through the institutional sphere, discourses and actual policies written out by the federal institutions (Kennedy, 2013). The Congress

party has often been called out for concentrating excess powers at the center, and this has manifested in policy formulation, control through fiscal powers and intruding into state affairs. A call was made by several states to reevaluate this power structure and in response several committees were established to gauge center-state relations (ibid).

In matters of industrial development the federal State possessed maximum power in setting the rules of development until 1990 (Kennedy, 2013). This was the legacy of a developmental State (Chibber, 2006). In matters of redistribution of welfare, there is a hierarchy, where administrative departments hand the resources to the states which in turn distribute them through district authorities. This is a pattern followed since colonial times (Kennedy, 2013). In case of industrialization, the Nehruvian ideal of capitalism with socialist principles, set in place a developmental State model. The central State would be the node of industrial planning, policy and development. This was after the Soviet model of the command economy. The policy that was followed was the import-substitution industrial model (ISI). A mixed-economy was instituted, with State-led industrial growth co-existing alongside private capital that was geared towards introducing diverse economic activities in line with the ISI policy frame (Kennedy, 2013). The central State was the chief regulator of private-capital based industrialization. It decided a) the commodity that was to be produced, b) its quantity; c) the degree of capital intensiveness; and d) the location of such private enterprise (Kennedy, 2013; Chibber, 2006). This was regulated through licenses/permits and this was pejoratively called the license-permit Raj, due to its stifling regulations (Kennedy 2013; Chibber,

2006). Thus the national State space was very closely connected with industrialization, as that was the space of regulation, management and structuring of capital social relations. Planning was carried out by the central government in part to equalize regions economically, setting in place tax incentives to promote industrial activities in backward areas (Kennedy, 2013). However, state political elites had considerable influence on this process, which conditioned the flow of investments and its spatialization. For instance, state politicians could impact licensing decisions; they would negotiate through bureaucratic means, or through connections with the Congress party, to divert investments into their states (Sinha, 2005 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). The case of West Bengal was different. It relations with the central government was fraught. This was because the central government was led by the Congress, while the state government was led by the communist party. The relationship was particularly strife-prone in matters of financial allocation. The West Bengal government often blamed the center for a lack of proper financial support, and that was the reason for instance given for not introducing radical land reforms (Bhattacharyya, 1999, Basu, 1992; Sinha, 2005; see also Sinha, 2004).

This vexed relation impacted the flow of industrial investments into the state (Sinha, 2005 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). However, these informal strategies solely were not responsible for investment flows to states. Central policy practitioners also had a role, given that they were at the apex of the regulatory apparatus, having access to a large body of critical information, they could exercise freedom and make strategic choices as well (Kennedy, 2013). This for instance, has been substantiated with the fact that a study

showed that those states that had political parties in power closer to the political party at the center, received more plan funds and loans from the Planning Commission: clearly here both state and central political and administrative elites had a role to play (see study conducted by Nooruddin and Chibber, 2008 as cited in Kennedy, 2013, p. 24).

Another aspect of the national State space was that the central State actually gathered a huge corpus of revenues (Corbridge et al., 2013). States rely on the central State to finance budgets, as the center has the capacity to levy taxes, but a majority (not all) of the spending is done by the states (Kennedy, 2013).Most states had to take aid in the form of grants from the federal level under the constitutional provision in Article 275 (Kennedy 2013; Corbridge et al., 2013). The Planning Commission allocated both the grants as well as extended loans, which often could not be paid back by the states as they did not have the capacity to do so (Kennedy, 2013). West Bengal was one (and still continues to be) such state, which was in deep debt being unable to pay back the loans (ibid). This led to friction, sometimes between states and the center and issue of fair allocation of revenues was a key issue in these conflicts. Sometimes the friction would be amongst the states as well, with each vying for the central grants (Corbridge et al., 2013). Thus struggles between the center and the states over resource sharing were very common (Kohli, 2001).

Since the early 1980's, there was a distinct change in the in the federal State's relationship with the accumulation process. With declining growth rates and increasing poverty, the Indian State changed from a 'wary pro-capitalist' State espousing a socialist ideology, to an 'enthusiastic pro-capitalist' State, trying to gradually adopt neoliberal policies (Kohli, 2007). This was due to the structural pressures of a capitalist economy.

Meanwhile globally, neoliberalization as a policy regime to facilitate accumulation was in place since the 1970s (Harvey, 2007). The neoliberalization of the Indian economy started in earnest in 1991, but as mentioned, steps were being taken since the 1980s to reform the Indian economy (Kennedy, 2013). The State was becoming more favorable towards private domestic businesses, since the 1980s, with amongst other things meant easing controls on investments and encouraging industrial growth in modern sectors (Kennedy, 2013; Corbridge et al., 2013).

A series of events propelled the central government to take the drastic step of reforms in 1991 and get more integrated with the flows of global capital. India suffered from a balance of payment crisis (Corbridge et al., 2013). India's trade deficit grew astronomically such that foreign exchange reserves started diminishing (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 126). Even though there was an increase in exports and remittances, a lot of expenditure was incurred due to technological and petroleum imports (Kennedy, 2013). In addition there was a fiscal deficit, with a lot being spent on subsidies, while less being earned through revenue. The geopolitical environment, particularly the Kuwait invasion of 1990-1991, led to higher oil prices and destabilized international markets. A combination of these economic and geopolitical crises (Kennedy, 2013; Corbridge et al., 2013), pushed India to borrow from capital markets at high interest rates to offset its expenditure costs. It borrowed 140% of its reserves in foreign exchange, and its credit rating plunged (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 126). Thus there was a severe debt crisis (ibid).The breakdown of the Soviet Union, meant that India's relation with the US was now key, and political elites tried to get closer to the US.

India had to take a loan from the IMF to offset the contradictions of domestic capital (Corbridge et al., 2013). For instance, without the money for the necessary imports, production in India was going to be hampered. Moreover, with the contradictions in global capital and the need to suspend them, capital was in search of mobilizing new labor forces, cheaper raw materials and trying to exploit geographic differences to accumulate further, i.e. to find productive sites to invest (Cox, e; Harvey, 1985a). India was thus becoming vulnerable to pressures from countries like the US via the IMF and World Bank, countries whose businesses would benefit with the suspension of the contradictions of over accumulation. These supranational organizations pressurized India into liberalization, these institutions acting in the interest of global finance capital (Kennedy, 2013). The adoption of reforms was also a strategic step taken by economic and political elites (Kennedy, 2013) to offset the contradictions of capital within. The reforms were quickly welcomed by business elites. For instance, in terms of economic elites, business organizations like The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) (which are representatives of domestic capital), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM) (which represent domestic capital but has foreign linkages) and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), saw in this a possibility of enhancing profits, wherein the IMF funds could be used to increase the imports of raw materials and realize value. The industrial enterprises in India were benefitting from the ISI model, but saw liberalization as a further opportunity to make profits, amongst other things this would free the movement of domestic capital outside of the territorial space of India (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 127; Chibber 2006; Marx, 1976).

The contradictions of capitalism are indeed a key process in this neoliberalization effort. The contradictions impel capital to flow to new spatial spheres, so that new geographies can be subordinated to the accumulation process (Harvey, 2007). Thus it was not surprising that there was international pressure on India to neoliberalize its space economy, with also pressures growing from domestic capital. Subsequently economic restructuring was carried out to rectify the fiscal crisis (Corbridge et al., 2013).

The reforms (New Economic Policy (NEP)) (Ahmed et al., 2011; Ahmed, 2011) itself was instituted to boost India's economic growth and the focus was on many issues including trade and investment. In trade, quotas and licenses on import and export were removed (except some consumer commodities and crucial commodities like petroleum, foodgrains) and custom duties were decreased. Incentives were given to manufacture for exports, like facilitating duty-free import of raw materials. There could now be up to 51% maximum ownership by foreign firms (up from 40% previously) in joint-venture enterprises. Full ownership was allowed in energy. Tax breaks were also offered to attract investments (Kennedy, 2013). State enterprises started disinvestments or privatization (though the latter has been slower). Meanwhile, taxes were raised, defence budget was cut and the Public Sector Enterprises and fertilizer subsidies were impacted (Corbridge et al., 2013). Many of the subsidies to the agricultural sector were rolled back. What is important in this reform is the issue of rescaling of State powers, with the sub-national State space being produced as a vital site for the attraction of capital.

The neoliberal reforms transformed the territorial structure of the State (Kennedy, 2013; Bardhan, 2009), where the states since then, have become important actors in facilitating

industrial development. In the past there has been rescaling of state powers due to administrative changes towards better governance, including decentralization of governance through local bodies (see Panchayati Raj Institution), or the devolution of powers to local agencies (Kennedy, 2013, p. 2,3). Since 1991, the rescaling of state spaces has happened because of the reforms, conditioned by the pressures of accumulation and the changing spatial division of labor. The rescaling powers was not about decentralization, or devolving responsibility to the local states, but was about setting up a new regulatory infrastructure at the scale of the states (Kennedy, 2013). It was the new "accumulation strategy"!

This scalar transformation of State spaces happened through several means. Most importantly, the license-permit Raj was abolished (see Chibber, 2006). This meant that the central State was no longer going to regulate industrial investments. Thus firms would no longer require licenses to set up their enterprises, and more importantly firms would have the mobility to locate anywhere. What in effect happened was a decoupling of industrialization with the national State and territory (Kennedy, 2013, p. 37). By this decoupling I do not mean that the national State was now no longer a major actor in the maintenance of the accumulation process. It still was, as we saw above with the trade and investment policies. As Poulantzas points out that the national State is always key in the reproduction of social relations of capital, which spatializes itself within national spaces (Poulantzas, 2003). However, there was a "relativization of scale" and states like West Bengal and others became "glocal fixes", directly requiring to attract global capital (Corbridge et al., 2013). This was a strategic rescaling to produce a State space in the

integral sense (Brenner et al., 2003). With the space of industrialization becoming more federated (Corbridge et al., 2013), there was incentivization of such spaces. What is meant by that is that the national State encouraged the creation of a favorable business climate, international development agencies started lending practices with local states, and states became direct negotiators with multinational corporations (Kennedy, 2013). Each state was now pushed to compete with each other with the territorial fragmentation of the spaces of accumulation. Each had to produce a conducive climate for investments. Further firms now had geographic mobility. This mobility is crucial as this becomes a strategic weapon for such firms, for playing off one state against another (Kennedy, 2013; Corbridge et al., 2013) to get tax breaks. This exacerbates spatial competition amongst states to attract the flow of values (Cox and Mair, 1988). Thus the accumulation process, organized a new geography of value flow, which set in motion a sort of a "provincial Darwinism" (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 135). To add to this, there were financial restrictions. Since the center collects revenues and taxes and the states spend, there were instances of state overspending. This was not just confined to the states though, as the center too was overspending. This meant that both scales of the State had to undergo fiscal restructuring. West Bengal was one of the states whose revenue earnings were far lower than the interest it had to pay on debt against loans from the center (Kennedy, 2013). This fiscal restructuring meant that states would now have to generate its own income: the solution more accumulation.

What is crucial to know about states is that each has a rich provincialized (see Moore, 2005) history and in fact it needed a lot of effort to produce the nation space of India

because of its rich multi-cultural heritage. This in turn means that the genesis of the political landscape of each of the states is different: in terms of its assemblage of institutions and their relations with each other, the nature of socio-spatial unity or lack thereof (in terms of class, caste), and the modality of governance (see Kennedy, 2013, p. 29). In terms of modality of governance, it is important to see the nature of political ideology, the mass base, internal structure of the dominant parties in power (Kohli, 1987). Thus the case of the communist regime in West Bengal, the ideology is communist but in practice they are social democrats. There has been an effort to eradicate poverty through implementation of reforms, though partial and this has meant that the CPI(M) party at the helm of the communist government has a political base that is composed of poorer sections of society. Therefore this particular history matters because there has been economic empowerment and political mobilization of the poor, and this count, in the acceptance of the effects of state space rescaling (Kohli, 1987; Harriss, 1999; see Kennedy, 2013). This history is important as with the creation of this new spatiality the role of the political elites become key in the further catalyzing of this new state space. Here their degree of action, opportunistic policies and their cooperation with economic actors count. The West Bengal State became a key political agent, acting in concert with other economic agents. In 1994, West Bengal adopted a new industrial policy to produce a new geography of accumulation (Kennedy, 2013). This local scale of investment and industrialization was produced through the actions of the communist government it did not just happen (Brenner et al., 2003; Kennedy, 2013). However this geography of accumulation was always riven with tensions: tensions that arose out of the

past history of reforms and militancy. Thus the new State space was always a becoming breaking-apart arena. It was in this context, that the SEZ policy was implemented with vigor. It is to that narrative that the paper will now turn.

I argue here that Bengal was created as a site for management and governance to make it investible. However it is constantly being made non-investible by the hauntings of its past: policies of reforms (from the rural sphere) and labor militancy (from the urban sphere), both being a legacy of it social democratic approach to governance (see Sinha, 2004). *In the context of the 'fragility' of this situation, that Special Economic Zone policy was adopted with alacrity to overcome the stubborn sedimentations (Moore, 2005) of the past (see Sinha, 2004).*

The Rescaled State Spaces

Local History of West Bengal: The Conditions and Context Before Rescaling

This part of the paper will discuss the existential conditions in Bengal that made it an imperative for the West Bengal State to embrace the rescaling of powers. The success of the land reforms was moderate. Firstly, as discussed in the previous chapter, the effects of reforms and its materialization was uneven, in part due to the play of negotiations, clientelism and groupism across axes of difference at the village level. Particularly clientelism and the creation of a "party society" led to a perversion of reforms (see Williams, 1999; Chatterjee, 2009; Bhattacharyya, 2009). For instance, since every aspect of village life was subordinated to the party, there were instances, when private suppliers and sellers of agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizers, pesticides) and creditors who were

closer to the party could exploit farmers (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). In the absence of proper agencies of the State to distribute these inputs, or even cooperatives including cooperative credit institutions, the same logics of exploitation did prevail (ibid). Further and in relation to the party society, since inputs, including credit was redistributed through the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), here again the issues of caste affiliations (i.e. party members of the same caste, offering these advantages to their own caste members), clientilism and groupism became important in determining who would benefit from theses central government schemes (see Rudd, 1999, Chatterjee, 2009; Lieten, 2003; William 1999). Secondly, agricultural production which had increased in the aftermath of the reforms had stagnated (see Rogaly et al., 1999). For instance, in terms of agricultural production, the percentage production went up to 5.15% in 1989-1990 (in the immediate post-reform period). This was up from 1.2% in the 1970s-1980s. While surprisingly, in 1990-2000, agricultural production was just at 2.4% (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). Thirdly, even in the redistribution policy itself, the focus was on redistributing small plots of land (Rudd, 1999), which were uneconomical and do not target the "land hunger" (Basu, 1992, p. 36). Fourthly, despite the claim of land to the tillers, a lot of effort was made on Operation Barga i.e. tenancy reforms. The lack of rural ownership in land did impact agricultural production (see Lipton, 2009, on how small plots of land can contribute to rising productivity). In sum the reforms cannot be considered as a thumping success and the state of West Bengal's agriculture was stagnant.

Coupled with the lack of proper success of reforms, the agricultural sector in Bengal as well as in the rest of the country was hard hit with the introduction of the NEP. Particularly, a situation of agrarian crisis was in the making. The State rolled back agricultural subsidies and withdrew price support mechanisms in the name of national interest (Patnaik and Moyo, 2011). The overall reduction on the central government expenditure exerted a deflationary pressure on the economy and Bengal was not insulated from this tendency. The upshot of this was that in Bengal as elsewhere in India, the agrarian crisis and the economic crisis came together to create a condition that slowed down overall growth (Patnaik and Moyo, 2011).

In terms of industrialization, historically West Bengal could not gain a competitive advantage over other areas due to the Freight Equalization Acts (Sinha, 2004; Kennedy, 2013; Corbridge et al., 2013). These acts were initiated as internal aspects of the Nehru-Mahalanobis model. This was a model of economic development that prioritized basic heavy industries to modernize India. The model targeted resource-borne areas for development (coal, iron-ore, copper). West Bengal was one of the states along with other neighboring states in the Chotanagpur Plateau region that was targeted towards developing manufacturing industries. These acts institutionalized a single price for all raw materials. The purpose behind the acts was to trigger industrial development through a comparative advantage that these states have in minerals. However and quite surprisingly, despite having the resources, these states could not benefit because of the spatial mismatch in the actual location of manufacturing units, particularly those manufacturing units up the commodity chain that added value (Corbridge et al., 2013).

Most of these industries were located in the western and the southern part of the country (Nielson, 2010). The reason why this was the case, was that capital was simply not attracted to West Bengal because of the communist regime!

West Bengal experienced a conspicuous capital flight i.e. disinvestment, since 1955. Domestic capital was attracted towards western and southern part of India, which were growing much more than Bengal (Nielson, 2010). Part of the reason why capital could not implant itself in Bengal, was the strong labor organization supported by the communist government, particularly the CPI(M) party. Trade unions exerted a lot of political influence in the geographies of industrialization. Labor protests were quite common and West Bengal came to be known as a state with constant labor unrest (Sinha, 2004). Bandhs and labor strikes had become endemic (Sinha, 2004). This sent out a strong negative signal to investors who did not want to invest in the state. Further, there was the issue of the wage fund (Marx, 1976) which had to be higher (because of higher wage demands), which meant that production costs would be high (Sinha, 2004). This dissuaded capital from circulating, and Bengal became a quintessential "rust belt" in eastern India. The common refrain was "there are no jobs"!![27] Industrial production in fact had decreased from 23% in 1964 to 10% in the 1970s (Nielson, 2010). What added to this problem of rampant industrial decline was that the state-center fiscal relationship was tense (Nielson, 2010). This meant that West Bengal State had very little funds available for spending both in the agricultural as well as in the industrial sectors. In fact,

[27] This is what I constantly heard while growing up (and still hear) in Kolkata. Another constant exasperated refrain from the middle class urban Kolkatan was that there were too many strikes and bandhs. This group particularly blamed the CPI(M) government for this state of affairs in Bengal. So the CPI(M) traditionally never had an urban base of popular support. Its mass support base was always the rural areas.

in case of the land reforms for instance, the communist government always complained that fundamental change could not happen because of the purse strings being controlled by the central government. The deindustrialization in the state coupled with a voluminous salary expense for a huge public sector, the West Bengal government never agreed to fiscal reforms which the center wanted to impose through the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) move (Kennedy, 2013). The fiscal dynamics created a situation of tense confrontation between the central government and the West Bengal government (Bhattacharyya, 1999; Sinha, 2005). Further, under the licensing Raj, the central government made decisions in industrial policies, which was always not in favor of the state (Sinha, 2004). It was under these conditions of crises that the rescaling of State spaces happened. This made West Bengal State an important actor in trying to recreate the conditions of accumulation and facilitate the flow of values through the state (Cox and Mair, 1988).

General Dynamics of Rescaling to the Sub-National Scale in India

Political action: A General Note

Loraine Kennedy, very succinctly discusses how domestic politicians are absolved of the responsibility of introducing the reforms in India, because the reforms are said to be an external imposition. Further, the uneven development as a result of the reforms is said to be automatically caused by the reforms (Kennedy, 2013, p. 3). These discourses are depoliticizing as they obfuscate the agency of politicians as well as other actors who are actually involved in the introduction of the reforms and are opportunistic about it,

specifically crafting policies that are neoliberal. So there is agency involved. Thus the reforms which have been introduced, and which have led to massive uneven development (Smith, 1984 (2008)) did not automatically cause a transformed State space (Kennedy, 2013). It was produced.

Political action happens not because it is predestined, with actors displaying specific goals towards restructuring. In fact there is no purposeful intentionality from the start, but that these actions evolve always in relation to the specific context. This specific context includes the conditions and the changes therein across global and more local scales (Kennedy, 2013). In case of West Bengal, while there were massive changes at the national scale in response to the crisis mainly in balance of payment (Corbridge et al., 2013), at the local scale, there was simultaneously an agrarian and industrial crisis that confronted the communists. So while the rescaling of State spaces was initiated at the central level, to make states like West Bengal new "glocal fixes", the relative importance of the sub-national scale as a new space of regulation also happened because of attempts to avert crises by the "locally dependent" (Cox and Mair, 1988) communist government. For instance, the communist government had local dependence on the spatial flows (economic flows) for the reproduction of its own territorial authority (Kennedy, 2013). As an "economic manager" (Kohli, 1989, p. 102), it was responsible in strategically organizing the socio-economic relations to produce State spaces of rule (Brennet et al., 2003). Therefore it is no surprise at all that the West Bengal government accepted the rescaling of State spaces quite quickly to reorganize socio-spatial relations conducive to the mitigation of crises. What will follow next is the general discussion on what rescaling

of State spaces involve, followed by how the West Bengal State tried to regulate and manage the accumulation process, and how the production of this new State space was always interrupted due to the past history of land reforms and labor militancy. These interruptions (see Gidwani, 2008) and the effort to suspend them, led to the adoption of the SEZ policy with haste.

The Dynamics of Rescaling in West Bengal: The Fragility of the New Space of Regulation, Hauntings of the Past and the Creation of SEZs

The rescaling itself is not a smooth process, but has many tentacles to it, occurring through various sites of action, not always in consonance with each other (Kennedy, 2013). These of course have been in response to not just the global accumulation dynamic, but also conditions extant at the scale of the state and the agency of various actors. These then have come together with guidelines, rules and policies across scales, to precipitate restructuring of State spaces (Kennedy, 2013, p. 2). This means that the restructuring of State spaces does not happen in an institutional vacuum, but the role of institutions is key. In other words it is a dynamic process (ibid). It has involved the marshalling of locally situated resources (entrepreneurial activities, "regional economic specializations, socioeconomic configurations" (Kennedy, 2013, p. 2)), relying on local institutions of the State and multinational agencies (multinational corporations, international development agencies) (Kennedy, 2013, p. 2). Such rescaling is geared towards economic governance, i.e. the bringing together of institutions, actors and policies towards economic management. Usually rescaling involves:

a. Evolving new set of guidelines and policies towards investment
b. Rules to initiate agglomerative activities that are geared towards attracting multinationals
c. Public-private joint enterprises in infrastructure where the agreements are forged at the local scale. Infrastructure can also be developed by the local State
d. For generating a conducive business climate, simpler procedures for investment are initiated through the "single-window clearance" (SWC) model i.e. only one institution handles investment and project-specific clearances
e. A business-friendly environment is created through financial incentivization (either direct or indirect) by the local State. This include capital supply for projects, providing subsidized water and power, facilitating tax breaks
f. Innovative policies are put together to meet contingent needs, including State Industrial Development Corporations help in acquiring private land or assembling public lands for industrialization (see Kennedy, 2013, p. 54).

In West Bengal, we see all of the above dynamics at play to produce new geographies of rule, conducive to the flow of values (Cox and Mair, 1988). The State particularly tried to engineer the productive benefits of scale (Cox, d). That means the State attempted to bring together particularly in and around Kolkata-Howrah industrial belt (see Sinha, 2004), labor power and capital for production (Harvey, 1985a). Thus there was an attempt to produce a rational urban-industrial landscape to allow for efficient temporal and spatial coordination facilitative of accumulation (Harvey, 1985b). However it was not just the urban-industrial landscape that was rationalized by the State, attempt was

made to convert fertile rural agricultural land into sites of capitalist production. However the production of West Bengal as a new scale for the regulation, governance and management has been a contested process (Brenner et al., 2003), that has always made the rescaled State space of Bengal fragile (see Sinha, 2004; Nielson, 2010). These contestations arose due to the past history of reforms and labor militancy that led to a sense of entitlement amongst farmers and laborers, that the Left found difficult to manage. The tenuous production of this new geography of rule led to the introduction of SEZs with a sense of urgency not seen before.

Initially the CPI(M) party at the central level strongly resisted the New Economic Policy. The national wing of the party wanted the state CPI(M) party to organize protests (strikes and rallies) (Sinha, 2004) at the state level. However in case of Bengal, the local political leadership decided, as a matter of policy to attract foreign investment and facilitate the development of private sector enterprises (Sinha, 2004). This was in response to the crises that has been discussed before. However this decision by the state CPI(M) was not a smooth and easy process. It was marked by a lot of tensions and ideological predicament within the party, with many opposed to the government's role in actively welcoming global capital (Sinha, 2004).

Part of the reason why there were so many internal debates within the party was that, it faced a predicament of moving away from State-led or public sector enterprises and redistributive land reforms. Particularly, it was part of the CPI(M)'s historically-constituted electoral calculus to build a traditional rural support base through reforms and an urban support base through organizing labor. Though Sinha (2004) rightly points out,

that historically the party has also disciplined labor because of the need to maintain accumulation and not deter investments from the state (see the previous chapter on how the party was restrained by the capitalist democratic form of the State). At the critical conjuncture, when the rescaling process kicked in, there were many within the party who were anxious about losing their traditional bases of popular support (Sinha, 2004). However the agricultural stagnation, the fact that land sizes were too small to be productive, the fact that the central-government imposed Freight Equalization Acts and licensing policies (under the license permit Raj) were not working in favor of Bengal and the lack of jobs (Nielson, 2010), made the state CPI(M) leadership quite firm in deciding to welcome the rescaling process with open arms, setting the stage for neoliberal reforms to be grounded in Bengal. This ethos can be summed up in a speech of the then Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, who stated "While disagreeing with many items in this policy [the New Economic Policy] we welcomed its two aspects, viz. the delicensing and discontinuance of the freight equalization scheme….With the removal of regulation and controls, we have got the opportunity to plan for the industrial development of our state……..we are making efforts to restore West Bengal['s] status as a leading industrial state…[having] no hesitation in welcoming foreign technology and investments in selective spheres….Since the "mixed" economy has been in operation in the country, the public sector, the private sector, and joint sector are required to play their required roles. As a state government, we are to function within its economic milieu…..[and] bring about the industrial resurgence of West Bengal." (Basu, 1997, p. xiv as cited in Sinha, 2004).

The West Bengal State worked to attract investments for the development of private sector capital, through advertizing and propaganda, with even State leadership taking foreign trips to promote industrialization (Sinha, 2004). The key discourse around industrialization was: "We need to accept conditional private participation for a quick qualitative change of our industrial and social infrastructure" (Government of West Bengal Declaration 1994, as cited in Sinha, 2004, p. 17). In 1994 West Bengal crafted its industrial policy in consultation with private business firms (Sinha, 2004). This was called the New Industrial Policy (NIP) (Guha, 2007). In this new policy, the goals and provisions which it embodied were not favorable for either farmers or labor. This policy had several provisions in it: this policy attempted to attract foreign investors and private capital, there was provision made for infrastructural development, the State was to lend support towards developing private sector enterprises and promised changes in existing institutions to craft new policies favorable for businesses (Sinha, 2004). These policies were not totally new but were in the pipeline since 1985. However, in the mid-1980s the policies were in an incoherent form and began to gather force in 1994 (Sinha, 2004). These policies were not favorable to farmers, because in them there was a seed of threat of farmland being taken away for industrialization which required land and a move away from agriculture to industrialization. In fact as Guha (2007, p. 3707) points out, that the land acquisition policies that are internal to the industrial policy are in "an antithetical relationship" to land reforms. Moreover, there was the possibility of intense disciplining of labor. The industrial policy of 1994 was followed up by the West Bengal Incentive

Scheme for Industrial Projects, where the following incentives were provided: a) subsidies on capitalist investment and lowered interests on loans; b) no electricity duty was charged; c) job creation subsidy was offered and; d)other fees and duties were waived (Nielson, 2010).

The NIP of 1994 and its accompanying incentive scheme were in contradistinction to the 1977-78 industrial and agrarian policy of the government in several ways: a) it wanted to attract private capital especially multinational corporations. Private sector entrepreneurial activities were facilitated in infrastructure, in centers of industrial agglomeration and in social infrastructure, which previously were within the remit of the State only (Sinha, 2004). This is in stark contrast to the industrial policy of the State in 1978, when the CPI(M) particularly was against big monopoly industrial houses and multinationals; b) The State now welcomed joint sector enterprises through public-private partnerships. This again was in contradistinction to the emphasis placed on the public sector in 1978. The announcement by the government that mirrors these shifts was: "While the state government considers the government and public sector as an important vehicle for ensuring social justice and balanced growth, it recognizes the importance and key role of the private sector in providing accelerated growth" (Gov of WB, 1994 as cited in Sinha, 2004). It is true that during 1978 till about the 1990s, workers were considered as having key power and trade unions had a major role to play in shaping capital social relations and that it is equally true that the power had diluted over the years because the government did discipline labor in order to keep the accumulation process going (Sinha, 2004). However what was happening now was that the organizing power of labor was

considerably debilitated.; c) The NIP flew in the face of the 1977 land reforms because, following this policy, steps were taken to relax the land ceiling laws that would pave the way for large scale land acquisition for industrialization (see Guha, 2007). This is a reversal of the reforms program. By showing these contrasts, I am not claiming that the Left was not interested in industrialization in 1977. It was always interested in maintaining the conditions for accumulation and helping the accumulation process, the dilution of land reforms is a testimony to that. Further the Left was interested in industrialization because it had to operate within a capitalist system (see previous chapter), however now there was an attempt at intensification of industrialization through greater privatization, disciplining the social relations around land and labor.

Even before the NIP was in place, there was evidence that the land reforms were in a process of unraveling because of the neoliberal thrust towards private capital in industries. In 1992, so-called mono-cropped land was acquired in Kharagpur (erstwhile undivided Midnapore District) for the TATA Metallics to set up a pig-iron plant (Guha, 2007; Sud, 2014). One can see the anxiety of the government in trying to push towards industrialization and away from agriculture and its past politics around land. These pig-iron plants are dirty industries usually not welcomed by other states because of severe environmental problems (Nagarik Mancha President, stating this in a personal conversation with me). However, Bengal in need for industrialization welcomed the TATAs. 217.23 acres of fertile land was grabbed, while uncultivable land which was well connected and located close to the area that was acquired was left untouched (Guha, 2007). The land was grabbed using the 1948 West Bengal Land (Requisition and

Acquisition) Act (which has since been made non-operational in 1993). This Act allowed the State to grab land without consulting the local panchayats. The small and marginal farmers and sharecroppers, many of whom were tribals were dispossessed and not adequately compensated. Following the NIP, in 1995, in the same area, another 525 acres of land was grabbed to set up a pig-iron plant to be run by the Century Textiles and Industrial Limited (CTIL) owned by the Birlas (Guha, 2007). However this acquisition generated stiff resistance. The resistance was around the issue of compensation and rehabilitation of the dispossessed. Given the history of the TATA Metallics acquisition and the immiseration of farmers that followed, the people found both formal and informal means to resist this time. Formally, farmers made legal deputations to the district administration, while informally soil testing by State officials was stopped when in the early part of January, 1996 farmers raided the tent of the soil testing engineer, the National Highway (no. 6, near the site) was blocked and the parliamentary elections was shunned by farmers (Guha, 2007). The irony of this acquisition was that, the land that was acquired remained unused till 2003, because of the volatility of the international steel trade and farmers were not paid compensation (ibid).

The State claimed that ‘useless’ mono-cropped or ‘jal soem’ land was grabbed in both instances, and that it was done for the purpose of industrialization which was now crucial for the state (Guha, 2007). This kind of reasoning completely goes against the foundational logic of land reforms, which is about security in land. The State completely invisibilized (see Scott, 1998) the fact that this area was productive for vegetables that were raised on homestead plots (including green chili, okra, mustard, water gourd etc)

and which were sold in local markets for the purpose of family survival. The objections that were raised about unemployment and food insecurity in the wake of industrialization, low compensation, that the acquisition only favored private capital in the name of public interest were completely disregarded. Instead the project was justified in the name of jobs, development and the fact that majority of the farmers acquiesced. Moreover, around issue of compensation, the State officials announced that it 'might' (not will) take up the issue of adequate compensation with the concerned firm (Guha, 2007). In addition the local party leaders of the CPI(M) blamed it on the opposition Congress party for the agitations, thus trying to shift the blame of disorder on the other party (Guha, 2007). The signs of a transformation in land reforms policy are quite evident in these land acquisition policies. What is also evident is that people would not easily give up land, and therefore the reordering of space by the State in the service of capital was not given but fragile and contested (see Sinha, 2004). The distrust of farmers towards the Left is epitomized by an old farmer in the area of acquisition who mentioned in relation to whether the Left was worth voting for or not in the panchayat and state legislature elections, "…we poor people always have to ride on some animal almost blindfolded. After the ride for some time we start to reali[z]e whether it is a tiger or a bullock. But very often we have to twist its tail in order to keep it in proper direction" (interview by Guha, as quoted in Guha, 2007, p. 3711). In this quote we see the signs that the past reforms and what the Left had done for the poor mattered in how people's reactions including resistance was shaped. Thus the past was ever present in the drive towards

industrialization. The 'stickiness' of past institution of labor militancy also shaped the trajectory of industrialization. It is to that the paper will now turn.

In order to attract capital, certain institutional changes were made. Firstly, the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBDIC) became the salient institution in creating conditions for accumulation. Thus it was rejigged into becoming the nodal agency for supporting industrialization (Sinha, 2004). The chairman of this institution was Somnath Chatterjee, a CPI(M) leader who was given autonomy towards initiating industrialization. There was also a recalibration of the power relations between this institution, the government, the party and the CITU (Centre for Indian Trade Unions), so that the latter two cannot influence the decisions of the WBDIC (Sinha, 2004). Another institutional step, was a committee of bureaucrats like the chief secretary, department secretaries were formed to quickly make decisions and give the go-ahead to proposals for investment (Gov of WB, 1994 as cited in Sinha, 2004). This speediness was meant to in part overrule any objections that might arise from some members of the CPI(M) party and the trade unions. Within the WBDIC a single-window clearance (SWC) agency was established called the "SilpaBandhu" ("A Friend of Industry") (Gov of WB, SilpaBandhu, 1994 as cited in Sinha, 2004, p. 20). This agency, aided investors who had trouble investing.[28] In order to discipline labor around industrialization, the state government communicated to the CITU, that productivity was necessary so work stoppages and demands will not work (Sinha, 2004). Further the government attempted to

[28] However, given the past culture of laxity in terms of private investments, this SWC agency did not monitor investments, and this follows from the license Raj days where the industries that were set up in and through the Raj were not monitored by the WBDIC. Moreover, the WBDIC did not collect information on rules, policies and technology availability that would help new investors. This was also in line with past policies of maintaining distance in matters of industrialization as the 'go to' center was the central government (Sinha, 2004).

spatially discipline where protests could be held and what sorts of protests and obstructionist policies were acceptable (Sinha, 2004). While CITU and labor in general were disciplined, the government also attempted to diffuse tensions around the issue of industrialization and the relative position of labor with its coalition partners (the CPI, the RSP and the AIFB) (Sinha, 2004).

In 1996, The West Bengal State Planning Board for the first time included a representative of private capital (Sinha, 2004). This was part of the boosterist logic of the state. Next a Government-Industry Coordination Committee was formed in 1996 that had representatives from the Confederation of Indian Industry (Sinha, 2004). A major "Partnership Summit" was organized in 1997, which showed that the government had been maintaining close ties with businesses and business representatives (Sinha, 2004). In 1994, an evaluation report was constituted by McKinsey and Company, entitled "Destination West Bengal" (Sud, 2014). Certain industrial and service activities were emphasized that primarily sidelined agriculture: these included IT, leather, pretrochemicals etc. The only industry that was favorable to farmers was food processing (ibid). In all of these efforts what stand out are the closer ties that the State tried to forge with capital (and not labor or farmers). This was quite a contrast with the past.

However West Bengal's past history mattered, in how this rescaling and efforts at industrialization would pan out. Sinha (2004) doing a comparative analysis between West Bengal and Gujarat (the latter is highly industrialized), claims that despite the two states becoming pro-neoliberal at the same time, there was a difference in the materialization of reforms. Firstly, the institutions that were responsible for governing the industrial

landscape were weaker in scope, because there were no institutions in place to coordinate with the center during the License Raj days and monitor industries. The WBDIC did not monitor the industries that the center supported and continued not to do so even when the West Bengal State tried to create space for industrialization. Secondly and significantly, the neoliberal reforms had a relatively narrow popular support base not just because labor was disciplined, but because of the narrow spatial concentration of industries around Kolkata. Therefore any industrial gain would accrue to the middle class and businesses in and around Kolkata. This meant that the rural population, who already experienced land reforms and who were actively encouraged to bring forth their "creative energies" around agriculture (Jyoti Basu at West Bengal legislative Assembly, quoted in Sarkar, 1989, p. 57), were not willing to bear the cost of subsidies and waivers to industries (Sinha, 2004). So the reforms did not take off as much as it did in Gujarat.

The State soon realized that there was a "credibility crisis", because investors were not quick to believe that the state government was serious about its policies given the past history of the government and the party. This was in part because there was not enough information circulating to prove the earnestness of the state in industrial policy (Sinha, 2004, p. 21). What therefore started was a series of discourses to convince industrialists that the past was history and that the present was a clean slate, unblemished by reforms or labor militancy. As Foucault states (1980c), that knowledge through discourses is entangled with power, because the discourses produced the effects of truth that become the framework of interpretation. This is turn also sustain the power relations that produce the discourses. Marxist might call such attempts as ideological maneuverings arising out

of actually existent material conditions, which shape social realities and practices that are propitious for the reproduction of capital social relations (Zizek, 2009; Althusser, 1970). The point here is that the government through various sites started producing knowledge that the state of West Bengal was ready to become a site for the circulation of values and that the past of land reforms and militancy should be forgotten.

Somnath Chatterjee, the chairman of the WBDIC lamented that "The most serious problem is one of image—an image that nothing happens in West Bengal, nobody works here, there's no power, no water, and the government is run by the Mafia, the industrial sector is full of all sorts of irresponsible people….But I say, *Forget the past, except to learn from the past*. We have hopes for the future and we have to work for it." (Interview Business World, June 22, 1997, p. 94 as cited in Sinha, 2004, my emphasis). According to Chatterjee, the rumors that things do not work in Bengal were being spread by the Congress government at the center and the media (Sinha, 2004). In another magazine interview, one can see the inertia of past policies were coming back and the desperate attempts of the communist government to ward them off. For example, Chatterjee states "unfortunately there is still the feeling among a section of the industry: Why should we go to a communist-led state? This should prompt us to be more aggressive in projecting West Bengal. We must attract private capital. I don't see any alternative. Where is the money?" (The Economic Times, August 12, 1997 as cited in Sinha, 2004). One can see a reverberation of the famous TINA moment of Thatcher, being re-enunciated by Chatterjee.

The attempts to get rid of the 'problematic past' gets clear when in adverts in the Washington Post and Financial Times 'screamed' "The Problems of the Past have been Overcome….Red Flags and Red Tape-ism have been Replaced by a Red Carpet" (Bhattacharya, 1995 as cited in Sinha, 2004). Such discourses were followed up by the politics of spatial cleansing, beautification and propaganda at home. In consultation with the Indian Chambers of Commerce Kolkata chapter and the larger Indian Chambers of Commerce countrywide and working together with other civic agencies, the government appointed Selvel Advertizing Ltd to spread the word in Bengal that the state was investor-ready (Sinha, 2004, p. 24). More privately, CPI(M) members were told, that the party had milked the rural cow of its political support, whatever gains it had to make was done and over. Political power therefore now lay in the process of industrialization (Interview of CPI(M) leader by author as cited in Sinha, 2004). This move reeks of political opportunism but also a pragmatism that embraces industrialization.

In the move towards generating State spaces that would make Bengal a new "glocal fix", there were always contradictions that made the process neoliberalizing the landscape of Bengal and making it globally competitive very challenging. Not only were land acquisition moves in the early part of 1990s challenged, but the government had to make a constant effort to discipline labor, keep CITU and its other political partners in line. However there was still a "credibility crisis", as mentioned above. The credibility crisis was in part about perception that the communist government can never get rid of the 'baggage' of past reforms and labor militancy. Thus the past reappeared in unexpected ways to constantly render the making of State spaces fragile and vulnerable to disruption.

It is in this context that a new opportunity to produce State spaces emerged, the opportunity the create Special Economic Zones. The West Bengal ruling dispensation took the opportunity with zest, to get rid of the inertia of the past and to move forward with its project of industrialization. It is to that the paper will now turn.

The Special Economic Zones

The creation of SEZ represents again an attempt to make the scale of West Bengal investible relative to the national State space, i.e. it was another "accumulation strategy" to attract global capital (Kennedy, 2013). The SEZ policies are a part of third-generation of reforms (Jenkins, 2011).[29] The idea of the SEZ s came about in 2000, when the Indian Commerce Minister visited China, following which crafted the Export and Import Policy (EXIM 2000). This policy report had the term SEZ, and suggested that 1000 to 5000 hectares of land could be converted into SEZs. Moreover the existing Export Processing Zones (which were the previous avatars of the SEZs, which were duty free processing zones for items of export) could become SEZs. These could be established either by the public or the private sector (Kennedy, 2013; Levien 2011).

As soon as this policy was framed, the West Bengal state was one of the few states that immediately crafted its own SEZ Act. This was the West Bengal Special Economic Zones Act, 2003 (Gov of WB, 2003). The Act stated that it aimed at "facilitate[ing] the development, operation….management…and regulation of Special Economic Zone…….to accelerate economic reforms and to promote the rapid and orderly growth,

[29] The first generation reform was the NEP policy, the second generation of reforms were the institutions that were instituted to extend the market (Jenkins, 2010).

development ..of industries in such Special Economic Zone." (Gov of WB, 2003). The Act awaited the approval of the central government, to be passed into law. Meanwhile the Act clearly stated that the State, as part of the agenda to create spaces for the circulation of values, would allow for industrial, commercial and residential activities to ensue in such zones. Further there would be waiver of electricity duties, rapid environmental clearances would be given and all manner of exemptions from taxes would be offered (Gov of WB, 2003). The alacrity with which the government passed the Act (pending approval from the central government), shows that it was precisely the inertia of the past and the resultant "credibility crisis" that propelled the State to carve out the SEZ policy with haste.

The SEZ Act was passed in 2005 by the federal government. The passage of the SEZ law was an attempt to produce the sub-national space as the site of circulation of capital, thus reconfiguring the "political economy of scale" of capital social relations. Part of the reason why states have responsibility in the creation of SEZs is because, land is both a central and a state subject. But the land has to be acquired by the states, as the Constitution mandates it in Article 246, that states have rights of land alienation and transfer, particularly of agricultural land (Sud, 2014; Kennedy, 2013). The states also have the responsibility of providing compensation, relief and rehabilitation. The Constitution in its wisdom offer such a division of labor between the center and the states because, there are no uniform land tenurial systems across the country. Thus the tenurial map is confusing and often titles to land are not explicit. So Bengal's land architecture is different from other states. There are no singular land titling and property recording

systems. There is mainly deed registering method followed across states. The deeds (called pattas in Bengal) are based on local customs (Kennedy, 2013). In addition, the local State is invested with the creation of SEZs because land records might be made up and these discrepancies can best be resolved by the local States. The local State is required to give permission in converting agricultural land into other types of land uses (Kennedy, 2013). The local State is required to act like a broker state as there are multiple land holdings where many can hold out and prevent the creation of SEZs (Levien, 2012). Further the State's intervention is necessary to modify the Urban Land Ceiling and Rent Controls Acts (Jenkins, 2011). The West Bengal State through amendments to the West Bengal Land Reforms Act tried to remove the ceiling imposition on family and firm–held land, but that had to be rolled back due to resistance. This again is another example of how the history of reforms was an impediment in the creation of new State spaces amenable to the flow of global capital. In this attempt the communist government first attempted to relax the ceiling laws in 1990 and repeated the process in 2006, but failed. Eventually it was in 2012, under the changed regime of the Trinamool Congress Party that the ceiling laws could be amended through the Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, where ceilings were withdrawn for particular industries (Sud, 2014).

When the SEZ law was passed several objectives were there in mind: to promote economic growth, export goods and services, attract investments from the domestic and international arenas, generate employment and build new infrastructure (Kennedy, 2013). The federal Act permitted the construction of good quality infrastructure, taxation policy that was favorable, allowed the clustering of industrial activities, facilitated the import of

duty-exempt raw materials, export-oriented production of goods and services were encouraged (Jenkins, 2011 as cited in Corbridge et al., 2013; Kennedy, 2013). The procedures for red tapism were removed, labor laws were eased and several monetary andtrade restrictions were removed. Thus the SEZs became enclavic spaces, which did not have to be in relation to the regulations of the domestic economy (Kennedy, 2013; Aggarwal, 2006). The nature of enclavic spaces meant that the West Bengal State could somehow detach the SEZ space from the legacy of past reforms and labor militancy, because materially it was to be separated and distanced from the rules of the West Bengal political and economic landscape.

By 2010 approximately 600 SEZs were ready to be implemented under the SEZ Act in India (Corbridge et al., 2013). IT, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, biotech and engineering were priority sectors (Kennedy, 2013). These attracted the educate engineers, technical workers and English-speaking populations (Kennedy, 2013). There could also be real estate property development within SEZs as stipulated by the central government. 50% of the land could be given over for production, but the rest could be given over for housing, shopping malls, schools, golf courses etc (Levien, 2012). Foreign capital found the Indian real estate market lucrative. Since 2005, there was deregulation of foreign investment in real estate (Kennedy, 2013). This encouraged real estate speculation and the sites of SEZ afforded foreign capital high rates of profit (Levien, 2012).

The land for the SEZs was to be taken over under the Public-Private Partnership model (Levien, 2011). State governments, including the Bengal government passed their own SEZ laws and had their own land acquisition models and practices for the same

(Aggarwal, 2006; Ananthanarayanan, 2008; Ahmed et al., 2011; Ahmed, 2011). The SEZ governance and implementation process is complex, and require a number of state government departments working together because of the tax, trade, employment, environment clearance and ceiling relaxation procedures. While the local State at the village level has to oversee issues of zoning and building codes (Kennedy, 2013; Sud, 2014), the entire SEZ governance is overseen by the Central State (Kennedy, 2013; Sud, 2014). As Kennedy (2013) states that this requires a government intervention, which is similar to the dirigiste economy and the license permit Raj before the 1990s (ibid).

The West Bengal State just like other States used the colonial-era 1894 land acquisition act to marshal land for SEZs for "public purpose" (Kennedy, 2013). The ways the lands for SEZs are identified include identification of land by private individuals, local ruling body and middlemen. As Levien (2013) points out that land acquisition is not new in India. There were steel townships that were constructed often in areas of adivasi/tribal population. Thus the economic history of industrialization is littered with incidents of the colonial era act being used to create industrial townships. However, these townships were for production purposes, but now the lands are being grabbed for speculative real estate industry as well by a State that is acting like a rentier State. Hence the ideological legitimation that surrounded the past acquisitions is no longer there (Levien, 2013), because of the falsity therein. Thus the rescaling process and the subsequent creation of SEZs to attract global capital is a contested political process (Jenkins, 1999 cited in Kennedy, 2013).

Through the implementation of the SEZ Act of 2005 in West Bengal, the space of Bengal got produced as a space that would then become the focal point for the redirections of circuits of global capital. In that sense, this was a "production of space" (Smith, 1984 (2008), p. 92) amenable to making this space a force of production for capital to accumulate, thereby bringing it into the realms of global capitalist relations (Marx, 1976). In other words, the new reconfiguration of West Bengal's State space, was a process in facilitating the territorialization of global capital through the concrete labor processes within SEZs, a process contributory towards making value (Marx, 1976, see chapters 1 and 7) "universal" (Smith, 1984 (2008), p. 112). The SEZs, was a "spatial fix" (Harvey, 2001, p. 24) themselves representing the dialectic between the local fixity of capital through concrete labor processes for the global "universalization of value" (ibid). This "fixity"/"mobility" dialectic (Harvey, 2001, p. 25) would then have crucial impact in the societal growth of West Bengal (ideas drawn from Smith, 1984 (2008)).

Thus the political strategy of rescaling, allowed a communist government to take on the task of materializing reforms through the SEZs. The communist government in order to get rid of the stickiness of the past adopted the SEZ policy with alacrity, and materialized the SEZs with utter "stealth" (Jenkins, 2011; 1999 as cited in Kennedy, 2013).[30] Partha Chatterjee rightly commented in a personal conversation with me, that the Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, wanted the least resistance to the SEZ policy and therefore introduced it with haste and stealth. In fact Bhattacharya was aware of the prevalence of

[30] See Jenkins (199; 2011) on the politics of stealth that has been historically used by the political class to introduce tough reforms. The politics of stealth include introducing reforms gradually, or to introduce a raft of measures when the Parliament is not in session, so that resistance on the floor of the Parliament is minimal.

"political society", that is the modality of negotiation through which the poor negotiate and get provisions from the State, since they are not part of the elite "civil society" they are not entitled to rights as they are not considered as full citizens (Chatterjee, 2004). Thus the Chief Minister wanted to avoid all such negotiatory modalities and introduce the reforms quickly and without any transparency, stem resistance and acquire land. In the process the government wanted to forget the past history of reforms to move forward towards industrialization. It is no surprise, that the acquisition of land made a sudden appearance on the scene of Bengal in 2006 (see Li, 2014a citing Tsing, 2000 on grand appearances) in Singur. As the rescaling of State spaces happened, the West Bengal State created these exceptional spaces mediating between capital on the one hand and land/nature and its social relations on the other in order to produce spaces for the smooth flow of value (Kennedy, 2013). The State thus became the "political membrane" necessary in capital's access to land/nature and in the entire sustenance of the value form (Parenti, 2014, p. 1). Mediated by the State, neoliberalism via the SEZs "assumed a crusading passion…..a militant creed" (Polanyi, 1944, p. 143).

The West Bengal State tried to overthrow the existing regime of property relations and enforce capitalist privatization through land acquisition (Parenti, 2014). However there was always the history of land reforms that it had to engage with and discredit. In order to do so, colonial logics of power (Werner, 2011) were used to implement the SEZs. The most important aspects of the logics were to produce farmers as a "subrace" (Foucault, 1997, p. 61), who can then be civilized towards industrialization. However for that to happen the past had to be forgotten (Fernandes, 2004), the existing social relations had to

be invisibilized (Scott, 1998) and violence had to be used to produce acquiescence around the civilizing mission. The paper will now discuss how colonial logics of power unfolded in the actual land acquisition process at two sites: Singur (Hugli District) and Salboni (West Medinipur District).

Land Acquisition in Singur and Salboni: The Workings of the Colonial Logics of Power

Background

This second half of the paper will argue how colonial logics of power (Werner, 2011) were used to ground the acquisitions, having varied effects (see Dean, 2010). Internal to using similar rationalities of power as was used in the colonial times, was the logic of division imposed on the population of farmers whose land was to be acquired. This division allows such population to be termed as inferior, denoted as a "subrace" (Foucault, 1997, p. 61), who can then be civilized (Mehta, 1990) towards industrialization, thus justifying industrialization through SEZs. Part of the politics around using this modality of division involve, the discourses of forgetting the past land reforms (see Fernandes, 2004), invisibilizing existing social relations (Scott, 1998) and using acts of violence. I will discuss how such logics of power were operationalized through land acquisition of agricultural land in Singur and Salboni (See Figure 1). Singur is a fertile tract of land located on the Durgapur Expressway in Hugli District, with good connectivity to Kolkata, which is about about 90 kms away (Ghatak et al., Date Unknown) (See Figure 2 and 3). Singur is well irrigated by the Damodar canal

network, and is a multi-cropped area (Walker, 2008). It is not totally rural but semi-rural. Singur town is flourishing and has trading, commercial and service activities. The social composition of Singur is quite varied. There are the middle-caste Mahishyas who are the richer and quite powerful landowners in Singur. They lease their land or allow share cropping on their land. The main SC (Scheduled Castes) community is the Bagdis whose economic profile is diverse. Some own marginal lands, some are sharecroppers; others are leasees or are agricultural laborers. There are the gowalas who are OBCs (Other Backward Castes), who primarily own land. Since Singur is semi-rural, many poor younger men of lower castes work in factories, shops and other businesses either in Singur or migrate out of the place (Roy, 2007). In terms of the impact of land reforms, Operation Barga was unsuccessful in Singur. Sharecroppers were mostly unregistered. The sharecroppers were themselves interested in maintaining good ties with landlords. The middle class-caste, relatively richer Mahishya landlords, benefitted the most, and are supporters of the CPI(M), which did not encourage registration of sharecroppers on their land. However Zamindars who supported the opposition parties, had to register their sharecroppers. Party politics mattered in the implementation of reforms in Singur. Many of these big landlords have since become absentee landlords as they have moved to the city of Kolkata (Roy, 2009). Women did not benefit from the land reforms (Roy, 2009). In 2006, about 997 acres of highly fertile agricultural land (Ghatak et al., date unknown; Ghatak et al., 2013) was demarcated by the State and acquired by using the 1894 Land Acquisition Act (Ghatak et al., 2013; Walker, 2008). The land acquired was soon to be converted into a factory site for manufacturing cars, to be owned by TATA Motors. The

land acquisition happened with minimal consultation with villagers or the panchayats. Only selected local party and panchayat leaders were consulted (Roy, 2009). There was complete lack of transparency in the way the acquisition unfolded (Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009) with the West Bengal State officials suddenly precipitating on the landscape to grab land in 2006.The CPI(M) armed cadres/or goons called harmads were used to intimidate people into acquiescence (Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009; Walker, 2008; see also Chakrabarty, 2011). This again is a reflection of the type of "party-society" the CPI(M) has tried to create (Chatterjee, 2009). This resulted in the formation of the Save Agricultural Land Committee (SALC) to protest against the acquisition. This was supported by various activist groups (Roy, 2007; Nielson, 2010) including the ultra-left communist group called the Naxalites (reference: conversation with an activist in Kolkata).

However the resistance was not universal. The Zamindars who have been previously marginalized by the Left during reforms, thought that the change in the land situation was propitious for them, as they could get rid of registered bargadars and sell their land for compensation (Roy, 2007; 2009). The Mahishyas who were the middle class-caste farmers were the major beneficiaries of land reforms, opposed the land acquisition, not because they felt economically precarious, but it was a question of diminution of their accumulated wealth and power position in the village. However there were many CPI(M) supporters within the Mahishya land owning caste who supported the acquisition, because they did not find agriculture productive enough. They continued to support the CPI(M) and repose their faith in the 'party of the people' (Roy, 2007). The Gowalas,

who were small and marginal farmers of the OBC category, were initially not interested in selling land but were persuaded by the CPI(M) party workers that giving up land was good. They felt hopeful about land acquisition (Roy, 2007). They thought this was a way towards upward mobility, which have often been denied in the past due to the cumulative disadvantages of their caste location. They were galvanized by the CPI(M) to form the "Voluntary Land Sellers Committee" (VLSC). This committee then urged people to give up their 'useless' marshy land to get compensation and a job in the factory (Roy, 2009). The VLSC was thus pitched against the SALC. The Bagdis who were mainly the sharecroppers felt a situation of economic despondency. They did not benefit from Operation Barga since they were unregistered. This meant that they could not legally receive compensation from the State (Roy, 2007; 2009). These Bagdis were part of the protests. Thus the picture of resistance is highly uneven with differentiated positions around the land question. Further the protests were around 400 acres of land that farmers refused to give up (Chakrabarty, 2011; Indian Express, 2014). As a result of the protests, the TATAs decided to pull out of Singur, but keep the land. The matter is now sub-judice under the Supreme Court (Indian Express, 2014).

Meanwhile in 2008, approximately 4900 acres of land was acquired at Salboni (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). This is relatively more rural, less fertile and mostly but not totally mono-cropped and forested area in West Midnapore District about 200 kms away from the city of Kolkata (See Figure 4 and 5). This area is connected via the Chandrakona Expressway, and is well connected with rail routes. The area lacks canal irrigation and there is a greater dependence on underground water to irrigate crops. There are some

refugee lands meant for resettling Bangladeshi refugees, who have since left the area and resettled elsewhere. There are also central government-owned defense lands, which are totally outside the remit of land acquisition (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). This area has a larger number of tribal populations, and is quite close to the "jungle mahal" area, which has had a concentration of naxals. The class-caste composition here is simpler than in Singur. There are ryots who belong to the dominant castes which are the OBCs: Mahatos and Kurmis, while there are some ryots who are tribals. There are a few pattadars (who received vested lands) too of lower castes (mainly OBCs) and tribes. Other tribals and SCs like the Bagdis are landless laborers. Overall, the reforms were not too successful as evident from few pattadars being present. Being relatively less fertile and given the small size of redistributed land, the patta-holders have not economically benefitted from the reforms (see Lipton, 2009 on how the nature of fertility of land makes a difference). Women across the class-caste divide were not distributed land. Moreover, vested land was being still held with the State and which has since not been redistributed to the tribal population (Singha and Sengupta, 2009; Ray, 2008).

The large area of land that was acquired in 2008 (relative to Singur), was done to construct a steel plant to be owned and operated by the Jindals. About 500 acres of land belonged to the ryots, and the rest of the land that was given were communal forest lands, refugee lands, and the land that was vested in the State and not redistributed to tribals (so this vested land is 'notified' land specifically demarcated for redistribution to tribals, but it had become a fodder farm) (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). The Salboni land that was acquired by the Jindals for the steel plant did not set off an agitation at the scale of

Singur. There was initial resistance by Naxalites, the area being close to the Naxal-dominated forest belts, and some other local activists. The Naxal resistance led to an assassination attempt on the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, who had come to inaugurate the steel plant site (Roy, 2008). Apart from this initial resistance, there was not much else, and the plant is under construction.

Perhaps given the Singur experience, where the State had faced tremendous resistance, there was relatively greater transparency in the process of acquisition. For instance, the Industry and Commerce Minister, Nirupam Sen came down to convince people to give up land. Local party leaders also tried to persuade people to give up land (Reference: provided by activists and their supporters). The compensation package that was offered included money, a job for each family and shares in the steel plant commensurate with the land price, the latter was supposed to yield a monthly income to the land losers. The project also promised watershed management, cattle rearing and provision of drinking water facilities (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). The project prided itself in the fact that there was consultation and the project was accepted across the board. This is what the adverts around the project stated (ibid). Many OBC and tribal ryotis who gave up land, was sold the dream of development. They found that compensation, promise of jobs and shares in the steel plant to be aspirational. This would help them to be out of poverty and counter the cumulative disadvantages of their lower class-caste positions. However this same population was a divided lot. There were many people who did not want to give up land. Families were divided on the issue of giving up land (see Singha and Sengupta, 2009; own source, gathered from activists and their supporters at Salboni). There are

others who have given up land but regret it now, or some are simply ambivalent on the issue. The SCs/STs who were landless agricultural laborers had no say in the acquisition, as they would work on the basis of daily wages in nearby fields or the men would migrate to other districts for agricultural work. They are almost the 'forgotten' people, who apparently did not have a voice (Reference: own source, gathered from activists and their supporters at Salboni). The construction of the factory has started. Thus here just as in Singur, there are diverse opinions of land losers on the land acquisition issue. However unlike in Singur, there is a lot of concern around the availability of clean water, and this expresses the general anxiety of the population on the quality of environment (clean water, environmental pollution) that would result from the ongoing construction of the plant (Singha and Sengupta, 2009).

Theoretical Anchor: The Colonial Logics of Power

The description of land acquisition in both Singur and Salboni, might suggest that colonial logics (stand sin for oppressive) of power are in operation when people resist and are not at play when people do not resist and voluntarily give up land. Whether the people give up land of their own volition or not, the argument in this part of the chapter is concerned with: how does power work? What sorts of formal and informal strategies are deployed and why? What are the discourses used, what are the practices of the State that is keen to introduce reforms/SEZs by 'stealth' (Jenkins, 1999 as cited in Kennedy, 2013). I turn to the idea of the colonial logics of power to explain how power works around land acquisition. The idea is drawn from the "coloniality of power" thesis of Anibal Quijano

(2000) and its subsequent application in Werner's work on capital-labor relations in sweatshops in Central America (Werner, 2011, see p. 1573). The fundamental idea here is how racialized logics of division and hierarchy used during colonial times are reapplied to further accumulation in the contemporary times (Werner, 2011). Historically, race is a socially constructed phenomenon that has been put to application in colonial projects of rule (McIntyre, 2011). For instance, race is essentially about a divisive rationality of superiority and inferiority of certain populations, i.e. a "splitting….into a superrace and a subrace" (Foucault, 1997, p. 61). This logic of division was propitious for the British in India while introducing the Permanent Settlement, because it justified why the Bengalis a "subrace", should be led forward via a civilizing mission of establishing private property by the British, a "superrace" (see First chapter). What is internal to this racialized notion is the idea that the "subrace" and their existential conditions become inconsequential, therefore are rendered invisible (see Mehta, 1990) as what matters is the modernizing thrust forward to which the "subrace" is being led. Finally what is also integral to this racialized logic is that some amongst the "subrace' count as entrepreneurial subjects (Foucault, 2010) as their dispositions are amenable to rule and are in consonance with ruling interests, while others are rendered as "waste" (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011), those who are always an external other to value (ibid) and who are disposable (Wright, 2006). My claim is that this logic of division was actualized around land acquisition, to materialize the SEZs with varied outcomes (see Dean, 2010). Further this logic of racialized division was supportive of the accumulation process (McIntyre, 2011). The "subrace" in my narration includes all the owners and users of land who were subjected

to the land acquisition process both at Singur and Salboni. By indicating such stakeholders as a "subrace" I am not making the claim, that the struggle around land acquisition was between the State on the one hand (land grabber) and this "subrace" on the other (land losers). What I am trying to bring out here, is how power is exercised through the logic of a binary that do not necessarily translate into a binarized struggle, as many in the "subrace" can totally support the State and will voluntarily give up land.

In order to substantiate this claim, the chapter will first engage with how discourses were mobilized to encourage a forgetting of the past. Following Leela Fernandes, I call this a "politics of forgetting" (2004). This politics of forgetting justified why the land reforms which provided a semblance of security in land should be erased from memory. That also meant that somehow those who practiced agriculture were inferior and primitive, a "subrace", who then needs to be led forward on the path of modernization through industrialization. Secondly, the chapter will engage with the politics of invisibilization, of how through discourses of promised jobs and certain forms of technical representations, there is a tendency to render invisible and illegible existing socio-natural relations/conditions, which then justify land acquisitions (Scott, 1998). Thirdly, the chapter will engage with politics of violence and how it was perpetrated to exclude the "waste" (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011) elements of the "subrace" who protested against the acquisition. Finally, the paper will explicate how such colonial logics of power culminated in the creation of walls to enclose space for global capital (or not), and how this walling itself is symbolic of who counts as entrepreneurial subjects and correct citizens and who deserve to be excluded and exploited because they are waste (Ong,

2006; Gidwani and Reddy, 2011; McIntyre, 2011). In sum this part of the chapter will explicate the "racialized relay system" of power (with strong continuities with the colonial past), through which an attempt was made by the communist government to get over the inertia of the past and facilitate capitalist accumulation (Nast, 2011, p. 1458).

Colonial Logic of Power: The Politics of Forgetting

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, stated that agriculture belonged to the past "the process of economic development evolves from agriculture to industry….it is incumbent on us to move ahead" (Bhttacharya, 2007; Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009). This enunciation is an example of how the past history of land reforms are being relegated to a space of 'mental absencing' or a forgetting that would permit the creation of SEZs. Leela Fernandes (2004) uses the term "politics of forgetting" (p. 2415) to discuss a political discursive tendency within the State to render invisible or forget the poor in the wake of implementation of reforms and the rise of the 'aspirational' middle class in India. This politics of forgetting she argues is epitomized by the jettisoning of State provisioning of subsidies and other facilities that were aimed at the poor with the increasing thrust towards neoliberal reforms. I use this phrase to denote how the past of agricultural reforms is being forgotten discursively to justify the transformation of property relations around land. Bhattacharya's statement not only denotes the increasing anxiety of the State to forget the reforms and adopt neoliberalization, it also denotes a teleological mode of development, where agriculture is supposedly in a primitive stage, while industries are at a modern stage. This by default also means that the State which is encouraging the

creation of SEZ is modernizing (Scott, 1998). Thus the modernizing goal of the State becomes legitimated when posited against the primitive stage of agriculture and its primitive practitioners. Through this politics of forgetting, the State tried to embark on a civilizing mission of the "subrace" stuck in the agricultural past.

In an article written by a CPI(M) politburo member Surjya Kanto Mishra, there was a justification given as to why the path of industrialization was inevitable despite the land reforms (Mishra, 2007). Industrialization was considered an ineluctable force, because "[t]he issue now is that of industrialization for the sake of the peasantry and agriculture itself." (Mishra, 2007, p. 14). In other words there is a built in paradoxical logic given here: on the one hand there is an attempt to improve agriculture precisely through the conversion of agriculture (therefore its annihilation) to facilitate industrialization! What is also integral in this statement is that the past history of land reforms should be forgotten. For instance, Mishra goes on to say industries would diminish the troubles and pain of the farmers who are suffering in agriculture, and that the industrial growth in itself would modernize the agricultural sector and increase wages (Mishra, 2007, p. 14). In this discursive stance, the truth that gets produced (Foucault, 1980c) is that land reforms that provided security in land has done its part and it was time to embrace industries which is the new messiah. This stance is not surprising as the general discourse of the CPI(M) was that agriculture was no longer profitable and industrialization was needed (Roy, 2007). The CPI(M) has always used its vote bank politics to justify its actions. Mishra, for instance states that the mandate that the party has got in the recent elections (of 2006) is an indication that their policy of industrialization was widely acceptable (Mishra, 2007).

Here there is a collapsing of the success of getting votes with a mandate to grab land. Such leaps in logic justify and legitimate grabbing. The Left was also led to believe that the de-licensing and the abolition of the freight equalization schemes made West Bengal an attractive site for global capital which in itself was an indication that new developments would happen in the state (Mishra, 2007). Here therefore industrial development is articulated with the idea of value and goodness (see Gidwani and Reddy, 2011), therefore should be internalized while the history of past reforms should be forgotten. This is a sort of a moral-economic rationalization of development being inherently good, as it is natural, and thus particular claims to land therefore must be subordinated to make way for a 'good' kind of development. Particularly, a mode of development that would lead to economic development, more jobs, better infrastructure and decrease of poverty (Li, 2014a). These discursive circuits are similar to those that emerged during the adoption of the NIP (see before). Another logic that gets communicated in this politics of forgetting is that the State is "sublime" (Baviskar, 2001, p. 354), as somehow it has a transcendental connection to that which is good: industrial development. Hence because of this connection, the State deserves the right to civilize farmers and lead them towards industrialization.

In sum, this is a politics of forgetting the past, such that it would justify the civilizing mission embarked upon by the Left to herald industrialization. This industrialization would civilize the "subrace" caught in the fetters of past reforms. However the Left was wrong in its optimism and civilizing mission, because Singur evoked massive resistance that eventually led to the downfall of the Left, which was routed out of power after ruling

the state for 34 years. As Polanyi prophetically stated, that land cannot be converted into a commodity without destroying society (Polanyi, 1944). The reason why it cannot be converted into a commodity is because of its internal connections to life-supporting and social-relations supporting functionalities (see Li, 2014a; Polanyi, 1944) that was completely de-recognized in this politics of forgetting. Thus exclusions from land can become contested (Li, 2014a).

Colonial Logic of Power: The Politics of Invisibilization through Promise of Jobs and Compensation

A crucial element of the colonial logics of power is the fact that what the "subrace" is in reality, what it does, the social relations that it engages in *do not matter*: these aspects are rendered illegible. Therefore inherent in the colonial logic of power is the politics of invisibilization of the subrace and its conditions of sociality (see Scott, 1998) that legitimates land grabbing by the State. This politics of invisibilization unfolds through discursive and technical means (see Li, 2014a; Scott, 1998). Through the window of the Left's promise that the dispossessed will get jobs and the issue of compensation, this part of the chapter will show how the politics of invisibilization precipitated.

The Promise of Jobs

During the land acquisition in both Singur and Salboni, there was the promise of jobs that would be given to a member of each family giving up land. While this sounds very promising, what is insidious in this promise is the fact that there is a signaling that the existing conditions in which the farmers and agricultural workers are immersed in do not

matter and hence jobs (which can only come with industrialization following land acquisition) is the way forward. Further, the politics of illegibility proceeds through a sort of marginalization and othering, because the promise of jobs can often be hollow i.e. jobs may not materialize or the jobs which will be offered will not be commensurate with the claims of job offers. Such marginalization has the effect of invisibilizing the "subrace". Land acquisition is usually preceded by statistics, data, surveys and maps that aim to show that the existing agricultural land usage is been grossly underutilized (Li, 2014a, 592) and the antidote for underutilization was industrialization through the SEZs. Such technical evaluations were also done in both Singur and Salboni, to legitimize creation of SEZs. This is termed as "statistical picturing" (Li, 2014a, p. 592). With this sort of discrediting of existing usage, it overlooks how the lands which are acquired are in fact extremely productive. This reductionist perspective (Li, 2014a), is also quite evident in the rhetoric of industrial development being essentially good, as has been discussed above. Thus the "statistical picturing" methods coupled with the discourses of underutilization and the need for efficient usage, then begin to constitute a framework of understanding through which the issues of "underutilization" and the need for jobs are recognized , realized and understood (Foucault, 2000f).

The promise of jobs to farmers in Singur, thus invisibilized the fact that Singur was a rich agricultural site that had the capability of sustaining villagers via a plethora of fruit trees, homestead vegetable farms, fishes in ponds and common pasture lands. Women of lower class and caste derived income from communal lands. They would use such lands for animal grazing, gathering herbs and saw land as "security" (Roy, 2009). Even though

jobs in the TATA factory was presented as an alluring option, it invisibilized the fact that Singur already had small scale agro-based enterprises around farming (cold storages) and cottage industries run by women (Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009; Roy, 2009). In Salboni, the land that was acquired was stated to be mono-cropped. Such land usage was considered as synergistic with underutilization, and this validated the need for jobs. However the reality was that most of the area was cropped twice a year and some were multi-cropped. Potatoes, mustard, vegetables and sesame were also grown in addition to paddy (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). Money was earned by selling mustard, sesame and other vegetables in the local market. Some villagers claimed that with irrigation the land could be even more productive (ibid). Further there was 4200 acres notified land that was under the supervision of the State Animal Welfare Board, which was a fodder farm supplying fodder crops. There were forest land, with Sal, Segun, Arjun, Shirish, Akashmani and Jackfruit trees that were grabbed. These forests were utilized by women to make hand crafted products which were sold in the local markets (ibid). Cattle rearing were important for the local economy and were carried out on such lands (ibid).

Thus the discourse of jobs and "statistical picturing" (Li, 2014a) that represented space through a technocratic gaze (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38) "in thrall to knowledge and power" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 50), completely derecognized and invisibilized the "representational space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39) i.e. the space that is actually lived in the everyday and is imbued with meaning i.e. the productive space where people carried out so many activities. Such abstractions evacuated actually existing usage of land and justified the need for modern jobs. This involved a politics of reductionism, where the actually

existing richness is atrophied so that space could be enclosed for imposing capital social relations (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 106-107).

The promise of jobs is also a politics of invisibilization as it tends to marginalize those who are promised jobs. This happens because the promised jobs never materialize and the people losing land get impoverished, or the promised jobs are not aligned with promises originally made or are simply incommensurate with the skills, credentials and culture of people who are getting jobs. For instance, in Singur, despite the fact that a family member was offered a job in the TATA factory, many recognized the precarity of the offer. This is because men across class-caste lines, who had migrated out of Singur for jobs in factories, knew the problem of jobless growth in the Indian economy due to capital-intensiveness of industries. They found industrial employment precarious, and were willing to get into farming, as that was a secure option in spite of the danger of getting into agricultural debt. Further, they feared that with poor educational credentials they could never land a job in the car factory (Roy, 2007; 2009). There were also aware of examples of factories closing down elsewhere in the state (Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009). Thus people did recognize the politics of invisibilization of their existence through the empty promise of jobs. They realized that the promise was mere rhetoric, and which would actually push their lives into economic despondency. Many people therefore wanted some sort of joint venture enterprise (between the State and capital) that would help set up agro-based industries that would actually generate jobs for the locals (Sarkar and Chowdhury, 2009; Nielson, 2010).

The promise of jobs at Salboni, created its own series of anxieties around marginalization and invizibilization of who they were. Many stated that jobs could never compensate (but would rather peripheralize) the value of their ancestral land. Such ancestral land was a repository of values: it was like their mother, their ancestral homestead land on which they could live, cultivate and hand over to the next generation of sons (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). In comparison therefore they saw the promise of jobs as taking away all these values. Moreover, in Salboni despite being promised jobs and the construction of the factory already underway, jobs have not yet materialized. It is in this "temporality of waiting" (Datta, 2012, p. 4) that the anxieties of being rendered illegible surfaced. Many while waiting for the promised jobs had already been reduced to agricultural laborers (given that they did no longer have cultivable land), and this caused anxieties of not only survival but being reduced to the same status as those who never owned land (Reference: own information from activists and their supporters at Salboni). Many realized that while capitalist development was good, but only if the State took over the barren lands to build factories and not take over their fertile lands and offer jobs instead. Some stated that their children were not better situated to benefit from development because of its requirements for credentialized workers (Reference: own information from activists and their supporters at Salboni). The poor OBCs and tribals, regretted their lack of education and social capital (see Gupta, 2012) and the ability to pull the required governmental strings to get the promised jobs (Reference: own information from activists and their supporters at Salboni). Here it is clear, that despite the promise of jobs there is a fear of being marginalized because of the historical legacy of being deprived of education because of

their class-caste location. This deprivation of education produces an 'ignorance' that reproduces the social hierarchies of power (Patankar, 1999). Many tribals were worried that with jobs, their cultures will be annihilated by being reduced to slaves in the steel plant which was against their specific histories of being (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). Looking at the promise of jobs, it is also a politics of invisibilization of land losers and who they are. This is because even though the jobs are offered, they never materialize or jobs are simply unsuitable for many. Therefore by unpacking the promise of jobs, one can see a racialized logic working: the "subrace" and who they were and their socialities did not matter.

Compensation

The offer of compensation around land acquisition is also indicative of the colonial logic that the people whose lands are being taken do not really matter. The compensation that was offered in Salboni was not as contentious as it was in Singur. Across both places, not every family who lost their land received compensation. Further there were problems of ascertaining the compensation rates which were not in consonance with the actual loss incurred by giving up land, neither were the rates pegged to inflation or took into account the future value of land acquired (see Banerjee et al., 2007). In some cases the land records were not up to date (see Ghatak et al., 2013). In Salboni ryots received compensation, while pattadars did not receive anything. Agricultural workers got nothing. The compensation amount was Rs 3 lakhs/acre. The compensation was then divided up amongst families that left very little money for an individual person (Singha and Sengupta, 2009). In Singur, after continuous resistance around compensation

package, the state government decided to improve the compensation package, including giving tenants compensation up to 25% of land value. Agricultural workers were not even given any compensation (Ghatak et al., Date Unknown).

The main issue of resistance around compensation in Singur was that since land was a source of social security, identity and value, the compensation rate was not adequate to make up for the loss of land, livelihood, status and identity (Ghatak et al., Date Unknown). Further there were protests against the technical oversimplification in the way the lands were valued up for compensation by the State (Scott, 1998). For instance this oversimplification led to the absence of valuation of strictures built on land, trees and standing crops. Bureaucratic work led to a wrong classification of multi-cropped irrigated land i.e. Sona land as Sali land (single cropped unirrigated land). Further land records failed to show the heterogeneous character of lands including how the soil was prepared and what was the grade of the soil (Ghatak etal., Date Unknown; Ghatak et al., 2013). So the way the classification was carried out by assessors led to problems in ascertaining compensation (Ghatak et al., 2013).

What one can see in this process of determining who gets compensation, and how much compensation is to be given, how are the assessments done across both places, depends a lot on bureaucratic-technocratic skill and expertise (Scott, 1998). Such officials are prone to oversimplifying a complex landscape with complex tenures, land uses and land qualities. This oversimplification tends to invisibilize the actually existing conditions (Scott, 1998) that strongly communicate the colonial logic that actual farmers on the ground, the materialities of the land that they farm do not matter. Thus compensation

determination can be considered as a "tactical and strategic operation[s]…undertaken with a view to the establishment….of a sort of impregnable fortress of knowledge….the learned promoters of such movements always express the conviction that their claims are of an irrefutably scientific nature….justif[ying] for assigning priority to what is known or seen over what is lived" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 60-61). In other words in the name of scientific evaluation of land for compensation, a whole series of actually existing conditions are rendered illegible (Scott, 1998). The creation of such abstract spaces (see Mitchell, 2002), means that the actual compensation rates that are determined for some (not all) who are dispossessed has consequences for social reproduction (Guha, 2007). This kind of marginalization through invisibilizing complexity is an expression of the colonial logic of power. It is no surprise, that many in Singur for instance were surprised at the blatant way in which the communist government with the help of its local party members implemented the SEZs (Roy, 2007; 2009). Many were of the opinion that the past reforms were just a myth, while many called the CPI(M) opportunistic (Reference: own information).

Colonial Logic of Power: The Politics of Violence

The final aspect of the colonial logic of power that was displayed around the land question was the exercise of violence by the State (see Springer, 2010 on violence as technology of power). This violence was perpetuated against those who tried to resist the acquisition. Singur became the site of continuous acts of violence by the State. Such acts of violence are indicative of the fact that that the "subrace" can be subdivided into those

who are more entrepreneurial (Foucault, 2010) while the rest are waste (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011). It is the excess waste population that can be subjected to a politics of violence as they do not count. Such logic of division are similar to how the British established a hierarchy amongst the Bengali population, justifying who could be the 'disciplined Lockean subject' and be land holders and who could be tenants and be disposable (Wright, 2006).

In Singur, the violence erupted from time to time. It however began with CPI(M) apparatchiks or harmads trying to enforce the SEZ and intimidate those who resisted (see Walker, 2008; Roy, 2009). One woman activist, Tapasi Malik, whose father was a landless laborer, was burnt to death during the early part of the Singur resistance in 2006 December (MKEP, 2006-2007). An aspect of the Singur resistance, that was subdued by the State was one carried out under the leadership of Mahishya women. These richer Mahishya women galvanized other women to put up a massive resistance against the police and local administrators from entering the villages, by warning villagers through blowing conch shells and getting armed with brooms to drive out the police (Roy, 2007). In doing so they faced police brutality (ibid). In Salboni the violence was more "subterranean" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 63), with the local mafia colluding with the local CPI(M) leaders to intimidate people to give up land (Singha and Sengupta, 2009).

The politics of violence was internal to the creation of the "abstract space…" of capital flows (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 52). This violence "accentuate[d] difference" (ibid), it distinguished those who were excess and must be excluded through coercion, while the rest should be included as entrepreneurial subjects of development. As Lefebvre rightly

points out, “abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space. I shall call that new space ‘differential space’, because, inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates difference.” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 52). The technology of power that accentuates this difference is violence.

Colonial Logic Of Power: Culmination in Walling

In this final section of the chapter, I would like to claim, that the material-symbolic expression of the colonial logics of power, based fundamentally on the idea of division, civilizing mission, invisibilization of realities and inclusion/exclusion dialectic working through violence, was walling. Gigantic walls were created to bound spaces off both in Singur and Salboni (See Figure 6 and 7). This act of walling in itself was an act of creating enclosure through which the State spatialized itself (Jeffrey et al., 2012). Walling also symbolized who needed to be included and who needed to be excluded (Ong, 2006). For instance, the “subrace” was to be included only partially in the project of constructing SEZs. Those who resisted, had to be kept out by the wall. It is also walling that expresses the West Bengal State’s anxiety to become a part of the circuit of global capital. Thus the enclosure was the site which was truly “glocal”. Sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and neoliberalism come together at the site of the wall to create dialectic of inclusion/exclusion (Ong, 2006). Given the past history of reforms, it is no surprise that in the aftermath of the land acquisitions particularly at Singur and at another place called Nandigram (where resistance was severe), a cry of anguish was heard from a CPI(M)

supporter: that given the communist government's past why could it not seek an "alternative path to industrialization" while operating within a capitalist form of the State (CPI(M) Supporter, 2007)?

Conclusion

This chapter brings together the past history of land reforms at play with contemporary land acquisition. In this part of the dissertation I have tried to show how the communist government made an attempt to forget the history of reforms, thereby introducing the SEZ implementation with stealth and alacrity. Further the government reproduced colonial logics of power to materialize the reforms having multiple effects. Thus through the examination of the contemporary land process, I have shown that the contemporary moment is impure, as it is shot through by the past, giving rise to a messy politics. To reiterate, I have shown how this politics is messy through showing how the past always reappears to produce a politics that is not merely a singular struggle between land grabbers and land losers within the current conjuncture. This dissertation makes several contributions. Firstly, it shows how history matter. The history of power relations around land and their sedimentation shape current day land politics in Bengal. Secondly, this work also has attempted to denaturalize property to show that property relations are not given but produced. It has also indicated that that this production process is highly contested. Thirdly, my dissertation has tried to write out the specific historical geographies of land acquisition in a very important part of South Asia. Relatedly, my work contributes to the global land grab literature, to show how the global process of land

grabbing plays out in West Bengal with it specific post-colonial context and history of communism. Fourthly, my dissertation has brought into play significant issues of power relations, particularly how they work within a spatio-temporal dimension. Thus my work has shown how the sedimentation of power and the attempts at erasure of certain powers around land has created a messy politics.

Figure 2. Fertile Lands of Singur

Figure 3. Fertile Lands of Singur

Figure 4. Relatively Less Fertile Lands of Salboni

Figure 5. Relatively Less Fertile Lands of Salboni

Figure 6. Walling at Singur

Figure 7. Walling at Salboni

Conclusion: Future Directions

This dissertation was concerned with the messy politics of land acquisition in West Bengal. It particularly interrogated the changing property relations and its attendant power relations across time to account for the messiness in land politics. By saying that the land politics is messy, what this dissertation has meant is that contemporary land politics is not a singular outcome of current events but is shaped by the past history of land relations. Further this is the reason why there are variegated responses around the land question that make this politics complicated.

In narrating the arc of changing property and power relations in West Bengal, this dissertation argues that property as a social relation has always been a vector of power relations (following ideas from Foucault), through which social relations around land are organized. The State has a key role in arranging social relations around land through property producing various effects across time that sediment together to make land politics messy. This is a meta-argument that runs through the dissertation. In the first chapter, this meta-argument is laid out by showing the colonial search for a stable solution to the revenue problem in Bengal, led to the establishment of private property vis-à-vis the Permanent Settlement, which materially (and discursively) organized rural social relations. This then had deleterious impacts on social reproduction in rural Bengal. In this chapter the dissertation argues and substantiates how property in its private form was key in the transmission of power that helped in the realization of political economic,

spatial and racist logic of the British rulers. In the second chapter which discusses the post-colonial period, the main argument is that through tinkering with private property relations via land reforms, the communist government despite its tall claims of radicalizing land relations simply reproduced private property relations which were somewhat continuous with the form of property relations established via the Permanent Settlement. This 'improper governance' of reforms should not be seen as an external other to 'proper governance' around land by the communists, but is an internal aspect of governance through property. This, the dissertation shows, is because of the capitalist democratic form of the State that restricted the extent and scope of the reforms. Further, the implementation of the reforms at the village level was uneven because its actualization was always tied up with issues of social intersectionality and attendant techniques of power. In the third and final chapter, it is shown again how property becomes a vector of power. In this chapter the key argument is that the transformation of property into capitalist property through the creation of Special Economic Zones, is highly contested and complicated because of the stickiness of the past institution of reforms around land. Further, because of the inertia of the past reforms, the communist government employed colonial logics of power, to "educate" and civilize land stakeholders to give up their land for industrialization. This led to diverse responses of farmers around the land problematic that makes this land politics messy.

In summary, in trying to historically trace the trajectory of land relations in Bengal, the dissertation has traced how private property relations were established by the British to support its political economic, territorial and racist ambitions. This led to massive poverty

in rural areas as private property holders (zamindars) benefitted at the cost of the ryots (peasants). In post-colonial Bengal, the communist government tried to ameliorate this condition through reforms but could not radically transform land relations as it had to work within a capitalist democratic framework of the State. The actualization of reforms at the scale of the villages was not perfect due to social intersectionality playing a key part. With the rescaling of State powers to the sub-national level of West Bengal in the wake of the reforms of 1991, West Bengal became a crucial site for the investment of global capital. Thus the same communist government adopted colonial logics of power to get rid of the inertia of past reforms and materialize the Special Economic Zones, by trying to produce land as a capitalist property.

There are several lessons that can be drawn from this dissertation. Firstly, the main lesson from this dissertation has been how the issue of development around land is contested and is intimately tied up with the State's role in establishing, making, maintaining, remaking or unmaking property relations, which has profound implications for subjectivity and politics around land. Thus one cannot ever analyze land politics outside of State-society dynamics in its historically dynamic form. Secondly and in line with the first lesson, this dissertation shows that history cannot ever be forgotten in land politics as it constantly reasserts itself in contemporary land politics, making this politics interesting and messy. Thirdly, though this work contributes to the global land grab literature (by particularly pulling out the political moment around land that is always a dialectic of the global and the local), it is important to understand and appreciate the particular form it takes within specific regions and contexts. This dissertation thus showed how land

politics emerged in a post-colonial communist context of West Bengal which had an interesting history of land reforms. This however is not to prioritize the 'local', but to consider how these local histories interact with global conditions of capital accumulation and issues of State governance to give rise to a specific form of land grabbing. Fourthly and finally, this dissertation shows that it is particularly important to understand what can be the nature of resistance around the land question to mitigate its violence. In other words there are no singular methods to resist land acquisition; the methods arise out of the context in dialectical interplay with broader conditions and strategies of struggle. Thus situatedness of the land question is key in determining the multiple modalities of struggle and resistance. There are no simple one-size-fits-all when it comes to resistance towards land grabbing.

One of the areas which my dissertation has not explicitly focused on is resistance. Particularly the various positionalities that shape resistance around the land acquisition issue. The issue of resistance is present in my dissertation, as evidence of colonial logics of power exercised by the West Bengal State. However, the multiple positionalities around resistance can be further elaborated. I would like to develop the resistance issue further in my future work.

My future research will also build on my current work to examine in-depth the statist moment around land politics in West Bengal. I will particularly analyze the various relationships the state establishes between casteised and gendered populations and their access to land and resources during different phases of land governance. Adopting the concept of "environmental biopolitics" i.e. way populations are managed in relation to

environment, I propose to ask three questions. Firstly, what knowledges and practices do the state produce during the reforms and acquisition periods to manage or govern people's connections to land? Secondly, are these knowledges and practices biased against certain castes and gender, and if so, how? Thirdly, what are the casteised and gendered effects of establishing these relationships, i.e. which subjects get (dis)enfranchised? I will conduct further archival, historical analysis and ethnographic work at the same research site to gather data around these questions. This research will enable an understanding of the relationship between the state, socially differentiated subjects and nature, and its impact on messy politics. In the context of global land grabs, it will particularly foreground the modalities through which the pressing problem of unequal land access is produced.

Another direction that I want my future research to take is to interrogate my own subjectivity and experiences of doing research. This research would have been impossible had my family not helped me in the enterprise. I encountered a lot of difficulties as a woman working in India, particularly coming from a middle class background. My family while being a resource to me in the research process was also an impediment as I lost my independence to travel to villages alone. I always had to take my family with me because of the general feeling that women cannot travel alone in India due to safety issues. I also want to interrogate how my aversion to talking to any and everyone, and at some level the inability to socialize easily with my research subjects impacted the research process.

Bengali Words	**Meaning**
Ryot	Small owner farmer or tenant
Zamindar or Jotedar or chakdar	Landlord
Bargadar or adhiar or bhagchashi	Sharecropper
Pattadar	Title holder
Patta	Land title deed
Mahishya, Bagdi, Kurmi, Mahato	Names of caste groups

Table 2. Glossary of Terms

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