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*The Ideology of
Tribal Economy and Society:
Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950–1980*

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In this paper I want to explore the implications of the rise and fall of Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism from the point of view of tribal policy and tribal politics in Independent India. More especially I want to examine an ideology of tribal economy and society which informs most existing accounts of Jharkhandi politics and which makes the case for a specifically ‘tribal’ policy. The main propositions of this ideology are recounted in Section One of this paper. They are (1) that the concept of a tribe is given and unproblematical; (2) that the tribals of South Bihar are the original inhabitants of the Jharkhand, where they still predominate (see Figure 1);¹ and (3) that tribal politics and tribal policies are effective because individual tribes are themselves undifferentiated, united and geographically concentrated. (A corollary of this third proposition is that any decline in Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism since the mid-1960s must be due to factional disputes within the tribal leadership and/or to inter-tribal clashes, perhaps along denominational lines).² These three propositions are examined in Sections Two, Three and Four of the paper, where they are measured against the recent historical experience of India’s Jharkhand. The implications of

¹ Within administrative circles ‘South Bihar’ commonly defines the Districts of Rohtas, Bhojpur, Aurangabad, Gaya, Patna, Nawada, Nalanda, Monghur, Bhagalpur and Santal Parganas. In this paper ‘South Bihar’ is taken to mean the five districts of Chota Nagpur, plus that of Santal Parganas. In other words, it is used interchangeably with the Jharkhand. It can reasonably be differentiated from North- or Plains-Bihar, in terms of topography and ethnic composition.

² On the role of the Christian Missions in nineteenth-century Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas, see Bradley-Birt (1910), Fuchs (1965) and Singh (1966). On the Christian/non-Christian clash within modern Jharkhandi politics, see S. Jha (1968), Galanter (1984), K. L. Sharma (1976) and Vidyarthi and Sahay (1978).

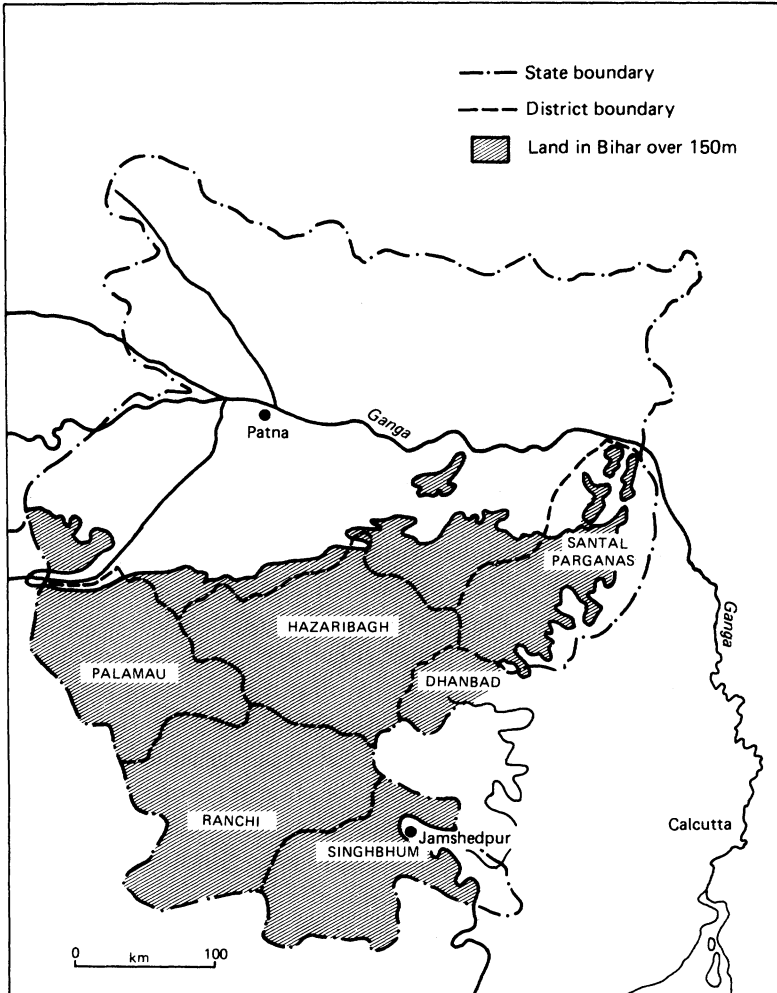


Fig. 1. The State of Bihar and the Jharkhand.

any shortcomings in the ideology of tribal economy and society are taken up in the concluding section of the paper where comments are offered, too, on an alternative 'model' of tribal policy and politics in the Jharkhand.

I. The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society

The ideology of tribal economy and society in India existed long before the rise of ethnoregionalism in central India and in the Union Territories of the North East (see, for example, Dalton, 1872; Elwin, 1942; Grigson, 1946; Roy, 1928). Nevertheless, the political and policy implications of this ideology have surfaced most dramatically in the post-Independence era and particularly since the early successes of the Jharkhand Party in the 1950s and early 1960s (see Table 1). The fact that the Jharkhand Party took the largest number of seats in South Bihar in the State Assembly elections of 1952, together with the fact that it became the chief opposition party to the Congress Party in the State of Bihar, led a number of academics and concerned officials to explore the roots of Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism.

The accounts they came up with may be grouped into three broad camps and at first glance there is little to link them together. Within anthropology and political science a Sons of the Soil model became popular (Jha, 1968; Sachchidananda, 1959, 1964) and this tradition has recently been revived by Myron Weiner (1978). According to this model the success of modern Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism must be seen as but one moment in a one-hundred-and-fifty-year struggle by the tribals of South Bihar to restore their economic, political and cultural hegemony over a region where they, the original clearers of the land, have progressively been displaced by non-tribal outsiders: the hated 'dikus' of North Bihar and Bengal. As Weiner puts it:

Although messianic and millenarian movements do not [now] exist among the tribals [vide the Santal Hul, Sardar and Birsa Movements in the nineteenth century],³ the belief in a 'restoration' is an important component of the outlook of many contemporary educated tribals as well as of tribal peasants. It takes the form of advocating the 'restoration' of the land to the tribals and the establishment of a Jharkhand State that would restore the tribals to power and status. Even the cry for socialism has a restoration dimension, for in the tribal context socialism means that tribals, by controlling the means of production, could eject non-tribals from control and could, moreover, assure tribals of employment. The tribals could thereby restore a world which they controlled and in which they did not have to compete with non-tribals, nor suffer the humiliation of being subservient to outsiders (Weiner, 1978, p. 202).

A second account has found favour in official circles and informs the

³ The Santal *Hul*, or rebellion is discussed in Datta (1957) and Ghosh (1971). On the Sardar and Birsa Movements, see Singh (1966, 1983) and Verma and Sinha (1980). For a useful comparative perspective, see MacDougall (1978).

TABLE I
Elections to the Lok Sabha, 1952-1980—Major Jharkhand Constituencies

Constituency	Election						
	1952	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980
Rajmahal	C	C	C	C	C ¹	J	C
Godda	C	JH	C	C	C	J	C
Dumka	C	JH	C	C	C	J	JMM
Dhanbad	C	C	C	JKD	C	I ³	I ³
Hazaribagh	JA	JA	S	JKD	C	J	J
Ranchi	C	JH	S	C	C	J	C
Jamshedpur	LKS	C	CPI	C	C	J	C
Singhbhum	JH	JH	JH	I	AIJP	AIJP	J
Khunti	JH	JH	JH	C	I ²	J ⁴	JH
Lohardaga	C	JH	S	C	C	J	C
Palamau	C	C	S	C	C	J	C

Notes:

- C Congress
 J Janata
 LKS Lok Kalyan Sangh
 JH Jharkhand Party
 S Swatantra
 CPI Communist Party of India
 JKD Jana Kranti Dal
 I Independent
 AIJP All-India Jharkhand Party
 JMM Jharkhand Mukti Morcha
 BPHJ Bihar Prant Hul Jharkhand
¹ BPHJ came second with 29.76% of the vote.
² NE Horo, a noted Christian tribal leader.
³ AK Roy, Communist Trade Union leader and one of the three 'founding fathers' of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.
⁴ Jharkhand Party second [NE Horo] with 31.01% of the vote.

Source:

Election Commission of India, *Reports on the 2nd-6th General Elections in India* (1958, 1963, 1967, 1973, 1978) New Delhi. V. B. Singh and J. Bose (1984) *Elections in India, 1952-1980*.

writings of many Government Reports on the 'tribal problem'. We might call this the perversity model. Briefly, successive Government commissions and their advisors have suggested that the success of the Jharkhand Party in the 1950s and 1960s was a perverse and irrational response to the progressive tribal policies of post-Independence administrations.⁴ According to this thesis ethnoregionalism might

⁴ Like any model, the 'perversity model' or the 'official account' is an archetype. I do not suggest that all of its propositions are accepted in full by all Government officials and their academic supporters, nor can I cite a string of Government Reports which make these propositions explicit. Nevertheless, a reliance upon the perversity model is implicit in many Government Reports on 'tribal problems' published in the 1950s,

have been an appropriate response to the isolationist tribal policies of the colonial power. Under British rule, the argument runs, India's tribals were deliberately isolated from their Hindu neighbours and left to stagnate in what amounted to a group of 'National Parks'.⁵ By contrast, the Governments of post-Independence India are said to have followed integrationist tribal policies based upon a philosophy of positive discrimination for tribal development. Against this background, with India's Scheduled Tribes now entitled to Reserved jobs and Reserved seats in Parliament on the basis of ethnicity, the rise of ethnoregionalism can only be considered—as one official put it to me—'ungrateful'. According to one proponent of the perversity thesis, 'The Jharkhand epithet is today being used by individuals and groups anxious to advance their interests at the expense of the needs of the wider tribal community' (Rungta, 1978, p. 119). Fortunately, this observer continues, the Jharkhand movement is now set to decline as the local population learns to challenge its 'irrational and ultimately factional nature' (*ibid.*) and to trust instead in the Government.

Finally, a third account of Jharkhandi politics argues that the rise of ethnoregionalism in Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas is an eminently rational response to a state of internal colonialism existing in this area. According to Steve Jones, 'The state in India is maintaining the underdevelopment of the tribals both by not attacking the power of the non-tribal rural oligarchy and by treating the tribal areas as an internal colony' (Jones, 1978, p. 49). Like Minz before him (Minz, 1968), Jones maintains that, 'the value of the resources extracted from tribal areas greatly outweighs the funds employed by Central and State Governments for tribal welfare and development. There is a substantial net flow of resources from the underdeveloped tribal periphery to the more developed non-tribal urban and lowland agricultural centre' (Jones, 1978, p. 51). Jones suggests that this outflow would have been of the order of Rs 400 crores in 1971/72, as against an inflow of well under Rs 200 crores. He also suggests that the net imbalance would have been felt most keenly in the mineral and forestry-rich tribal economies of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. This third account clearly has something in common with the Sons of the Soil thesis. Nevertheless, it is distinctive insofar as it blames the State of Bihar, 1960s and 1970s, just as it is apparent in the philosophy which today inspires the Tribal Medium Term Plan put together by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

⁵ On the so-called 'National Parks', see Elwin (1944, 1955). On British isolationism see Ghurye (1943), Grigson (1946) and Kanekar (1942). See also the stirring debate in the Constituent Assembly; Constituent Assembly Debates, vol. IX (1948), especially pp. 953-94.

specifically, for participating in, and even directing, the 'neo-colonial exploitation' of its tribal populations.⁶

Despite the diversity of these three accounts, they share an important common ground, I believe, in the ideology of tribal economy and society. In each of these models the tribals of South Bihar are presented as an undifferentiated mass of 'simple cultivators' variously exploited by, and/or misperceiving the actions of, non-tribals (including the Government). Further, all three accounts assume that the struggle for a Jharkhand State is made possible by the territorial integrity of these ethnic units. It is because the tribals of South Bihar are the Sons of the Soil, and it is because they occupy the districts of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas, that the demand for a tribal Jharkhand State has some meaning. I shall comment shortly on the problems inherent within such a model; notably its difficulty in accounting for the post-1963 decline of Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism except in terms of a factionalist model of politics.⁷ For the moment, however, let us detail the three propositions (and one qualification) which together define the ideology of tribal economy and society.

1. Tribe and Space: Ethnic Closure

A first assumption of the ideology of tribal economy and society is that tribal communities in India are typified by their geographical isolation and high levels of ethnic closure. For Weiner, as for Dhebar,⁸ the 'typical' tribal village is a village of tribals: it is not a mixed village of tribes and castes, nor are any minor castes which might be resident in a tribal village entitled to any occupancy or employment rights therein. David Mandelbaum makes a similar point in the course of an extensive discussion of tribe and jati: 'most tribal peoples of India', he says, 'live in hilly or forested terrain where population is sparse and communication difficult . . . within their villages and localities . . . most tribals have a strong sense of their distinctiveness and hold themselves to be quite separate from jati villages' (Mandelbaum, 1970, p. 275).

⁶ Further variants on this theme can be found in Sinha (1973) and Rothermund and Wadha (eds.) (1978).

⁷ In 1963 the leadership of the Jharkhand party, Jaipal Singh included, defected to the Congress Party. Since that time a number of 'ethnoregionalist' Parties have tried to fill the vacuum, including a resurgent Jharkhand Party, the All-India Jharkhand Party, and the more 'class-based' Birsa Seva Dal and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.

⁸ Weiner (1978, p. 168); Dhebar (1962, Ch. 2).

This assumption holds quite definite policy implications. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that official tribal policy in India depends upon the proposition (or assumption) of 'ethnic isolationism'. This first became the case when the British chose to rule its 'rebellious tribals' within the confines of deregulation districts (see Hunter, 1975; Jha, 1964; and Roy, 1970). In more recent times this assumption has attained a new importance. The basis of current tribal policy in India is to pump resources into the tribal Sub-Plan areas which are the successors to the Tribal Development Blocks and the Multi-Purpose Tribal Blocks.⁹ For this policy to work the Government must assume that there is a close correspondence between these geographical units and the undifferentiated tribal communities which supposedly inhabit them. If this is not the case the benefits may flow to local non-tribals (or to a tribal elite). The fact that the Government is not at all certain of this assumption is something I shall comment on in Section Three. For the present it will suffice to say that a good deal of laxity has entered into the definition of these Sub-Plan and Scheduled Areas. The Twenty-Fourth Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes records that the 'new approach to tribal development initiated in the Fifth Plan was extended to all the Scheduled Areas and tribal areas with more than fifty per cent Scheduled Tribal population' (1975/77, p. 117). Even this may be considered an improvement upon the Dhebar Commission's recommendations regarding the definition of Scheduled Areas. Writing in 1960/61, the Commission proposed that an area could be considered 'eligible for declaration as a Scheduled Area' if it met these four, vague, criteria:

- (1) preponderance of tribals in the population
- (2) compact and reasonable size
- (3) under-developed nature of the area
- (4) marked disparity in economic standards of the people

(Dhebar, 1962, p. 63).¹⁰

⁹ See the *Basic Policy Papers on Tribal Development in the Fifth Plan* (1975); and the *Reports of the Study Teams on Tribal Development during the Medium Term Plan* (1978-82).

¹⁰ The Commission also noted that 'The most important factor is the concentration of tribal population. This is particularly necessary when intensive efforts for protection and large-scale development are contemplated. Obviously, such efforts will be partly wasted, and the tribals will only benefit to a small extent, if they are not there in sufficient numbers' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 62).

2. *The Economics of 'Mechanical Society'*

A second element of the ideology of tribal economy and society runs economic underdevelopment and an absence of economic specialization alongside the geographical isolation of tribal communities. The latter, indeed, is made a condition of the former. The Dhebar Commission Report suggests that 'Life in the hills, in spite of its attendant disabilities, has made the tribals hardy, self-reliant and vigilant' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 8). More precisely, it sees in the 'rigour of climate . . . and centuries of forest and mountain existence' the basis of a tribal economy which is dependent upon 'land and forest, the Twin Needs of the Tribals' (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Given this physical setting the tribal economy is thought to be described by three related parameters. The first of these concerns the limited range of occupations practised by India's Scheduled Tribes. Most students of tribal India are impressed by the pre-eminence of agriculture and forestry—and above all 'simple cultivation'—in the welfare of tribal communities (see Naik, 1974; Jay, 1968; see also Mandal, 1975). In this vein Weiner suggests that 'most of [Chota Nagpur's] tribals live as peasants, cultivating grain crops' (Weiner, 1978, p. 155). Schermerhorn, more expansively, claims that 'More often than not [India's] tribesmen engage in hunting and fishing, slash and burn agriculture and cultivating without ploughs and without irrigation practices' (Schermerhorn, 1978, p. 70). By contrast, the Scheduled Tribes are thought to be poorly represented in agricultural labouring, in trade and in industrial pursuits.

Climate and geology aside, the reasons for this (forced) specialization are said to be bound up with a lack of functional specialization, or division of labour, in tribal society. David Mandelbaum is emphatic on this point. In his judgement, the communal and subsistence organization of tribal agriculture is part of the very essence of tribal society and what distinguishes it from jati society. Following Bailey (1961), he argues that 'Direct access to land [especially through clan membership] is the prime test of tribal organization. The larger the proportion of a given group in India that has direct access to land, the closer that group is to a tribal kind of organization' (Mandelbaum, 1970, p. 578). Schermerhorn takes a similar view. In his opinion, 'to speak of levels of functions in tribal organization is hardly possible because of pervasive egalitarian patterns' (Schermerhorn, 1978, p. 71). For Schermerhorn, tribal communities take the form of Durkheim's

'mechanical society'. Their organization, such as it is, is amorphous and diffuse; it is structured by ties of lineage (and family) which are made independently of the more functional and market-oriented demands of 'organic societies'. Above all, the tribal communities lack a hierarchy; their communities are communities of equals.

This lack of an economic hierarchy has in turn been traced back to a 'psychology' of tribal economics which might be described as Chayanovian at best and as irrational at worst. Amongst those leaning towards the irrationalist thesis Myron Weiner is perhaps the best known. His picture of the carefree and hedonistic tribal is essayed at length in *Sons of the Soil* (1978, pp. 155-6) and it is clear from this that Weiner is loath to credit the tribals of Chota Nagpur with anything approaching a degree of economic common-sense. For Weiner, the economics of tribal India are a by-product of quite different principles (of lineage and 'happiness') which guide tribal societies. More flattering, and surely more realistic, are the views of Schermerhorn, Mandelbaum and Sharma (amongst others). For these authors the tribal cultivator is endowed with an economic rationality, but not with the profit-maximizing mentality of the commercial farmer. It is rather the case, says Schermerhorn, that 'tribal communities place little value on surplus accumulation [since] they stress prompt consumption and immediate enjoyment' (Schermerhorn, 1978, p. 71). Taking this a stage further, it is implied that the tribal peasant, like all peasants, is interested in achieving an equilibrium between wants and efforts. In search of this equilibrium, which is determined biologically by a family's changing consumer/worker ratio,¹¹ the tribal peasant has no need of an economic calculus which adopts a 'sectoral' or compartmentalizing approach to profits and losses or to production and consumption. Sharma is adamant that 'There is no functional differentiation in the tribal community as yet even in relation to such basic aspects like the religious, social, economic and political. The tribal is not yet used to the sectoralised approach which is the distinguishing characteristic of modern advanced communities. For example, he cannot distinguish between a loan for consumption or for production purposes' (Sharma, 1978, p. 531).

This last quotation takes us to the core of the economic philosophy assumed within the ideology of tribal economy and society. As Sharma sums it up, tribal society is identifiable by a unique correspondence between the subsistence psychologies of individual peasant households

¹¹ Concise accounts of the Chayanov thesis can be found in Shanin (1972), Kerblay (1971) and Harrison (1982).

and a social structure which refuses to grant any primacy to economic (as opposed to cultural or religious) calculations. In jati society the existence of both subsistence and commercially minded peasant households is allowed within the framework of a broadly hierarchical social and economic division of labour. In tribal society the pursuit of wealth is conducted within the confines of a harsh physical environment and within the social constraints imposed by an enduring egalitarianism and a refusal to specialize.

3. The Dominance of Culture

The supposed unimportance of economics in tribal life is further underlined by the importance attached to matters cultural within the ideology of tribal economy and society. Anyone familiar with the many monographs on India's tribal communities will have noticed the typical organization of these texts: a brief chapter on the economic arrangements of a tribal village is sandwiched between a host of chapters on tribal customs, on tribal folklore, on tribal dance and music, on tribal sexual mores, on tribal religions and so on and so forth.¹² The net effect of this organization is to lend support to Schermerhorn's view that 'tribes are distinguished from one another not so much by occupation (for they are much alike in this respect) as by kinship and lineage' (Schermerhorn, 1978, p. 70).

Whether or not this is the case will be discussed in Section Four. For the moment let us elaborate upon the three propositions which comprise the core of this aspect of the ideology of tribal economy and society. A first proposition concerns the pre-eminence of the lineage in tribal societies. We have seen already how Mandelbaum distinguishes between tribal and jati society in terms of the quality of interpersonal relationships. 'In tribal life', says Mandelbaum, 'the principal links for the whole society are based on kinship. Individual equality as kinsman is assumed; dependency and subordination among men are minimized. Agnatic bonds form the fundamental web, affinal ties are of lesser significance. Lineages or clans tend to be the chief corporate units; they are often the principal units for land ownership, for defense, for

¹² See Griffiths (1946), Jay (1968) and Hasan (1972) as three instances. By contrast, Nag (1958) and Saxena (1964) offer a more considered view of tribal economic systems. I am not concerned here with the tribals of North-East or Central-Southern India, where economic transformation seems to have been less marked: see Rustomji (1983) and Fürer-Haimendorf (1982).

economic production and consumption. Each man considers himself entitled to equal rights with every other' (Mandelbaum, 1970, p. 576). In less formal terms this model of tribal society holds two implications. First, it suggests that the normal (or 'ideal-typical') organization of tribal agriculture is through the sort of communal land tenures epitomized by the Munda *khuntkattidari* system (see Reid, 1912; Roy, 1970). In this system rights in land reside with the clan elders (or the leaders of the exogamous *killis*¹³ which form the lineages of the original founders of the village). It is up to these *killi* chiefs to allocate clan lands on a periodic and impermanent basis to particular *killi* households and their dependants. A second implication of Mandelbaum's (widely supported) model is that the *killi* controls the generality of employment opportunities within tribal life. Again, this takes us back to the tribe/jati division. According to Mandelbaum, there is in jati society a functional, if hierarchical, interdependence between members of different kinship groups. Within jati society it is possible for agricultural labour to be hired on the open market¹⁴ and in the absence of agnatic ties and bonds. In tribal societies this is not supposed to be the case. Mandelbaum suggests that tribal society exhibits a tendency to segmentation wherein each *killi* assumes a responsibility for its economic and social reproduction. A corollary of this is that dependent groups within tribal villages—where they exist—are assumed 'to be useful but disposable adjuncts to [*killi*] society and not integral, necessary parts of it' (*ibid.*, p. 577). More directly, Mandelbaum endorses the view that agricultural and non-agricultural labour within tribal society must be supplied on a reciprocal basis within the *killis* (and at the behest of the *killi* chiefs): it cannot be supplied on or through the open market.

A second proposition relating to tribal cultures concerns the role of tribal women. Students of tribal India are rightly impressed by the economic and even ritual importance accorded to the female members of most tribes (see Bodding, 1916; Roy, 1970; and Omvedt, 1982). This importance manifests itself in a number of ways. It is evident, most obviously, in the existence of marriage contracts involving brideprice (rather than dowry) systems. The fact that it is the groom's family

¹³ Exogamous clans known as *killis* exist in Munda and Ho societies. Different proper nouns define the *khands* and *khunts* of the Santals and the *khunts* of the Oraons: see Prasad (1961, pt III).

¹⁴ Mandelbaum (1970, ch. 31). Mandelbaum recognizes, of course, that *jajmani* relations (and thus a measure of patronage, even bondage: Breman, 1974) are characteristic of rural employment markets in jati society.

which must recompense the bride's family speaks clearly of the economic loss borne by the latter unit.¹⁵ The importance of tribal women is further apparent in the organization of tribal agriculture where the women maintain a high participation rate. Women are involved equally with men in most agricultural operations—save ploughing and sowing—and take a part in agricultural decision-making. Finally, the tribal female is said to enjoy an unrivalled parity within the family unit. In many tribes, reports Dhebar, 'household duties which are elsewhere assigned only to women are divided equitably among the sexes . . . the man often undertaking tasks which belong to the domain of women [*sic*]' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 18). This equality is not thought to extend to the public or political realm (*ibid.*), nor does it offset the dominant patrilocal and patrilineal systems of tribal society. Nevertheless, it does ensure that 'women's [domestic] dependence is relatively shallow' (Mandelbaum, 1970, p. 576). Tribal women tend to marry at later ages than their jati counterparts and they are less restricted than the latter in their marital ties. As W. V. Grigson put it: 'The tribal woman has great freedom both in her marital life and the choice of her husband. She is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her. The woman who has a taste for ornaments and beads, quite natural in itself [*sic*], is given full scope by the husband who recognizes her right to spend her earnings on the purchase.' On balance, Grigson concludes, the 'tribal woman is far freer than a Hindu woman' (Grigson, 1949, quoted in Dhebar, 1962, p. 18).

This freedom relates also to a third dimension of tribal cultures. Underlying the propositions relating to lineage and sex within the tribe there is a more pervasive, if less definable, feeling that tribal societies are organized according to cultural principles which are quite different from those guiding jati society. Mandelbaum points us towards this conclusion when he speaks of the 'pleasure principle' in tribal society. In terms that are reminiscent of Weiner, Mandelbaum suggests that whilst 'Tribesmen are not averse to accumulating food stores, to deferring consumption [and] to maximizing productivity . . . they characteristically feel that these worthy pursuits should not be pressed so hard as to interfere with the prompt prospect of pleasure' (Mandelbaum, 1970, p. 581). Moreover, whilst the tribal people can work diligently when necessary, 'they do not find much pleasure in the sweat of labor, in the righteousness of abnegation or in visions of future

¹⁵ 'Among the Hos the problem of a high bride-price and the inability of the average Ho to afford it actually improves the status of the wife who is so difficult to get' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 19).

power' (*ibid.*, p. 582). In short, tribal society is different. Its dominant cultural principles are reflected in its economic organization in ways which emphasize an attitude towards life (and the future) which is extremely contingent and which may be described as 'exotic'. On this reading the essence of tribal life is its all-night dances and its *dhumkarias*.¹⁶ As Dhebar sums it up: 'It is difficult in the dry pages of an official report to convey to the reader the zest for life expressed in tribal poetry and dancing, the instinct for colour and pattern . . . [nevertheless] above all things, the tribal people are intensely lovable and have fascinated most of those who have anything to do with them' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 20).

4. *The Tribe in Transition*

A fascination for things 'tribal' can be entirely meretricious, of course, and there is no suggestion that the Dhebar Commission is anything but sincere in its fellow feeling for India's tribals. What is at issue is the extent to which this ideology of tribal economy and society is borne out by the facts. In the rest of this paper we will be examining the main propositions of this ideology in some detail. Before we do so, however, let us be clear as to two points.

First, it must be obvious by now that by challenging this ideology we are directly challenging three major accounts of Jharkhandi politics. The Weiner account, the 'official account' and the internal colonialism account all draw upon versions of an ideology of tribalism which emphasizes the twin qualities of geographical isolation¹⁷ (hence the demands for a tribal State) and a lack of economic differentiation and specialization (hence the assumed unity of tribal politics). (There is also a radical account of Jharkhandi politics which makes rather different assumptions of tribal economy and society: see Corbridge, 1986; Sengupta, 1982; Hrach, 1978.)

Second, it is far from obvious that the concept of a 'tribe in transition' in any way dents the ideology of tribal economy and society. The concept of a tribe in transition was first advanced by Majumdar in 1937 and it has since become a standard feature of most academic (and official) accounts of the 'tribal problem'. In some ways the concept of a tribe in transition would seem to soften the edges of the more rigid

¹⁶ The youth dormitories which figure so prominently in many accounts of tribal cultures and village life.

¹⁷ Albeit defined at different scales: see pp. 20-8.

stereotypes of tribal life which we have just been discussing; for example on marriage customs, on initiation ceremonies and occupations. In essence, however, it does no more than recognize that the concept of a tribe or one tribe is inappropriate in the modern era, when tribes engage in a wider range of activities than once they did. Not all tribes, we now learn, are devoted to slash and burn agriculture or even to 'simple plough cultivation'. We are advised, instead, that tribal India may be thought of more profitably as a combination of groups or classes, much in the same way that Vidyarthi set forth in the mid-1960s. (In 1964 Vidyarthi proposed four tribal 'culture types'—the forest/hunting type, the hill cultivation type, the plains agriculture type and the simple artisan type: Vidyarthi, 1964, p. 16. In 1981 this classification was extended to include a fifth type—the industrial/non-industrial labour type: Vidyarthi, 1981, p. 3).¹⁸ What is significant about this classification, and others like it, is that it does not render problematic the internal dynamics and organization of each tribal type. Although the concept of a tribe in transition recognizes a new complexity in tribe/jati relations, it does not challenge the assumptions of ethnic closure and tribal egalitarianism which are so vital to most accounts of ethnic politics and which in turn assume the dominance of cultural factors in the organization of tribal society. Nor does it consider the historical development of the concept of a 'tribe' itself. It is to these considerations and assumptions that we now turn.

II. The Concept of a Tribe

Let us begin with the concept of a 'tribe'. Although the Weiner, 'Official' and internal colonialism models of Jharkhandi politics all assume the concept of a tribe to be unproblematical, it is significant that a radical account of Jharkhandi 'ethnoregionalism' has lately emerged—with the support of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha—to challenge this view (see Sengupta, 1982; Das, 1983).¹⁹ In calling into question the concept of a tribe or a Scheduled Tribe, Sengupta and

¹⁸ Similar typologies can be found in Dhebar (1962) and Elwin (1944).

¹⁹ The Morcha won a sizeable power-base in the 1970s amongst tribal and non-tribal landless labourers and marginal farmers (under the leadership of Sibhu Soren) and within the ranks of South Bihar's industrial workers (led by A. K. Roy). It sought the establishment of a Jharkhand State not, ostensibly, for one ethnic group, but for all the region's 'peasants and workers' (see Sengupta, 1982a). Since 1980 this peasant/worker, tribal/non-tribal alliance has rather fractured, as has the Morcha's leadership (see Panchbhai, 1983).

others have drawn on the work of G. S. Ghurye (1943, 1980), F. G. Bailey (1960) and André Bêteille (1974). All of these authorities discuss the grounds upon which a tribe in India could and should be delimited and Bêteille summarizes the arguments as pithily as anyone. In an essay on Tribe and Peasantry (1974), Bêteille discusses four criteria which have been used to distinguish tribal societies: size, isolation, religion and means of livelihood. Taking them in turn, Bêteille finds little support for the claim that major tribal societies exist in modern India.

Consider, first, the question of scale. Bêteille notes that anthropologists have long defined tribal societies as small-scale, segmentary systems. Lewis' definition is a case in point. His entry in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* records that, 'Ideally tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations, and possess a morality, religion and world view of corresponding dimensions' (Lewis [1968, p. 147], quoted in Bêteille, 1974, p. 61). Bêteille accepts that this may be true of many African tribes but he doubts that it fits the Indian situation where 'some of the major tribes such as the Santals, Gonds and Bhils are quite large, numbering over a million persons each and scattered over extensive territories' (*ibid.*). A similar lack of correspondence befalls the claim that tribal societies are always 'isolated' and deprived of culture contact with non-tribals. If we accept that the major Indian tribes are 'tribes' we must accept also that most of these tribes have long been in geographical contact with Muslims and caste Hindus. At best we can speak of the relative isolation of India's tribals. It is the isolation of hillsmen from plainsmen. This same 'relativity' is evident, too, in matters of religion. In present-day India it is hard to find major tribal communities which practise exclusively animistic religions. In any case, the 'animism' of tribal India has long been tinged with Hinduism, leading some authorities to maintain that 'India's "animists" are best described as Backward Hindus' (Ghurye, 1980, p. 20). Finally, there is the question of livelihood. Bêteille notes that an archetypal tribal society is characterized by its lack of any clear division of labour, by its lack of settled agriculture and by its lack of family farming systems. None of these conditions describe a major Indian tribe. The Birhors of Bihar, says Bêteille,²⁰ may follow a hunting and gathering way of life, but even these few souls 'employ' specialized households to make baskets and to press oil. When it comes to the Mundas and the Hos, the

²⁰ The Birhors are Bihar's most 'classical' example of a small, isolated and 'backward' tribe.

Santals and the Oraons, it is clear that settled plough agriculture is the norm and that 'the first characteristic [of these societies] is the family farm' (Béteille, 1974, p. 65).

For all of these reasons, Béteille concludes that in India, 'there really is no satisfactory way of defining a tribal society' (*ibid.*, p. 60). At the margin we may be able to talk of India's 'tribes in transition', or to speak of a continuum of rural societies running from tribe to peasant or from tribe to caste (cf. Bailey, 1960). (On a personal note, Béteille writes of his first field trip to an Oraon village in Ranchi District, Bihar. 'I clearly remember', he says, 'my initial disappointment in discovering that, although we had come to investigate proper tribals, the people who confronted us were outwardly no different from the poorer villagers one might find anywhere in rural Bihar or West Bengal' [Béteille, 1974, p. 64]. Compare this with Myron Weiner's extraordinary, but wholly typical, claim that 'everyone in Chota Nagpur can recognize a tribal. A distinctive racial type, known by physical anthropologists as belonging to the proto-Australoid stock, they are somewhat darker than other Indians and have features that are sometimes mongoloid in appearance. They live in their own villages, many of which are wholly homogenous . . . Perhaps the most distinctive feature of tribal life is the very attitude toward life itself. In contrast with their Hindu neighbours, the tribals are a carefree people, hedonistic in their simple pleasures' [Weiner, 1978, pp. 155-6]).

If we accept Béteille's conclusion—and there are sound reasons for doing so—it follows that we must ask questions of the Government's rationale in continuing to demarcate Scheduled Tribal communities. It is at this point that the supporters of the radical line become most forceful in their views. Ghosh and Sengupta (1982) argue that the invention and perpetuation of 'tribalism' in India owes everything to the calculations of a governing elite in three different historical periods.

The first of these periods is the period of Social Darwinism that followed the Pax Britannica in the waning years of the nineteenth century. At this time, says Ghosh and Sengupta, the 'classificatory urges' of the early British anthropologists coincided with the revenue and defensive 'needs' of the British Raj. Men like Dalton (1872) and Risley (1891) were now encouraged to divide India into manageable units of 'tribes' and 'castes' and to identify a group of responsible revenue-farmers with whom the British could deal. In the Jharkhand this led to the equation of a Munda with the position of superior landlord—a leap of logic which Hilary Standing firmly rejects. She argues that: 'In its original usage the term Munda meant a wealthy

man or head of a village responsible to the superior landlord for tribute and revenue exactions' (Standing, 1973, p. 5). Only under the British did the term Munda come to mean a particular kind of person and 'a whole scheduled tribe defined in ethnic terms' (*ibid.*).²¹ The British further confused the concepts of tribe and caste within the Jharkhand. Instead of recognizing the 'hundred imperceptible gradations' of which W. W. Hunter had spoken (Hunter, 1975, p. 135), the British preferred the certainties of a rigid classification.

These certainties assumed a political significance in the early twentieth century. By this time, says Sengupta, 'the policy of divide and rule was a well-applied policy of British administration' (Sengupta, 1982a, p. 9). One part of this policy was to divide tribe from caste and it was to further this end that the British agreed, in the late 1920s, to the principle of Reserved Constituencies in tribal areas. The problem then arose of how to distinguish the tribal areas and tribal voters. The Censuses of 1901, 1911 and 1921 had not recorded the size of India's 'tribal' population—an omission noted at some length, and with some glee, by G. S. Ghurye (Ghurye, 1980, pp. 3–11).²² In 1931, however, Dr J. H. Hutton (the Census Commissioner) was persuaded to enumerate India's 'primitive tribes' on the basis of a theory of soul-substance,²³ a demonstrably unsound procedure made necessary by the electoral proposals of the Simon Commission. Once again, says Bêteille, 'It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the list [of Primitive Tribes] reflects the demands more of administrative and political circumstance than of academic or logical rigour' (Bêteille, 1974, p. 62).

Finally, there is the post-Independence era. Since 1947 the Government of India has persisted with a policy of scheduling Areas, Castes and Tribes, even though its demarcation lines grow more opaque.²⁴ According to the radical school, the Government does this because it—or more especially the Congress—stands to gain politically from the voters of 'Scheduled India'. This might seem rather an odd argument, given what we know about the politics of tribal Bihar, but in

²¹ Though I take Standing's point it is possible that she has pressed it too far; see Roy (1970).

²² Nevertheless, these Censuses do provide us with sufficient data to make such a calculation: see Section Three.

²³ See Ghurye (1980, Chapter 1).

²⁴ The Dhebar Commission admits that 'The term tribe is nowhere defined in the Constitution and in fact there is no satisfactory definition anywhere' (Dhebar, 1962, p. 1). In the *First Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes* (1951, pp. 109–111), it is suggested that four (vague) traits identify a tribal: 'tribal origin [*sic*], primitive way of life, remote habitation, and general backwardness in all respects'.

India as a whole the Congress Party has benefited from the support of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.²⁵ In the late 1960s especially, when there was pressure on Government to deschedule many communities, 'the Congress . . . had become considerably more dependent on the adherence of the occupants of the reserved seats, who now supplied its much narrower plurality in the Lok Sabha' (Galanter, 1984, p. 138).²⁶

III. The Jharkhand: Tribe and Caste, Names and Numbers

The ambiguity attached to the 'correct' definition of India's tribals surfaces clearly in the second major assumption of the ideology of tribal economy and society; namely, that in Bihar, the Jharkhand has long been, and remains, a recognizably 'tribal' homeland. In fact two propositions are argued here. A first proposition, which is implicit in Government accounts, holds that the Jharkhand is inhabited more or less exclusively by members of the Scheduled Tribes living at low population densities. A second proposition modifies the first by acknowledging the recent intrusions of 'non-tribals'. In both the Weiner and internal colonialism accounts these *dikus* are presented as unwanted and exploitative outsiders whose geographical presence in the region is nonetheless not thought to threaten the integrity and spatial closure of individual tribal communities. According to this view the tribals and non-tribals mix only as oil and water: the non-tribals are said to reside in separate hamlets and villages and/or in the more urban-industrial areas of the region.

If we go back to the murky depths of Jharkhandi history it is possible that we will find support for both these propositions. Although Weiner offers no evidence that Chota Nagpur was 'once almost exclusively tribal' (Weiner, 1978, p. 149), his view is not seriously at odds with the detailed histories essayed by Roy (1928, 1970) and Basu (1956, 1956a) amongst others. These histories reveal that Chota Nagpur first became a centre of inter-regional trade in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—well after the region was first settled by the Mundas and other tribes. By the time we reach the late-Mughal era, however, these inter-regional contacts were quite common and the associated migration to and from the Jharkhand wrought a series of changes in the region's ethnic

²⁵ See also Weiner and Field (1975, pp. 107–8) who dispute this view.

²⁶ 'In 1967 the Congress plurality was 38 seats (279/520); Congress held 72 of 114 Reserved Seats' (Galanter, 1984, p. 138).

demography. These changes became more marked under British rule and they are closely reflected in the Censuses of Bihar conducted between 1872 and 1971.

The first Census of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas was conducted in 1872 when the two divisions were part of the Province of Bengal. In some respects this was a flawed Census and there are reasons to suppose that the populations of the 'outlying tracts' of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas (and the Tributary Mahals) were under-counted by the Census takers.²⁷ Even allowing for this, the material summarized in Table 2 reveals that in 1872 Chota Nagpur did approach the model of a scarcely populated area. If the Chota Nagpur Feudatory States are included in the general statistics for Chota Nagpur (and most did in time become part of the Division), the region records a density of only 87.1 persons per square mile. This is less than one-third of the density recorded in the Province of Bihar as a whole at this time. Nevertheless, there are variations within this general picture. The populations of Santal Parganas and Manbhum Districts are already distributed at densities approaching the Provincial average and this tendency to regional convergence becomes more marked over the next fifty years. By 1921 the average density of population in Chota Nagpur is only half that to be found in Bihar as a whole and the total population of the Division in that year accounts for twenty-one per cent of the Provincial total.

Two factors lay behind this slow convergence. Of primary importance was the higher than average fertility of the tribal populations. The Census of 1921 records a birth rate of 45/1000 amongst the tribals of Ranchi District. This high birth rate more than offset the high tribal mortality rates and helps to explain why the rate of reproduction of the 'native populations' of the Jharkhand was in excess of the Provincial average at all times between 1872 and 1971 excepting 1931/41 and 1951/61. A second factor surrounds the turn around in the 'migration budgets' of most Jharkhand districts which occurred between 1872 and 1971 (see Table 3). Prior to the 1930s both Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas (and especially Ranchi District) were areas of high net out-migration. The lack of agricultural employment opportunities, allied to a general absence of double-cropping in agriculture, ensured that the tribals were a favoured target for the contractors recruiting for the Calcutta brickyards and the Assam tea plantations. After 1931 a very different picture pertains. In the wake of the burgeoning

²⁷ *Census of Bengal (1872)*, p. 154.

TABLE 2
*Population, Population Density per Square Mile and District Population as a Percentage of
 Total Bihar Population: Jharkhand and Bihar, 1872-1971*

	Bihar	Santal Parganas	Palamau	Ranchi	Hazaribagh	Manbhum	Singbhum	CNFS ¹	Chota Nagpur incg CNFS
1872a	24,236,172	1,259,287	1,237,123		771,875	995,540	415,023	405,980	3,825,571
b	275.29	229.46	102.72		109.94	202.60	92.17	26.33	87.10
c	100%	5.20%	5.10%		3.18%	4.11%	1.71%	1.67%	15.78%
1881a	28,031,111	1,568,093	1,609,244		1,104,742	1,058,228	453,775	678,002	4,903,991
b	310.91	287.41	133.60		157.35	255.18	120.91	42.23	106.56
c	100%	5.59%	5.74%		3.94%	3.78%	1.62%	2.42%	17.49%
1891a	29,905,655	1,754,196	596,770	1,128,885	1,164,321	1,193,885	545,488	883,359	5,512,151
b	331.53	320.75	121.67	158.11	165.83	287.90	145.35	55.02	127.60
c	100%	5.87%	2.00%	3.77%	3.89%	3.99%	1.82%	2.95%	18.43%
1901a	30,143,163	1,809,737	619,600	1,187,885	1,177,961	1,301,364	613,579	1,001,429	5,901,858
b	345.62	330.85	126.09	166.66	167.78	313.81	163.50	62.38	137.19
c	100%	6.00%	2.06%	3.94%	3.91%	4.32%	2.04%	3.32%	19.58%
1911a	33,452,186	1,882,973	687,267	1,387,516	1,288,609	1,547,576	694,394	148,646 ²	5,754,008
b	383.56	344.74	139.86	195.31	183.54	373.18	178.46	246.90	207.88
c	100%	5.63%	2.05%	4.15%	3.85%	4.62%	2.08%	0.44%	17.20%
1921a	29,785,813	1,798,973	733,394	1,334,473	1,276,946	1,548,777	759,438	152,497	5,805,008

b	334.51	329.30	149.19	187.90	181.88	373.47	194.88	253.32	209.84
c	100%	6.04%	2.46%	4.48%	4.29%	5.20%	2.55%	0.51%	19.49%
1931a	32,558,056	2,051,472	818,736	1,567,149	1,517,357	1,810,890	929,802	186,622	6,830,556
b	465.45	375.87	166.55	220.66	216.12	442.22	239.70	310.00	247.35
c	100%	6.30%	2.51%	4.81%	4.66%	5.56%	2.86%	0.57%	20.97%
1941a	36,340,151	2,234,497	912,734	1,675,413	1,751,339	2,032,146	1,144,717	no data	7,516,349
b	521.04	407.75	186.23	234.03	249.62	491.93	293.14	—	277.23
c	100%	6.15%	2.51%	4.61%	4.82%	5.59%	3.15%	—	20.68%
1951a	40,225,947	2,322,092	985,787	1,861,207	1,937,210	2,279,259	1,480,816	—	8,544,259
b	571.96	425.92	201.35	259.98	276.11	552.01	328.49	—	308.37
c	100%	5.77%	2.45%	4.63%	4.82%	5.67%	3.68%	—	21.24%
1961a	46,445,610	2,675,203	1,187,789	2,138,565	2,396,411	1,158,610 ³	2,049,911	—	8,931,286
b	691.20	489.07	241.18	303.47	341.56	1040.04	394.90	—	353.11
c	100%	5.76%	2.56%	4.60%	5.16%	2.49%	4.63%	—	19.23%
1971a	56,353,369	3,186,908	1,504,350	2,611,445	3,020,214	1,466,417	2,437,799	—	11,940,225
b	838.64	582.62	305.45	370.58	430.47	1316.35	469.62	—	436.49
c	100%	5.66%	2.67%	4.63%	5.36%	2.60%	4.32%	—	19.59%

Notes:

a. Total population b. Population density per square mile c. District population as percentage of total Bihar.

¹ Chota Nagpur Feudatory States.

² Boundary changes.

³ Dhanbad only: parts of the Purulia sub-division of Manbhum district now transferred to West Bengal.

Source: *Census of India, 1872-1971*.

TABLE 3
Immigration and Emigration: Santal Parganas and Chota Nagpur, 1891-1971

	Immigration	Emigration
1891	96,000	333,000
1901	179,000	NA
1911	293,000	707,000
1921	307,000	947,000
1931	307,000	NA
1941	NA	NA
1951	480,000	NA
1961	1,073,920	NA
1971	1,429,805	NA

Source: K. S. Singh (1978), Statement VII, p. 69.

industrialization of Dhanbad and Singhbhum Districts (section 3.4) Chota Nagpur becomes a division of significant net in-migration. The details of these changing patterns are represented, in part, in Table 4. This Table records, for each Census period, the percentage of a given District's population which registers its place of birth as (a) within the District, (b) within the Jharkhand, (c) within the Province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa or Bihar, and (d) out of the Province or State. (The figures for Gaya are recorded as a point of reference. The District was randomly selected). The reader should note that the apparent leap in migration into Dhanbad in 1951 (29.84% of out of district births) is due mainly to the division of the old Manbhum District into the predominantly coal mining District of Dhanbad and the more rural District of Purulia (West Bengal). The division of Lohardugga into Ranchi and Palamau Districts in 1892 had little bearing on the statistics here recorded. The implications of the Table are straightforward enough. The Table reveals a significant degree of spatial closure in the Jharkhand prior to 1921; in the Censuses before that year not one District in the Jharkhand recorded an immigrant population of even ten per cent. After 1921, however, this closure breaks down and by 1951 the degree of immigration into both Singhbhum and Dhanbad districts is plain to see. By 1971 only Palamau district records a level of immigration (just) below that recorded in Gaya district.

The effects of this immigration are further inscribed in the changing ethnic composition of the Jharkhand (see Tables 5 and 6). Table 5 records, for each Census year, the percentage of a District's population that would be classified as Scheduled Tribal according to the 1971 list of Scheduled Tribes in Bihar. (The full list of these 30 tribes is provided

as Appendix 1). The construction of the Table proved simple enough for the period from 1951 to 1971 when separate volumes on the populations of Bihar's Scheduled communities were prepared. For the preceding eight Censuses the percentage figures had to be calculated by searching the tribe and caste tables of the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Bihar Censuses for the thirty named tribes and adding up their members on a District-by-District basis. It is possible, again, that the figures for 1872 under-represent the true tribal population, given the unwillingness of some tribals to make themselves known to the Census enumerators. It is also possible that the definition of certain of these tribes may have changed over time, but there is no reason to suppose that this is a major problem.

The Table admits two main conclusions. Firstly, it demonstrates that as early as 1891 (the first reliable data set) the population of Chota Nagpur was only one-third 'tribal' (or Scheduled Tribal), although in Santal Parganas this figure was slightly higher at 38.71% and within Chota Nagpur both Lohardugga (and more especially Ranchi: see 1901 statistics) and Singhbhum Districts recorded tribal majorities. Secondly, the Table reveals a relative decline in the tribal population of the Jharkhand between 1872/91 and 1971. The 1971 Census records a tribal majority in Ranchi District alone. In Singhbhum District the Scheduled Tribes now comprise only 46.12% of the population, as against 68.16% in 1891. Overall, the northern parts of Chota Nagpur are considerably less 'tribal' than its Southern and South-Western portions. In Santal Parganas the picture has been a good deal more stable, in part because the area has lacked the sort of industry-led immigration which is common to Singhbhum and Dhanbad.

These statistics should make sobering reading for proponents of the ideology of tribal economy and society and particularly for the Government which so dearly needs to assume a degree of ethnic closure (and tribal dominance) in the Jharkhand. Ironically, the Government is itself partly responsible for these figures. Section Two noted that the definition of Scheduled Tribes is far from scientific and that it has reflected a series of political calculations in three different eras. This much is clearly revealed in Table 6. This Table charts the changing ethnic composition of the Jharkhand between 1872 and 1971 according to the definitions of tribe and caste provided by the British in 1872. In other words, Table 6 works forwards from 1872 rather than backwards from 1971.

A moment's reflection will reveal the significance of these calculations. The base data of Table 6 are supplied from the British

TABLE 4
Birthplace and Immigration: The Jharkhand, 1881-1971

	Santal Parganas	Palamau	Ranchi	Hazaribagh	Manbhum	Singhbhum	Gaya
1881							
Born in District	90.51%	95.72%		95.29%	95.27%	93.38%	96.24%
Born in Jharkhand	91.86	96.95		96.49	96.75	96.67	—
Born in Bengal	99.41	99.73		99.85	99.73	99.63	99.81
Born out of Province	0.59	0.27		0.15	0.27	0.37	0.19
1891							
Born in District	91.27%	96.46%		93.74%	96.01%	92.82%	97.47%
Born in Jharkhand	91.49	97.58		97.92	97.75	97.47	—
Born in Bengal	99.54	99.69		99.82	99.86	99.79	99.63
Born out of Province	0.46	0.31		0.18	0.14	0.21	0.37
1901							
Born in District	93.84%	93.73%	97.30%	96.44%	95.23%	94.04%	97.76%
Born in Jharkhand	98.40	98.80	98.88	99.44	98.47	98.14	—
Born in Bengal	99.48	99.00	99.79	99.75	99.51	99.54	99.80
Born out of Province	0.52	1.00	0.21	0.25	0.49	0.46	0.20
1911							
Born in District	94.33%	96.23%	97.57%	96.77%	90.77%	92.82%	97.91%
Born in Jharkhand	94.95	97.01	98.91	97.65	93.69	95.90	—
Born in Bihar & Orissa	97.74	99.32	99.59	99.65	96.02	97.93	99.67
Born out of Province	2.26	0.68	0.41	0.35	3.98	2.07	0.33
1921							
Born in District	95.55%	95.72%	97.94%	97.16%	90.10%	89.82%	97.92%
Born in Jharkhand	96.06	96.54	98.93	97.91	92.86	92.17	—
Born in Bihar & Orissa	98.33	98.93	99.46	99.22	96.76	94.61	99.79
Born out of Province	1.67	1.07	0.54	0.78	3.24	5.39	0.21

1931									
Born in District	97.38%	97.04%	98.17%	95.64%	90.56%	88.06%	97.88%		
Born in Jharkhand	97.53	97.65	98.99	96.70	92.82	89.57	—		
Born in Bihar & Orissa	98.72	99.30	99.44	98.32	96.34	92.62	99.81		
Born out of Province	1.28	0.70	0.56	1.68	3.66	7.38	0.19		
1941									
Born in District									
Born in Jharkhand									
Born in Bihar									
Born out of Province									
1951									
Born in District	97.30%	96.40%	97.21%	94.22%	70.16%	87.01%	97.79%		
Born in Jharkhand	97.83	97.97	98.15	95.76	77.13	88.58	—		
Born in Bihar	99.25	99.46	98.66	97.88	90.12	90.17	99.73		
Born out of State	0.75	0.54	1.34	2.12	9.88	9.83	0.27		
1961									
Born in District	94.41%	95.12%	94.04%	92.43%	68.77%	85.89%	96.84%		
Born in Jharkhand	95.43	97.84	96.57	94.19	73.46	88.12	—		
Born in Bihar	97.72	98.82	96.81	97.44	87.14	89.66	98.85		
Born out of State	2.28	1.18	3.19	2.56	12.86	10.34	1.15		
1971									
Born in District	94.34%	94.99%	92.85%	90.14%	69.62%	86.78%	96.33%		
Born in Jharkhand	95.20	97.60	95.17	94.51	71.44	87.61	—		
Born in Bihar	97.69	98.83	96.92	97.61	87.34	91.47	98.79		
Born out of State	2.31	1.17	3.08	2.39	12.66	8.53	1.21		

NO COMPARABLE DATA

Source: *Census of India, 1881-1971.*

TABLE 5
The Scheduled Tribes of Bihar as a Percentage of the Total Population of the Districts of Santal Parganas and Chota Nagpur, 1872-1971

	Santal Parganas	Palamau	Ranchi	Hazaribagh	Manbhum	Singhbhum	Chota Nagpur
1872 ^a	43.70%	44.71%		7.71%	24.12%	61.90%	32.45%
1881			NO COMPARABLE DATA				
1891	38.71	67.79		10.91	29.48	68.16	33.60
1901	42.30	17.70	56.51	11.11	23.01	72.49	30.43
1911	41.98	22.16	53.56	10.16	23.01	64.60	32.51
1921	40.01	20.04	55.22	10.12	22.21	62.57	32.62
1931	41.89	19.87	61.93	13.44	22.02	58.36	34.30
1941	41.50	19.18	67.33	12.53	21.29	55.83	34.53
1951	44.67	20.16	60.49	13.81	15.65 ^b	48.18	31.15
1961	38.24	19.24	61.61	11.30	11.08	47.31	32.64
1971	36.22	19.09	53.50	10.99	10.61	46.12	30.94

Notes:

- a. It is possible these figures underestimate the true strength of Bihar's Scheduled Tribes in 1872.
 b. Dhanbad only, 1951-1971.

Sources:

- Census of Bengal 1872*, Statement VB
Census of India 1891, Vol III Lower Provinces of Bengal, Provincial Table V
Census of India, 1901, Vol VI Bengal PT III, Provincial Table V
Census of India, 1911, Vol V Bihar and Orissa PT III, Table XIII
Census of India, 1921, Vol III Bihar and Orissa PT II, Table XIII
Census of India, 1931, Vol VII Bihar and Orissa PT II, Table XVIII
Census of India, 1941, Vol VII Bihar, Table XIV
Census of India, 1951-1971 Special Tables on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Bihar.

TABLE 6
The Aboriginal and Semi-Aboriginal Tribes of Bihar as a Percentage of the Total Population of the Districts of Santal Parganas and Chota Nagpur, 1872-1971

	Santal Parganas	Palamau	Ranchi	Hazaribagh	Manbhum	Singbhum	Total Chota Nagpur
1872 ^a	62.05%	60.21%		33.48%	45.54%	68.63%	51.38%
1881				NO COMPARABLE DATA			
1891	50.85	88.57 ^b		30.68	43.61	72.86	49.17
1901	59.55	49.25	64.31	37.06	47.30	76.82	50.61
1911	59.05	48.61	61.82	33.99	40.42	74.15	48.97
1921	55.40	44.22	63.33	32.07	37.80	70.40	47.74
1931	56.49	44.90	66.01	33.82	35.41	66.69	47.81
1941	53.57	43.03	72.99	31.84	33.97	59.25	47.21
1951	55.21	43.03	67.14	32.67	25.92 ^c	52.16	45.79
1961	54.69	42.22	65.11	28.00	21.24	50.95	43.17
1971	50.60	40.66	61.92	22.23	17.63	48.16	39.24

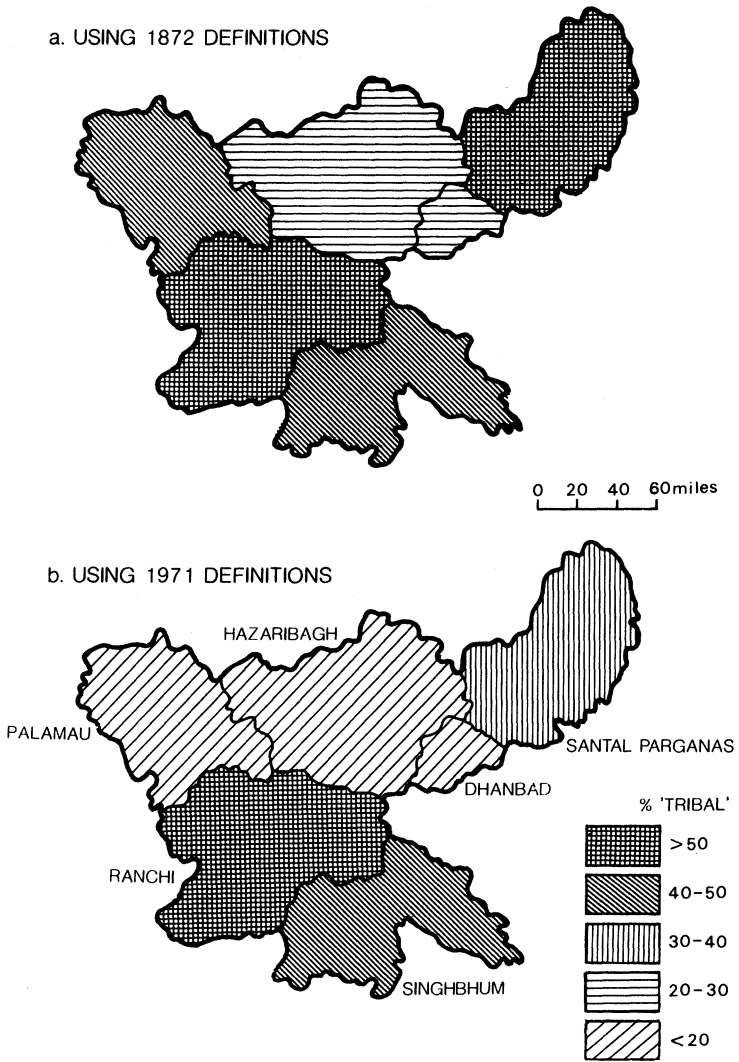
Notes:

- a. It is possible that these figures underestimate the true strength of Bihar's Aborigines (and especially the activists of Lohardugga-Palamau & Ranchi-District).
- b. Double checked. No clear reason why this figure is so high.
- c. Dhanbad only, 1951-1971.

Sources: As Table 3.5. Based upon definitions given in the *Census of Bengal, 1872*—General Statement VB.

Government's list of Primitive and Semi-Aboriginal Tribes as set down in the Census of 1872. The Table then presents the results of a series of re-calculations, from 1872 to 1971, of the 'tribalness' of each Jharkhand District. An example may explain what I mean. Consider the case of the Bhuiyas. In 1872 the British classified this community as a Semi-Aboriginal tribe in both Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas, but today it is classified as a Scheduled Caste. The assumption in Table 6 is that the Bhuiyas remain a tribe. Using material on tribe and caste available in the Censuses of 1872–1941, Table 6 is constructed by totalling up, for each Census period, the total members of this community on a district-by-district basis. This procedure is then repeated for all the other communities designated as Tribal in 1872 (see Appendix 2 for the full list) and then the total tribal population for each District is expressed as a percentage of the District's total population. After Independence it is impossible to follow this procedure because the post-colonial state does not produce comprehensive community tables. The figures for 1951–71 must instead be estimated in one of two ways. For those 'tribes' which become Scheduled Tribes or Scheduled Castes the procedure is simple: the populations of these communities continues to be recorded in the Census volumes dealing with India's Scheduled communities. For those tribes which now disappear from view—the Ghatwals and the Bhars, for example—the procedure is less clear-cut. For each of these communities one now has to project forward from 1941 rates of population growth known to obtain in other tribal communities between 1951 and 1971. This last procedure is clearly unsatisfactory and it has been used here with great caution. Nevertheless, it is unlikely to have prejudiced the broad conclusions that can be drawn from Table 6. The Table reveals that, on contemporary British definitions, the tribal population of Chota Nagpur in 1891 was fully 49.17% of the Division's total population. In Ranchi and Singhbhum Districts this figure is higher still—at 85.57% and 71.86% respectively—and in Santal Parganas, too, it is clear that the tribals comprised a majority of the District's population. After 1891 a decline does set in, but not to the extent recorded in Table 5 and not consistently over time and space.²⁸ According to these recalculated figures, Singhbhum,

²⁸ Some of the spatial and temporal variation in the 'tribal' population of the Jharkhand undoubtedly reflects certain inconsistencies in Census definitions and patterns of enumeration. This is most notable in the apparent, and unexplained, jump in 'tribalness' between 1891 and 1901. Since the post-1901 statistics are more or less consistent with one another, it is likely that the 1901 Census represents the more accurate set of base figures.



SOURCE: Census of India, 1872 & 1971

Fig. 2. The Tribal Population of Jharkhand 1971.

Ranchi and Santal Parganas Districts remained predominantly 'tribal' even in 1971 (see Figure 2 for a comparison with the Scheduled Tribe population).

We should not get too carried away with these statistics, however, or

with the implications they hold for the concept of a tribe. The fact remains that tribal policy is meant to serve just thirty Scheduled Tribes and it is by and for these thirty tribes that a fight for a tribal State is supposedly being waged. Against this background we can draw but two conclusions. A first conclusion concerns the state's official tribal policies. Insofar as these policies assume a correspondence between ethnicity and location they are based on a massive misconception. This is demonstrated not only by the materials assembled in Tables 5 and 6, but also by the figures quoted by the Government's own Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Table 7 reproduces material from Appendix XXIII of the 24th Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. To these statistics I have added the figures listed in columns 6 and 7. Column 6 reveals that just over two-thirds of Bihar's Scheduled Tribes are resident in the Sub-Plan areas which, since 1974, have been the basic unit of tribal planning in India. This level of coverage compares favourably with that in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra but it still leaves 21.36% of Bihar's Scheduled Tribal population out of account. Under a planning regime which tends increasingly to equate tribes and areas these tribals are left to the tender mercies of Special Assistance schemes. More worrying still are the implications of Column 7. This column reveals that within Bihar's Sub-Plan area—which is supposed to be more tightly defined than all of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas²⁹—fully 54.81% of the population is non-tribal. Just how these non-tribals are to be excluded from the fruits of Sub-Plan spending is not explained, nor is it explained why this state of affairs is allowed, given the Government's firm intention to form Sub-Plan areas only where more than fifty per cent of the population can be classified as Scheduled Tribal.³⁰

A second conclusion relates to the politics of ethnoregionalism. In one sense these demographic and ethnic statistics leave untouched both the Weiner and internal colonialism models. Calls for a separate tribal State are clearly not helped by the demonstration that two-thirds of the Jharkhand's population is 'non-tribal', but the claim that Jharkhandi politics are phrased in terms of tribe versus caste is not disproven. What

²⁹ The Sub-Plan area in South Bihar covers all of Ranchi District, all of Singhbhum District save Dhalbhum sub-division, all of Santal Parganas District save Godda and Deoghar sub-divisions, plus the Latehar sub-division of Palamau District.

³⁰ There are exceptions to this conclusion, of course: educational scholarships and reserved jobs can be targetted on an ethnic basis. Of concern here is the far greater amount of 'tribal spending' which is devoted to area and infrastructural programmes.

TABLE 7
Tribe and Region: Scheduled Tribes Population of States/Union Territories and their Representation in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas, 1971

State/ Union Territory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Total Popn. of State/U.T. (lakhs)	Scheduled Tribe Popn. (lakhs)	Total Popn. of sub-plan area (lakhs)	Scheduled Tribe Popn. in sub-plan area (lakhs)	% of State's Scheduled Tribes in sub-plan area	% of Scheduled Tribes/total sub- plan Popn.	
Andhra Pradesh	435.05	16.38	13.21	7.09	43.28%	53.67%	
Assam	146.25	16.06	17.07	9.44	58.78	53.30	
Bihar	593.53	49.33	74.92	33.86	68.64	45.19	
Gujarat	266.98	37.34	38.96	26.82	71.83	68.84	
Himachal Pradesh	34.60	1.42	1.14	0.84	59.15	73.68	
Madhya Pradesh	416.54	83.87	90.64	58.57	69.83	64.62	
Maharashtra	594.12	29.54	26.13	15.20	51.46	58.17	
Manipur	10.73	3.34	3.48	3.13	93.71	89.94	
Orissa	219.45	50.72	60.07	34.99	68.99	58.25	
Rajasthan	257.66	31.26	20.04	13.16	42.10	65.67	
Tripura	15.56	4.51	4.16	2.67	59.20	64.18	
Kerala	213.47	2.69	0.39	0.16	5.95	41.03	
Karnataka	292.99	2.31	*	0.56	24.24	*	
Tamil Nadu	411.89	3.12	*	0.64	20.51	*	
Uttar Pradesh	883.12	1.99	0.15	0.15	7.54	100.00	
West Bengal	443.12	25.33	*	7.33	28.94	*	

Notes:

* No data.

Source: Computed from *The 24th Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Part II, Appendix XXXII.*

we can say is that at village level the tribe/caste division is nothing like as clear cut as these two schools maintain. Investigation of the ethnic composition of a random sample of twenty villages drawn from the 1971 Census of the most tribal thanas of Ranchi District revealed that not one village upholds the model of a closed community portrayed in the ideology of tribal economy and society. Most villages register a non-tribal population of at least twenty per cent. Of course it is possible that these statistics reveal no more than a spatial juxtaposition between communities, with the tribe/caste boundary being preserved in the daily round of social, political and economic life. Whether or not this is the case is something we shall not know until we begin to examine the economic circumstances of tribal and non-tribal in the Jharkhand.

IV. The Jharkhand: Economic Transformation and Regional Change

A detailed investigation of the economic circumstances of selected Jharkhand communities is essayed in Corbridge (1986, Chapters 3 and 4) and there is space here to draw attention to just three points emerging from that study. Firstly, the economic and demographic transformation of the Jharkhand in the twentieth century has quite undercut any simple equation between a 'tribal' and a 'simple [let alone shifting] cultivator'. In the Census of 1891 the British authorities classified almost all of the tribals of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas as Hunters, Forest and Hill Tribes and Cultivators.³¹ If a Weaver's Combination Index is calculated for each of Bihar's tribes using 1961 data a very different picture obtains (see Table 8).³² Some ten (of thirty) tribes now record significant numbers of agricultural labourers in their ranks, with the Bathudi and Savar being predominantly of this occupation. Other tribal groups record a creditable rate of participation in mining and manufacturing industries, which speaks again of the scale and pace of regional economic transformation in South Bihar.

Secondly, this transformation has not bypassed the aboriginal populations of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas or buried them at the bottom of what Michael Hechter calls a 'culturally defined

³¹ *Census of India 1891*, vol. III, Lower Provinces of Bengal—Provincial Table XVI.

³² Weaver's Combination Index is a simple measure designed to convey the most accurate classification scheme—or intervals—to describe a given body of data: in this case to determine the degree of occupational specialization of a given tribe. For a brief discussion of the technique, see Hammond and McCullagh (1974, pp. 27–31).

TABLE 8
*The Occupations of the Scheduled Tribes of Bihar, 1961: Classified according to
 Weaver's Combination Index*

Scheduled Tribe	Males	Females	All
Asur	C	C	C
Baiga	C, Ag	C, Ag	C, Ag
Banjara	Mg, C, O	Mg, O, C	Mg, O, C
Bathudi	Ag	Ag	Ag
Bedia	C	C	C
Bhumij	C, Ag, O	C, Ag	C, Ag
Binjhia	C	C	C
Birhor	HHI, C, Ag	HHI, C	HHI, C, Ag
Birjia	C	C	C
Chero	C	C, Ag	C
Chik Baraik	C	C	C
Gond	C	C	C
Gorait	C, Ag	C	C, Ag
Ho	C	C	C
Karmali	C, MQ	C, Ag	C, Ag
Kharia	C	C	C
Kharwar	C	C	C
Khond	C, Ag, MQ, O	C	C, Ag
Kisan	C	C	C
Kora	C, Ag, MQ	C, Ag, HHI	C, Ag, MQ, HHI
Korwa	C, Ag, MQ	C, Ag	C, Ag
Lohara	C, HHI, Ag	C, Ag, HHI	C, HHI, Ag
Mahli	C, HHI	HHI, C	HHI, C
Mal Paharia	C	C	C
Munda	C	C	C
Oraon	C	C	C
Parhaiya	C, Ag	C, Ag	C, Ag
Santal	C	C	C
Sauria Paharia	C	C	C
Savar	Ag	Ag	Ag

Key:

C = Cultivators; Ag = Agricultural Labourers; MQ = Mining, Quarrying etc;
 HHI = Household Industry; Mg = Manufacturing; O = Others.

hierarchical division of labour' (Hechter, 1975). Whilst it would be idle to pretend that all tribals gained as much from the industrialization of Chota Nagpur as perchance they could have, the internal colonialism thesis is betrayed by a series of Census statistics and fieldwork data-sets which reveal the significant labour contributions made by South Bihar tribes to the region's industrial development. It seems likely, for example, that the 'tribals' of the Jharkhand comprised between 40 and 65% of the unskilled mines' labour force in Chota Nagpur in 1921 (the

TABLE 9
The Size-Distribution of Operational Land Holdings in Bihar and the Jharkhand (Tribal and all Communities), 1971

Size-Class (Hectares)	All-Bihar			All-Jharkhand			Jharkhand: Tribals only		
	% Total Holdings	% Total area	Average of holding	% Total holdings	% Total area	Average of holding	% Total holdings	% Total area	Average of holding
Less than 0.5	46.55%	7.53%	0.2ha	36.34%	3.77%	0.2ha	34.98%	3.69%	0.2ha
0.5-1.0	17.79	8.56	0.7	15.97	5.22	0.7	15.44	4.80	0.7
1.0-2.0	14.64	13.62	1.4	15.66	9.97	1.4	14.70	8.64	1.4
2.0-3.0	7.59	12.02	2.4	9.57	10.30	2.4	8.12	7.90	2.5
3.0-4.0	4.99	10.09	3.4	6.40	9.66	3.4	6.61	9.17	3.4
4.0-5.0	2.95	8.62	4.4	4.48	8.43	4.5	5.29	8.28	4.5
5.0-10.0	4.22	19.02	6.8	7.77	23.63	6.9	7.85	21.83	6.8
10.0-20.0	1.38	12.12	13.2	2.93	17.41	13.2	4.12	18.65	13.2
20.0-30.0	0.25	3.89	23.4	0.56	5.77	23.1	0.98	6.40	23.2
30.0-40.0	0.08	1.69	33.7	0.16	2.38	33.6	0.74	4.05	33.6
40.0-50.0	0.03	0.88	44.3	0.06	1.21	44.5	0.75	3.63	44.5
50.0 and above	0.03	1.96	87.4	0.05	1.85	79.8	0.42	2.96	80.6
Total	100.00	100.00	1.5	100.00	100.00	2.3	100.00	100.00	2.6

Note:

The text suggests that the true size-class runs from 0.5-0.99 and 1.0-1.99 and so on.

Source:

S. R. Adige (1974) *Report on the Agricultural Census of Bihar, 1970-71, p. 135 and p. 221.*
Census of India, 1971. Series 4 Bihar, Pt V-A.

only year for which meaningful data are available).³³ Further, it is not the case that patterns of land ownership and land operation in 'tribal' South Bihar remained frozen through this transformation. Many tribals have lost land to the immigrant non-tribals, but so, too, has much land been transferred within the tribal community.³⁴ This much is evident from Table 9, which reveals broadly similar profiles of land ownership inequality in tribal and non-tribal South Bihar (and even in Gangetic Bihar). It is also confirmed by the perceptive remarks of Asit Bandopadhyay, Land Reforms Commissioner in Bihar in 1977/79. 'It is time to note', says Bandopadhyay, 'that the many social and economic changes that have come about in tribal areas have created a class of tribal landholders and moneylenders who exploit small landholders of their own community (Bandopadhyay, 1979, Chapter II, pp. 3-4).

Finally, it is not the case that the tribal element of the industrial working class of South Bihar has been systematically and collectively signalled out for exploitation by a class of controlling external capitalists. Nor is it the case that in rural Jharkhand agricultural contracts are now based solely, or even mainly, on intra-*killi* relationships or on the decisions of *killi* chiefs. Regarding the first proposition, and contra Rothermund *et al.*'s portrait of the 'coalfield as an external enclave' (Rothermund *et al.*, 1978, 1980), there is evidence that many tribals gained remunerative employment in the iron ore mines and copper mines especially (and also in the coal mines in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s). Research by Corbridge (1982, 1986 Chapter 4) suggests that it was the savings amassed by a number of permanent mine labourers—some skilled, most not—which prompted and 'paid for' the recent opening up of the protected land markets of Chota Nagpur. Regarding the organization of agriculture in contemporary Chota Nagpur, I can only report that in the context of a difficult dry-land farming system, commercialization and commercial attitudes are at least as evident amongst the tribal communities as in the non-tribal communities (see also Wanmali, 1981). The ideology of tribal economy and society, though accurate perhaps in the early part

³³ Data from *Census of India 1921*, vol. III, Bihar and Orissa, pt II, Table XXII. (See also Das Gupta, 1976). The true ethnic figure is difficult to specify, in part because of a 'Workers of Unknown Caste or Race' category, and in part because of the different definitions of a tribe between 1921 and, say 1981. For example, using 1921 definitions, 83.8% of unskilled stone workers were 'tribal', however the Scheduled Tribes of 1981 comprise only 55.5% of the workforce in 1921.

³⁴ This is one of many paradoxes induced by the area's protective land legislation: see Rothermund (1978).

of this century, and perhaps even today in parts of north-east India, is fast becoming a myth which is at odds with the changing realities of 'tribal' life and development in the Jharkhand.

V. Conclusion: Models of Jharkhand Politics

In the final section of this paper I want briefly to consider the consequences of accepting the ideology of tribal economy and society as the basis of tribal policy and tribal politics and as the basis of a scholarly understanding of tribal policy and tribal politics. Two points are at stake here. Firstly, it seems clear to me that the underlying philosophy of tribal development in Bihar must now be challenged. It is not just the case that successive administrations have failed fully to meet their laudable expenditure targets on the Special Tribal Spending account, or to provide significant numbers of Reserved jobs above Class III and Sweeper levels (see Corbridge, 1986a). It is the case also that those benefits which are being channelled to 'tribal Bihar' are being directed, first, to wide Sub-Plan Areas where tribals are rarely in a majority, and, secondly, to those elements within the tribal communities—the political and economic elites—which have the necessary skills and resources to appropriate most of the 'prizes' on offer from Government (see also Maharaj, 1980).

Secondly, there is the question of the present and future, and indeed the past, 'direction' of Jharkhandi politics. A number of related issues are entwined here. Regarding the future of ethnoregionalism in the Jharkhand, it seems unlikely that there will be a return to the heady-days of 'tribal politics' which emerged under Jaipal Singh's leadership in the 1950s. This has rather less to do with inter-denominational and factional clashes—though this 'vertical' circuit of politics (Carter, 1974) is clearly important—than with the erosion of a single tribal constituency to which this politics can correspond and from which it can gain support. In my judgement the decline of a united Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism in the late-1960s and 1970s has everything to do with the increasing and parallel speed of the economic transformation then (and now) destroying old patterns of livelihood and ethnicity in South Bihar. Following on from this, if seemingly at odds with it, we are not yet set, I think, to see the replacement of ethnic politics in the Jharkhand by a resolutely class politics (see Sengupta, 1982; Simeon, 1982). Such a scenario fails to enter two important caveats: it overlooks the extent to which individuals and communities

can draw strength from both class position and ethnicity (men and women are not one-dimensional puppets), and it forgets that state tribal policies, perhaps misleadingly and no doubt paradoxically, continue to hold open the door for the (limited) pursuit of ethnic politics. In a sense this takes us back to Weiner's work on the 'politics of scarcity' (Weiner, 1962) and to Robinson's account of the state's role in encouraging the growth of Muslim politics in the United Provinces (Robinson, 1974). More precisely, it reminds us of Hechter and Levi's prescient observation that 'state programmes are both resources and targets of attack for ethnic communities' (Hechter and Levi, 1979, p. 270). The state in India may now be hoist with its own petard: having phrased its tribal policy in terms of a philosophy of positive discrimination, the Government is at once unwilling to finance the demands of a majority of its tribal communities, whilst finding itself unable to change direction because of the political threat posed by a tribal elite which has benefited from those 'prizes' which are on offer. Conversely, the problem for the Jharkhand Movement, and for the student of it, is this: any account of the rise and fall of ethnoregionalism in South Bihar must explain (1) why ethnoregionalism first surfaced, politically, in the 1950s, precisely when the post-colonial state began to make available to 'tribal Bihar' resources such as had not been seen under the British; and (2) why the force of this political movement declined in the 1960s (given that factional struggles and inter-denominational disputes had been present from the start: see Vidyarthi, 1970). A detailed response to these questions cannot be supplied here (see Corbridge, 1986). Nevertheless, it must be clear that a meaningful account of recent Jharkhandi politics must first dispense with the ideology of tribal economy and society which today informs most major models of Jharkhandi ethnoregionalism. To assume that the rise and fall of 'ethnic politics' can be modelled in terms of a static ideology of tribal economy and society is both intellectually untenable and quite at odds with the real history of the transformation of the space-economy of modern South Bihar. More positively, I would suggest that a consistent account of recent Jharkhand politics must pay attention to two related, and at times colliding, 'factors': the economic and demographic transformation of South Bihar and the contradictory development of state tribal policies. It is in the complex inter-relationships of these two factors that we may find the basis of a theory of Jharkhandi 'ethnoregionalism' which is at once sensitive to its rationale and fissures, and to its emerging chronology and differential spatial impress.

Appendix 1

The Scheduled Tribes of Bihar, 1971

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Bhumij | 16. Kharia |
| 2. Asur | 17. Kharwar |
| 3. Baiga | 18. Khond |
| 4. Banjara | 19. Kisan |
| 5. Bathudi | 20. Kora |
| 6. Bedia | 21. Korwa |
| 7. Binjhia | 22. Lohara or Lohra |
| 8. Birhor | 23. Mahli |
| 9. Birjia | 24. Mal Paharia |
| 10. Chero | 25. Munda |
| 11. Chik Baraik | 26. Oraon |
| 12. Gond | 27. Parhaiya |
| 13. Gorait | 28. Santal |
| 14. Ho | 29. Sauria Paharia |
| 15. Karmali | 30. Savar |

Source: *Census of India, 1971*: Series 4 Bihar Pt V-A.

Appendix 2

The Aboriginal and Semi-Hinduised Aboriginal Tribes of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas, Bihar: 1872

Aboriginal Tribes

- a. *Chota Nagpur*: Asur and Agaria; Bhuiher, Boyar, Parheya; Bhumij; Binjhia, Binghamwar; Birhor; Cherwa; Gond; Kaur; Khairia; Khond; Kol (including Ho); Korwa; Kuru; Mal; Munda; Nagesia, Kisan; Naiya, Naik; Oraon; Pahariya; Pandabasi; Puran; Rautia; Sabar; Sonthal; Saout.
- b. *Santal Parganas*: Bhar; Cheru; Dhangar; Kanjhar, Kanghar; Kharwar; Kol; Mal, Mar; Naiya; Nat; Pahariya; Sonthal; Tharu.

Semi-Hinduised Aboriginal Tribes

- a. *Chota Nagpur*: Bagdi; Bathudi; Bauri; Bhuiya; Bhar; Banjara; Bediya, Bahelia; Chamar, Muchi; Chik; Dom, Turi; Dosadh; Ganda; Ghatwal; Kaora; Khaira; Kharwar, Bhogta, Mahal, Manjhi, Gunjhu; Mahali; Mihtar, Hari; Musahar; Pab; Panika; Pasi; Rajwar.
- b. *Santal Parganas*: Arakh, Baheliya; Bagdi; Bari; Batar; Bauri; Bhuiya; Bin, Bind; Chain; Chamar; Chandal; Dom; Dosadh; Gangaunta; Hari; Kadar; Mahali; Markande; Mihtar; Musahar; Paliya, Rajbansi; Pasi; Rajwar.

Source: *Census of Bengal, 1872*, Table V-B: Nationalities, Race, Tribes and Castes—Bihar.

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