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From company town to company village: CSR and the management of rural aspirations in eastern India's extractive economies

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ABSTRACT

In India's contemporary model of extractive industry, the Company Town has been replaced by the 'company village.' Private sector firms throughout India's mineral belt now occupy sectors that were, until recently, almost exclusively state-owned. Once the great hope for India's industrial modernization and developmentalist effort, extraction continues to cause immense social and environmental dislocation but now offer few avenues of employment. Operating in the resettlement colonies of those displaced by land acquisition and in peripheral villages, extractive companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs attempt to mediate and redirect rural aspirations away from plant gates and mine sites, though often with only limited success.

KEYWORDS

Land; India; CSR; dispossession

Introduction

On 19 March 2019, several hundred individuals from nearby villages and resettlement colonies assembled at Vedanta Alumina's refinery gates in Lanjigarh, demanding jobs. The private security force employed by the company moved to disperse protestors, compelling a violent clash in which a protestor and a member of the security force were killed and another fifty from both sides were injured (*Business Standard*, 19 March 2019). In Lanjigarh, which is one of the most volatile flashpoints of India's 'land wars,' the most recent devastating violence was spurred not by resistance to land grabs but because of an urgent demand for employment. India's land wars are also – and perhaps more pointedly – job wars. While much of the literature on India's extractive economy has focused on corporate and government efforts at land acquisition and the social movements that have emerged in opposition, I shift the focus here to questions of employment and labor, which have remained core concerns of political economy since Marx began theorizing about capitalism. As Jameson has suggested, Marx's '*Capital* … is not a book about politics, and not even a book about labor: it is a book about unemployment' (Jameson 2011, 2). The contemporary crisis of automation and ongoing debates about artificial intelligence are not novel; they are merely the most recent instances of labor-threatening changes endemic to capitalism. The unfolding of unemployment has played out at different speeds and with different effects across the world. This essay takes up the

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story of how capital is negotiating the shift away from labor in a particularly contentious context – extractive economies in India, where we see these processes play out in violent as well as banal ways on the ground.

I situate the contemporary extractive economy alongside a longer history of extractive economic practices. Over the last two decades, the pace and scale of extractive industry around the world have intensified as a result of the deregulation of industrial activity in newly liberalized economies and surging global demand for commodities. In India, subterranean resources are concentrated in the mountainous eastern and central parts of the country, where a profusion of open cast mines, power plants, refineries, and steel plants is converting vast agricultural and forestlands to new extractive and industrial use. Through the arm of the firm known as the Corporate Social Responsibility unit, firms are building and operating rehabilitation villages, hospitals, schools, and cottage industries, extending the spatial reach of their presence far beyond the perimeters of mine pitheads and industrial plants. These CSR activities are embedding corporations in the countryside through what I call 'company villages,' inversions of the 'company town' of the past. Company towns emerged in the twentieth century as companies were forced by labor mobilization to enact programs for social welfare, redistribution, and development – what we might consider corporate social ethics – within the body of the firm itself. The bottom line for firms – profitability – was achieved by also providing training and welfare for at least some categories of workers. In the contemporary model of highly mechanized extractive industry, however, there is a transformation of this tendency. Now firms attempt to demonstrate their social ethics on sites and on behalf of communities exterior to and on the periphery of plants and mines. In India, where there is public opposition in almost every case of land acquisition for mining and mineral-dependent industry, two new laws passed in 2013 – the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, and the Companies Law – represent an effort on the part of the Indian state to mitigate conflict over land and in the process, transfer some of the obligation for rural development to corporations. In place of the labor-capital dynamics that produced hard-won welfare for workers in yesterday's company towns, companies in today's extractive sectors are developing diverse mechanisms to keep people away from the mine and factory gates. Corporate Social Responsibility is one such mechanism.[1] And it operates in 'company villages' that include the Resettlement and Rehabilitation colonies for those displaced by extractive investments and also myriad villages arrayed outside the plant perimeter for whose residents there are few industrial job opportunities.

This essay draws from a larger project based on fieldwork at six principal sites that include a mix of mines and metal plants. All are major private sector investments apart from one aluminum factory owned by the Indian central government. Thanks to a rich body of work on land acquisition and social opposition that is based on fieldwork with local communities and social movement leaders across India, we have a good sense of how opposition movements form, when and how they are successful, their relationships to transnational alliances, and how land acquisition's effects are conditioned by socio-economic differences and hierarchies within communities. We know relatively less

[1]This essay focuses on one purpose of CSR – to manage the expectations of those left out of contemporary industrialization in the countryside. I do not mean to suggest that this is the only aim of CSR; my research has suggested that placating government actors, projecting an inclusive image, and even serving as a eyes and ears of the firm in hostile landscapes are other utilities of CSR.

about the corporate and state actors on the other side of these contests. To address this lacuna, my research 'studies up' to understand how capitalist firms are positioning themselves in the new political economy of capital-intensive extraction. I carried out research during one seven-month research trip in 2016 and shorter visits in 2013–2015 and 2019. At each site, I interviewed the Head of CSR, junior field staff, and NGO implementation partners, and, where possible, senior Operations, Human Resources, and Executive Managers of mining and metal companies. In the case of plants that were still under construction and where displacement was underway, I also interviewed officers in the Land Acquisition, and Resettlement and Rehabilitation teams. In some cases, my interactions took the form of semi-structured interviews, but also included extended tours of village-level CSR sites and repeated informal meetings and conversations, particularly with the field staff who work most closely with local communities and NGO facilitators. Such an engagement allowed me to understand CSR beyond its stylized representations in news stories, corporate awards ceremonies, and company annual reports, and facilitated a better approximation of the logic of CSR as it was practiced on the ground. I do not mask the names of companies or towns; the size and scale of these projects makes efforts at preserving anonymity quixotic. I refrain, however, from naming individuals from companies or NGOs and also mask the names of local NGO partners. Instead I refer to interviewees by their institutional location or employee designation.

The rest of the paper is organized as followed. The first half of the essay consists of two sections that motivate the essay theoretically. The first section links discussions of land dispossession, rural aspirations, and CSR to put the latter into a political economy frame. The second section theorizes the contemporary 'company village' by juxtaposing the concept with corporate welfare and labor practices from two earlier moments: the early twentieth century context of India's first company town in Jamshedpur and post-independence public sector steel towns. To give an empirical sense of these arguments, the second half of the essay draws from fieldwork at three extractive sites in Odisha, India.

Land politics in extractive contexts: dispossession, rural aspirations, and CSR

Over the last several decades, there has been burgeoning interest in the politics of land grabs and dispossession, rural aspirations and the future of smallholder agriculture, and the rise of Corporate Social Responsibility. My research is situated at the intersection of these three domains. In particular, considering CSR in light of the literatures on dispossession and rural aspirations enables a novel reading of the meaning and location of CSR, particularly in the context of contemporary mining economies. Here I argue that the most useful theoretical approach to CSR in mining and mineral-processing economies is to understand it as a tool for negotiating rural dispossession and responding to rural aspirations, one that has only mixed success. Similarly, I hope that examining the functioning of CSR on the ground can contribute a novel frame to the literature on land politics in India, much of which has focused on resistance to dispossession and on speculative real estate economies in peri-urban contexts. Some of this literature has focused on people's aspirations to be included in projects of development and other parts emphasize how those aspirations go unrealized; the contribution I make here is to study how corporations respond to the unrealizability of these aspirations for inclusion in the context of jobless growth, specifically in the context of extractive economies.

Much of the literature on land politics in the last several decades has drawn inspiration from Harvey's (2003) theorization of accumulation by dispossession (Levien 2012, Hall 2013). In much of this work, it is land itself, commoditized, subject to repeated speculation, and financialized, that is at the core of dispossession (Goldman 2011 and this collection, Levien 2018, Sampat 2015, Searle 2016). Some among the dispossessed can succeed in navigating these new opportunities for mobility, but many are left out; dispossession thus reproduces and exacerbates existing rural inequalities. The shadowy nature of land deals makes resistance difficult, but not impossible, particularly through creative alliances of local and transnational groups in the case of global land transfers (Kraemer, Whiteman, and Banerji 2013; Temper 2019). As Gardner (2018) and others have pointed out, though, in many cases in the Global South, local reactions emerge more stridently not as opposition to dispossession but as demands for jobs. This is particularly so where land fragmentation and declining productivity have made agrarian livelihoods increasingly tenuous, and also in the context of the large-scale extractive economies that materially and substantially transform landscapes, erecting behemoth structures amid farmlands. The rural-industrial context of the opening vignette in Lanjigarh, Odisha, is one such context, where locals stopped work at Vedanta's massive refinery to demand jobs.

The social and economic effects of land dispossession hinges on how it impacts the prospects for stable livelihoods and rural aspirations, which have become the site of novel theorizing about the pace and orientation of capitalist development (Cross 2014, Gardner 2018, Levien 2018, Li 2014). Much of the academic literature emphasizes sites of resistance to change, in which communities strive to maintain local socioeconomic forms and practices against the onslaught of forced change via dispossession. Other scholarly accounts emphasize the aspirations of local communities to participate in economic transformation rather than halt modernizing development (Rangan 2004, Ramamurthy 2011). Aspirations are not static desires but instead a field of contestation in which a range of actors – individuals themselves, communities, NGOs, politicians, and also capitalist firms – attempt to shape what is considered desirable and achievable for rural communities and individuals who are left out of capital-intensive economic change. Local and transnational activists (Kumar 2014, Sampat 2015), everyday social relations and alliances (Nielson 2016), and actors within the larger political context (Sud 2014) all contribute to shaping the terrain of response to dispossession and dislocation. Likewise, rural aspirations, or how people 'imagine possible futures' (Cross 2014, 57), also have become key sites of attention for corporations, specifically through their corporate social responsibility agendas. For many of those whose homes and livelihoods are either displaced or deeply affected by capitalist expansion, it is the promise of employment that becomes most persuasive in generating compliance.[2] For CSR teams, then, redirecting these rural aspirations for employment away from their own firms becomes their most important mandate.

The emergence of CSR as an ideology and a domain within extractive firms has brought together a range of actors whose primary motivation is to manage and redirect rural aspirations for work. For newer and expanding projects, negotiating with local

[2]Cross (2014, 68) quotes one bureaucrat in charge of land acquisition in Andhra Pradesh as saying: 'You can't convince people to leave their land for payment only … The price of the land works to convince them 50 per cent and the hope of employment works to convince them 50 per cent.' And as Levien (2018) points out, the dream of upward mobility through new avenues of non-farm employment works especially powerfully on higher caste / class families who had already invested in education for their children.

communities is a fraught and difficult process. Even as many corporations resort to coercive methods during land acquisition and negotiation, they also employ 'community relations consultants' who advise a much softer tone (Gardner 2018, 1490) in negotiating over land prices, terms of rehabilitation, and the demand for jobs. Although functionally distinct, CSR teams often work very closely with the other parts of the company that negotiate land acquisition and displacement, such as the Resettlement and Rehabilitation or Industrial Relations units. The latter were once tasked with managing labor relations within firms, but in several of the companies I studied, these corporate units along with the CSR divisions were at the front line of land acquisition and managing community relations instead, underscoring how the thinning of the firm has turned divisions that were previously invested in internal welfare relations outward toward the community.

Empirically, most of the literature on CSR is focused on multinational corporations headquartered in Europe and North America, as these were indeed the vectors along which the philosophy and practice of CSR originated, spread most quickly, and became most deeply intertwined in corporate practices. Whereas early strands of CSR literature emerged from management schools, more recently sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists have begun investigating CSR historically (Barkan 2013, Kinderman 2012), in institutional terms (Shamir 2004, Dashwood 2012), and as a set of socially embedded practices (Gardner 2012, Rajak 2011, Welker 2014). By now, some variant of the philosophy and practice of CSR has spread throughout the global capitalist ecosystem, among smaller firms that continue to operate in domestic economies, through multinational firms headquartered in Asia and Latin America, and even among public sector and para-statal firms in the Global South. Compared to the much broader literatures on CSR among multinational firms, of which a considerable amount is devoted to mining and other extractive firms, there is a much smaller literature on CSR among Indian firms and within India. In India, CSR was institutionalized in the 2013 Companies Law (Krichewsky 2017) as a directive to large companies to spend two percent of annual profits to social efforts, prioritized in areas where they operate.[3] Despite the absence of the kind of shareholder and social movement activism that compelled these programs in the US and Europe, CSR has grown apace in India, with roughly two-thirds of private companies starting CSR programs between 1991 and 2005 (Mitra 2012). The Ministry of Corporate Affairs records that in the calendar year 2015–16, 10,190 *crore* ($1.5 billion) was spent on CSR by private companies, and slightly more in the following year.[4]

In the context of the extractive economies of eastern India, I suggest that CSR is not about brand management – Indian shareholders and institutional investors seem relatively unconcerned about the ethical practices of the firms in which they are invested – and there is little evidence that CSR responds to the kind of middle class activism that spurred the global spread of CSR in other parts of the world in the 1990s. Nor are firms carrying out CSR as either a commitment to a new kind of ethical capitalism or as a continuation of older Indian philanthropic values, although one can hear in conversations with CSR staff and managers echoes of both of these themes. Rather CSR is making extractive capitalism possible by confronting and managing those on the peripheries. In the

[3]Among the antecedents of this legal codification are a 2007 speech on a 'Partnership for Economic Growth' given to the Confederation of Indian Industry by then prime minister, Manmohan Singh, and the Ministry of Corporate Affair's 2011 National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental, and Economic Responsibilities of Business.

[4]Data last accessed on 3/28/19 at: http://www.mca.gov.in/MinistryV2/csrdatasummary.html.

contexts of capital-intensive industry in places that are still very rural, land alienation produces particular local demands and aspirations that capital does not serve. Coercion is costly, and CSR has proven useful as a mechanism with which extractive companies can respond to and occasionally forestall disquiet. In the absence of large scale employment, even the limited budgets of CSR teams become significant tools in this process.

While Indian law obligates companies to spend on CSR, the specific forms that it takes are left to the determination of individual companies. In some cases, CSR efforts to manage rural aspirations mean keeping people in place. In the villages just outside the plant and mine periphery, CSR teams facilitate new industries like fly-ash bricks and rural BPOs (business process outsourcing), and cultivate entrepreneurship through programs to train and connect micro-entrepreneurs to local bank branches. Many CSR teams have substantial budgets devoted to agriculture programs, with an aim to increase productivity and diversify smallholder income streams and thereby make farming a viable alternative to industrial employment. In other instances, CSR teams organize industrial training programs in an attempt to place workers in other parts of the country. CSR teams thus become heavily invested in exactly the kinds of development activities – skill building, facilitating small-scale production through self-help groups, agricultural extension work, irrigation development – that were once the near-exclusive purview of state-led development efforts. Many CSR programs fail to achieve their intended aims, as the second half of the essay illustrates; nevertheless, they become an important demonstration of corporate responsiveness to local communities.

Modes of extraction: from company towns to company villages

As CSR comes to replace corporate labor welfare, there is an analogous spatial shift, from the company town to the company village, as corporations seek to manage populations on their perimeters rather than within their own factories or mines. To underscore what is novel about the contemporary moment, we can set it against the company towns that emerged during two earlier modes of extractive development. The first was initiated during the decades just before independence when Tata Steel's operations in and around the city of Jamshedpur represented a new political economic form in colonial India. The second came about during the decades just after independence, when public sector companies became the engines of India's extractive economy through investments like the National Mineral Development Corporation, Steel Authority of India Limited, Bharat Aluminium and National Aluminium Companies, and Coal India Limited among others.

Company town I: colonial-era TISCO

Before independence in 1947, India's preeminent company town was the Tata Iron and Steel Company's (TISCO) vertically integrated operations centered in Jamshedpur that included everything from coal and iron ore mines to steel manufacturing. The steel mill itself was set up in the first decade of the twentieth century in what was then Bihar and Orissa Province, and in what is now the state of Jharkhand. The site selection followed a typical logic of extractive projects, chosen for its proximity to water sources for production, iron ore deposits and coal mines which supplied the chief production inputs, and rail facilitates that allowed for the transport of finished products (Brush 1952, 44–6).

These various industrial inputs were spread throughout the British territories in eastern India. The firm acquired leases for mines and land for the steel mill and also a much larger surrounding area that served as residential quarters for its large workforce, under a combination of arrangements with princely rulers, and in the territories of British India, under the Government of India's Land Acquisition statute of 1894. The Tata's acquisition of land under the 'eminent domain' provision of the land statute was a key early test for how the statute delineated 'public purpose' (Raianu 2018, 369–70).

In its acquired lands, the firm exercised its corporate governance with little interference from the colonial state. In its relationship with its labor force and the surrounding communities, TISCO built a local variant of the company town, a steel *zamindari* [large landowner] to use Simeon's (1995) term. Eventually, the company became not only the main employer, but also provided all of the growing town's municipal infrastructural and social services, from schools and hospitals to roads and sewage systems. In many cases, new welfare services were extended after hard won union battles (Simeon 1995), much like the expansion of the traditional welfare state in other parts of the world. Despite periodic debates about whether the town's private governance should conform to standard Indian models of municipal governance, Jamshedpur retains its status into the present as a 'flexible, heterogeneous form of corporate sovereignty' (Raianu 2018).

Outside of its own growing sphere of extractive production in and around Jamshedpur, the growth of the Tata economic empire was joined to a diversifying set of philanthropic orientations, weighted particularly heavily towards what Raianu terms 'knowledge infrastructure' (2017), which included gifts and endowments to everything from the Archaeological Survey of India, the London School of Economics, and institutes devoted to Science, Social Science, and Fundamental Research among others. Beyond this far flung philanthropy, though, much of the firm's ethical commitment was enacted through its labor relations and within the city of Jamshedpur. There, corporate welfare practices for its own workforces served to recruit, manage, discipline, and ensure the daily and intergenerational reproduction of its workforce. Whereas India's emerging iron and steel industry had many advantages relative to its competitors in the US, Europe, and Japan – plentiful coal and ore resources, government support, and low wage rates – the overwhelming handicap was the lack of skilled labor (Mather 1927, 612–13). Whereas much of the firm's semi-skilled and unskilled labor forces were recruited from local agrarian and forest communities, many of whom were members of *adivasi* (tribal or indigenous) communities, by necessity, much of the company's management and skilled workforce was imported from outside of the region. By 1921, in the second decade of operation, more than half of the skilled and semi-skilled workforces (making up 30% and 41% of total employment figures, respectively) came from outside of Bihar and Orissa, whereas nearly half of the unskilled workforce was drawn from the firm's immediate environs.[5] Early investments in technical education became critical for establishing precisely the kind of skilled and semi-skilled workforce that was lacking not only in the region but in India more generally. The first such institution, the Jamshedpur Technical Institute, was established in 1921 with TISCO's own investments supplemented by grants from provincial governments (*Times of India*, 27 February 1925).

[5]As Simeon (1995, 21–22) notes, the lines between 'unskilled' and 'skilled' were often blurry, and could in some cases denote more about the social identity of the worker than the material content of labor. For example, an early Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee report suggested that on occasion, an *adivasi* performing 'complex work would only be recorded as 'semi-skilled' and accordingly paid a lower wage than a foreigner doing the same work.'

The majority of graduates were employed in various parts of TISCO's shop floor. The consequence of these and other kinds of training investments was not just to stabilize the skilled workforce but to gradually Indianize it, replacing more expensive Americans and Europeans with technically-trained workers from within India. The success of these efforts was pronounced. Whereas 229 Europeans were employed in the mills in 1924, just three years later, the number had shrunk to 161, replaced by skilled, and much lower-cost, Indian workers, at least some of whom were trained through TISCO's educational investments (*Times of India*, 3 March 1927).

In its early decades of operation, at the local level, TISCO's welfare and educational investments were closely connected to the firm's own needs for scientific, managerial, and technical expertise to be ultimately absorbed by its workforce and for its own production needs. If even a small segment of its workforce benefitted directly from these training sessions, it is nevertheless representative of the thrust of corporate ethics of the time, which were directed inwards towards their own employees and potential workers. This stands in contradistinction to the kinds of efforts in education philanthropy that are carried out by the CSR wings of contemporary extractive firms, the bulk of which are aimed at preparing locals to remain outside of extractive operations. It is the context of production that accounts for the differences across these two eras. Labor-intensive production guided TISCO towards developing and training workers and providing welfare to stabilize employment; today's capital intensive production reduces the need for workers, and so firms respond by directing more of their welfare efforts towards populations outside of the plant and mine.

Company town II: post-colonial steel townships

After 1947, a postcolonial variant of the company town emerged, concentrated around public sector extractive firms operating in and near to India's coal and iron ore belt. Planned townships became common throughout independent India; many were built to house new governments and to accommodate populations moving across newly created national borders, but it was industrial townships that made up the lion's share of India's new cities (Glover 2012). Prominent among these were the public sector steel townships of Rourkela (in Odisha), Bhilai (in Chhattisgarh), Durgapur (in West Bengal), and Bokaro (in Jharkhand). The company towns of Nehru's India were designed for a dual purpose, both to produce the raw materials for planned industrialization and also to stage the immense possibilities of the modern industrial city and the modern Indian citizen-worker who would inhabit it (Roy 2007). This vision of the steel town as a site of India's industrial modernity may have emanated from the political and technocratic elite, but was shared more broadly by the labor forces drawn from multiple parts of India for construction and operations (Parry 2003). When the steel cities succeeded in creating a new common, modern identity, they often did so by reinforcing the differences between those within the township and those outside. The former became a regional labor aristocracy distinguished by hereditary employment guarantees, access to good schools and healthcare, and far higher wages (Parry 2003, Strumpel 2011, Sanchez and Strumpel 2014).

The government's acquisition of land for these new industrial sites far exceeded what was required for production alone, in keeping with the plan for novel, planned townships to house large workforces. Here, industrialization was imagined as the twin of urbanization, so lacking in the largely agrarian contexts of eastern and central India. In Rourkela, for example, the government acquired 20,000 acres on which 13,000 villagers lived (Strumpel 2014). Only about a fourth of that would have been for the plant itself, the rest for the new township of Rourkela.

On paper, dispossessed families were to receive permanent employment for one family member and house plots to compensate for what was taken, although the government's record on compensation was extremely poor. Fernandes (2004) estimates that fewer than a third of families displaced by the state from the 1950s to 80s were resettled. By contrast, these new sites served their own workforces much more effectively. In their dual commitment both to making steel and to making employment, India's steel towns reflected what Levien terms a 'developmentalist regime of dispossession' (2018, 41). As with the precolonial company town of Jamshedpur, the postcolonial company towns' had two primary ethical commitments: to their own workforces and to the ideals of nation-building. Whereas the former was directed internally through generous housing, education, healthcare, and dependent benefits; the second was projected onto a national canvas through news coverage of exciting ground-breaking and stone-laying ceremonies, documentaries by the Films Division of the modern concrete cities taking shape amidst large agrarian landscapes, and through annual reports that demonstrated the productive energies of the emerging industrial workforces.

The difference in ownership between private sector Jamshedpur and the post-colonial company towns meant that though all of them were driven primarily by profit, the former responded to changes in production technology and threats to profitability by retrenchment when necessary, prompting periodic and widespread labor actions as workers fought to retain jobs and welfare benefits (Simeon 1995). According to the developmentalist commitment of public sector company towns, on the other hand, employees were retained despite global movements towards more capital-intensive modes of production. It is only in the last two decades that the postcolonial steel towns, too, have faced pressures to adopt global production technologies and processes that require reconfiguring and retrenching their workforces.

India's new company villages

What is unfolding now is a third phase of extractive industrial development, in which the new forms that are emerging are unlike both colonial-era Jamshedpur and Nehru's industrial townships. In brief, I suggest that if CSR practices have replaced corporate labor welfare, the company village has replaced the company town. The contemporary extractive complex has several features that constitute the political economy frame within which it operates, and for which CSR projects become a vital if partial response. First, de-licensing in the early 1990s has meant that new capital flows now come from private firms, and not from state-owned companies that were the dominant source of investments from the 50s to the 80s. The downstream iron and steel industry provides a good example of these shifts. The sector, which had been dominated by the state-owned companies, was one of the first to be opened up to private capital in the early 90s; two decades after deregulation, over 80% of crude steel production is now coming from private steel firms (*Ministry of Steel Annual Report 2018–19*).

A second feature of the new, privately-helmed extractive complex is its decreased labor intensity. Both mining and refinery operations have become far more mechanized and capital intensive over the last fifty years. From mining and processing industries all the way to food and textiles production, all manufacturing sectors – both labor-intensive and capital-intensive – are getting more capital intensive over time (Kapoor 2016). Perhaps even more problematic from the standpoint of overall welfare and employment is that capital intensive sectors of the economy are growing at a much faster pace than labor intensive sectors. A third feature of the Indian economy – including the contemporary extractive complex – is the growing proportion of contract or precarious labor (Perry 2014, Centre for Sustainable Employment 2019). Automation and the rise of contract labor has severely restricted the scope for permanent employment, particularly for local populations that tend to be entirely unskilled. This kind of unskilled labor would have been essential to the work of digging that is now accomplished by mammoth excavators, to the work of transporting materials that are now moved along elaborate conveyor belts, and to the dirty and dangerous work of washing the raw ore with chemicals in preparation for subsequent stages of purification. An increasing reliance on casual labor and the shrinking of the permanent workforce is occurring even in India's public sector steel cities. From 65,000 in the late 1980s, the permanent labor force in one of Nehru's company towns, Bhilai, plummeted by more than half to 31,500 in 2011 (Parry 2013), with much of the reduction due to the the growing use of contract laborers. One consequence is that inequalities organized along regional, ethnic, and gender identities have become even more marked (Parry 2014, Sanchez 2012, Strumpel 2014).

These three characteristics of extractive industry – privatization, decreased labor intensity, and greater labor informalization – have changed the nature of extractive firms' relationships to those displaced for land acquisition and residing in the regions around their mines and plant sites. Capital intensification and the slimmed ranks of permanent employees – the need for land but not labor – means that firms' relations with local communities are marked not by efforts to recruit, discipline, and reproduce workforces but by the need to manage and regulate local populations, to keep them well outside the company gates. The company village, then, is the result of economic growth in the extractive sector minus employment, a process whereby economic transformation in some parts of the world is de-linked from urbanization and instead produces a return to the village, underscoring capitalist uneven development. The company village comprises two forms. The first is the resettlement and rehabilitation village built by companies to house displaced populations, or DPs. These households are additionally eligible for employment, one per DP family, as per Odisha government's 2006 law on compensation. The second form of the company village, which far exceeds the first in number and geographic scope, is comprised of all of those villages to whom the company owes nothing legally, but whose proximity to the plant or mine generates expectations for employment. From the perspective of mining capital, the strategic location of many of these villages – near vital water resources and road and rail transport linkages – makes stability in these areas essential for production. It is in the need to manage local communities that CSR emerges as a vital agent of capitalist expansion.

Livelihoods in India's 'company villages'

Kalinganagar, Jajpur district, Odisha

A first example of how CSR negotiates expectations for employment returns us to the Tata Steel company (previously named TISCO), whose colonial-era company town in

Jamshedpur was discussed above. The company's second major steel plant is located in the Kalinganagar Industrial Estate, a name that invokes a 3rd C. BCE regional kingdom. The estate is located in Jajpur district, two and a half hours by road from the capital city of Bhubaneswar. Tata Steel, on a sprawling 3400 acres, is its largest occupant. My interactions with company staff were motivated by the need to understand what the arrival of Tata Steel would mean for the area's villages, in which livelihoods remained almost exclusively tied to the land. If this was unlikely to lead to a new company town like Jamshedpur, what socio-economic form and what kinds of relationships between communities and the company would take its place?

Tata Steel's early land acquisition efforts were marked by extreme violence: on 2 January 2006, a group of protestors from villages that would be displaced for the project and from among the surrounding areas assembled to protest the construction of a boundary wall. The police opened fire and twelve tribal protestors were killed along with one member of the police force. According to activist accounts, two more protestors died of injuries, bringing the body count to 15. In 2016, one decade after these bloody events, Tata Steel's newest plant went into production. As of my early visits to Kalinganagar in 2016, approximately 200 families (out of 1234 enumerated by the government) were refusing to move, thereby preventing Tata Steel from completing its boundary wall. Those who did leave their villages and were deemed eligible for housing compensation are now spread across four relocation colonies, three built by the company and one a self-relocation colony in which villagers took compensation and purchased their own private lands to re-settle themselves. The official enumeration to determine compensation took place in 2004. Since then, hundreds more young people have come of age in DP families, but are not eligible for jobs or re-training. They see their elder brothers or perhaps their fathers with jobs 'on the rolls' at Tata Steel, but as CSR staff informed me, the best these young people might hope for from Tata Steel are temporary jobs with one of the subcontracting firms that provide construction, grounds keeping, and security services.

Apart from having the longest history of all of the private firms now operating in India's extractive sector, Tata Steel is also unique in having a dedicated organization for rural development. Tata Steel Rural Development Society (TSRDS) is an NGO established by the company in the late-1970s. Most if not all of Tata's various mining and metallurgy sites also have an attendant TSRDS office, which since the CSR law was enacted, have now become responsible for CSR efforts. The head of each TSRDS facility is a Tata Steel employee, and formally also the head of CSR, but the rest of the field staff are either employees of TSRDS, TSRDS contractors, or third party contractors. The interviews and interactions from which I draw were carried out with two members of the TSRDS-Kalinganagar staff at the time, whom I call Kishore and Megha.

In late December 2016, I had arranged to spend the day with Megha to learn about the livelihood and entrepreneurship programs under her direction. My morning started with a conversation with Kishore. Kishore had grown up in nearby coal mining areas, where Tata Steel has had substantial mining operations since the early twentieth century and where his father worked for another public sector company in the extractive sector. This was a common trajectory for many of the mining company managers and CSR officials that I encountered; many had grown up in company towns during the 60s to 80s and nostalgically recalled the broader developmental project that they felt their families had both participated in and benefitted from.

Describing the common problem for rural development in both mining and plant sites, Kishore said, ‘in all of these areas, our biggest challenge is how to engage the youth. The new generation is not interested in agriculture. But they don’t have skills and education to get jobs elsewhere. [Tata] Management is telling us, don’t lie to them but show them how agriculture can be profitable if done correctly. That is why our major focus is on providing irrigation through ponds, check dams, lift irrigation points.’ I asked him to tell me a little more about how management communicates this intention to focus on agriculture. At that point, Kishore seemed to walk back his early statement: ‘actually management wants a big push approach to give the locals lots of options. Education, skill development, entrepreneurship support, and also agriculture. Because obviously the company can’t tell them to only do agriculture. So we also do all of the other things.’ The rest of that day’s visit was occupied with learning about these other activities.

Megha and I along with a TSRDS driver traveled along the road past Gobarghati, one of the villages right next to the plant, just beyond which was a training facility where we first stopped. We arrived at a one-story building where PARFI, one of Tata Steel’s partner organizations for livelihood development, was housed. PARFI, which stands for Pan-IIT Alumni Reach for India, is an NGO founded by alumni of the Indian Institutes of Technology that has campuses devoted to skill development spread out throughout the country.[6] For the previous three years, this PARFI training facility had given training courses in bar-bending, shuttering (preparing foundations), and carpentry that lasted 45 days for domestic placements and 90 days for international placements. The batches trained previously at the facility had been placed with the construction company Shapoorji Pallonji, either internationally in Dubai and Kuwait, or domestically in Pune, Chennai, and Haryana.

The PARFI trainer met us on the driveway and led us to an open yard beside the building where a group of 11 young men was practicing bar bending, the technical work of shaping rebar to precise specifications for construction projects. This batch, like the previous group of 14, was to be employed on short-term contract by JUSCO, another Tata company that was then building the Tata Steel township in Kalinganagar. As part of its rural livelihood development initiatives, TSRDS had mobilized three batches of trainees for this program so far. The first batch was trained in forklift and placed with companies in Pune, Madras, Haryana. The second batch had already been working for JUSCO since the previous month. This third batch of TSRDS recruits was then on their 32nd day of training, with about ten days left. The trainer was a retired army *subedhar* (junior commissioned officer), a characteristically disciplined military man who proudly explained that the trainees stayed on campus in a hostel and were taught a little bit of everything while under his tutelage: in addition to the main focus of industrial skills, they learned how to cook by assisting in kitchen, worked in the garden, received behavioral training, and learned discipline through early morning physical exercise.

As we watched the young men bend metal construction bars in the midday sun, I asked Megha how TSRDS recruits trainees for this and similar programs. She explained that TSRDS first gets a list from the company’s Resettlement and Rehabilitation unit that lists unemployed youth among DPs and other families in the immediate area. Of

[6]The Indian Institutes of Technology were set up by the post colonial state to train Indian citizens in technology, and make the country moden and independent of foreign expertise. Its successful middle class alumni received highly subsidized state education and in recent years are giving back through charitable projects like PARFI.

the 11 young men training that day, all came from either Schedule Caste or Scheduled Tribe families, which reflects the demographics of the area. Four came from DP families but were too young at the time of enumeration to have received employment compensation. The families of all four stayed in various TS resettlement villages. Two of them had older brothers who worked at the plant and the third had an older brother who was awaiting placement. The family of the fourth had several older brothers and his father had not yet decided whom to nominate for employment compensation; since the sons were not over 18 at the time of land acquisition, the family as a whole was given only one job, in accordance with the compensation plan. After finishing the full course, the graduates would be placed alongside the earlier batch of trainees at JUSCO as contract construction workers, with a salary of Rs. 8330/month (around $115). The steel company's hope was that after this initial contract, TSRDS's livelihood program would enable them to look elsewhere in the area for work or even further afield, in India or abroad. An enduring problem of the compensation program overall is the time lag between when the enumeration for compensation takes place, and when villagers actually lose their homes and livelihoods and the prospects for gainful work at that point. Within a single family, whereas an older brother might have a permanent job with the company, younger siblings would be left to seek precarious and much lower-paying contract work.

During a conversation with Megha three years later, in September 2019, I found out that young men that she had recruited ended up having a disastrous experience with their employment. The labor contractors who recruited for JUSCO refused to pay wages, claiming that the quality of the work done by the PARFI trainees was too poor to warrant compensation. As Megha understood it, the dispute was symptomatic of a fundamental friction in the model of skill development, both in this instance and more generally. Labor contractors were far more interested in suppressing wages, and from the contractors' perspective, the little bit of skill that could be acquired in the space of a short training program unnecessarily inflated wages and expectations without providing enough meaningful skills. The experience was enough of a failure that Megha severed the TSRDS relationship with PARFI entirely. As of 2019, she was uncertain whether the NGO continued to conduct training programs near the Kalinganagar industrial estate at all.

It is the facts of modern steel production that necessitate these strategies. As of mid-2016, Tata Steel was already producing three million tonnes of steel annually with a workforce of approximately 3,000 permanent employees and 5,000 contract workers. Of the latter, the majority were employed by construction subcontractors to finish building the plant facility.[7] The company announced plans to expand production to 8 million tons annually (*Economic Times*, 21 June 2018); yet the number of permanent employees was expected to increase by less than half to roughly 4,500 permanent workers with another 6,000 contract workers. By contrast, Tata Steel's older facility at Jamshedpur had an annual capacity of 10 million tonnes of steel but employed 37,000 workers, and in previous decades employed twice that number. The managing director of Tata Steel put it well, the company's 'aim is to take the per-employee output [at Kalinganagar] to over 2,000 tonnes of steel to compete with global leaders like [the South Korean company] Posco, whose per-employee steel output stands at 2,300 tonnes' (*Business Standard*, 3 November 2016). Even though Tata Steel operates in a labor-rich economy with

[7]Interview with Tata Steel Kalinganagar Head of Resettlement and Rehabilitation, 29 September 2016.

high unemployment, it aspires to produce steel in the same way as its global competitors, a fact that leaves the thousands in the periphery of the plant with no prospects for stable employment.

Angul, Angul district, Odisha

A relatively young firm established by Naveen Jindal (one of the sons of industrial magnate OP Jindal), Jindal Steel and Power is located in Angul district, roughly three hours by road from Bhubaneswar. I made several visits to the steel plant and the surrounding company villages from 2013 to 2016, learning about the operations at the plant, the fraught process of land acquisition, and varied development programs. These included everything from attempts to organize local women to produce *papadams*, hand-made paper, and menstrual products to attempts to educate local farmers in multi-cropping and vermiculture, and to design and build watershed management systems. The former efforts, in small-scale production organized as women's self-help groups, were concentrated in the company's relocation villages, and were meant to engage the wives and daughters from displaced families. The latter efforts, in agricultural extension and irrigation infrastructure development, had a greater spatial reach, taking the CSR team into agrarian areas within a ten kilometer radius of the company's perimeter wall.

It was on an early visit to JSPL in July 2013 that I first heard a senior CSR staff member use the phrase 'company villages,' by which she was referring to both the resettlement villages (referred to as R&R sites) built by the company and also the cluster of nearby villages where CSR staff carry out livelihood and agricultural training programs. My first walk through one of the company's planned resettlement villages included a visit to the village temple built in the local architectural idiom (modeled on a famous temple at Puri), school, and community meeting spot. Along with a senior CSR staff member, we made our way through the village and halted just opposite the entrance to the village, at the Jan Jeevika Kendra (JJK) [People's Livelihood Center]. The JJK houses a number of women's self-help groups (SHGs), with separate small-scale units devoted to producing soap, *agarbati* (incense), spices, paper, jute bags, and menstrual pads. Only some of the women working at the center came from the R&R villages, though it was intended primarily for them. The majority came from further afield, from households which had lost some farmland but whose homesteads were intact. The SHGs operated with rotating 0% loans from the company, which also served as their primary buyer in the absence of any market linkages to larger centers of consumption. For example, the notepaper and file-folders in all of the plant offices I visited were produced by the handmade paper-making SHG. The model for these SHGs was an unsustainable one; they existed because of the company's loans and patronage. One of the few exceptions was the *agarbati* unit, for which the CSR team had negotiated a long-term contract with the Indian Tobacco Company. When I asked why the company persisted in these ventures, a senior CSR staff person told me that 'the biggest challenge of R&R is not the resettlement, but how to engage people afterwards … After resettlement, all of the adult men [deemed eligible for compensation] are given jobs, but the women are idle. Household expenses are higher, for gas, electricity, mobile phones. So SHGs allow the women to earn supplementary income and occupy themselves productively.'

In both subtle and explicit ways, as in the conversation above, company staff gestured to the idea that local women, in particular, had to be managed carefully. Often, this sentiment emerged in conjunction with stories about events that had occurred a year prior to my first visit to JSPL, when several hundred villagers had successfully breached the company's perimeter boundary and marched through the plant demanding better compensation in the form of jobs and financial compensation for lost land (*Business Standard*, 26 January 2012). The company executives whom I interviewed described local women being at the forefront of the march. The proximate cause of the protest was the growing sentiment among both displaced and nearby villagers that the firm was recruiting workers from outside of the state rather than locally. The protest ultimately became violent, causing injuries to 160 villagers, many of them women, and a few guards from the company's private security forces, as well as damage to plant equipment and buildings.

If local women were seen by CSR as a major problem to be managed, then the company responded to what was perceived to be a gendered problem with what appeared to be its own gendered response. The few women whom I saw or interacted with at the steel plant worked either in CSR or Human Resources (HR), both units with a high rate of intersection with local villagers. A senior administrative employee based in Bhubaneswar, who had previously worked in Angul in HR, recalled that she and other female employees were encouraged by senior management to interact with local communities as much as possible, especially during festivals and religious ceremonies.[8] The company even tried to further encourage these interactions by institutionalizing them as part of a 'touch ten' initiative, which enjoined company employees to engage with at least ten individuals from the company villages. In addition to managing explicit demands for employment compensation, then, one additional task for the CSR team – particularly company women – was to maintain the company's social relations with local communities. Encouraging company employees in positions of contact with company villagers served as a way to address disquiet, protests, or demands which the company felt might be instigated by village women.

Lanjigarh, Kalahandi district, Odisha

The village of Lanjigarh in Odisha's southwestern district of Kalahandi is now the site of a bauxite refinery established by the global firm, Vedanta. The refinery is located not far from the border with Chhattisgarh, at the foot of the mountain known as Niyamraja, revered by local *adivasi* communities as a deity. In a case that drew broad national and international attention thanks to the successful coupling of local struggles against land acquisition with transnational movements (Kumar 2014), Vedanta's proposed bauxite mining at Niyamgiri was halted by the order of a Supreme Court-mandated referendum in the surrounding *gram panchayats*, local rural governments. The local Dongria Kondh *adivasi* community voted overwhelmingly in 2013 to block mining in favor of protecting their sacred sites of worship. Unsurprisingly, the contest between the multinational Vedanta and the small community of *adivasis* who resisted the proposed bauxite mine has drawn considerable activist and academic attention (Padel and Das 2010, Kumar 2014, Oskarsson 2017). Well before losing this battle over mining, though, Vedanta had

[8]Interview in Bhubaneswar, July 2013.

spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to construct its refinery facility, anticipating a steady, nearby source of cheap, high-grade bauxite. Along the drive to the factory gates, one can still see rusty remnants of the conveyor belt snaking along the side of the mountain, constructed to carry ore from the mountaintop down to the plant. The company's ongoing presence at the refinery, its myriad difficulties with local communities, and its negotiations with the local state all continue apace, even as the bauxite-rich mountains that overlook it remain so far inviolate. Rather than the more high-profile conflict over mining, it is the complex relations between Vedanta's increasingly embattled CSR team and local communities surrounding its refinery operations that formed the core of my research in the area.

I first arrived in Lanjigarh on a weekday in July 2016 via a night train from Bhubaneswar, traveling there with an employee of a local NGO that was one of Vedanta's CSR implementing partners. On my second morning, I noticed that the Vedanta guest house was full of executives even after the workday should have begun. A group sat reading newspapers on the sofas in the lobby, and another group similarly attired disappeared with a tray of tea into one of the guestrooms. Waiting with my traveling companion on the front steps of the building, we began chatting with a man who turned out to be a recently appointed senior legal counsel for the firm. He told us that there was a work stoppage at the plant. Locals from one of the neighboring villages had surrounded the main gates of the plant, neither allowing the night shift to leave nor the day shift – including all of the managers – to enter. The lawyer was unable to tell us anything more about the specific causes of their protest, but I learned from others over the course of the next few days that residents of a village adjacent to the plant had come there to demand more definite information about when their village would be displaced. The farmlands of this village lie just on the other side of Vedanta's Red Mud Pond, where the slurry from mining operations is ultimately deposited and meant to be contained. A thick coating of red dust had settled on their fields and was making farming, and indeed living there, intolerable. Perhaps worse than being displaced by extractive industry is to live in a village that falls close enough to the perimeter of the mine or plant to feel the environmental effects but not close enough to have rights to compensation as a displaced person.

Through conversations over the rest of that visit to Lanjigarh, I learned of three ongoing agitations near the plant, each devoted to a specific claim. The first was spearheaded by the group whose lands and homes were coated in bauxite dust, those who caused the work stoppage described above. It was this group whose ongoing protests to demand employment were met three years later with the violence of March 2019 that opened this essay. A second group of protestors was composed of contract workers who were demanding that Vedanta intervene with one of the subcontracting firms that was delaying salaries. And the third group was from the already displaced villages, who were arguing that the company had not paid all of the compensation that had been initially promised. The lawyer who first told me about that day's events had only recently joined the Lanjigarh plant, but claimed to have seen more strikes and disruptions to production in his first month at Lanjigarh than in his previous three years at an aluminum smelter elsewhere in the state.

I finally met with the Head of the CSR division on the afternoon of my second day. I had interviewed him extensively several times before in Bhubaneswar, and it was those early meetings that enabled my later visit to the plant. By that point, I had visited a full array of Vedanta's CSR programs – a mid-day meal scheme to supply cooked food for school lunches, self-help women's groups engaged in poultry farming, and rooftop household solar power systems – all provided by subventions or seed grants from Vedanta CSR. Seated in his office in the CSR building, which was located down the road from the plant and opposite the resettlement colony, the head of CSR told me that 'the [local NGO's training] project is the most ambitious, most important project of all the things that we are doing. Because Vedanta cannot provide jobs for everyone who wants them.'[9]

This flagship CSR program, run by one of the company's NGO partners, aims to train young people from the resettlement village and other land-losing households in English-language and computer skills. The development NGO has offices in New Delhi and Bhubaneswar but the bulk of its work is focused almost solely in Odisha. The NGO was founded in 2002 by a man who had worked in development for the previous three decades, most recently as India Advisor for USAID's Health Policy Initiative, and prior to that with the British government's bilateral aid agency, also on health issues in rural Odisha. In describing the motivation for his NGO, the founder told me that India had now transitioned to a third phase of development.[10] If the first phase was a Nehruvian one with the state at the helm, and the second was led by the types of bilateral and multilateral organizations for which he had previously worked, the current phase of development would be championed and funded by corporate foundations and CSR. He believed his NGO was positioned to be a partner in this process, one with both the necessary professionalism to sell their work in corporate boardrooms and the grassroots knowledge that corporate foundations lacked. Very quickly, CSR had become a mainstay of his development work; in 2016, he estimated that CSR had funded 85% of his organization's work. In Odisha, his NGO partners with some of India's largest extractive firms, including Tata Steel, Cairn Energy, and Vedanta, which are also among Odisha's largest CSR spenders.

In Lanjigarh, the NGO runs the Yuva Pragati Kendra [Youth Progress Center], a skills and training workshop intended to link young people between the ages of 18 and 25 to employers located in Indian cities outside of the state. Some of these young people are from displaced families but were too young to have benefitted from employment guarantees at the time of land acquisition. Others are from villages within 5–10 kilometers from the refinery. Their villages lie in its shadow, affected by the plant, but not on lands that would have assured compensation. At the time of my visit in July 2016, about 35 young people regularly attended the morning sessions and another 15–20 came for the afternoon sessions in the YPK center. Most students come from Other Backward Class or Scheduled Caste agrarian villages, rather than upland villages of mostly Scheduled Tribes (STs) who successfully opposed mining in 2014. The first batch of graduates from the YPK program took a final exam first administered by the NGO, and then were registered to take an exam administered by the Indian retailer Shopper's Stop, a grocery chain with branches in many of the country's large metros. Of the group that sat for the Shopper's Stop exam, 14 passed and were given job placements at retail outlets in Bangalore. One of them had emerged as a star of the program, an exam 'topper.'

[9]Interview in Lanjigarh, July 2016.

[10]I had several discussions with the NGO founder in 2016, both in-person in his Bhubaneswar offices, as well as by skype when he was back in his Delhi headquarters. This exchange took place in Bhubaneswar on 1 July 2016.

What happened next exposed the challenges of running these kinds of programs, and in general for the project of managing youth aspirations. The exam topper explained to me that his village is located about 5 km from the refinery site.[11] His is one of ten families from the village designated as Project Affected Families (PAFs), as distinct from PDFs, or Project Displaced Families. According to the 2013 Land Act, and echoing the Odisha Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy of 2006 that had preceded it by a number of years, displaced families are those who have lost homestead land. Their compensation includes payment for the land lost, costs for resettlement into a new colony, and employment benefits for one person from every eligible household. PAFs, on the other hand, are owed only the market rate for agricultural lands that have been acquired by public domain laws. But young people from these families nevertheless expect and feel entitled to more compensation than just market value for their land, which in any case is rarely enough to purchase substitute land elsewhere, particularly when land prices rapidly rise in nearby localities. After the exam topper and his batchmates at the YPK passed the Shopper's Stop exam, someone at Vedanta – the NGO claims that it was not their doing – made large posters celebrating their success, and plastered them inside the YPK building and in several places within the refinery. The star student then ran into a manager at Vedanta who recognized him from the poster, congratulated him heartily, and told him that now Vedanta's obligation to him was complete, that he should not expect anything more from the plant.

The aspiration of this young man, though, is to work for Vedanta. In this entirely rural locale, Vedanta has set up a massive refinery operation with plans for nearby mining, occupying thousands of acres of agricultural land and negatively impacting many of the lands and villages outside of its boundary wall. Vedanta's claim that there are insufficient jobs at the refinery is met by locals with disbelief and suspicion that the firm is overlooking locals in favor of outsiders. After this exchange with the plant manager, the exam topper told the NGO administrators that he would not leave the area to accept employment at Shopper's Stop, which in any case constituted a very low rung of the retail service economy. The rest of his batch mates followed suit, fearing that they, too, would be shut out of the plant. In the absence of legal entitlements, they worried that whatever moral claims they felt entitled to make on Vedanta would be rendered obsolete. In other words, progress for the Company meant training these youth with skills that would net them entry-level jobs in urban areas, whereas progress for the youth meant a job at Vedanta that allowed them to stay close to home.

Conclusion

Traveling through rural Odisha, it was very hard not to viscerally feel the paradox pointed out by the exam topper and his classmates in the Youth Progress Center. The last twenty years of extensive greenfield expansion of extractive industry in the state has produced an odd juxtaposition of imposing steel structures, belching chimneys, and elaborate boundary walls protecting state-of-the-art production facilities across the road from which are paddy fields and villages with no irrigation, electricity, or paved roads. These economic transformations entail a bounded reorganization of landscapes to mine and transform the subsoil wealth of the state into inputs for industrialization, with seemingly

[11] Although most of my research time was spent with company officials and CSR staff, I was able to have a few discussions like this one with community members, which will hopefully be expanded in subsequent phases of research.

no space for communities to enter as labor. In an earlier fieldwork encounter at Lanjigarh, I had spent nearly four hours being toured around the plant, learning in detail how bauxite is refined into alumina and sent onwards to a smelter to be turned into aluminium. As in the villages outside of the plant, inside, too, there was a thick layer of red dust coating the equipment. During the first few minutes of the tour, my guide, who was the plant's production coordinator and had worked in Lanjigarh since 2005, pointed out the absence of people. The plant, he said with a look of pride, is fully automated with very little need for labor. At the time, the plant produced 1 million tons annually of alumina with a workforce of 500 permanent Vedanta employees and 1500 contract workers.

Several generations ago, during the end of the colonial period, when establishing the first domestic company town, the Tatas famously justified their work in ethical terms. The company operated as a trustee of the land, people, and profits and not merely as an owner. These ethical commitments were embedded in labor relations and through the provision of welfare and urban services in the township. Post-independence company towns justified their agenda in nationalist terms; these steel towns were deemed vital to the project of nation-building. Over time, as in Jamshedpur, employment in the steel towns became an important opening for social mobility, even as the line that divided labor within the plant from those outside of it became more deeply etched. What is unfolding now is a new model of extractive industrial development. New social forms are emerging that are unlike both colonial-era Jamshedpur and Nehru's townships, and are unlikely to lead to a facsimile of either. Capital intensity and the slimmed ranks of permanent employees – the need for land but not labor – means that firms' relations with local communities are marked not by efforts to recruit and discipline new workforces but by the need to displace and regulate local populations who have to be 'kept away from the factory gate' (Sanyal 2007, 63).

It is this stark contraction of the opportunities for employment – as well as the threats of disruption posed by village mobilizations – that is the current reality of mining capital, and dealing with this it is a primary object of CSR in the mining industry. In the new model of extractive industry, the Indian state and capital have enacted the replacement of the Company Town by the 'company village,' where CSR units carry out projects of resettlement, rehabilitation, and peripheral rural development.

If in other parts of the world, chief among them China, it is government officials and local cadre who both orchestrate dispossession and manage its effects (Zeng this volume; Luo and Andreas this volume), in India this role is played chiefly by capital with little mediation from the local state.[12] In this paper, I have suggested that contemporary CSR in India's extractive sector primarily should be seen as a set of practices to contain and re-direct rural aspirations away from the company gates in the context of jobless economic growth. Many of these processes are manifest spatially, in how extractive firms are inserting themselves in rural landscapes. Articulating this as a key aim of CSR is not meant to imply that corporate efforts are always or even mainly successful. Indeed, as shown in the empirical material above, companies initiate projects and fund programs that frequently fail. Their failure in these instances was not unique. In fact, I heard more instances of failed CSR attempts than successes.

[12]Other aspects of my research has suggested that the local state has a greater effect on CSR efforts of public sector firms, but is less influential with private firms, who operate CSR according to their own agendas.

By pointing out the logic of CSR as it functions on the ground in extractive contexts, I also do not mean to discredit the intentions and goals of the individuals working to implement CSR projects. My research suggested that they are in the main extremely dedicated to what they understand to be a project of modernist economic development and in particular to creating rural economic opportunities, whether in agriculture or outside of it. Many find themselves working in CSR units because these are indeed the sites for new jobs in the development sector; in an earlier moment, they might have found themselves working for development NGOs or multilateral aid organizations. In the extractive economy, development, as it was first imagined and practiced by state and non-state actors, is now increasingly a corporate project that unfolds in the resettlement villages that corporations are obligated to build for displaced populations, replete with roads, electricity, piped water systems, schools and hospitals. Even outside of these resettlement colonies, though, extractive firms are now deeply enmeshed in trying to shape how local communities navigate their futures.

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