Master's Thesis of Political Science

Foreign Investors and Neoliberal Politicians! Get Off Our Sacred Land

-Dynamics of the Agrarian Class Politics and Special Economic Zones Settlement of Local India-

해외자본과 정치인들아! 우리들의 신성한 토지는 결코 양도할 수 없다네:

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Abstract

Do nation-states converge as neoliberal regimes due to globalization? About that, Marxists would say, “Yes, indeed”. In this research, however, I argue even if neoliberal hegemony is a formidable phenomenon, it does not necessarily result in convergence of economies without considering peculiarities of each nation/sub-state. Special Economic Zones(SEZs) of India are notable examples. During the 1990s, the central government led by the Congress Party discarded its socialistic mixed-economy by neoliberal reforms and highly encouraged regional bodies to settle SEZs as crucial tools for capital inflow. However, only some states followed the direction precisely. Among remaining others, several regions even do not consider SEZs while some others encounter serious popular discontents which entirely demoralize pro-SEZs policy implementations.

To analyze the ‘varieties of SEZs settlement’, I presume dynamics of class politics of each region matter that is usually disregarded by researchers. First, each class has a central tendency of economic preferences. Rural classes of India are by far the most significant in that, it is their land that is supposed to be acquired by SEZs developers. Second, their relative political power is a decisive factor for determining the settlement. Therefore, regions having numerically dominant classes deeming land as inalienable or vulnerable to sustenance farming will expect much a slower expansion of SEZ due to resistance over land acquisitions. By contrast, in regions with independent landowners running commercial agriculture as dominant classes, discontent to land acquisitions will be less severe. They tend to view land as *transactional assets* and developers are able to offer sufficient compensation and incentives in exchange for acquisitions.

To verify my hypothesis, I chose Bihar, Kerala, and West Bengal among India's 29 states and Union Territories in accordance with the historical comparative analysis. From the analysis, I found out both 1) land reforms and 2) green revolution are significant variables transforming rural class relations. I term *green revolution* as state-led projects aimed at the transition from sustenance farming into an acceleration of, "agrarian production through a series of technical innovations like seeds of a high-yielding variety[HYV], pesticides, chemical fertilizers" which ultimately lead to commercialization, diversification and self-sufficient agriculture.

First, as Bihar failed to achieve both, landowners and tenants are still bounded by sustenance farming/moral economy and they perceive any land acquisitions as non-sense. By contrast, Kerala achieved both and the commercialized farmers are not antagonists of SEZs. In the middle, when West Bengal's communists successfully dispelled feudalism by land reforms, they distorted green revolution projects by rampant clientelism and careless decentralization. Consequently, only a small number of rich farmers coexisted with the landless, impoverished farmers and agricultural laborers. In this situation, West Bengal's SEZ projects have had marginal support and there have never been any notifications for SEZs since the 2010s.

Key Word: Special Economic Zones, Class Politics, Land Reform, Green Revolution, Land Acquisition, India
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Chapter 1. Introduction & Research Background

From 2006 to 2007, in Nandigram, one of the typical poor villages in West Bengal, India, saw a series of bloody clashes between the villagers and the Communist Party of India, Marxists(CPI[M]). The unrest was derived from the contract between CPI(M) and the Indonesian Salim Group which enabled the settlement of new Special Economic Zone(SEZs) for chemical industries. What they feared was, even if through the SEZs, they might expect capital inflow and jobs, land acquisitions will lead to peasants' pauperization(Sarkar and Chowdhury 2009). Likewise, Tata Motors, one of the largest corporates of India gave up developing new SEZs in Singur village due to similar reasons(Nielson 2010). Two events contrast with neoliberal hegemony in India's center. Politicians there regard SEZs as accelerators of capital and technology inflow necessary for economic development and it is bipartisan. First, SEZs are conceptualized as,

"[A] clearly defined geographic area in which national, provincial or local governments use policy tools such as tax holidays, improved infrastructure, and less onerous or differentiated regulations and incentives other than those generally available in the rest of the country(the domestic tariff area) to attract and promote private, usually foreign,

investment from enterprises which commit to create jobs and export their products or services in order to generate foreign currency for the host country"(Carter and Harding 2011, 3).

For instance, Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister from the Congress Party(center-left) asserts, "I am happy that the state government has finalized the development of a Special Economic Zone in Amritsar[in Punjab]. This city and its neighborhood had a great industrial past. We need to revive it and the SEZ is one such step"(Rediff 3.24.2006). Likewise, incumbent Narendra Modi and his conservative Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) commented on the new projects near Mumbai as, "The proposed industrial infrastructure in 277 hectares with a total public and private investment of Rs 4,000 crore is planned as a self-sustainable integrated development project having a potential of generating 1.5 lakh[around 100,000]direct and indirect jobs"(The Economic Times 8.10.2014).

Until the 1990s, however, India's economic policies were socialistic. By the state planning, prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru began construction of a self-sustaining economy as the Second Five-Year Plan(1956-1961). Following the plan, New Delhi focused on import-substitution with subsidies, protectionism, limited capital inflow, licensing of industries, and the establishment of state-owned

enterprises(Ghosh 2013, Ch2). Like the Soviet Union, the planning was directed by the Planning Commission, the National Development Council, and other agencies.[1]

Things have changed since the late 1980s. India's state-led development was challenged on the inside. First, India saw the balance of payment crisis and the fiscal deficit that made the existing policies unrealistic. Second, financial minister Manmohan Singh and the prime minister Narasimha Rao retreated the state to liberalize the economies(Mukherji 2008, 320). For example, foreign investments have been encouraged, the New Industrial Policy(NIP) abolished the licensing, and joined the neoliberal multilateralism including WTO(1995) and the bilateral free trade with Sri-lanka(2000), Thailand(2003), and Singapore(2005) by mimicking *The Washington Consensus*(Mukherji 2008, 323; WTO; Mitra 2014, 236-239; Gilpin 2001, 315). The 8th Five Year Plan(1992-1997) credits the new reforms as,

"1) The Plan attempts to correct the fiscal imbalances…The funding of the Plan has to be done in a non-inflationary manner by avoiding the debt trap…This calls for reduction in Government's dissaving; 2) This Plan is performance oriented. It concentrates not so much on its allocative role, but on how to utilize the allocations optimally. The stress is on performance improvement, quality consciousness, competitiveness; 3) Structural policy reforms such as trade liberalization, industrial and financial deregulation, proposed above, would ensure an efficient use of resources; 4) The processes of deregulation and structural adjustment recently initiated are bound to bring in a qualitative change in the outlook of the

[1] By *The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act*, corporates had to acquire the permissions for manufacture, sales, and diversification of industry while *The Foreign Exchange Regulatory Act* reduced foreign equity participation as 40% of the total(Mitra 2014, 222-223; Mukherji 2008, 318).

manufacturing sector…; 5) The recent policy changes and the liberalized environment created for increased foreign investments are likely to help further in achieving the desired results in the industrial sector"(The 8th Five Year Plan).

The central government stresses SEZs as pivotal elements. Many experts in India also believe it is through such zones, foreign investors and corporates will offer a sufficient amount of capital. To attract investment, any SEZs should provide special preferences as advantageous loans, infrastructure, labor policies biased to corporates, and tax exemption in exchange for exports(Mitra 2014, 239; Mukherji 2008, 324).

<Table 1.1: Expected Utilities of SEZs Proposed by the Central Government>

Expected Utilities	
generation of additional economic activity	promotion of exports of goods and services
promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources	creation of employment opportunities
development of infrastructure facilities	-

Source: The SEZs Act, 2005

The enactment of *The SEZs Act, 2005* is a watershed event. Before that, there were only several operational SEZs and currently there are more than 200. What made such a difference? Surely the act simplifies and devolves the establishment processes to the local bodies. Prior to the enactment, the settlement was demanding as the whole processes were centrally administrated with bureaucratic apathy(Alkon 2018, 398). Thanks to the act, not only the central/state government but also foreign investors(or jointly) are able to propose that they desire certain areas as SEZs. Before the proposals, developers should acquire 10 hectares

for IT/ITES/handicrafts, bio-technology, non-conventional energy, gems/jewelry, 40 hectares for The Free Trade and Warehousing Zones(FTWZ), 100 hectares for sector-specific SEZs, and 1000 hectares for multi-sectors as a minimum(Special Economic Zones in India, The SEZs Act, 2005).

The proposals are received by the regions and the Board of Approval(BOA) of the Department of Commerce.[2] The application processes begin as the regions provided the fact that they recommend these proposals. When the BOA gives approvals and inspections from the Development Commissioner is completed, SEZs are notified. Inside SEZs, developers and any units providing goods/services are exempted from taxes, duties, and tariffs. The central government then classifies new SEZs by 3 categories: "1) the processing area for setting up units for activities, being the manufacture of goods, or rendering services; 2) the area exclusively for trading or warehousing purposes; or 3) the non-processing areas for activities other than those specified under clause 1) or clause 2)"(The SEZs Act, 2005, 8).

Remind that under the new act, developers should acquire minimum land from landowners prior to proposals. (Un)fortunately, The Land Acquisition Act, 1894 which lasted more than 100 years, enabled forcible acquisitions as bland as

[2] If a state government alone proposes new SEZs settlement, it directly goes to the BOA.

possible. Under the act, the state governments were able to acquire land whenever it is considered as 'public purposes(and for corporates)'. The problem was, however, the term 'public' was too vague and comprehensive(Nielson and Nilsen 2015, 208-210; The Land Acquisition Act, 1894).[3] Moreover, compensations were available only for the actual landowners but tenants, and the users of communal land were excluded(Nielson and Nilsen 2015, 208). It implies, whenever the state governments regarded land acquisitions as public purposes, they proceeded without obstacles.

However, faced the severe unrest from the acquisitions, India enacted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act(LARR) in 2013. Thanks to the act, there have been improvements in acquisitions. For the establishment, developers should acquire land by at least 70% by compensating the owners as the *market value* with miscellaneous benefits. Then, the remaining 30% is responsible for the state governments(LARR).

Nonetheless, given that the states and private investors are authorized to settle SEZs rather freely, their regional expansion seems to diversify. According to

[3] It includes, "1) the provision of village-sites, or the extension, planned development or improvement of existing village-site, 2) the provision of land for town or rural planning, 3) the provision of land for planned development of land from public funds in pursuance of any scheme or policy of Government and subsequent disposal thereof in whole or in part by lease, assignment or outright sale with the object of securing further development as planned, 4) the provision of land for a corporation owned or controlled by the State, 5) the provision of land for any other *scheme of development* sponsored by Government or with the prior approval of the appropriate Government, by a local authority"(The Land Acquisition Act, 1894, 2).

the <Table 1.2>, the first group of regions(Arunachal Pradesh to Nagaland) does not even have one operational SEZ with limited notifications. Conversely, some(Uttar Pradesh to Tamil Nadu) are SEZs-friendly. In the middle, while they(Chhattisgarh to West Bengal) have some SEZs and the notifications, the popularity is unclear.

Moreover, the locational advantages believed to (de)accelerate SEZs do not guarantee the expected impacts. For example, while Goa and West Bengal have good conditions(e.g. coastlines, urbanization, HDI), there are limited-or do not have-operational zones. Likewise, the areas contiguous to China do not seem to be stimulated by the Mandarin Capital. By contrast, in Uttara Pradesh and Telangana-and to some extent Haryana-with its inferior bases(e.g. inland, low urbanization and workers in manufacturing)-, the local politicians are interested in establishing SEZs.

This finding leads to interesting questions because, 1) the neoliberal convergence of the center does not match with the local bodies at least on the settlement of SEZs. Besides, 2) as land acquisitions from the owners are crucial, the table above signifies there are differences in rural structures and the villagers' perceptions unless locational advantages are unconditionally decisive. Two points are what I am going to study in this paper. In other words, **to what extent, have local land questions impacted on the settlement of SEZ in India?** This paper does not claim geography is insignificant. I claim there should be in-depth considerations of land questions and related political dynamics when to study SEZs.

<Table 1.2: List of Operational and Notified SEZs of India and Locational Advantages of Each Region>

Region	Operational SEZs[4]	Notified SEZs	Urban Population(%; 2011)[5]	Workers in Manufacturing(%; 2015-16)	Railway (KM;2015-16)	Highway (KM;2019)	Human Development Index (2007-8)	Location[6]
Arunachal Pradesh	0		22.9	1	26	2,537.4	N/A	Inland (borders with China)
Assam			14.1	5.9	3,447	3,908.5	0.444	Inland
Bihar			11.3	5.7	6,870	5,357.6	0.367	
Himachal Pradesh			10	6.6	358	2,606.9	0.652	Inland (borders with China)
Meghalaya			20.1	2.4	13	1,155.6	N/A	Inland
Mizoram			52.1	1.8	6	1,422.5	0.573	
Tripura			26.2	6.4	243	853.8		
Uttarakhand			30.2	9.3	509	2,949.3	0.49	Inland (borders with China)
Sikkim			25.2	3.5	N/A	463.0	0.573	
Jammu & Kashmir			27.4	9.6	490	2,423.2	0.529	
Goa	0	3	62.2	14.2	98	292.9	0.617	Coastal
Jharkhand		2	24	7.7	5,968	3,366.8	0.376	Inland
Manipur		1	29.2	10.2	6	1,750.3	0.573	
Nagaland		2	28.9	2.1	22	1,547.7	0.573	

[4] Including zones established prior to the SEZs Act, 2005. The current number of operational and notified SEZs are issued in November 11, 2019.
[5] To figure out the urban population rate, I subtracted the rural population rate from the total. About the rural population, see the original data.
[6] About the general locational advantages of India's SEZs settlement, see Singh and Sanjeev(2019).

Andaman & Nicobar (Union Territory: UT)	0	37.7	4.3	N/A	330.7	N/A	Island
Dadra & Nagar Haveli(UT)		46.7	46.8		31		Inland
Daman & Diu (UT)		75.2	62.8		22.0		Coastal
Delhi(UT)		97.5	20.5	699	157.1	0.75	Inland
Lakshadweep (UT)		78.1	4.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Puducherry (UT)		68.3	17.5	26	26.9		Coastal
Regions Above Do Not Have Any Operational SEZs and the Notifications are Limited							
Region	**Operational**	**Notified**	**Population**	**Workers**	**Railway**	**Highway**	**HDI**	**Location**
Chhattisgarh	1	1	23.2	4.8	2,676	3,605.8	0.358	Inland
Rajasthan	3	4	24.9	9	8,579	10,341.8	0.434	
Punjab	3	3	37.5	16.8	3,579	3,274.1	0.605	
Madhya Pradesh	5	6	27.6	7.2	9,337	8,772.3	0.375	
Odisha	5	5	16.7	9.8	5,038	5,761.5	0.362	Coastal
Haryana	7	20	34.9	13.3	3,110	3,165.7	0.552	Inland
West Bengal	7	5	31.9	22.7	10,604	3,664.5	0.492	Coastal

Chandigarh (UT)	2	2	97.3	13.9	66	15.3	N/A	Inland
Regions Above Have a Limited Number of Operational SEZs								
Region	**Operational**	**Notified**	**Population**	**Workers**	**Railway**	**Highway**	**HDI**	**Location**
Uttar Pradesh	13	20	22.3	12.8	15,291	11,736.8	0.38	Inland
Andhra Pradesh	20	27	29.6	10	7,132	6,913.5	0.473	Coastal
Kerala	19	25	47.7	13.4	2,042	1,781.6	0.79	
Gujarat	20	24	42.6	19.7	7,691	6,635	0.527	
Telangana	30	56	38.7	N/A	3,058	3,795.5	N/A	Inland
Maharashtra	31	42	45.2	12.2	11,053	17,756.6	0.572	Coastal
Karnataka	32	51	38.7	12.3	5,140	7,334.8	0.519	
Tamil Nadu	40	50	48.4	20	6,453	6,741.5	0.57	
Regions Above Have Multiple Operational SEZs and the Notifications are Active								

Source: Special Economic Zones in India; National Indicator Framework Baseline Report 2015-16(Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation); Indian Railways; Ministry of Transport and Highways; Human Development Index and Its Components by States, 1999-00 and 2007-08(Data.Gov.In); State/Ut-wise Rural and Urban Population as Per 2001 and 2011 Census(Data.Gov.In)

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Do Locational Advantages Matter That Much?

Issues surrounding SEZs are barometers of India's experiments of neoliberalism. Not only the center but also the regions contemplate SEZs as the places for investment and technology inflow. Many social scientists in fact have studied on dynamics of SEZs settlement happening in India. Marxists stress that there will be an unceasing regional expansion of SEZs in the long run. By contrast, others argue geography matters in the settlement and it causes regional divergence. I will explain the latter's approaches first. As stated, some highlight that geography is significant. According to them, SEZs of India-and generally-are concentrated in regions having explicit locational advantages. Carter and Harding argue,

> "[L]ocation, location, location. Most successful SEZs are not hidden away in accessible rural areas but are located near ports and have easy access to publish transportation and other infrastructure…Even the most generous incentive package [by SEZs] will not compensate for or offset disadvantages such as poor location"(Carter and Harding 2011, 10).

Why, then, do locational advantages matter? How do they eventually result

in local divergence of SEZs? As similar to the neoclassical theories, they assume behaviors of corporates/investors are based on rational calculations and cost-benefit analyses. To be rational, they *universally* pursue profit maximization by minimizing costs over benefits. As the market is constructed by such rational actors, it smoothly functions in allocating goods and services. That is, when demand is high, supply, in the long run, matches it to achieve an optimal equilibrium(Gilpin 2001, Ch3).

When to apply these factors in SEZs settlement, I believe locational advantages beyond incentive packages offered by host countries matter. For example, foreign investors notably as FDIs are able to acquire huge labor forces, accessibility in domestic markets near urban areas, and indigenous natural resources. Above all, it is through starting a business in areas where transportation is well-developed, they will minimize transaction costs caused by multiple shipments. These considerations result in *coastal/urban areas* as primal destinations(see Gilpin 2001, Ch11).

Therefore, according to the locational advantages theories, it is presumable that as the demand for SEZs in coastal/urban areas is higher, regions situated will more likely to settle SEZs other than secluded or inland regions in which demand itself is scarce. In fact, lots of academic works on India's SEZs stress locational advantages as well. Mukhopadhyay and Pradhan(2009) insist metropolitan areas of India are more advantageous to the settlement because a majority of foreign

investments are from IT sectors and the cities usually have more educated youth.

Devadas and Gupta(2011) suggest four advantages of SEZs-friendly regions as connectivity, infrastructure, human settlement, and resource availability. Others point out SEZs are concentrated in southern India where ports and sea routes were highly internationalized. By contrast, when it comes to the settlement, inland states are lagged behind due to geographical obstacles(Anwar 2014; Palit 2009; Reddy *et al* 2009). Finally, the central government itself acknowledges locational advantages can hardly be disregarded when to consider new SEZs. It articulates,

> "In order to find the role of location in making an SEZ successful we posed several questions. It is interesting to note that 82% of the respondents feel that location plays a vital role for their success. The location of SEZ was defined in terms of proximity to big cities, proximity to port/airport/railway station, and whether in a specific state(developed or backward). Nearly 75 % respondents were of the opinion that they would favour SEZs to be near bigger cities and that too in developed regions"(Department of Commerce 2007, 57).

Admittedly, the settlement would be *correlated to* the locational advantages of India's regions. As the <Table 2.1> contrasts, most of the SEZs constructed before the SEZs Act, 2005, are in coastal areas. Moreover, other SEZs in inland are also located near metropolitan cities. Besides, it is hard to deny that there are regional differences in the absolute number of SEZs. The regional divergence is what I also concur. Presumably, the settlement would be *correlated with* geographical factors.

<Table 2.1: Locations of the SEZs Before the SEZs Act, 2005>

Name	State/Location	Name	State/Location

SEEPZ SEZ	Maharashtra/Coastal	Kandla SEZ	Gujarat/Coastal
Cochin SEZ	Kerala/Coastal	Madras SEZ	Tamil Nadu/Coastal
Visakhapatnam SEZ	Andhra Pradesh/Coastal	Falta SEZ	West Bengal/Coastal
Noida Export Processing Zone	New Delhi/**Inland**	Surat SEZ (Apparel, Diamond)	Gujarat/Coastal
Salt Lake SEZ (IT, Jewelry)	West Bengal	Indore SEZ	Madhya Pradesh/**Inland**
Jaipur SEZ	Rajasthan/**Inland**	Mahindra City-SEZ (IT, Auto Ancillaries, Apparel)	Tamil Nadu
Moradabad SEZ	Uttar Pradesh/**Inland**	Jodhpur SEZ	Rajasthan
M/s. Nokia India Pvt. Ltd	Tamil Nadu	-	

Source: Special Economic Zones in India

Nonetheless, several things are questionable and the works based on geography provide insufficient answers. First, political processes of local India are almost non-existent in the analyses. Few of them seriously consider the possibility that the locals express their negative opinions which affect the settlement regardless of locational advantages. A notable example is Goa. It is one of the most prosperous coastal states. However, due to the public unrest, an expansion of SEZs is still in a stalemate(Sampat 2015). Conversely, some inland states such as Uttar Pradesh and Telangana are ardent drivers in foreignization of land(see the <Table 1.2>).

Therefore, it is not just to regard locational advantages have strong *causal*

relations with the settlement. Previous studies rely on descriptive statistics showing the coastal areas have more SEZs. Remind that India decentralized the overall settlement processes. Thus, why should the local politicians be bounded too much by the law of supply & demand if SEZs are believed to attract the capital for development *in the short run*? Do inter-region competitions encourage each to embark on the settlement not to be lagged behind? For instance, Telangana has 30 operational SEZs while there was not any before 2005. Conversely, why should regions having locational advantages push the settlement if it is politically risky?

Above all, locational advantage theories deem land acquisition issues of India as secondary or even are reticent to these. Considering some occupied villages and paddy fields for SEZs is one thing, and peaceful acquisitions are another. Thus, few would deny land acquisitions themselves have causal relations with SEZs' local divergence. In fact, the coastal states having many SEZs *haphazardly* are the places where acquisitions are not demanding as the locals tend to perceive land as transactional assets. Such states experienced successful land reforms which dispelled traditional landlordism. By contrast, many inland states are juxtaposing semi-feudal structures and they prevent commodification of land. People, there, consequently deem most of the land as inalienable to SEZs developers(will be discussed in detail).

2.2. Marxist Perspectives on India's SEZs Settlement

Marxist researchers, by contrast, expect SEZs settlement will converge regardless of the locality. They argue any democracies-as India-Fare *intrinsically* designed to maximize dominant classes' interests. These are the servers of bourgeois' self-interests by victimizing the many vulnerable to exploitations. Lenin highlighted, "the electoral system, which in Great Britain is still sufficiently restricted to exclude the lower stratum…only this upper stratum is generally spoken…the tendency of imperialism to divide the workers, to encourage opportunism"(Lenin 1939, 105-106).

Likewise, the international regimes are biased to the hegemonic states, whose ultimate goal is to let developing countries being dependent on multi-national corporations(MNCs) and the capital from their economies(Mingst 2008, 201-202; Cox 1981, 143). Venn(2018) claims the current economic systems are the continuation of colonialism where exploitation of subaltern areas is justified. He says,

> "[T]he contemporary phase of globalization is the systematic reliance, then and now, of the prosperity of the 'West' upon the profit derived from activities in the colonies and now the 'postcolony'…Many of the instruments may not be the same, and many key institutions and infrastructures set up in the colonial period continue to provide support for the new mechanisms of private and corporate accumulation"(Venn 2018, 74).

Of course, relations between dominant and subordinates are structurally unequal. Mills(1956) insists the *power elites* comprised of corporate elites and

government officials(*state classes*) outdo the many. While the latter are fragmented, these elite groups enhance unequal power and cohesion. For instance, they have similar educational and cultural backgrounds that contribute to psychological unity. By common interests, interconnectedness, and rulemaking power, coordination of each becomes easier. Though there might be internal factions, the intensity of it hardly goes *beyond* the boundaries. By contrast, subordinate groups are described as being incapable of collective actions against exploitations. According to Gramsci,

> "[T]he psychology of the peasants was inscrutable: their real feelings remained occult, entangled and confused in a system of defense against exploitation that was merely individualist, devoid of logical continuity…peasants were left completely at the mercy of the landowners and their hangers-on and corrupt public officials…He had no understanding of organization, of the state, of discipline…incapable of setting himself a general goal for action and pursuing it with perseverance and systematic struggle"(Gramsci 2000, 114-115).

Second, Marxists explain how the logic of the transnational capital penetrate to developing countries via domestic politics. First, subaltern areas are systemically dependent on the world system constructed by the *imperialisti*c West. For instance, "hegemons have been the most thoroughly capitalist states and they have preferred to follow a strategy of controlling trade and access to raw material imports from the *periphery*"(Chase-Dunn 1999, 193). The dependency is accelerated by a symbiosis of transnational forces and the comprador service sector(CSS).

The CSS is economic elite groups that 'preach' neoliberalism to the aligned

state classes[7] described as, "officials from FDI-related bodies, local branches of global consulting and legal advisory firms…and companies providing other services to foreign investors"(Drahokoupil 2009, 183). The existence of the CSS implies, unlike those insisting the retreat of states under neoliberalism, foreign investors are *mediated* by the CSS and the state classes as well(Bieler and Morton 2004, 92). Moreover, intellectuals from the CSS are-such as think-tanks-responsible for making neoliberalism commonsensical. For neoliberalism to be functioning, construction of public consents by minimizing discontents are necessary(Harvey 2005, Ch2).

On issues of SEZs, Harvey's 'accumulation by dispossession' is noteworthy. He presumes that the over-accumulated capital of the developed world seeks places where potential gains(e.g. labor, resources, tax exemptions) over costs are higher. Second, subaltern areas are optimal destinations for it. Because the 'liberalized' politicians of each promotes penetration of foreign investors-this causes inter-state competitions to attract more investments-regardless of popular will. Such governments not only internalized neoliberalism but also the international regimes encourage or pressure it(Harvey 2003). Accumulation by dispossession includes,

"[C]ommodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasants populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights(common, collective,

[7] "a combination of party, bureaucratic and military personnel, and union leaders, mostly petty bourgeois in origin, which controls the state apparatus"(Cox 1981,151). Mills(1956) subdivides the state class by civilians and military personnel.

state, etc.) into exclusive property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons…What accumulation by dispossession does is to release a set of assets at very low(and in some instances zero) cost…This entailed taking land, say, enclosing it, and expelling a resident population to create landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatized mainstream of capital accumulation"(Harvey 2003, 145-149).

Harvey posits SEZs of the developing world settled by the CSS, foreign investors, and the state classes are rent-seeking 'sanctuaries'. Instead of generating wealth, state actors, by surrogating these groups, redistribute land to the foreign capital by forcible grab, abjuring communal rights, commodification of peasants' properties while trickle-down effects in domestic economies are murky(Harvey 2005, 159-165). He says, "The social distress[of privatization] is immense, but the distribution of assets that resulted through privatization and market reforms was both lop-sided and not very conducive to the sorts of investments activity that typically emerge with expanded reproduction"(Harvey 2003, 153). Arrighi(1994) also stresses,

> "[S]urplus capital found a new outlet in an increasing range of speculative activities which promised an easy and privileged access to the assets and future revenues of the governments engaged in the competitive struggle. The more widespread and intense inter-state competition for mobile capital became, the greater the opportunities for those who controlled surplus capital to reap speculative gains"(Arrighi 1994, 172).

For example, instead of establishing industries for the locals' employment, SEZs investors pursue real estate or cutting edge businesses-as IT- that do not require lots of workers while the CSS does not defy such rent-seekers(Zoomers, 2010). Marxists also suggest how dominant classes assuage the public exposed to grim

aspects of neoliberalism. Like Lenin's lament on the UK's democratic opportunism, they stress the neoliberal states will capitalize on ideological-yet parochial-measures to divert people's deep unrest. According to Harvey(2005), these strategies include racism, homophobia, and jingoism. In fact, notable works on the issues surrounding India's SEZs, land acquisitions, and commodification of land are based on Harvey's accumulation by dispossession. Harvey himself mentions India as,

> "India's rural economy which supports seven hundred million people, is being garroted…landless agricultural laborers are out of work as big estates...They're all flocking to the cities in search of employment…the transfer of productive public assets from the state to private companies…To snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession"(Roy 2001 as cited in Harvey 2003, 161).

While Levien(2011, 2017) acknowledges the reliability of Harvey's, he nevertheless insists that accumulation by dispossession spuriously explains political processes of land acquisitions. For him, it is true that SEZs of India do not result in mass employment due to the speculative capital as Harvey's. However, the state actors of New Delhi are not just simple surrogates of foreign investors. In many cases, neoliberal (sub)states themselves *proactively* redistribute land to the capital by expecting short-term gains and he names this as 'the regimes of dispossession'.

Likewise, some analyze land acquisitions of India by dual phases. That is, the local state-capital alliances are connected with the international regimes in the settlement. Politicians are not interested in coping with the speculative capital and

such businesses can barely absorb huge peasants as few educated are eligible as employees(Banerjee-Guha 2013; Zoomers 2010; Rao and Behera, 2017; Bhaattacharyya *et al* 2013). Nielson and Nielson(2015), focuses on the LARR. They argue that the reason why the government enacted it is not to guard peasants against the predatory capital. The enactment of the LARR was instead intended to appease landowners by more reasonable compensation packages. By doing so, they argue India paves the way for politically less demanding settlement of new SEZs.

Admittedly, Marxists have overcome some parochial ideas that settlement of SEZs are entirely dependent on rational calculations or locational advantages. Besides, they attempt to holistically explain that land acquisitions result from domestic and international forces. Accordingly, it is inappropriate to deem any (sub)state actors solely reprehensible. Last, it is through a variety of delusions and appeasements, India's neoliberal politicians are still able to mobilize a huge number of subordinate groups even if the former betray the latter's interests. As briefly stated, this is indeed observed in current Indian politics under the BJP's leadership.

However, some are still questionable. The works above has a selection bias as they tend to exclude the cases where politicians do not consider acquisitions for SEZs due to public unrest. It is also dubitable the convergence is an unquestionable phenomenon. It is true that India is included in the developing world by Marxists as

vulnerable to exploitations by MNCs, and the international regimes backed by the West(Chase-Dunn 1999). Nonetheless, India-at least in the local levels-does not show that the politicians fecklessly stick to neoliberalism both New Delhi and the West propose. If political institutions and statecraft of such states are truly 'blinded' agents of dominant classes, there should be an unceasing expansion of SEZs regardless of popular discontents. About that, Skocpol(1994) criticizes,

> "[T]he fatal shortcoming of all Marxist theorizing (so far) about the role of the state is that nowhere is the *possibility* admitted that state organizations and elites might under certain circumstances act against the long-run economic interests of a dominant class…no writer has unequivocally accepted the notion of fully independent, non class-conditioned state action…Marxist theory has remained frozen within the assumption that "in the last instance" political structures and struggles are determined by the economic"(Skocpol 1994, 37).

Marxists also talk about political dynamics of land questions. They righteously point out the foreign capital is mediated by domestic coalitions such as the CSS, the state classes, and allied subordinates(Cox 2004; Bohle 2006). As Harvey(2005) and Lenin(1939) insist, dominant classes tend to rely on appeasements to overcome public discontents. Nonetheless, their assumptions on class politics exaggerate the power of the dominant too much. Marxists presume dominant classes comprehend how to divert people's discontents by parochial agendas. It implies scholars surely doubt the subjectivity of subordinate groups in political processes.

However, this is not necessarily the case. It is unclear whether or not

subordinate groups unquestionably support dominant classes' 'egoistic' policies even if their interests are continuously denied. In any democracies, subordinate groups are given equal chances to vote regardless of wealth, and they at least outnumber dominant classes *numerically*. In this aspect, it is entirely possible that 1) the locals judge incumbent governments in prospective elections. Besides, 2) the latter will also be challenged by the opposition who successfully mobilize the discontented over land acquisitions. Two possibilities, therefore, would prevent many state actors from pursuing unilateral land acquisitions.

From my perspective, subordinate groups of India tend to harshly judge politicians in local elections as 'weapons of the weak' and these prevent elites' uninhibited neoliberalism. The locals are also *issue voters* who recognize a land acquisition is the foremost issue and the local parties aware of it. Consequently, an SEZs expansion is seen in the states where accumulation by dispossession of peasants' land was least apprehensible. As expected, those who were against the locals' material interests maimed the incoming elections. For instance, West Bengali communists have been losing popularity since the 2010s. Because they pushed the settlement by betraying the farmers who were unwilling to give up their land.

Chapter 3. Research Design

Previous convergence and divergence theories do not offer convincing explanations on why a variety of SEZs settlement occur in India. First, even if the central government regards 'hyper-liberalized' SEZs as core instruments buttressing neoliberalism and the capital(Levien 2012, 934), some regions keep resisting the settlement when others face huge political unrest. Second, while divergence theories are seemingly plausible-and I believe this happens in India-they tend to exclude land acquisitions as the units of analyses. Note that India even has well-functioning *Panchayati Raj*(village-level autonomous councils)(Mitra 2014, Ch3). Such institutions enable effective reflection and mobilization of subordinate groups.

3.1. Class Politics in the Political Economy of India

This paper focuses on the dynamics of class politics and their impacts on the settlement of SEZs in particular. By following Gourevitch(1986), I assume though locational advantages matter, they can hardly be sole driving forces unless

are firmly supported by the locals. In democracies, politicians should endeavor to mobilize the many as coalitions to proceed with economic reforms smoothly. He argues, “politicians have to construct agreement from among officeholders, civil servants, party and interest group leaders, and *economic actors* in society”(Gourevitch 1986, 20). By contrast, minor parties rely on mobilizations of narrowly focused class interests without considerations for the many. It is because they are not interested in-or give up-winning elections(Schattschneider 1967, 63).

In this context, class coalitions are important as politicians are able to overwhelm oppositions who are against their policies(Schattschneider 1975, 72-73). Whenever confidence of the public decreases, they would more likely to be harshly judged in incoming elections(Przeworski 1991, 167-171). Thus, “democracy is above all a matter of power”(Rueschemeyer *et al* 1992, 5). Second, classes vie for the realization of material interests. Thus each has a *central tendency* of policy preferences. Third, that does not mean such preferences are so definite and irreconcilable that a class compromise is impossible. Politicians are wise enough to mobilize disparate classes by concocting policies acceptable to all(Gourevitch 1986).

3.2. Policy Preferences of Classes

Then, in what way, do class politics theories conceptualize the economic preferences of social classes? Clarifying these is very important as without thoroughly comprehending these, defining class contentions and coalitions related to SEZs is almost impossible. About the preferences of class, I follow Gourevitch's *production profile*. He explains, "preferences of social actors as shaped by the actor's situation in the international and domestic economy…Desirous of a particular policy outcome these actors form coalitions...to mobilize the consent needed to prevail. Politicians act as the *brokers* of such coalitions"(Gourevitch 1986, 55).

Gourevitch, therefore, supposes that coalitions of classes by common preferences on economic issues are crucial variables of policy implementation. For example, if a region constructs new SEZs for FDI, it is because the coalitions supporting it overwhelm the oppositions that prefer protectionism. I judge this approach explains dynamics of class politics in India's land acquisition issues. Besides, Gourevitch adds the agrarian classes in his typology(Gourevitch 1986). This is significant in that, India is still sustaining huge rural structures and the preferences of the classes are crucial to land acquisitions for SEZs.

The biggest theoretical flaw of Gourevitch's works, however, is such preferences are *overly deterministic* to policy choices. I basically concur that "economic interests are most frequently opposed by other economic interests, and

they destroy each other"(Schattschneider 1967, 32) in democratic systems. Like typical Marxists, however, he omits how politicians-as *brokers* in his term-*actively* mobilize, coordinate variegated class interests, and elicit political compromises by the leadership and endeavor to bolster such coalitions to be persistent(Smith 1993, 358). Naturally, he does not answer the possibility that any dominant production profiles can be excluded from *realpolitik*, and about how the leadership constructs compromises between classes having seemingly irreconcilable preferences.

These are the reasons why I believe parties are more than brokers. To keep hegemonic status, they, of course, have to maintain the status quo with existing coalitions. However, politicians also attempt to create new cleavages to expand the *scope* of coalitions if these are believed to bolster supremacy to the oppositions. Note that it is unrealistic to mobilize all classes. They thus construct newfangled coalitions by offering policies that would be preferred by many prospective allies yet surely be *disadvantageous to outsiders*. By doing so, they endure risk that once dominant classes deviate from the coalitions when they fail to make compromises with the newcomers. To sum, material interests of dominant classes are important. Nonetheless, production profiles of such classes do not automatically determine policies, while coalitions transcending material interests of each are dependent on the particular will and the leadership of politicians(Schattschneider 1975;

Schattschneider 1967; Hacker and Pierson, 2014).

Last, about *the scope* of social classes, I borrow Dahrendorf's. He argues "[S]ocial class shall be understood such organized or *unorganized collectives* of individuals as share manifest or *latent* interests"(Dahrendorf 1959, 238). I do not insist that class politics is confined to interactions between concretely organized interest groups, corporates, and the state actors. Rather, class politics occurs beyond well-organized groups. Because the unorganized are able to alter their *latent* interests into *manifest* in elections and it rules out the *interest group politics* from my research.

Specifically, **corporates** and the **transnational capital** are ardent supporters of SEZs. Under capitalism, their most significant *raison d'etre* is profit maximization. Thus, they intrinsically, "employ labor[input] for a wage and sell what they produce[output] in the market"(Katznelson 1986, 14). Consequently, any incentives minimizing input costs are welcomed. Thus, the settlement is helpful as SEZs will reduce transaction costs of interstate trade via FDIs, low-cost (un)skilled labor, accessibility to resources, and institutional incentives(Gilpin 2001, 281-285). These elements make corporate and transnational capital as firm supporters of SEZs.

Likewise, **local governments, bureaucrats**, and **parties** are *basically* pro-SEZs. First, by settling SEZs, they expect capital inflow and technology transfer necessary for local governance(Gilpin 2001, 291). Second, fierce inter-region

competitions impel the local bureaucrats to establish more SEZs not to be deprived of investment opportunities(Levien 2017, 62). Last, corporates and the capital situated in SEZs-at least temporarily-alleviate socio-economic diseases including unemployment, absurdly low wages from domestic industries, and insufficient capital for governance(Pinto 2013). Nonetheless, their policy preferences are **conditional**, unlike corporates. As explained, an expansion of SEZs is contingent on the preferences of classes supporting parties and the leadership of the latter.

I insist views toward SEZs are differ among landowners. It is true agrarian classes are crucial actors as it is their land to be handed over to corporates. When it comes to **independent-**middle or big-**farmers** running *commercial* agriculture, unrest of acquisitions will be less severe. Importantly, they view land as *transactional assets* but inalienable owing to the 'spirit of capitalism'(Nair 2019, 2). Agricultural productivity is heavily dependent on input costs of lavish equipment and seeds(capital-intensive). It means, they no longer need unproductive tenants for sustenance farming. Therefore, independent farmers are freed from feudal relations with the landless(Moore 1966). An equally significant reason is, such classes tend to dispose of land whenever they feel farming is not profitable, land price increases, compensation is acceptable, and need cash for other businesses(Popkin 1979).

By contrast, **feudal landlords**, **tenants,** and **agricultural laborers** would

be opponents of SEZs. Moral economists(Scott 1976; Scott 1985; Thompson 1971; Nair 2019; Edelman 2005; Smith 2011) point out that land, agriculture, and employment of tenants are more than the market principles. The term moral economy and its approaches-especially under rural backgrounds-are summarized as,

> "[The moral economy] centers on the idea that in pre-capitalist societies social relations are grounded in a publicly recognized right to subsistence[sustenance] that entails **reciprocal rights and obligations** between *elites and the lower classes*…peasants employ a 'safety-first' principle, seeking to minimize risks to their subsistence rather than to maximize opportunities to make profit….villages are moral economies precisely because the overriding objective is not individual maximization of wealth but the protection of the community as a whole against a subsistence crisis…Peasants judge matters such as rents or taxes or the behavior of landlords or tax collectors against a standard of justice that is bound up with the reciprocal rights and obligations…These institutions extended to forms of clientelism in which patrons, in return for the services, deference and loyalty of their clients, ensured that the latter were in position to survive a crisis by offering them a temporary reduction of rent, short-term credit"(Smith 2011, 143).

That is, in typical rural communities sustained by feudal or pre-capitalistic structures-while exploitation of tenants is equally problematic-landowners have moral obligations to the weak. First, they are obligated to guarantee minimum safety to poor villagers. There are many ways of it such as communal land, but the most prevalent one is sharecropping. Sharecropping enables landlords accrue rent from tenants *in proportion to* the total output. It is seemingly harsh. However, when it comes to 'hard times' as drought, the proportion of rent automatically decreases-or exempted-to guarantee minimum profits to tenants. The moral economy imply

landlords can barely dispose of land as they are *morally* bounded to offer tenancy to villagers. In exchange for social safety, landlords conversely receive legitimacy for informal and customary dominance from tenants(see Scott 1976).

<Table 3.1: Perception Gap on Land: Customary VS Positive

Customary/Moral Economy	Positive/Post-Land Reform Economy
Rights (of land) are customarily acquired	Rights are legally acquired
Non-alienable	Liable to Alienation and Appropriation
Largely community ownership	Owned by the state
Ownership subsumed in community	Individual right is the basis of growth
Land is a cultural place	Land is a commercial place
Land for sustenance product	Land for surplus product
Oral/customary grand of land	Legal tenure

Source: Chakraborty and Kumar Ray(2017, 307)

Reluctance to land acquisition is also related to agricultural productivity. For poor tenants, even if sharecropping offers social safety, they have few incentives to generate profits by commercial farming. Remind that tenants' high productivity automatically leads to higher rent. For landlords, as it is through sustenance farming they maintain the status quo, they do not need to take an adventure in capital-intensive farming, or dispose of land that bring discontent from tenants(Sugden 2017, 131). Consequently, feudal relations are *self-enforcing* enough to prevent farmers from becoming capitalists which is a necessary condition for land acquisitions. Likewise, more acquisitions mean more layoffs-thus related to social security-of agricultural laborers. Without alternatives, these groups would also oppose SEZs.

3.3. Hypothesis & Methodology

When putting material interests of classes and the dynamics of class politics together, I suggest 3 scenarios explaining how a variety of SEZs prevent the neoliberal convergence of. I specify agrarian classes as independent farmers, feudal landlords, tenants, and agricultural laborers whose economic survival is dependent on landowners' offer of tenancy and jobs. I believe this typology provides more convincing perspectives. Note that I do not herby insist these hypotheses are unconditionally deterministic to the settlement of SEZs. As argued, it is dependent on politicians' *will to mobilize* specific production profiles of the agrarian classes(see the Table 2.1 and 2.2), and existing locational advantages as well.

Hypothesis 1: given a situation where corporates and state actors support SEZs, regions with independent farmers as dominant social classes would establish SEZs without fewer unrest. Because farmers of these areas tend to perceive land as transactional assets and will relinquish properties if remunerations by developers are sufficient. For land acquisitions to be simple enough, regions should experience comprehensive and successful 1) land redistribution policies and 2) green revolution projects that substantially demolished feudal relations as well as sustenance farming.

Hypothesis 2: regions characterized as strong feudalism would have the least number of SEZs due to the exceptional difficulty of land acquisitions. Even if local elites desire settlement, they are more likely to encounter with peasants' vehement unrest and apathy of landlords who are equally constrained by the moral

economy or by feudal structures.

Hypothesis 3.1: Regions having without feudalism but many landless peasants or agricultural laborers have ambivalent attitudes toward SEZs. There, while land reform was successful, reformers failed to transform sustenance farming into diversified/commercialized agriculture by green revolution. Thus, SEZs expansion is seemingly favorable because some rich farmers are interested in selling land. In this context, however, the landless or laborers even without protections from landlords, are vulnerable to pauperization by acquisitions. Consequently, resistance toward SEZs is serious enough for local politicians to reconsider the settlement.

Hypothesis 3.2: Conversely, green revolution will not be properly operated in regions where land reforms are not completed. Only some commercial farmers would monopolize inputs from such projects. Because a majority of landed classes(either landlords or tenants), are bounded by tenancy/sharecropping and thus do not have incentives to switch to cash crops. In this backgrounds, land acquisitions for SEZs will be demanding due to the reasons proposed in the **Hypothesis 3.1**.

<Table 3.2: Policy Preferences of Social Classes toward SEZs settlement[8]>

	Higher Preferences of SEZs	**Lower Preferences of SEZs**
High Cost of Land Acquisition		1) Feudal Landlords 2) Tenants/Sharecroppers 3) Agricultural Laborers
Low(No) Cost of Land Acquisition	1) State Governments, Bureaucrats, and Parties (contingent on voter preferences) 2) MNCs and Transnational Capital 3) Independent-Middle/Big-Landowners	

Some would cast doubt on my argument probably by asking “How does a

[8] I borrowed this typology from Gourevitch(1986, 81).

mobilization of classes by parties *directly* affect the settlement?" I, therefore, will explain about the local governance of India. I mentioned by the SEZs Act, 2005, New Delhi devolved all the settlement processes. Now it is important to have a glance at the political processes. First, members of the state legislatures(Vidhan Sabha) are directly elected by a popular vote and elections are independent of the center. Each Vidhan Sabha is responsible for constructing a government(with the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers) which carries out the actual governance. There are governors directly nominated by the president. However, they hold marginal positions and most of the executive power is under the Chief Minister(Election Commission of India; Elections In). Thus, parties, Vidhan Sabha members, and Chief Ministers' decisions are crucial in SEZs settlement.

For the case study, I choose Bihar, West Bengal, and Kerala. First, the number of the operational SEZs differ greatly. Whereas Bihar does not have a SEZ, Kerala has 19 and the region is normally deemed as pro-SEZs. West Bengal has 7. However, due to the peasants' unrest, there have not been any notifications since 2009. Second, by picking three regions, I could estimate how land reform and green revolution as two *independent variables,* transform rural structures and their impacts on SEZs*(dependent variable).* First, Bihar eschewed both when Kerala accomplished both. Interestingly, when West Bengali communists abolished

feudalism via land reforms, they were responsible for total fiasco of green revolution.

I also judged Bihar, West Bengal, and Kerala are representative to each group I divided by the number of SEZs, land reform, and green revolution. In Bihar, land reform and green revolution were *the least* successful. Moreover, there is no operational/notified SEZ. Conversely, Kerala's two reforms were *the most* successful even in India as a whole with a continuous expansion of SEZs. Finally, West Bengal represents the states where land reform and green revolution showed mixed results and their adverse impacts on future land acquisitions(see the <Table 3.3>).

<Table 3.3: Land Reforms and Green Revolution of India's Regions>

Region[9]	Operational SEZs	Notified SEZs	Land Reforms	Green Revolution
Arunachal Pradesh	0		N/A or limitedly reformed	N/A or limitedly implemented
Assam			*Limited improvements*[10] Ceiling for landowners only, Conformed to national guidelines of tenancy reform	
Bihar			*Limited improvements* Ceiling for landowners and tenants, No provision for informal tenancy	Partially implemented
Himachal Pradesh			*Limited improvements* Ceiling for landowners only, Conformed to national guidelines	N/A or limitedly implemented
Meghalaya			N/A or limitedly reformed	
Mizoram				
Tripura				
Uttarakhand			Separated from Uttar Pradesh	
Sikkim			N/A or limitedly reformed	N/A or limitedly implemented

[9] Union Territories are not included in this table because of insufficient empirical data.

[10] The criteria differentiating the accomplishments was set by the author's judgment based on several works of India's land reforms. For any reforms to be *successful*, I presumed 1) they should set the ceiling not only for landowners as well as 'rich' tenants who owned land but became lessees for profit maximization for comprehensive redistributions. Besides, 2) successful reforms should result in either complete abolition of tenancy or at least with strict regulations. If any region did not set the ceiling for landowners/tenants and allowed traditional(informal) tenancy being intact, I classified as *limited improvements*.

Jammu & Kashmir			*Substantial improvements* Ceiling reforms for landowners and tenants, Conformed to national guidelines	
Goa	0	3	N/A	
Jharkhand		1	Separated from Bihar	
Manipur			N/A or limitedly reformed	N/A or limitedly implemented
Nagaland		2		
Regions Above Do Not Have Any Operational SEZs and the Notifications are Limited				
Region	**Operational**	**Notified**	**Land Reforms**	**Green Revolution**
Chhattisgarh	1	1	Separated from Madhya Pradesh	
Rajasthan	2	4	*Limited improvements* Ceiling for landowners and tenants, *few* provisions for informal tenancy	Implemented[11]
Punjab	3	3	*Limited to moderate improvements* Ceiling for landowners only, Permitted informal tenancy with regulations	
Madhya Pradesh	4	5	*Moderate* Ceiling for landowners only, Abolition of informal tenancy	
Odisha	5	5	*Limited improvements*	N/A or limitedly implemented

[11] Note that the implementation itself does not guarantee the actual accomplishments of green revolution projects

			Ceiling for landowners only, No provision for informal tenancy	
Haryana	6	21	*Limited to moderate improvements* Ceiling for landowners only, Permitted informal tenancy with regulations	Implemented
West Bengal	7	5	*successful* Ceiling for landowners only Tenancy reforms (complete abolition of feudalism; permitted informal tenancy under strict regulations)	
Regions Above Have a Limited Number of Operational SEZs				
Region	**Operational**	**Notified**	**Land Reforms**	**Green Revolution**
Uttar Pradesh	11	21	*Limited improvements* Ceiling for landowners only, Informal tenancy persisted	Implemented
Andhra Pradesh	19	27	*Moderate* Ceiling reforms for landowners and tenants, Permitted informal tenancy with regulations	
Kerala	19	25	*The Most successful* Ceiling reforms (for landowners and tenants), Tenancy reforms (complete abolition of tenancy)	
Gujarat	20	24	*Moderate* Ceiling reforms for landowners and tenants,	N/A or limitedly implemented

			Conformed to national guidelines	
Telangana	29	57	Separated from Andhra Pradesh	
Maharashtra	30	43	*Substantial improvements* Ceiling for landowners only, Tenancy reforms (few informal tenants observed)	Implemented
Karnataka	31	51	*Substantial improvements* Ceiling reforms for landowners and tenants, Tenancy reforms	N/A or limitedly implemented
Tamil Nadu	40	50	*Moderate to substantial improvements* Ceiling reforms for landowners and tenants, Landowners cannot evict tenants permanently in leased land, Landowners does not have a right for resumption of land for self-cultivation	Implemented
Regions Above Have Multiple Operational SEZs and the Notifications are Active				

Source: Mearns(1999, 47-54); Frankel(1971, 2); Kumar and Rahaman(2016, 6); Sachs *et al*(2002)

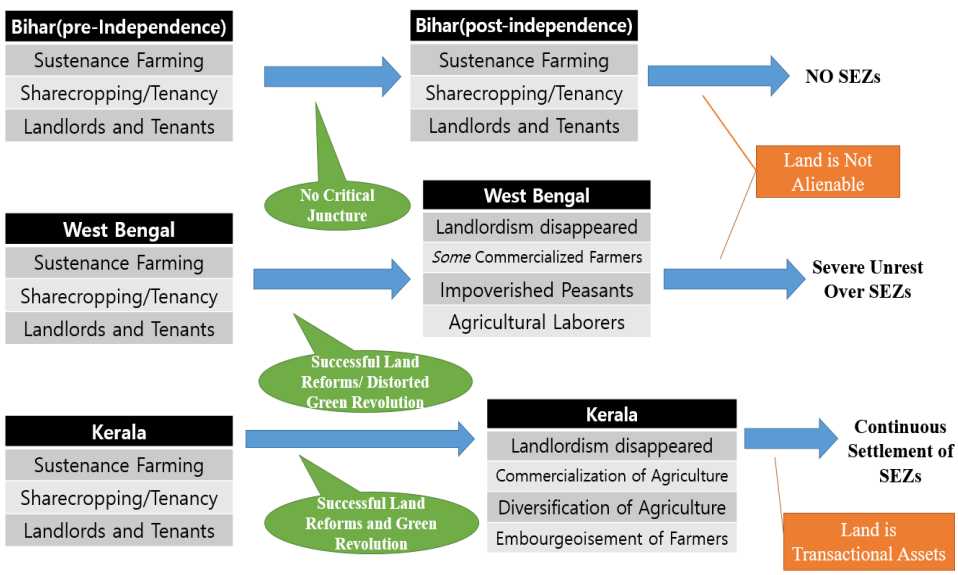
The <Figure 1.1> shows how the *independent variables*(land reform & green revolution) work. By land reforms, landlords can hardly persist feudalism to villagers. First, landlords must yield surplus land to a government if they hold more than allowed(*the ceiling*). Second, redistributions to tenants enables them to be freed from sharecropping. Even if tenancy will not completely disappear, landlords can barely use informal-and exploitative-contracts due to strict regulations. The moral economy collapses as landlords' dominance in exchange for tenancy is not available.

Green revolution accelerates capitalization of agriculture. I presume land reforms themselves are insufficient. Peasants are so accustomed to sharecropping that it prevents automatic capitalization. Still, the independent are not affordable for cash crops due to input costs. It necessitates state-led green revolution projects with high yielding varieties(HYV), fertilizers, chemicals, irrigations and loans as inputs. The farmers' livelihoods might be more insecure as they have no tenancy as security. Thus, without green revolution, they are vulnerable to impoverishment begetting agricultural labor or informal tenancy. I assume when two variables are embedded in rural societies, farmers will eventually perceive land as transactional.

<Table 3.4 & Figure 1.1: The Most Similar System of Bihar, Kerala, and West Bengal>

Region		**Bihar**	**Kerala**	**West Bengal**
Control	*Social Structure*	Strong Feudalism in Rural Communities		

Variable		Bihar: Zamindar, WB: Zaminda/Zotedar, Kerala: Zenmom		
	Party Politics	Dominated by the Congress Party and the Communists		
	Ethnic Conflict	Not Severe		
	Institution	Democracies		
	Ideologies	Leaning Toward Neoliberalism		
Independent	*Land Reform*	Failed	Successful	
	Green R	Limited	Successful	Controversial
Dependent	*SEZ settlement*	No SEZs	Less resistance	SEZs suspended



By the way, three regions are optimal to realize *The Most Similar System*. It assumes any researches to be reliable, cases should resemble except the (in)dependent variables. To apply, it is required to control 'the third variables' as a *constant*(Johnson *et al* 2016, Ch4). For instance, Bihar, Kerala, and West Bengal had feudalism(Zamindar) before independence, and have maintained democracies. The reasons I choose not to analyze the states under non-Zamindar system are as follows.

First, in regions under the Raiyatwari system, peasants were controlled directly. Similarly, the Mahalwari system enabled the colonizers to treat peasants collectively via village councils. They usually were less exploitative(Nickow 2017, 36-37).

Note that the Congress Party supported by upper classes, and the communists mobilized poor peasants divided the local politics. Besides, there have not been serious ethnic disputes as Jammu & Kashmir. I presume 'the material interests-based class politics' can hardly be developed in such areas. Ethnic issues, in general, overwhelm all other important cleavages and rearrange by 'we' and 'other ethnic groups' regardless of their socioeconomic status(Schattschneider 1952).

Last, this paper utilizes the *historical comparative analysis*. This method enables researchers "systematic and contextualized comparisons of similar and contrasting cases"(Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 13) from historic events. They punctuate path dependence, (qualitative)causal analyses from case studies, and systematic comparisons(Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 6-7). I believe it fits my research as I compare only three regions but complements its methodological weaknesses(e.g. limited cases) by detailed analyses about the land questions.

Furthermore, the historical comparative analysis does not posit path-dependency is only a reliable option. Although it is one important assumption, they admit *path-breaking* by external factors is also possible. Though few *critical*

junctures(*tipping points)* exist that fundamentally alter the existing orders, changes also gradually occur from initial stages(*layering*). By contrast, unexpected aspects are reproduced and developed by the critical junctures(*convergence*; Thelen 2003).

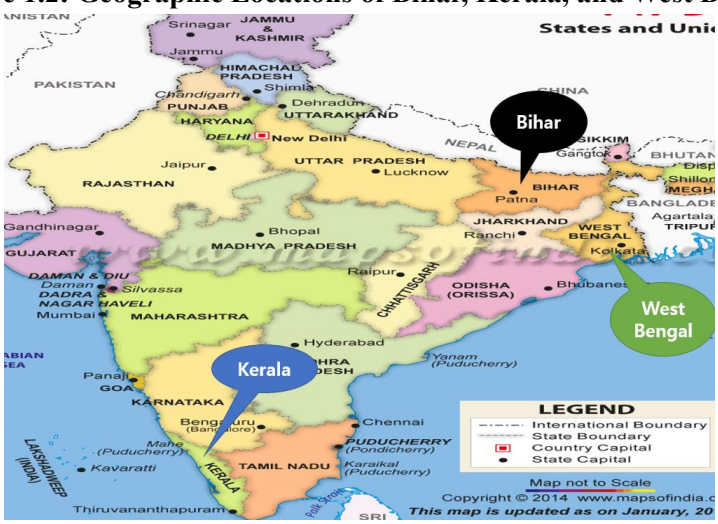
My ratiocination does not stop here. Layering and convergence imply current institutions are self-enforcing. It is also possible that the changes are so illegitimate that people stick to old institutions by curbing layering(*negative feedback*; Pierson 2000, 85). Accordingly, I presume Bihar's class relations are path-dependent without critical junctures, Kerala's *land reform* and *green revolution* entirely transformed its feudal structures. There was only one *righteous* critical juncture(land reform) in West Bengal which produced qualitatively different aspects.

3.4. Brief Profiles of Bihar, Kerala, and West Bengal

Bihar is located in the northeastern part of India. The feudal structures of Bihar were derived from the colonial rules. Since Bihar was separated from West Bengal, the upper classes had dominated the region by landlordism(Blair 2018, 104). The colonizers acknowledged the dominance of as the Zamindar system. They titled these elites as Zamindars and entrusted tax collection duties as intermediaries(Blair 2018, 104-105). Paradoxically, Bihar was the first state where landlordism was

nominally abolished by the Zamindari Abolition Bill in 1952(Sengupta 1982, 24). For redistribution, Bihar Land Reforms Act was passed(Samanta *et al* 2014, 6). Accordingly, landlords had to give up the land above the ceiling. However, due to collusions of the landlords and the bureaucrats, the actual reforms had many loopholes(Sharma 1995, 2593). Likewise, green revolution also bypassed Bihar.

<Figure 1.2: Geographic Locations of Bihar, Kerala, and West Bengal>



Source: Maps of India

West Bengal is an eastern state of India. During the Partition of 1947, the Muslim dominated areas were separated and annexed to Pakistan. West Bengal also had the Zamindar system. Here, however, the system was more complex as there were *Jotedars* who were landlords but did not belong to the Zamindar and the Muslim Saiyads(aristocratic) and Maulvis(learned) were also included in the upper classes. It was sustained by a number of tenants(Bargadars; Rajat and Ray 1975).

The first crucial juncture occurred during the 1950s when the Zamindar was abolished. Contrary to the success of the land reforms, the green revolution showed mixed results. The communists launched the *Operation Barga* in the late 1970s. It was to register tenants to protect them against exploitations under tenancy(Dasgupta 2006, 63; Dasgupta 2017, 249). The state also provided credits, HYVS, irrigations, and subsides(Nielson 2010, 150). By the way, fruitions of the projects were not fairly distributed. They *unequally* provided the inputs to big farmers, the villages with informal connections, the communities under influences of the communists.

Kerala is located in the southwest and its' feudalism was called the Jenmom(Harilal and Eswaran 2016). The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill as the first land reform was initiated by the communists with Kerala Land Reforms Act(1963) and Kerala Land Reforms Amended Act(1969)(Dasgupta 2017, 248-249). During the 1970s, Kerala at last abolished the Jenmom. Furthermore, its green revolution projects led to commercialization of agriculture. The projects were operated in Kuttanad and Palghat(Aniyankunju 2004, 95) and the experts extended to other districts(Aniyankunju 2004; Frankel 1971; Heller 1994). It was to get rid of sustenance farming for capital intensive one. Thanks to the projects, sharecropping substantially disappeared in Kerala(Aniyankunju 2004; Viswanathan 2014).

Chapter 4. No Change at All: Bihar

4.1. Historical Background: The Zamindar System of Bihar

Why does Bihar rarely consider the establishment of SEZs? How have the local politics and the rural structures impacted on that question? Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister(head) with his Janata Dal United(JD[U]) do oppose any land acquisitions. I argue that the semi-feudal structures of Bihar which are dependent on an overwhelming number of peasants under sharecropping and the existence of landlords make land acquisitions politically risky. First, the profiles and the history of Bihar will be explained to help readers comprehend the basic backgrounds.

<Figure 2.1: Administrative Divisions of Bihar>

Source: eMapsWorlds

Bihar is one of the regions in India located in the northeastern part and its borders are contiguous to West Bengal to the east, Uttar Pradesh to the west, and to Nepal to the north. The capital city is Patna. The region is rural in that 92,257.51 sq. kms of total 94,163.00 sq. kms is not urbanized. According to the census in 2011, around 100 million dwellers were occupying in Bihar(Government of Bihar). Even though contemporary Indians see a lot of metropolitan cities such as Mumbai owing to the skyrocketed economic growth, the rurality of Bihar has almost unchanged.

The long-lasting and exploitive feudal structure of Bihar was derived from British colonial rules. After Bihar was separated from neighboring West Bengal in 1912, the upper castes(Brahmans, Bhumihars, Rajputs, and Kayasthas) began to dominate the region as landlords(Blair 2018, 104). By the way, British colonizers had already acknowledged the permanent settlement of these groups in rural villages as the Zamindar system in 1793. That is, faced with the administration with an insufficient number of the colonizers, British titled these groups as Zamindars and entrusted tax collection from peasants as intermediaries(Blair 2018, 104-105).

Because the colonizers had imbued viable autonomy and power-sharing to Zamindars, they began to distort feudal relations by exploiting tenants. They were supposed to provide 90% of the total rent gleaned from peasants to the government

legally. Of course, there also existed the Bihar Tenancy Act of 1885[12] to protect the landless by modern rights from arbitrary rent-seeking(Chintu and Kumar 2017, 92). Nonetheless, such measures failed to guard tenants against Zamindars' exploitations. In many parts of India, they "used to collect several times the intended revenue, though they had a fixed tax to pay to the government which was permanently fixed as land tack back in 1793"(Mitra 2014, 232). It was caused by the government's desire to keep distances from rural villages via Zamindars(Kumar 2003, 44).

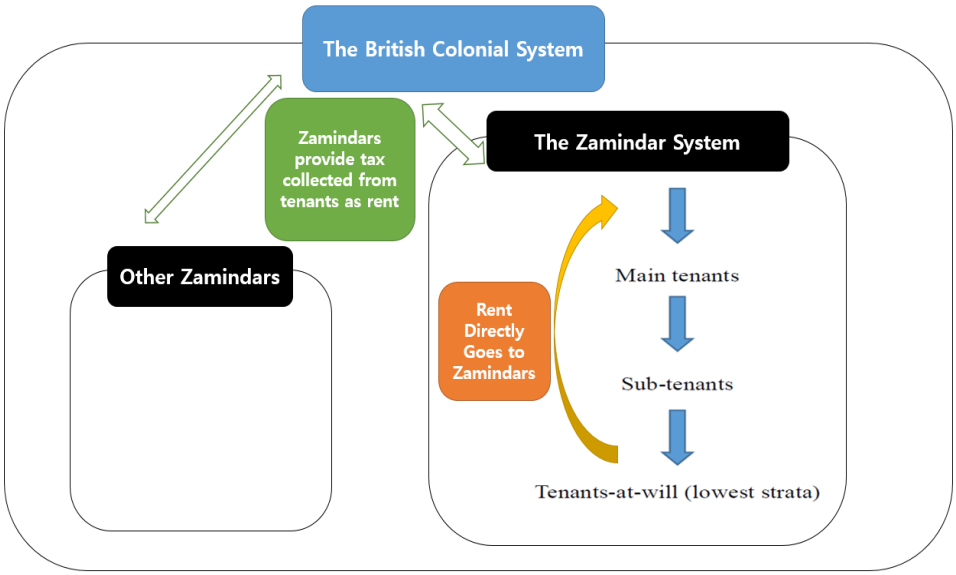
4.2. The First Critical Juncture: Land Reform Bypassed Bihar

Bihar botched land reforms and green revolution that are believed to boost agricultural income by the commercialization. Paradoxically, Bihar was the first state where landlordism was *de jure* abolished. Before independence, Zamindars occupied almost 90% of the land by tenancy(Samanta *et al* 2014, 5). The seminal Zamindari Abolition Bill was introduced and adopted during 1947-52(Sengupta 1982, 24). For redistribution, Bihar Land Reforms(Ceiling, Land Allocation, and Surplus Land

[12] It sub-divided feudal tenants into three categories. First, *occupancy raiyats* indicated independent farmers who own land for cultivation and it is transferable to others. Second, *non-occupancy raiyats* were the rural villagers whose rights over land are temporary. The colonial government additionally classified *sub-tenants* for those who were literally pure tenants and sharecroppers(Samanta *et al* 2014).

Acquisition) Act was also passed(Samanta *et al* 2014, 6).

<Figure 2.2: The Zamindar System and the Social Hierarchy in Colonial India>



Source: Mitra(2014, 232); elaborated by the author

Accordingly, Bihari landlords(Zamindars) had to yield a sufficient amount of land for redistribution. By the Zamindari Abolition Bill, "the rights of Zamindars and title-holders on land and at the same time trees, forests, fish-breeding ponds, markets, mines and minerals, were legally terminated. And these rights were directly vested with the state government"(Samanta *et al* 2014, 6). Moreover, the Bihar Land Reforms Act supported the reforms. The act enforced any landowners having more hectares above the ceiling must give up the surplus(Samanta *et al* 2014, 6).

However, that does not mean that the landlords once denominated Bihar as

Zamindars lost a significant portion of their vested rights. Due to rampant collusions between landlords and bureaucrats, the implementation contained loopholes(Sharma 1995, 2593). For example, the ceiling stipulates that "instead of a family this act recognized the individual landholder as a unit for fixation of ceiling area, Landholders holding land in excess of ceiling area were allowed to transfer portions of his land to sons"(Chintu and Kumar 2017, 94). Thus, in the 1970s, less than 2% of Bihari people still held more than 20% of the entire land and each had more than 25 acres(10 hectares)[13](Sengupta 1982, 25). Likewise, the ceiling enabled Bihar to seize only 152.2 thousand hectares and 102.6 thousand of it was redistributed until the 1990s and the villages' feudal structures remained intact(Sharma 1995, 2593).

<Table 4.1: Typical Loopholes of Bihar's Land Reforms>

Loopholes Which Enabled The Tenancy Almost Being Intact
1) The ceiling policy set individual landowners rather fan families as basic units
2) Allowed transfer of excessive land to family members and their relatives
3) Overlooked the eviction and the owners registered the land as self-cultivation
4) Landowners replaced tenants claiming their rights by docile lower classes.
5) Evicted peasants contracted again with landowners for tenancy
6) Landlords organized the private militiamen(*sena*) to oppress rural unrest

Source: Chintu and Kumar(2117, 94); Chakravarti(2001); Kumar 2003

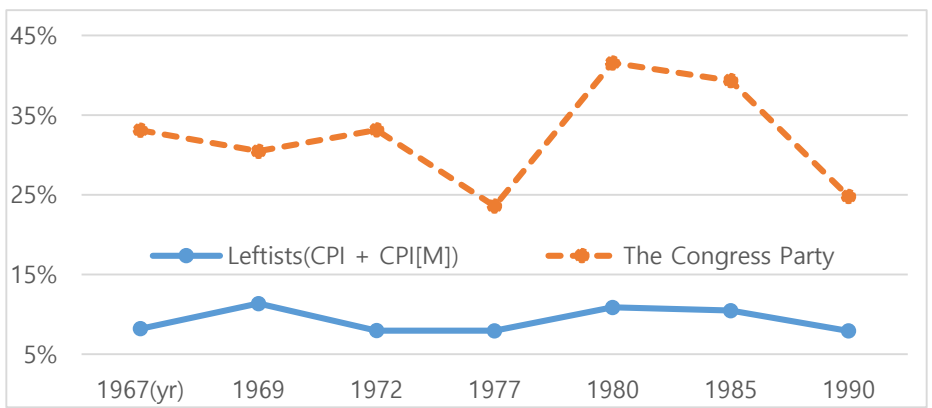
The existence of semi-feudal structures was possible because of several historical events. First, unlike Kerala and West Bengal where the CPI(M) achieved

[13] From now on, I will juxtapose acres with hectares to prevent readers from begin confused. You can divide any numbers in Acres by 2.47105 to convert these as hectares.

land reforms by forcible measures, Bihari politics was occupied by the upper classes having Zamindar backgrounds and the Congress Party as a sponsor. Blair(2018, 106) argues, to guard Bihari landowners, the Congress Party relied itself on clientelism with the landed and poor tenants. It was possible because the former granted land for tenancy/sharecropping in exchange for not supporting the communists.

Moreover, the security forces controlled by the Congress Party overlooked unlawful behaviors of landlords. For instance, even if the Bihar Land Reforms Act evinced that they are obligated to glean 1/4 of tenants' total produce, it was almost 50% in many cases. Besides, they ousted discontented farmers from tenancy, used illegal weapons whenever peasant uprisings were impending(Sengupta 1982, 30-32). More significantly, the oppositions in Bihar's local assembly failed to proceed with the reforms by mobilizing peasants under huge dominance of the Congress Party.

<Figure 2.3: The Local Electoral Outcomes Before the 1990s(Vidhan Sabha)>



Source: Election Commission of India

According to the <Figure 2.3>, two communist parties could not even contest in the local elections against the Congress Party from the 1960s to the 1990s. This is one of the reasons that decided the fate of impoverished peasants in Bihar. Why then? First, even if Bihari communists endeavored to mobilize the landless by appealing 'class conflict', it did not penetrate sticky feudal ties between landlords and tenants(Dasgupta 2009, 16). Of course, there were some expectations of the success during the 1960s when the Indo-China war of 1962 aggravated abject rural famine and the membership of communist organizations surged as a response.

However, that popularity was at best temporary. The leftist bloc was soon divided by the Naxalites, radical Maoist guerilla forces which also participated at Bihari politics(Sengupta 1982, 32-33). To realize 'land to tillers', and total demolition of semi-feudalism, the Naxalites carried out guerilla tactics anywhere of Bihar. In 1968, for instance, the Naxalites skirmished Muzaffarpur village in north Bihar and appropriated properties of the landed. In central Bihar, the Naxalites with other affiliated groups seized and killed some landlords in Bhojpur, Patna, and Nalanda Districts during the 1970s(Kumar 2003). Their ways of achieving the 'class liberalization' were radical and militaristic as such events show. They stressed,

"[F]irst of all, we[the Naxalites] do not subscribe to any theory of excitative violence…everywhere in Bihar, it is the landlords who are armed, they derive a sadistic pleasure by beating and killing poor peasants, burning their houses, and raping their

women…the rural poor cannot be denied their right to organize their own "resistance force" to counter the attacks of landed armies[e.g the *Senas*]. Thirdly, if peasant struggle takes violent forms in Bihar, the root must be sought in the forms of oppression"(Kumar 2003, 60).

Nonetheless, the Naxalite disappeared after the 1970s. They were defeated by the right-wing militia groups(Senas) and the security forces and both were sponsored by landlords(Sengupta 1982, 34-35; Kunnath 2006). Importantly, the defeat of the Naxalites also resulted in wiping out of other 'programmatic' leftists including the CPI(M) who paradoxically demanded moderate strategies. Naturally, Bihari landlords as 'modern Zamindars' were unfettered from the idea that denied the existence of the semi-feudalism while the clientelism of the Congress Party far strengthened. As a result, there were few historic events enabled land reforms. The rural areas thus have remained impoverished under sharecropping/tenancy.

<Table 4.2: Outcomes of the Land Reforms in Bihar>

Surveyed from 1987 to 1988	**Sampled(N: 44564)**			**Total Rural Population**
	sampled	*Self-employed*	*Laborers*	
		The Original Data Are Not 100% Accurate		
Landless	10,678(24%)	342(3.2)	6,140(57.5)	18,652,700(29)
0.01 – 0.4(ha) Marginal	9,238(20.7)	1,820 *(19.7% of 20.7)*	4,056(43.9)	15,165,000(23.6)
0.41 – 1.00	8,237(18.5)	4,761(57.8)	1,565*(19% of 18.5)*	12,711,600(19.8)
1.01 – 2.00 Small	7,327(16.4)	5,730(78.2)	432(5.9)	9,577,600(14.9)
*2.00 – 4.00*Middle	5,587(12.5)	4,866(87.1)	157(2.8)	5,505,800(8.6)
4.01 – above Large	3,497(7.9)	3,126(89.4)	39(1.1)	2,628,200(4.1)
Total	44,564(100)	20,625(46.3)	11,491(25.8)	64,241,000(100)

Source: SARVEKSHANA_43rd_Special Issue(Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

The <Table 4.2> shows more than 60% of the population had less than 1 hectares of land. By contrast, less than 30% of the total held 1 hectares or above. Besides, 57.5% of the landless and 43.9% of those having less than 1 hectare were laborers in the sample survey. These findings imply the locals had not many alternative jobs(e.g. service in urban areas). Remind that around 70% are either self-employed or laborers. Importantly, most of the large and middle landowners are self-employed in agriculture. This suggests they were not completely independent of farming as the major industry of Bihar accordingly. It is difficult to find out whether other modes of production replaced it as India's other industrializing regions. Then, in what ways, do Bihari people keep bounding themselves in rurality?

Several researches and findings support the idea that Bihar's economies are maintained primarily by sustenance farming. As mentioned, tenancy under landlordism undermines the possibility of modernization and commercialization of agriculture. First, Landlords do not have incentives to transform sustenance farming into modern for better outputs as they are able to please themselves via sharecropping. Second, huge debts resulted from tenancy prevents tillers from attempting venturous commercial grains. Although the markets for commercial products exist, they are underdeveloped due to low productivity(Sugden 2017, 131-132).

This happened by Bihar's notoriously harsh-and also re-enforcing-sharecropping(Bhaataiya). Under the system, landlords typically accrue almost half of the crops/cash in proportion to the total outputs. There are only limited cases where the landlords shared inputs. Of course, the sharecropping itself is exploitative(Sharma 1995, 2594). Madhubani region is observed that the ratio of rent was almost 90%(Sugden 2017, 143). In addition, unofficial oral contracts between landlords and peasants-therefore the latter's security is vulnerable to the former's arbitrary decisions-are rampant in Bihar's rural villages(Kunnath 2006, 102). As many peasants are illiterate, verifying legal rights of tenancy to the state is unrealistic and it enables landlords to easily maintain privileges(Sharma 1995, 2594).

The exploitations by sharecropping have been observed in other areas. For instance, only 41 landlords of Purnea region owned more than 400 hectares while 40% of the residents were sharecroppers in the 1980s(Mitra and Vijayendra 1982, 98). Sharecropping was maintained by 50:50 in northern Bihar and tenants even had to offer labor services for landlords. Moreover, few loans for cash crops were given to tenants as sustenance was prevalent(Verna and Mishra 1984, 51-53).

Likewise, in four villages of Buxar District, researchers found out almost 1/4 of the arable land were leased to tenants and landowners usually took half of the outputs. The point is, most of the lessors are the upper classes from the Zamindar

system with some of the upper-middle castes as Yadavs, Kurmis, and Koeris(Sahay 2002). Besides, a local journalist describes the tenancy by his anecdote as,

"Once my maternal grandfather lost his four well-bred bullocks…He stopped farming and switched over to sharecropping…that was so informal. He[landlord] used to give the land for a year's two crops. It was either a fixed amount of the paddy or on sharing basis that used to be 50:50 or 75:25 of the produce depending on the land quality and irrigation facility. The tenants used to take concessions with many excuses, but the relationships were never bitter unless some tenant cheated him…small landholders who remain in farming occupation even lease the land of other smaller ones"(The Bihar Times 10.13.2009).

It follows that Bihar has failed to modernize its feudal structures and this has impacted land acquisitions. The anecdote below shows that the properties of tenancy/sharecropping have not ameliorate compared to the colonial era.

"My father came to Barena(a village in Dhamdaha region) from Dumka long before the earthquake(1934). About four years before the earthquake he was settled on the present site by Madaneshwar Babu(a malik[upper class landlords]). He selected a clear space in the jungle and built a *khopir*(an impoverished hut made mostly of straw). The Malik offered my father a loan to raise a *hal*(literally, 'raise a plough'-which in local parlance implies acquiring a pair of oxen four pursuing with one plough). He was expected to make *abad*[render fir for cultivation] as much land as possible. Before he died, he had raised two *hal* and was cultivating 10 to 15 bighas[an unit of measurement] of land"(Chakravarti 2001, 51).

4.3. The Second Critical Juncture: Green Revolution Failed

After independence, Bihari politicians with New Delhi's support attempted to implement green revolution in areas believed to accelerate agricultural outputs.

Nonetheless, it was evident that without land reforms, such measures would not function well enough to commercialize the land from sustenance farming. Because landowners and tenants bounded by sharecropping eschewed themselves from modernization of agriculture, only a small number of independent farmers(normally the upper-middle classes) were benefitted the most(Galhena 2007, 31-32).

Indubitably, some of Bihari landlords maximized gains via agricultural modernization. However, a majority of upper classes did not work on farms as they maintained their status from rent by sharecropping. Remind that tenants, in general, do not have incentives to attempt cash crops. In this situation, only some upper and upper-middle classes(Yadavs, Kurmis, and Koeris) who worked themselves in land as rich tillers, but did not hire many tenants turned into the beneficiaries of green revolution. They were highly interested in capital-intensive farming(Kumar 2003, 65-67). Because the upper-middle classes of India lack coercive and symbolic authorities that are essential for informal social control. It is derived from the custom that their positions are not on top of the caste(Chakravarti 2001, 124-125).

For instance, when the green revolution was introduced near Kosi River(Saharsa, Madhepura, and Supaul district; the government established the irrigation canal), they figured out most of the peasants could not afford the inputs(e.g. chemical fertilizers, HYVs, and tractors) as their holdings were too marginal(La

Kamee 1981, 205-206). Sahay(2002, 203-204) shows that some upper and most of the upper-middle landowners(e.g. Brahmins, Yadavs, Rajputs, Banias, and Chamars) of the Buxar district consumed almost all of the chemicals distributed. By contrast, lower classes had to rely on natural fertilizers as manure. It is seen in Aghanbigha village. It is the area where the locals were given 'boons' of the canal system and is known as a village where modernization of agriculture proceeded. However, they failed to eradicate conventional sharecropping entirely from the village. Traditional relations of landowners-tenants still remain intact(Chakravarti 2001, 111-112).

<Table 4.3: Land Owned by Each Class in Aghanbigha Village>

Class (observed in the 1980s)	**No. of Households**	**Percentage**	**Land Owned (Acres/Hectares)**	**Percentage**
Upper Class Landlords(Malik)	42	11.6%	1579.92/639.37	78.5%
Upper-Middle Class Landlords(Grihast)	27	7.5%	283.89/114.88	14.1%
Tenant Cultivators[14]	20	5.5%	44.51/18.01	2.2%
Petty Cultivators	69	19.1%	86.04/34.82	4.3%
Landless Laborers	198	54.7%	N/A	N/A

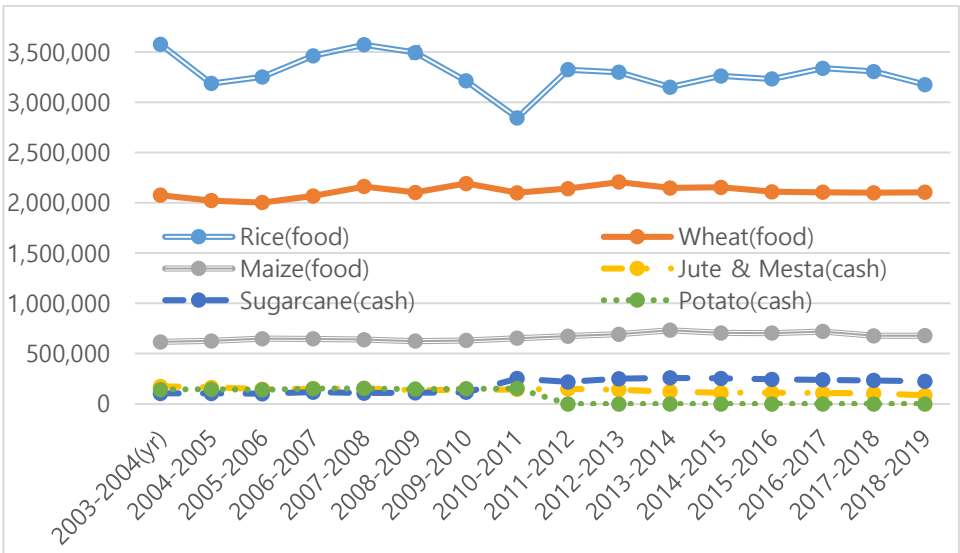
Source: Chakravarti (2001, 112)

Based on the <Table 4.3>, it is dubitable the green revolution encouraged tenants transform themselves into independent farmers. Only some landlords

[14] The difference between tenant and petty cultivators is, in the former, most of the farmers own their land under cultivation and leased some areas for sharecropping. In the latter, the ratio of leased land increases because petty cultivators become economically marginal and impoverished without tenancy.

interested in capital-intensive one deemed sharecropping as irrational(Chakravarti 2001). However, around 25% of the peasants in Aghanbigha village were still sustaining their households as sharecropping/tenancy. Furthermore, 2 landed classes(Malik/Grihast), as less than 20% of the total population, had more than 90% arable land of the village. To sum, Bihar's green revolution did not result in farmers' enrichment, capital-intensive agriculture, and eradication sharecropping.

<Figure 2.4: Areas(Ha) Cultivated for Representative Cash/Food Crops in Bihar[15]>



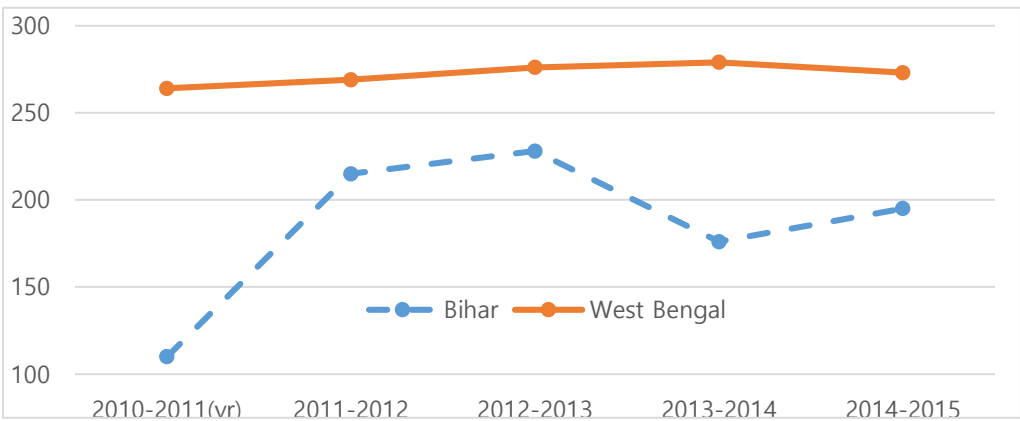
Source: Department of Agriculture, Government of Bihar

The <Figure 2.4> clarifies that Bihar's main agriculture is constricted to food crops consumed in farmers' households. According to the graph, the popularity of cash crops believed to boost income is not even comparable to the that of food

[15] The empirical data for the potato since 2011 is not available.

crops. At best, less than 500,000 hectares of Bihar's total arable land are respectively under cultivation for jute & mesta, sugarcane, and potato. These findings suggest the beneficiaries of the green revolution were limited to some classes while others still rely on food crops. Furthermore, when it comes to the total yield of rice, Bihar is far below neighboring West Bengal that had successful reforms(see the <Figure 2.5>).

<Figure 2.5: Total Yield(kg/hectare) of Rice Per Year of Bihar and West Bengal>



Source: Directorate of Rice Development(Government of India)

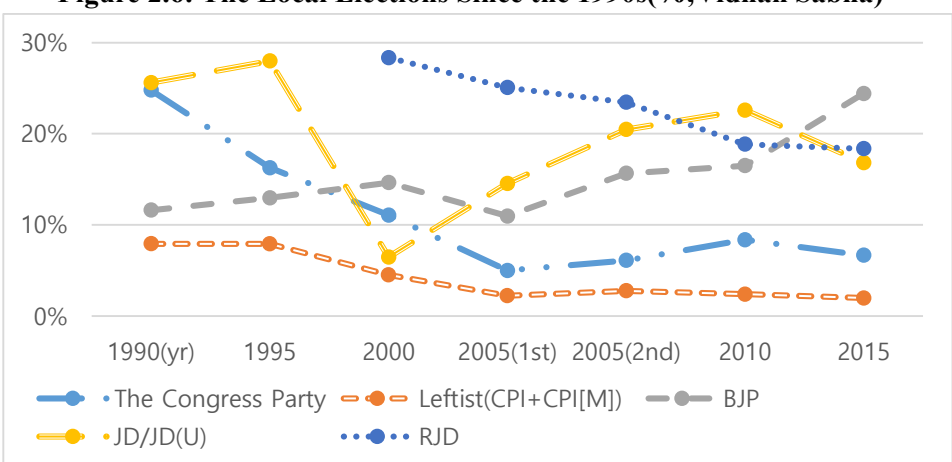
4.4. The Political Economy of SEZs Settlement in Bihar

Since the 1990s, the properties of Bihari politics have fundamentally changed. A notable example is the collapse of the Congress Party and other communists who joined the Naxalites or the CPI(M)(Kumar *et al* 2008). As the latter were totally quelled by the conservatives, the only cleavage left was the one between upper and upper-middle classes *within* the Congress Party. When to have a glance at

the composition of the assembly in 1975, the upper classes from Zamindars(Brahmin, Bhumihar, Rajput, Kayastha) and the upper-middle(Baniya, Yadav, Kurmi, Koeri) occupied 53.9% and 32.1%(Kumar *et al* 2008, 8; Nickow 2017).

However, the Congress Party's elitism was challenged during the 1990s. First, Lalu Prasad Yadav, former Chief Minister and his Janata Dal(JD; later as the Rashtriya Janata Dal[RJD]) swept the elections. To outdo the clientelism, Lalu pursued mobilizations of lower classes and Muslims who no longer felt efficacy from the Congress Party(Kumar *et al* 2008, 12-19). Another important factor is the penetration of the BJP into Bihar which also doomed the existing order. The BJP absorbed many upper classes who were loyal to the Congress Party for a long time.

<Figure 2.6: The Local Elections Since the 1990s(%;Vidhan Sabha)[16]>



Source: Election Commission of India

[16] The JD(U) is an abbreviation of the Janata Dal(United) party separated from JD. JD(U)'s popularity with Nitish Kumar's first inauguration as the Chief Minister surged in 2005's election.

As the <Figure 2.6> illustrates, the newcomers(BJP, JD, and RJD) seem to have replaced the hegemony of the Congress Party and already deadening the communists since the 1990s. The Congress Party has never won any of these parties since 2005. Above all, the year 2005 was the second critical juncture of the local politics. In the 2nd election of that year, Lalu and his RJD were finally defeated by the JD(U)-BJP coalition. Nitish Kumar, leader of the JD(U) inaugurated as the Chief Minister and has currently governed Bihar(Nickow 2017, Ch2).

As similar as his non-Congress predecessors, Kumar relies heavily on the huge support from lower classes. As responses, he has embarked on reforms that help overcome some of the feudal structures. For instance, the government fortified the law enforcement and transparency of the governance via the Right to Information Act(Kumar 2013, 110). Besides, Kumar took actions to enhance the symbiosis between JD(D) and the lower classes(Other Backward Castes[OBCs]). Notably, he increased the quota in the state jobs which was automatically provided to OBCs by 29% of the total recruitment(Times of India 01.22.2019).

Based on such events happening in Bihar, one may argue that politics would be independent of social classes and their material interests. However, such a claim is spurious. I have insisted that there exist material interests which are inalienable for other considerations. Besides, parties, regardless of their original ideologies, are

vulnerable to the interests and they recognize the fact that completely defying these would doom incoming elections. Consequently, politicians will not attempt new policies if they are believed to seriously undermine pivotal class interests.

It is true that still many Bihari peasants are under sharecropping and tenancy. Evidently, not many of them have been commercialized as Kerala. Moreover, there exist a number of landlords who are supposed to exploit rent and informal dominance in exchange for tenancy. While tenancy is exploitative, poor peasants still need it under sustenance farming as social safety. In these circumstances, I assume even the non-Congress politicians mobilizing lower classes will not easily implement fundamental land reforms related to land acquisitions.

This exactly happened in Bihar. Although the popularity of Kumar and JD(U) is bullish, several attempts to 'correct' side-effects of the sharecropping have faced obstacles. Wen Kumar's first term began in 2005, he established the Bihar Land Reforms Commission to cope with the region's everlasting land questions. Nevertheless, the aim of the reforms was rather focused on moderately strengthening tenancy rights in sharecropping instead of redistribution for the landless by strict ceiling policies. Likewise, Kumar even refused to accept the recommendations of his committee containing radical land reform initiatives(Nickow 2017, Ch2).

The recommendations were issued by Mr. Bandyopadhyay who carried out

land reforms in West Bengal. He argued the ceiling policy should be strengthened, and the state will redistribute the land from the ceiling to shelter-less households among non-farm rural workers. The suggestions included that all sharecroppers' heritable rights of cultivation must be secured with at least 60 to 70/75 % of the total outputs(Chintu and Kumar 2017, 96). Notwithstanding, the JD(U) stick to the idea that the current tenancy rights are *de facto* realistic options. Kumar comments,

> "It has been observed in Bihar that many landowners do not cultivate themselves instead give their land to other farmers under lease or sharecropping. The Bihar government is providing financial assistance to **both**-the *land holding* and *non-land holding* farmers equally in all the important schemes related to agriculture"(Times of India 06.16.2019).

About the Bandyopadhyay's recommendations, he even evinced that the traditional semi-feudal structure of Bihar is based on 'good governance'(Chintu and Kumar 2017, 76), with his hostility toward such new proposals. For instance,

> "We are not going to enact a new act to protect bataidars[Bihari sharecroppers] in the state… it has not been enacted in a state like West Bengal which is known for radical land reforms then how can it be done in Bihar"(Hindustan Times 10.19.2009).

Likewise, a top cabinet member opposed the land reforms as,

> "Land, as the Chief Minister himself knows, is an extremely sensitive and volatile issue…We must tread with extreme care and ensure people have no misgivings…People, especially landed people, who also happen to be socially and politically influential, will receive any new initiative on land as a hostile move…That[the policy for sharecroppers] was nowhere intended for any *re-distribution of land* "(Telegraph 11.30.2011).

Even if Kumar and the JD(U) acquire huge support from the lower classes, it does not rule out the fact that material interests of landlords are also significant.

First, the JD(U) has continuously allied with the BJP since 2005, and the latter's politicians and rank-and-file members are from the upper and upper-middle classes. Besides, many high ranking members of the JD(U) also have Zamindar backgrounds. Naturally, they prefer the status quo and Kumar recognizes any actions contrasting landlords' opinions and interests will arise severe unrest(Nickow 2017, 74-75).

However, the dynamics of Bihari politics do not stop here. I hypothesize even if policies are contingent upon (numerically)dominant classes' interests, it does not mean politicians are simple brokers as Gourevitch(1986)'s. One should not forget there exists the leadership. The leadership enables politicians to keep contemplating how to 1) coordinate preferences of the voters having disparate interests in ever-changing socio-economic circumstances. Some 2) 'novel' policies and discourses are often originated from such considerations to buttress parties' dominant coalitions.

This happens under the leadership of Kumar and the JD(U). When faced the imperative choice of whether or not to settle new SEZs via land acquisitions, Kumar again proposes new policies that have not been attempted in other regions. By eschewing land reforms for the landed, he appeases the lower classes by opposing any prospective acquisitions and SEZs *per se*. It was, of course, implemented to consolidate *the grand coalition* between the landed and the landless mediated by the

JD(U). Nevertheless, Kumar's ambivalent land policies re-enforce Bihar's historical tenancy/sharecropping as they are precisely intended to maintain the status quo.

By the way, sometimes the land of Bihar-which has obvious locational disadvantages than the coastal states-has also been considered as prospective SEZs by corporates. In 2014, the urban development and the housing department of the state government once contemplated the construction of a new SEZ in Bihta, the city near Patna following the success of Hyderabad's IT sectors. It is because some IT corporates requested new SEZs to Bihar if they wish to attract them(Telegraph 01.18.2014). The Vice Chairman of the Zensar Technologies(MNCs) states,

"The IT park has become an obsolete concept. No one wants to be a part of an IT park these days. Most companies prefer operating from SEZs these days due to the tax benefits associated with them. Even Zensar plans to expand its operations by operating from new SEZs in tier-2 cities like Bhubaneswar[in Odisha] and Bhopal[in Madhya Pradesh]. If the Bihar government also sets up a SEZ for the IT industry, we would definitely consider the option to operate from here"(Telegraph 01.18.2014).

Regardless of such considerations, Kumar comprehend land acquisitions are the *Achille's Heels* for lower classes given that these groups are still under tenancy/sharecropping. This leads to Kumar's discreet attitude toward SEZs. The <Table 4.4> below shows how impoverished Bihari peasants are.

<Table 4.4: Rural Poverty of Bihar, Kerala, West Bengal, and All India>

State	Per Capita Poverty Line(Rupee)	% Under Poverty Line
Bihar	11655	71.88%

Kerala	12648	26.31%
West Bengal	11209	56.94%
All India	N/A	53.37%

Source: Ranganathan(2015, 71-72; surveyed from 2011 to 2012)

For instance, right after the anti-SEZs protests in Nandigram village of West Bengal turned into the bloody clashes in 2007, Kumar has many times clarified to his constituents that the state will not initiate any new SEZs. He emphasizes,

"I personally feel that acquisition of large chunk of agricultural land of the farmers in the name of industrialization would not serve any purpose. Hence, I have told the Centre in very clear terms that the Bihar Government *is opposed to* creation of SEZs…For the development of any State, industrialization was a must as it would reduce State's dependence on agriculture. But the farmers need to be adequately compensated for parting with their agricultural land, so that they can earn their livelihood…I immediately directed the officials to stop the process and look for non-fertile land"(Hindustan Times 01.30.2007).

"There won't be any forceful acquisition of land. Lands for establishing industrial units would be acquired only at people's will. The government is *dead against* creating SEZs"(Hindustan Times 04.09.2007).

"The government will not repeat a Nandigram in Bihar by forcibly acquiring the land for industrial development. The industries will come up only on plots, which the people will give on their own will and volition…not to use force to displace the landowners…The problem of unemployment can be taken care of only through industrialization. But the government will not use coercive methods for acquisition of land. After all, the government is just the manifestation of the wishes of the people"(Telegraph 04.09.2007).

His stalwart opposition to land acquisitions for SEZs did not stop in the 2000s. Recently, Kumar evinced his anger about the BJP(of New Delhi)'s continuous attempts to revise the LARR, 2013 into more business-friendly by alleviating

acquisition regulations to attract more investors. He says,

"The state government opposes any attempt to dilute, nullify or tamper with the letter and spirit of the 2013 Act…substitution of term 'private company' by term 'private entity', removal of the consent clause, exemption from social impact assessment and special provisions for safeguarding food security in the process of land acquisition and relaxation in the time limit for return of the unutilized acquired land are not in public interest"(India Today 07.15.2015).

Contrary to the consistence opposition to SEZs, Kumar have gradually capitalized on acquisitions for modernization of Bihar's dilapidated infrastructure.

<Table 4.5: The Land Acquired for Several Modernization Projects>

Name	Year/Acre & Hectare							
	05-6	06-7	07-8	08-9	09-10	11-12	12-13	Total
Railway	973/ 393.8	2421.9/ 980.1	1067.1/ 431.9	464.9/ 188.15	448.5/ 181.5	514.1/ 208.1	140.9/ 57.0	6030.6/ 2440.5
Power Grid Corporation	7/ 2.8	11.5/ 4.7	4.5/ 1.8	9.4/ 3.8	39.1/ 15.8	33.4/ 13.5	40.5/ 16.4	145.4/ 58.8
Sashastra Seema Bal (Security Force)	N/A	571.6/ 231.3	83.2/ 33.7	100/ 40.5	59.8/ 24.2	208.1/ 84.2	190.9/ 77.3	1213.5/ 491.1
Bridges & Roads		N/A				1037.4/ 419.8	804.3/ 325.5	1841.7/ 745.3
Highway (Sakaddi-Nasatiganj)						110.5/ 44.7	87.1/ 35.3	197.7/ 80
Highway (Bihta-Sarmera)						490.2/ 198.4	136.8/ 55.4	627.1/ 253.8
Highway (Chandi-Sarmera)						389.7/ 157.7	76.1/ 30.8	465.8/ 188.5

Infrastructure (Nalanda)			464/ 187.8	262.3/ 106.1	726.3/ 293.9

Source: Samanta *et al*(2014)

Note that such facilities do not provoke severe unrest by benefitting the most. Contrary to the works stressing locational advantages, it seems clear that the infrastructure development do not motivate politicians to reconsider SEZs. In a nutshell, no SEZs in Bihar is strongly correlated with its rural structures. First, the reformers failed to redistribute land due to Zamindar's resistance. Second, green revolution benefitted only some upper classes as a majority of peasants were under tenancy. Because two events obviously bypassed Bihar, tenancy/sharecropping have remained almost unchanged. Therefore, the local politicians barely attempt to settle SEZs for the landed and the landless as well. Landlords are unable to collect rent while tenants have difficulty in sustaining households without land.

Chapter 5. Political Costs of the Unsolved Land Questions: West Bengal

The self-enforcing feudal structures of Bihar have prevented its politicians from considering any SEZs and land acquisitions. Similarly, although West Bengal has 7 operational SEZs(see the <Table 5.1>), the state has much less SEZs than Kerala. What makes such a difference? To what extent have Bengali farmers and landowners resisted over land acquisitions? To answer these, West Bengal's current class politics and how it has been constructed since independence will be analyzed.

<Table 5.1: List of the Operational SEZs in West Bengal>

Name	Location	Type	Developer
Falta SEZ	Falta	Multi-purpose	The Central Government (Before the SEZs Act 2005)
Manikanchan SEZ	Kolkata	Gems & Jewelry	State and Private Investors (Before 2005)
Salt Lake Electronic City - WIPRO		Software & ITES	
M.L. Dalmiya and Company Limited		IT/ITES	Private Investors (notified in 2006)
Candor Kolkata One Hitech Structures Private Limited			Private Investors (notified in 2007)
Tata Consultancy Services			Private Investors

Limited			(notified in 2008)
DLF Limited			

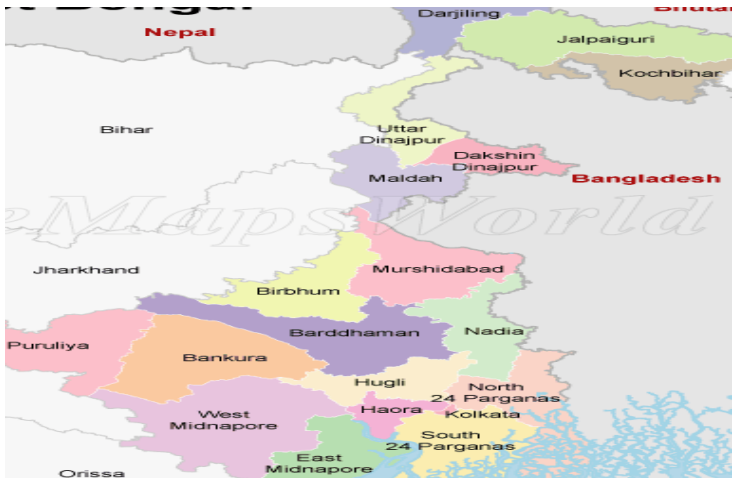
Source: Special Economic Zones in India

According to the official document by Indian government, there have not been any notifications for SEZs by the state government and developers as well since 2009 in West Bengal. This well signifies land acquisitions would be demanding though the local feudalism disappeared owing to the land reforms by the communists.

5.1. Historical Background: Zamindars and Zotedars

Geographically, West Bengal is an eastern state of India next to Bihar and is sharing borders with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. Legally, the administration started in 1956 with Kolkata as the capital. Nearly 90 million citizens are estimated and the urbanization is around 30%. This indicates a majority of people are under rurality but is not as high as that of Bihar(West Bengal State Portal). During the colonial rules, the region(formerly as Bengal) had a substantial number of Muslims especially in the eastern part such as Dhaka. During the partition of 1947, these Muslim dominated areas were forcibly separated from Bengal and annexed into Pakistan(Bangladesh). Because of that historical event, overwhelming citizens are Hindu(70%) while around 30% are the Sunni Muslims(Britannica; The Census 2011).

<Figure 3.1: Administrative Divisions of West Bengal>



Source: eMapsWorld

Owing to geographical and historical proximity, West Bengal also had the Zamindar system before independence. Here, however, the system was more complex in that, there were Jotedar class who were landowners but did not belong to the Zamindar. Bhaumik(1993, 30) argues around 1/16 members of the villages in West Bengal were Jotedars. Unlike Zamindars, they were comprised mostly of rich self-cultivators and traders. Simultaneously, they leased out the land to tenants for sharecropping as Zamindars sustained their rural dominance by sharecropping.

Besides, there were the Muslim upper castes such as Saiyads(aristocratic) and Maulvis(learned) who were also included in the Zamindar. It is needless to say that West Bengal's feudalism was sustained by an overwhelming number of tenants/sharecroppers named Bargadars(Rajat and Ray 1975). According to the

survey conducted in 1808, around 6% of the upper classes dominated 36.5% of the land while almost 50% of the total was either agricultural laborers or tenants in Dinajpur district(Rajat and Ray 1975, 84). Naturally, capital-intensive farming was hardly developed as sharecropping discouraged Bargadars(Bhaumik 1993, 38-39).

Of course, the colonizers devised some legal measures to protect tenants from 'too' excessive rent-seeking of Zamindars and Jotedars. For instance, the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885 and the Tenancy Act Amendment Bill, 1928 enabled any Bengali tenants as cultivators have a legal occupancy right of the land they possessed for 12 years. These occupancy tenants(ryots) were guarded by the colonizers from landlords' arbitrary rent-seeking by setting the fixed rent. Besides, the tenants were able to dispose of or purchase land whenever they wished(Bhaumik 1993, 28-29).

However, the majority of them were non-occupancy tenants who were almost independent of the two acts. For instance, landlords still collected rent by a *proportion* of the total produce, rent itself was determined by private agreements between two parties, and non-occupancy tenants were vulnerable to arbitrary eviction from tenancy(Bhaumik 1993, 28-29). Thus, sharecropping was widespread in West Bengal. It was reported that around 40% of the farmland was under the sharecropping in 1944 and it increased by 20% from 1938(Raychaudhuri 2004, 6).

5.2. The First Critical Juncture: Land Reforms

Land reforms as the first critical juncture of West Bengal drastically altered the existing rural structures. During the 1950s, the long-lasting Zamindar system was abolished by a series of legal measures. Though sporadic, there were several peasant uprisings right after independence. Those events encouraged the reformers not to hesitate necessary actions. The Tebhaga Movement is a notable example. From 1948 to 1951, the organized local tenants, supported by the communists rebelled against India and claimed that 2/3 of the total product of agriculture must be guaranteed to tillers if all inputs are self-supplied(Raychaudhuri 2004, 4).

First, the Bargadars Act, 1950 forced Bengali tenants to retain 2/3 of the total output of agriculture if all inputs were self-supplied unless there are mutual agreements with landlords about the rate of rent. Second, the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955(amended in 1969) regulated landlords' rent-seeking against tenants. For instance, the act stipulated any landlords are able to receive half of the total output from tenants only if they supplied all inputs. Even in other cases, the act prohibited any rent of more than 2/3 of the total output(Bhaumik 1993, 42-43).

The measures listed and upcoming reforms were successfully implemented as Bengali upper classes failed to cohesively organize themselves under auspices of

the Congress Party due to salient intra-class heterogeneity(Kohli 1997, 341). For instance, “the state leadership rested its support on a series of *ad hoc* alliance with large landowners, traditional patrons…kin groups, caste fellows and clients including sharecroppers”(Frankel 1971, 179). Accordingly, the Congress Party were not able to defend the upper classes’ interests from the land reforms thoroughly.

Unlike the situations of Bihar, Bengali communists firmly grabbed hegemony without obstructions from upper classes. The United Front(the communists), comprised mostly of the CPI(M), the Bangla Congress deviated from the Congress Party, and some other leftists carried out drastic reforms. When the communists dominated the local parliament in the 1970s, they endeavored to bolster existing reforms to get rid the loopholes used by landlords. As it was frequently reported that a number of sharecroppers were forcibly evicted because the landed proclaimed their properties as ‘self-cultivation’, the communists stipulated that landlords cannot hire agricultural laborers in such land and at least 2.5 acres(1 hectare) of the total land should remain for tenants(Bhaumik 1993, 47).

In the 1980s, they enacted the West Bengal Reforms(Amendment) Acts, 1981. It existed to block the loopholes during the reform processes. Simply the act abolished all the waivers for excessive land of all classes above the ceiling. Owing to the act, the state government could not exempt any excessive land deemed as

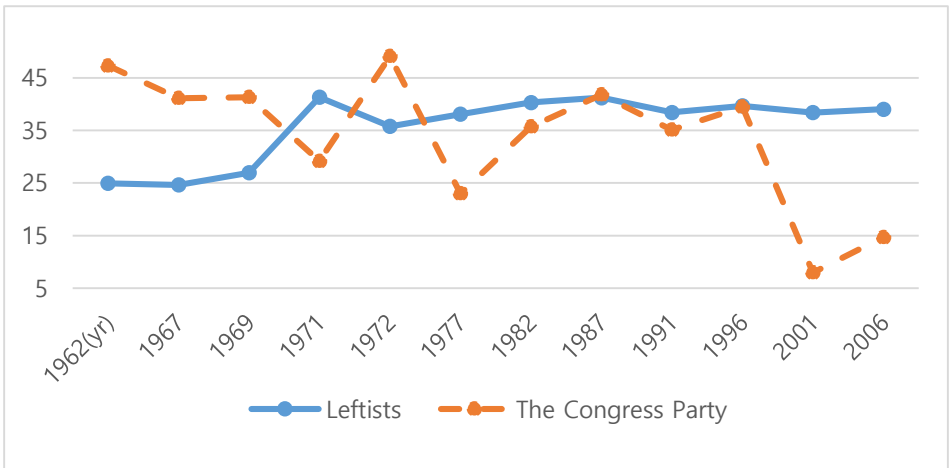
“religious/charitable trusts, plantations, and fisheries”(Bhaumik 1993, 49).

After the 1970s, the communists comprehensively redistributed the land gleaned from Zamindars and Jotedars to peasants with firm regulations on tenancy. Specifically, the ceiling was set to 12.3 acres(4.97 hectares) to land for irrigation and 17.3acres(7 hectares) for unirrigated for each household having 5 heads(Dasgupta 2017, 249). The land reforms resulted in redistribution of 20% of land to landless peasants with tenancy protections and almost half of the households were actually benefitted(Törnquist and Harriss 2015, 31). Besides, sharecropping actually began to decrease. According to Dasgupta(2006, 56)’s calculation, while the % of it decreased from 17.34% in the 1970s to 4.83% in the 1990s, fixed rent conversely increased from 0.64% to 2.11% and total leased areas decreased 18.74% to 10.4%. Certainly, the moral economy of Zamindars/Jotedars and tenants began to oscillate.

I mentioned the Congress Party was overpowered by Bengali communists. What are the reasons behind the latter’s empowerment? Contrary to the poor leadership of Bihari communists, they effectively penetrated rural communities. One of the most influential peasants’ organizations were the Krishak Sabha with more than 480,000 members. Under auspices of the communists, the Krishak Sabha supervised landlords whether they were abiding on the ceiling and the regulations. Whenever the members found illegal surplus land or informal tenancy, they forcibly

confiscated(Frankel 1971, 184). Though the Naxalites operated in the north, their influences were constricted to Santhals(semi-nomadic tribes) and the rest of the villages not loyal to the CPI or the CPI(M)(Kohli 1997, 346).

<Figure 3.2: Vote Share(%) of the Communists(CPI+CPI[M]) in the Local Elections>



Source: Election Commission of India

Given that the Congress Party was the most dominant party until Narendra Modi and the BJP supplanted, the communists' success in West Bengal is surprising. In fact, the CPI(M) and its factions governed the region from 1977 to 2011 with continuity(Lofgren 2016, 102). At least *superficially*, the reformers' redistribution policies were successful in equalizing landownership. According to the <Table 5.2>, only 7.5% had more than 2 hectares and around 65% of the peasants were liberated from being landless(note that the large and middle landowners were occupied around 9% and 4% in Bihar). Besides, the % of laborers within the landless were lower in

West Bengal. In the sample surveys, for instance, almost 60% of Bihari landless were laborers while it is estimated as 48.1% in West Bengal.[17]

<Table 5.2: Outcomes of the Land Reforms in West Bengal[18]>

Surveyed from 1987-1988	**Sampled(N:26,971)**			**Total Rural Population**
	sampled	*Self-employed*	*Laborers*	
		The Original Data Are Not 100% Accurate		
Landless	7,287(27%)	124(1.7%)	3,505(48.1%)	13,766,600(32.7%)
0.01 – 0.4(ha) Marginal	6,670(24.7)	794 *(11.9 of 24.7)*	3,448(51.7)	11,813,200(28)
0.41 –1.00	5,136(19)	3,415(66.5)	673*(13.1 of 19)*	8,055,300(19.1)
*1.01 –2.00*Small	4,199(15.6)	3,582(85.3)	80(1.9)	5,369,000(12.7)
*2.00 –4.00*Middle	2,882(10.7)	2,646(91.8)	20(0.7)	2,563,800(6.1)
4.01 – above Large	797(3)	729(91.4)	0(0)	575,600(1.4)
Total	26,971(100)	11,060(41)	7,425(27.5 of 100)	42,143,500(100)

Source: SARVEKSHANA_43rd_Special Issue(Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

Being confident at the overwhelming support, the communists launched the *Operation Barga* in the late 1970s. This was also a watershed event of West Bengal's land reforms. It was operated to officially register the local tenants so that the state effectively oversees landowners exploiting rent more than allowed, guarantees more farming outputs for peasants, and by expecting that the registration will ultimately

[17] Notwithstanding, the absolute number of the landless and agricultural laborers were as similar as those of Bihar in this publication. It was derived from the fact that the green revolution of West Bengal combined with some unexpected side-effects of the land reforms let the land questions almost unsolved.
[18] Note that the ratio of the sample and of the entire population are slightly different. Besides, the ratio of the Self-employed and the Laborers are found by the dyad of each category(e.g landless-sampled N) but from the total. This is also applied in the <Table 4.2>, and the <Table 6.4>. For more information, refer to the original official data(They are not 100% accurate).

lead higher productivity as peasants are encouraged to cultivate cash crops that is impossible under sharecropping(Dasgupta 2006, 63; Dasgupta 2017, 249).

Of course, the reformers observed that lots of tenants did hesitate to register their names on the list. They apprehended that landlords will soon evict them from the land under sharecropping. Besides, it was not possible for the impoverished to self-supply inputs without landlords. To cope with, the communists established several commercial banks and cooperatives that surrogated loaning with a low-interest rate(Bhaumik 1993, 48-49). Admittedly, owing to such efforts, West Bengal's inveterate sharecropping/tenancy gradually decreased.

<Table 5.3: Changes in Tenancy/Sharecropping in West Bengal>

Hectares	**% of Households Leasing Out**			**% of Operated Area Under**			
	1953-4 (yr)	71-2	82	71-2 sharecropping	82	71-2 fixed rent	82
0-1 (marginal)	8.26	7.34	2.52	23.41	9.38	0.81	1.33
1-2 (small)	14.66	14.34	8.74	22.64	8.94	1.06	1.19
2-4 (middle)	22.68	12.9	13.84	13.78	6.5	0.42	3.6
4-6 (big)	33.9	31.97	24.26	10.19	1.85	N/A	0.92
6-above (large)	50.45	38.38	18.54	4.48	N/A		0.77
Total	10.41	9.48	3.71	17.34	6.85	0.64	1.82

Source: Bhaumik(1993, 57-63); I converted acres into hectares

Based on the <Table 5.3>, it is presumable that the land reforms contributed to the great of the rural structures. Obviously the tenancy itself decreased especially among large landowners. Moreover, the popularity of sharecropping, once a dominant mode of agriculture lost its hegemony while fixed rent slowly increased. What is noteworthy is, the sharecroppers officially registered by the Operation Barga were treated more favorably than the unregistered. In Aman paddy cultivation, for instance, 75% of the unregistered tenants had to provide half of the total output when 55% of the registered could acquire at least 75% instead(Bhaumik 1993, 115).

5.3. Why Green Revolution Aggravated Rural Inequality?

Similarly, through green revolution, West Bengal endeavored to modernize its dilapidated rural structures. They assiduously provided credits to peasants under debts, HYVs, irrigation systems, chemicals, and the minikits by the Integrated Rural Development Program(Nielson 2010, 150; Bardhan and Mookherjee 2011) Contrary to the success of the land reforms, however, the green revolution show somewhat mixed results. Note that it was *supposed* to be the second critical juncture of the transformation of West Bengal's rural structures. Thus, it is important to review how it distorted the economies which will be related to land acquisitions.

<Table 5.4: Summary of The Green Revolution in West Bengal>

Program Overview	
Administration of the two principal poverty alleviation schemes: 1) the Integrated Rural Development Program(IRDP), which gave subsidized credit to impoverished peasants	2) The employment programs such as Food for Work(FFW), National Rural Employment Program(NREP), Rural Labor Employment Guarantee Program(RLEGP) in the 1980s.
3) Distribution of subsidized inputs as 'minikits' containing seeds, fertilizers and pesticides	
4) Selection and construction of local infrastructure projects (including roads and irrigation)	
5) Miscellaneous welfare schemes (e.g. old-age assistance, disaster relief, housing programs)	

Source: Bardhan and Mookherjee(2011, 190)

These state-wide projects were seemingly creditable. For example, in Burdwan district, the areas for rice cultivation were 366,950 hectares in 1966 and in 1986, these expanded by 518,830 hectares while the yield rate per hectare almost doubled(Webster 1990, 179). By the way, fruitions of the green revolution were not fairly distributed to tillers. Bates(2005, Ch3) highlights, in Africa, green revolution was failed due to rampant clientelism. Policymakers *partially* provided inputs to middle or big farmers, villages with informal connections, and those supporting incumbent parties, but excluded other peasants. This also happened in West Bengal.

First, as briefly analyzed, the fear of alienation of the land to tenants by the Operation Barga made huge numbers of landlords to pause sharecropping. Besides, landlords forcibly expelled tenants by cultivating themselves or alternated to 'low paying' laborers(Frankel 1971, 168). Owing to such unexpected events, the middle class farmers relatively independent of sharecropping registered themselves biasedly.

By becoming the official sharecroppers, they soon turned into the main beneficiaries of almost all kinds of the inputs and the minikits(Mallick 1993, 53).

When it comes to poor sharecroppers or the landless, however, registering themselves was not recommended and many actually refused. The most serious consideration was the interest rate required by the commercial banks/cooperatives was too exorbitant for them to be independent of 'input sharing' with landlords. Because the unregistered were not accessible to finance, sustenance farming and sharecropping persisted in many parts of West Bengal(Mallick 1993, 61-65).

Naturally that the beneficiaries of the Operation Barga became ardent supporters of the communists. The problem is, as they were more well-organized than the landless or marginal farmers, voices of the former masked the latter. For instance, Krishak Sabha, once organized to mobilize the agrarian poor in villages was controlled by middle farmers. They not only resisted further land reforms but also monopolized all the inputs for farming(Mallick 1993, 53-60). For instance,

> "In Basudha, class disputes would appear as the factional struggle of the landed elite caste to take over village leadership and "big man" status from the old Zamindar…In Basudha the landed Sadgope[middle caste] struggle to remove the traditionally dominant Zamindar family…they are challenged in turn by their former laborers…The leadership of one family is being replaced by the leadership of a landed caste"(Mallick 1993, 132-133).

This in turn aggravated rural poverty in that, a majority of marginal and landless peasants could not even receive 'security' from landlords unlike under the

moral economies. Besides, regardless of the communists' endeavors, many tenants refused to register their names on the list by response. For example, in several villages of Midnapore district, it was observed that around half of the tenants were still unregistered even the government encouraged it(Bhaumik 1993, 73-75).

Second, some communities with firm political connections with Bengali communists were major beneficiaries of the green revolution. This is exactly because each Panchayat was responsible for allocating the inputs of farming as an intermediary. The state government and the communists did not *directly* carry out the projects by decentralization. For instance,

"The resources percolated down from the central government to GP[Gram Panchayat]s through the state government, its district-wide allocations, and then through the upper tiers of the Panchayats at the block and district levels. Upper tiers of the Panchayats selected their allocation across different GPs. The responsibilities of the latter was either to allocate them across households and farms within their jurisdiction or to recommend beneficiaries to local implementing agencies"(Bardhan and Mookherjee 2011, 190).

<Table 5.5: Classes and Profiles of the Panchayats in Burdwan and Minapore>

Political Profile		**Land Ownership**		**Vocation**	
Relations with CPI(M)	%	Size(Ha)	%	Types	%
Opportunists	13.3	0-0.8	8.3	Agriculturalist	60.1
Sympathizers	58.3	0.8-2	69	Landless laborers	8.3
Part-time members	21.7	2.4-4	19.4	Non-Agriculturalist	31.6
Full-time members	6.7	4-above	2.8	-	-

Source: Kohli(1983, 793)

Just because the communists dominated West Bengal from the 1970s to the 2000s, they also controlled the local Panchayats(see the <Table 5.5>). According to the Kohli(1983)'s calculations in two districts, almost all Panchayat members affiliated with the CPI(M). Besides, less than 10% of the members from marginal farmers(less than 0.8 hectares) and laborers occupied two councils. I mentioned that the communists' major support was from (upper)middle farmers as the beneficiaries of the Operation Barga. While it is true that any villages showing loyalty to the CPI(M) were biasedly received inputs, such items were concentrated to middle farmers already backed by the state. For example, when the IRDP was recommended to redistribute at least 50% of the total funds to lower classes, the actual allocation was 41.71% from 1983 to 1984(Mallick 1993, 94-95).

<Table 5.6: Beneficiaries of the IRDP projects in Sampled Panchayats>

	1980-81	**1981-82**	**1982-83**
Total Beneficiaries	37,415	67,338	95,607
No. of the lower classes (Schedules Castes and Tribes)	10,522	29,920	29,637
%	28.1	44.4	30.9

Source: Mallick(1993, 94).

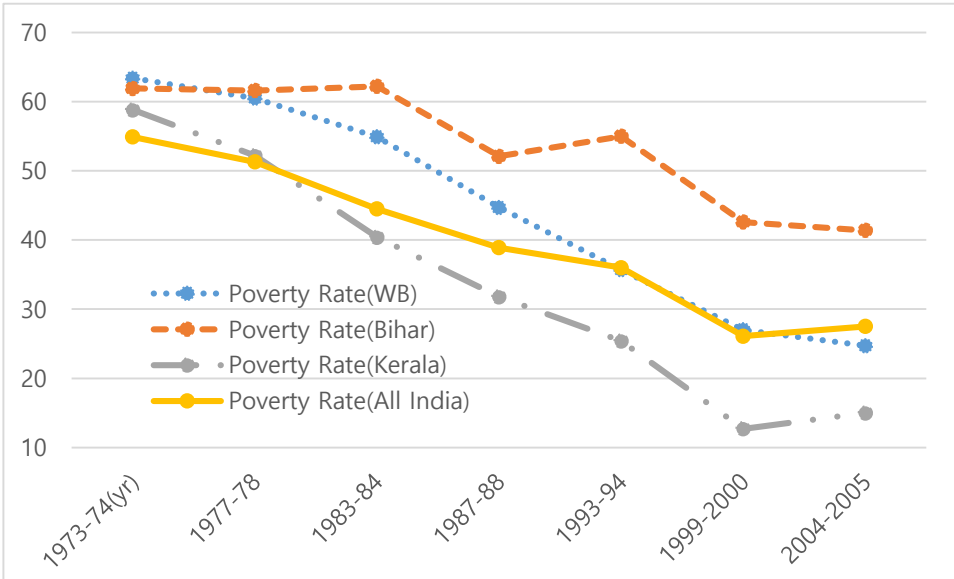
In these circumstances, the locals loyal to the CPI(M)'s were heavily assisted from such projects including credit, the minikits, and poverty relief programs. Furthermore, the communists consolidated its hegemony in village-level

meetings and rallies beyond Panchayats. As the locals could not express their loyalty by secret voting, participating at such campaigns was necessitated. This provided chances for the communists to discern 'the infidels'(Bardhan *et al* 2009).

In Fonogram, the villagers belonged to the *Samity*(civic association supporting green revolution) received most of the benefits. For instance, the Samity arbitrarily restricted water supply from irrigation to the villagers while the official members were exempted from that arbitrary decision(Beck 1995). Besides, as landowners were independent of the moral obligation forcing them to provide sharecropping, they were able to disposed of land whenever they desire(Frankel 1971).[19] Consequently, poverty and inequality are what have constrained many Bengali farmers even if landlordism by Zamindars and Jotedars entirely disappeared.

[19] It is because "Many landlords are actually absentees, living in other villages or in Kolkata; they have other occupations and consider their income from rent simply as supplemental" (Frankel 1971, 168).

<Figure 3.3: Poverty Rate(%) of Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, and All India>



Source: Reserve Bank of India

Unequal distribution of the agricultural inputs during the green revolution was also seen in the Burdwan district. Here too, the state carried out the projects since the 1960s. However, only a few became the beneficiaries. Such villagers included those whose holdings were contiguous to the irrigation such as tubewells, and those who were economically modest(e.g. having more than 2 hectares) for the inputs and loans. As a consequence, the total yield of paddy even decreased from 1963-1964(658,000 tons) to 1967-1968(621,000 tones). Although the reformers provided HYVs to the district to maximize the total outputs in 1968, it at best increased by 725,000 tones which was not satisfactory at all(Frankel 1971, 161-162).

The upper bias of green revolution in West Bengal was not confined to the

inputs. As many of the (upper)middle farmers guarded by the communists hired cheap laborers, they did their best not to increase the daily wages. Naturally, the CPI(M) failed to enhance the well-being of numerous agricultural laborers. Remind that political processes of West Bengal was decentralized by the Panchayats and the communists could not disregard the voices of the rich(Mallick 1993, 75).

<Table 5.7: Average Daily Wages of Male Agricultural Laborers Under Different Regimes>

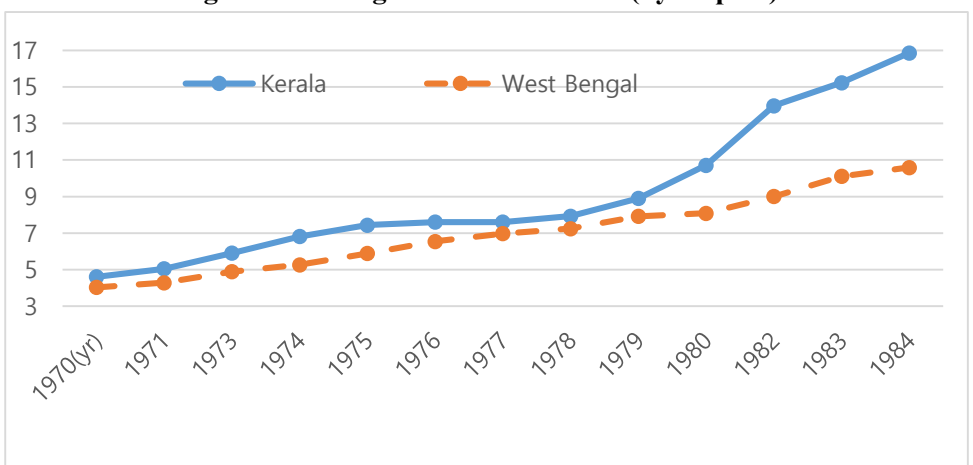
Regime	Year	Area Total	Weak Presence of the Communists(district)	Medium	Strong
The Congress	1960-67(Mar)	2.08(Rupees)	2	1.98	2.3
The communist	1967(Apr)-67(Nov)	3.11	2.94	3.02	3.51
The Congress	1967(Dec)-69(Feb)	3.02	2.73	3.22	3.33
The communist	1969(Mar)-70(Mar)	2.97	2.78	3.09	3.18
The Congress	1970(Apr)-77(June)	3.99	3.7	4.22	4.28
The communist	1977(July)-81(June)	6.42	6.11	6.3	7.07

Source: Mallick(1993, 72)

As the <Table 5.7> presents, the differences of the daily wages between the districts where the communists dominated and others who chose other parties are not significant. It is also observed in the time-series comparisons. From 1967 to 1969,

for instance, the Congress regime's daily average was even higher while it is true that it increased since 1977. Nonetheless, the difference between the districts where the communists were unpopular and popular are not salient at all. This implies the trend is no less than a byproduct of West Bengal's land reforms and green revolution which increased the agricultural outputs *per se*(Mallick 1993, 70). Furthermore, when it is compared to Kerala[20], where the CPI(M) also dominated the local parliaments, the difference is even more striking(see the <Figure 3.4>).

<Figure 3.4: A Comparison of Kerala and West Bengal on Average Daily Wages of Male Agricultural Laborers(by Rupees)[21]>



Source: Jose(1988, A48).

As the land reforms did not fully absorb tenants into the registered

[20] Simply speaking, the CPI(M) of Kerala did not decentralize land reform and green revolution processes to Panchayats that much. It will be discussed in the following chapter.
[21] On the average daily wages of West Bengal, the calculations by Jose(1988) and by Mallick(1993) are slightly different. I just wanted to show the trend that the average daily wages of male agricultural laborers of West Bengal did not dramatically increase after the land reforms.

sharecroppers, and few upper-middle farmers were benefitted from the green revolution. Therefore, diversification and commercialization of the local agriculture was fanciful. Furthermore, the low daily wages of the agricultural laborers did not encourage tillers to switch labor-intensive into capital-intensive farming. The <Table 5.8> contrasts that more than 70% of total arable land was under food crops in 2010. Moreover, rice as labor-intensive gain occupies most of the food crops. By contrast, less than 10% of the total land is capitalized on cash crops.

<Table 5.8: Major Cash and Food Crops in West Bengal's Agriculture>

Name (2010-2011)	**Type**	**Area Under Crop(000ha)/% of Total**
Jute	Cash	568.463(8.54%)
Mesta		6.256(0.09%)
Sugarcane		15.017(0.23%)
Aus(Rice)	Food	212.132(3.19%)
Aman(Rice)		**3362.122(50.5%)**
Boro(Rice)		**1369.892(20.57%)**
Wheat		316.808(4.76%)
Til(sesame)		180.426(2.71%)
Mustard		410.793(6.17%)
Musur(lentil)		57.447(0.86%)
Maize		32.295(0.48%)
Maskalai		45.020(0.68%)
Others		82.195(1.24%)
Total	-	6658.866(100%)

Source: Districtwise Estimates of Yield Rate and Production of Nineteen Major Crops of West Bengal During 2010-2011

5.4. The Political Economy of SEZs Settlement: Why Severe Unrest?

I have proceeded the argument with evidence that West Bengal's green revolution was distorted by decentralization and clientelism of the communists. Consequently, the reforms did not alter the rural structures characterized as unofficial sharecropping, agricultural laboring, and some independent farmers with marginal income. Remind that in Bihar, the resistance to acquisitions was possible as not only tenants/sharecroppers but also landlords are unwilling to yield their land to foreigners. Here, by the way, landlordism disappeared by the land reforms. In this situation, acquisitions of land to settle SEZs would be easier for the local politicians.

This was indeed observed after the SEZs Act, 2005 was enacted. In accordance with the demise of the state-led development, the CPI(M) liberalized the local economies. They launched the new industrial policy in 1994 and emphasized the importance of foreign technology/investment. By the West Bengal Incentives Scheme for Industrial Projects(2000), the state offered incentives including subsidies, and remission many duties for prospective investors(Nielson 2010, 152).

Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Chief Minister of West Bengal served from 2000 to 2011, was an 'neoliberal' communist. His economic schemes were named as the

‘Brand Buddha’. As it shows, he pursued radical foreignization of land to settle SEZs, industrial parks, and any other business-friendly zones under the slogan “agriculture is our base, industry our future”(Nielson 2010, 153). He and the CPI(M) argued that the agriculture and the state-planning as two pillars of West Bengal are no longer feasible and neoliberalism will at last revive the local economies(Jones 2009, 76).

Following the Brand Buddha, the communists had to acquire land as much as possible to for SEZs. However, a majority of Bengali farmers were either marginal cultivators, unofficial sharecroppers, and laborers. In other words, they were antagonistic to dispossession of land as it was perceived inalienable. Besides, their primal agriculture is labor-intensive food crops and there were not many alternatives beyond sustenance farming. Given that marginal farmers and laborers as numerically dominant classes gave overwhelming support to the communists, they nonetheless embarked on rapid foreignization of land under the leadership of Buddhadeb.

In 2006, the state decided to acquire land in Singur village, Hooghly district. It was to settle SEZs for new factory of the Tata Motors. In a deal between West Bengal and the company, the latter was given the right to use the land for 90 years(Jones 2009, 94). The factory was supposed to manufacture the light car named Nano. In the name of the ‘public purpose’, the state with police forces began forcible acquisitions. With 260,000 of the total residents, 12,000 were supposed to be *directly*

affected by the acquisition as they planned to acquire 400 hectares. The problem was, as Singur was rural, the village had lots of sharecroppers and agricultural laborers. When the acquisition proceeds, they will have to give up farming and the state did not promise compensation packages(Pal 2016, 425; Jones 2009 85).

<Table 5.9: Village Structures of Singur>

Land Size	**No. of Landowners(2005-2006)** Hooghly District	**% of Total**
Less than 1 (ha)	293535	85.69%
1-2(ha)	40363	11.78%
2-4(ha)	7464	2.18%
4-10(ha)	1169	0.34%
Total	342531	100%
Categories of Workers	**No./% of Total Population(2011) in Singur**	**Total Working Population**
Cultivators	17184, 16.4%	104809
Agricultural Laborers	17131, 16.34%	

Source: Department of Planning and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Admittedly, a direct comparison of two data surveyed in 2005-2006, and 2011 might be inappropriate. But, it is possible to reason why Singur resisted the acquisition. According to the <Table 5.9>, an overwhelming number of the villagers in Hooghly district where Singur is situated had less than 1 hectare. At the same time less than 20% of the total working population were cultivators. This signifies that without such marginal land, the villagers would not even sustain their livelihoods. In fact, 137 hectares of the would-be acquired were refused by the landowners(Nielson

2010, 157). Few of them did perceive their land as alienable assets. They argue,

"Our village is a developed area in terms of agriculture. The main livelihood is farming. Do we have no right on this land that we inherited from our ancestors? This land is not being used for any hospital or school project, which we call government projects. There is no public benefit out of it"(Pal 2016, 418).

"Our cultivation yields relatively consistent annual returns. Compensation however is a *one time thing*. We know that, once we put this money in the bank, the interest will be fixed, while inflation continues to rice. While the interest from the compensation might sustain us now, this might not be the several years from now"(Jones 2009, 91).

These discontented villagers of Singur proceeded land acquisition protests by organizing the Krishi Jami Raksha Committee(KRJC). With support from various NGOs, activists, and the Trinamool Congress Party, around 7000 villagers joined the committee(Pal 2016, 425). For instance, the KRJC recognized that approximately 80% of the targeted land for the Tata Company was not barren or used for monocrops(Nielson 2010, 158). To quell the unrest, the state dispatched 6000 policemen and the local court helped the company by judging that the acquisition was legal and serves the public(Jones 2009, 93-95). Nonetheless, the resistance of Singur was unstoppable and the Trinamool Congress was against it. Consequently, the Tata Company closed the factory down in 2008(Nielson 2010, 146).

The unrest of Nandigram village was even worse. In 2006, West Bengal was approved for new SEZs in Nandigram for the Salim Group, an Indonesian conglomerate that planned to develop chemical hubs. The size of the land to be

acquired was more comprehensive than that of Singur as it was more than 4046 hectares covered 28 blocks(Jones 2009, 96-97). The plan was finally heard to the village. In early January 2007, the villagers rebelled against the CPI(M) by ousting the police, the party members, and the government agents(Sarkar and Chowdhury 2009, 74). The local security forces soon fired at the residents to quell the protest(It was officially claimed that 14 villagers were killed). As a response, the villagers barricaded themselves from external threats(Sarkar and Chowdhury 2009, 83).

During the stalemate, Nandigram farmers organized the Bhumi Uchhed Pratirodh Committee(BUPC). The committed directed daily protests against the CPI(M) and advertised what was happening in Nandigram to media. Above all, the BUPC monitored whether or not the police destroy the barricades. Owing to such unrest, Buddhadeb announced that the government will not acquire any land without the consent of the villagers and promised to redistribute arable land to the landless(Jones 2009, 99-100). Notwithstanding, the BUPC did not stop resisting to the construction. Buddhadeb and the CPI(M) eventually yield to the protestors and officially noticed that they will discard the plan to settle the SEZ(Jones 2009, 103).

<Table 5.10: Village Structures of Nandigram>

Land Size	**No. of Landowners(2005-2006)** Purba Medinipur District	**% of Total**
Less than 1 (ha)	542502	92.83%

1- 2(ha)	37397	6.4%
2- 4(ha)	4312	0.74%
4- 10(ha)	159	0.03%
10- Above	6	0.0%
Total	584376	100%
Categories of Workers	**No./% of Total Population(2011) in Nandigram**	**Total Working Population**
Cultivators	20805, 20.04%	86537
Agricultural Laborers	32723, 37.81%	

Source: Department of Planning and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

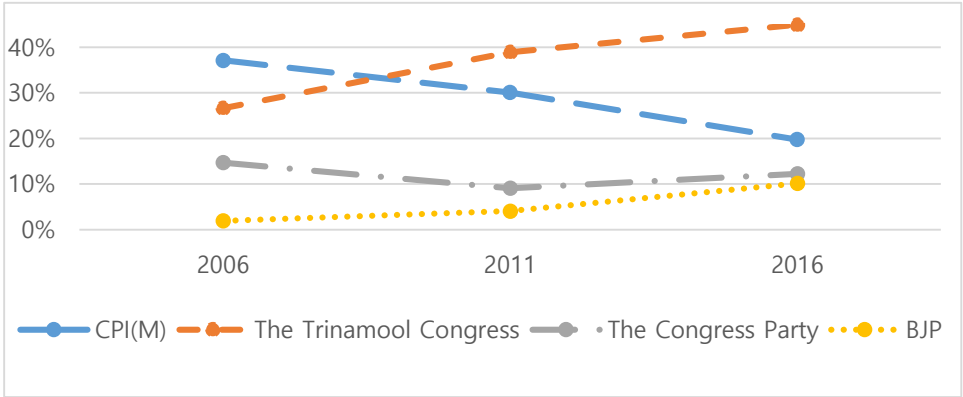
The reasons that caused the violence are as similar as those of Singur. First, a majority of the villagers were marginal farmers and laborers. Based on the <Table 5.10>, above 90% of the villagers of Purba Medinipur where Nandigram is situated had less than 1 hectares of land. In addition, the total % of agricultural laborers reaches at 40%. Accordingly, any acquisitions were critical to the residents. Note that the table above even does not include unofficial sharecroppers. The fear of dispossession was easily observed. One villager stressed it as,

"But he[Chief Minister Buddhadeb] is still taking of industrialization! Thus for them the term "industrialization" itself had come to be synonymous with dispossession and displacement and they had been swayed by the campaign and by reports in some newspapers that the assurances were eyewash and land acquisition would start as soon as the administration entered the area"(Bhattacharya 2007, 1897).

The price of defecting the clientelism with Bengali peasants was tremendous than the communists imagined. Two peasant uprisings entirely altered the previous orders. Since 2010, the Trinamool Congress, once an unpopular local

organization has evolved itself as a hegemonic party by supplanting the CPI(M).

<Figure 3.5: Vote Share(%) of the Parties in the Local Elections After the Crises>



Source: Election Commission of India

While the <Figure 3.5> included only 3 elections, it is easy to know that the CPI(M)'s popularity has plummeted. The protests of Singur and Nandigram were adverse events for Bengali communists. It seems unclear whether they will recover once long-lasted hegemony. By contrast, the popularity of the Trinamool Congress is the most conspicuous. Since 2016, no party in West Bengal is even compatible.

Obviously a majority of rural classes seemed deviated from the CPI(M) due to the protests. The Trinamool Congress began to absorb the discontented into their allies. The campaigns against the CPI(M) by Mamata Banarjee, Chief Minister are notable examples. When the Singur and Nandigram crises were broken, she visited the villages countlessly to mobilize the anti-SEZs villagers. In 2007, Mamata carried out fasting for 23 days. Of course, the villagers comprehended that it is through

Trinamool Congress' mobilization efforts, their material interests over land will ultimately be realized against foreign investors(Jones 2009, 116). They said,

"Mamata Banarjee was trying to make this a national issue, so she was trying to mobilize the people in favor of a national movement. She went to Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka to try to show some solidarity among the states. She also tried to mobilize the people from Singur and Nandigram. So the people in different states in the meeting saw that they are being affected like us"(Jones 2009, 217).

"Mamata's important is immense. She is an important leader, so her coming here helped us take our movement forward as a political battle"(Jones 2009, 220).

Even after the electoral victories, Mamata and the Trinamool Congress stick to the idea that land is not transactional assets. They oppose any SEZs. Mamata highlights, "It is our cabinet decision, our party decision that land acquisition and SEZ is not part of our policy. How can I change my policy for a particular company"(India Today 04.27.2012). At the initial stage of Singur and Nandigram events, by contrast, Mamata's stance toward SEZs was conditional. She says,

"The Trinamool Congress is not opposed to industrialization in West Bengal. But we want the industry and agriculture to go hand in hand. At the same time, we will not allow the Left Front government attitude of forcefully acquiring agriculture lands. And that was spirit of the popular verdict in Singur and Nandigram in the panchayat elections. We therefore demand that the state government first amend the outdated land acquisition law, create land banks and come out with detailed maps, demarcating the agriculture and non-agricultural lands"(The Economic Times 06.11.2008).

Regardless of the initial ambivalent attitude toward SEZs and following land acquisitions, Mamata's firm opposition to land acquisition *per se* has extended

to other industrial sectors beyond SEZs. She also reveals that her past experiences were crucial to alter the idea of West Bengal's land questions. For instance,

> "Lot of agricultural land had been taken in the past. But the 26-day hunger strike I undertook and our movement against land acquisition triggered the demand for abolition of the draconian Land Acquisition Act of 1894"(NDTV 04.25.2015)

> "About one lakh people will get direct employment at this coal mine project. The number of indirect employment will be much more. But I am telling you very clearly. My government will not go for forcible land acquisition"(The Economic Times 01.20.2016).

To conclude, I have attempted to show why public unrest toward SEZs and following land acquisition was severe in West Bengal. Contrary to Bihar, where any SEZs are not yet settled, West Bengal already has several operational SEZs. However, any notifications for new zones have not existed since 2009. To answer this disparity, I analyzed how land reforms and green revolution altered existing feudal structures.

During the 20th century, Bengali communists abolished landlordism by the reforms. Nonetheless, it was not combined with commercialization of agriculture during green revolution. As the projects were distorted by rampant clientelism under the CPI(M) and by careless decentralization. Consequently, only a few were benefitted the most while others remained as marginal farmers, laborers, and sharecroppers. Besides, as the daily wages of the laborers were cheap, cultivating labor-intensive food crops were preferred. In these backgrounds, the CPI(M)'s attempts to settle SEZs collided with the locals who deem land as inalienable.

Chapter 6. We Are Willing to Sell Our Land: Kerala

So far, I have showed the agrarian class politics, land questions and their impacts on SEZs in Bihar and West Bengal. First, Bihar has never initiated the settlement while West Bengal's pro-SEZs communists faced severe unrest on the same issue. To what extent then, have Kerala's land acquisitions, as equally the region of India, caused less unrest from farmers? Interestingly, Kerala similarly has sustained the CPI(M)'s hegemony as that of West Bengal until 2011. What are the implications of class relations and land reform/green revolution? As the <Table 6.1> contrasts, Kerala is one of the regions of India that generally support SEZs.

According to the official document published by the Cochin SEZ, they argue, "The SEZ's have particular appeal for Kerala…Giving an export-orientation to the Kerala economy and gearing up infrastructure and systems to produce for the world market…holds the promise of rich dividends for Kerala in terms of wealth creation and employment generation. The SEZ's enhance the capacity of Kerala to do this"(Cochin Special Economic Zone). Likewise, Pinarayi Vijayan, incumbent

Chief Minister from the CPI(M) comments on Kerala's newly launched SEZs for IT sectors as, "As a priority sector, the government is giving emphasis on creating a necessary social milieu and basic infrastructure in the IT sector, aiming at increasing software export and attract investors."(Business Standard, 10.12.2018).

Based on the <Table 6.1> below, contrary to West Bengal, Bihar and other states not friendly to foreignization of their land, Kerala explicitly has more SEZs and several official notifications are waiting for their final operations. Therefore, it is important to understand how Keralite politicians have dealt the farmers' resistance caused by land acquisitions.

<Table 6.1: List of Operational SEZs and Notifications in Kerala[22]>

Name	Location	Type	Notification Date
Cochin-SEZs	Cochin	Multi-product	Before the SEZs Act 2005
Infopark	Kakkanad, Ernakulam	IT/ITES	2006-2007
Cochin Port Trust	Vallapadom, Mulavukadu/ Fort Kochi Village, Ernakulam District	Port Based	2006
	Puthuvypeen, Eranakulam District		
Electronics Technology Parks-Kerala	Thiruvanthapuram	IT/ITES	
	Attipura Vill, Taluk/Distt, Thiruvanthapuram		
Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation(KINFRA)	Trivandrum District	Animation & Gaming	2007
	Malappuram District	Agro Based Food Processing	
	Ernakulam District	Electronics Industries	
Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited	Alappuzha District	IT/ITES	2009
Carborundum Universal Ltd	Ernakulam District	Solar Photovoltaic	
Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited	Kollam District	IT/ITES	

[22] The official website does not clearly reveal the developers of SEZs in Kerala.

Electronics Technology Parks-Kerala (Technopark)	Thiruvananthapuram		2009-2015
Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Limited (ULCCS LTD)	Kozhikode District		2010
Sutherland Global Services Private Limited	Ernakulam District		
Smart City (Kochi) Infrastructure Limited			2011
Infoparks Kerala			
Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited (KSITIL)	Kozhikode District		2011-2018
Kerala State IT Infrastructure Limited	Thrissur District		2014
Beyond Are Only Notified Zones(Not Operational Yet)			
Name	**Location**	**Type**	**Notification Date**
Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited	Kannur District	IT/ITES	2009
Bluestar Realtors Private Limited	Ernakulam District		2010
Parsvnath Infa Ltd			2013
Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited	Kasaragod District		
Electronics Technology Parks	Thiruvananthapuram		
Electronics Technology Parks-Kerala (notified in different villages in the same district)			2012

Source: Special Economic Zones India

6.1. Historical Background: Feudalism Also Dominated Kerala

Contrary to Bihar and West Bengal, Kerala is located in southern India. It has coastlines in the Arabian Sea and contiguous to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to the east. Approximately 30 million residents are occupying the territory with 14 districts and Thiruvananthapuram as the capital. While agriculture especially paddy was a major part of the region's industry, it has been continuously decreasing. Nonetheless, around half of the total population is still under rurality(Government of Kerala).

<Figure 4.1: Administrative Divisions of Kerala>

Source: eMapsWorld

Kerala was legally formed after independence. In 1956, two princely states(Travancore and Cochin[Kochi]) was annexed with the Malabar district which

was directly administered by the UK(Oommen 1994, 119). As mentioned Kerala had also maintained feudalism prior to independence. The system here was denominated as the Jathi-Janmi-Naduvazhi Medhavitham(cast-landlord-chieftain dominance) and they prevented commercialization of agriculture from the same reasons moral economists argue(Harilal and Eswaran 2016). Pre-independence Kerala was even described as 'the most exploitative are on the Earth' coupled with absurdly high rate of tenancy, sustenance farming, and rigid caste hierarchy(Herring 1991). The only exception was the Travancore region. The colonizers abolished the tenancy by the Royal Proclamation of 1685, and the Jenmikudiyan Proclamation of 1867(Oommen 1994, 119). It was simply because, the UK planned to nurture Travancore as a plantation-rich area especially for coffee and rubber(Desai 2001, 42).

Specifically, few upper classes(Jathi, Janmi, Naduvazhi, Medhavitham) enjoyed inveterate hereditary rights over almost 99% of the total land by tenancy as the Jenmom. Like typical feudalism, most of Kanomdars(tenants/sharecroppers) received de facto hereditary land as social safety in exchange for high rent and approval of dominance by landlords under the Jenmom. Of course, they also leased land to Verompattomdars(tenants-at-will) who were at the bottom line of Keralite caste(Frankel 1971, 127-129). Remaining others excluded from the feudal system were mainly the landless or agricultural laborers(Herring 1991, 172).

<Table 6.2: The Feudal Structure of Kerala Before the Land Reforms>

Class Background	Economic Status	Caste
Priests, Rulers, Administrative Officials	Superior Jenmom Rights against Tenants/Sharecroppers	Brahmins, Rajas, Aristocratic Naris.
Militia, Petty Officials	Kanondars (superior lease/pure tenants)	Nayars, Nambiars
Petty Producers, Traders, Artisans, Dry Land Laborers	Verompattomdars (inferior lease/tenants-at-will)	Non-aristocratic Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians, Muslims
Wet Land Laborers	Agricultural Laborers/Landless	Ezhavas, Pulayas, Cherumas

Source: Isaac and Tharakan(1981) as cited in Yadu(2017, 21)

Because Kerala's major agriculture was historically tenancy/sharecropping, food crops by sustenance but cash crops were mainly cultivated in rural villages. The <Table 6.3> shows this aspect. Right before independence, it was observed that food crops raised by the peasants outnumbered the cash crops in Cochin and Malarbar region. The only exception might be the farmers of Travancore. There, the % of the total area used for cash crops occupied more than 40. Remind that it is the only sub-region of modern Kerala where the tenancy was forcibly abolished by the colonizers. Nonetheless, still a majority of Travancore farmers cultivated food crops.

<Table 6.3: % of the Total Land Under Cash/Food Crops Before Independence>

Year/Region	Travancore		Cochin		Malabar	
	Cash(%)	Food(%)	Cash(%)	Food(%)	Cash(%)	Food(%)
1920-21	46	54	34	66	20	80
1930-31	45	55	34	66	26	74
1940-41	42	58	37	63	28	72

1946-47	46	54	40	60	25	75

Source: Varghese(1970) as cited in Egan(1976, 256)

6.2. Land Reforms as the First Critical Juncture

Contrary to persistence of semi-feudalism in Bihar, Kerala by the way dispelled the *Jenmom* during the state-building. This was the first critical juncture of the transformation of rural systems. The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill as the first attempt for land reforms was initiated by the CPI(later ramified by the CPI[M]) aiming at setting maximum ceiling as 15 acres and 25 acres(from 6 to 10 hectares) for large families in 1959. It was re-introduced by the Congress Party as the Kerala Agrarian Relations Act(1960) without visible changes. However, viable land reforms were realized by the Kerala Land Reforms Act(1963), and the Kerala Land Reforms Amended Act(1969)(Dasgupta 2017, 248-249).

By the Kerala Land Reforms Amended Act(1969), “the government of Kerala ordered that on 1 January 1970, the entire rights, titles, and interests of holdings held by the cultivating tenants be vested in the Government and they became owners of their leased-in holdings”(Oommen 1994, 119). Unlike the insufficient land reforms of Bihar, Keralite reformers did their best not to engender

loopholes for landlords. First, the act restricted landowners' self-registering as cultivators to eschew the ceiling. Second, The Land Tribunal of Kerala regulated/coordinated the issues surrounding land disputes(Oommen 1994, 120-121).

During the 1970s, Kerala almost abolished landlordism(Jenmom) in rural communities. Landlords here, unlike Bihar, were not able to persist sharecropping by oral and customary contracts as the communists' will to abolish to these was strong. Second, vast areas were redistributed to laborers living in hutments. Specifically, almost 300,000 hutment dwellers(Kudikidappukars) were received land and habitations at 25% of the market value(Oommen 1994, 122; Moolakkattu 2007, 90). Most importantly, the ceiling was implemented as a minimum 5 acres(2.4-3 hectares) for each adult, and maximum of 20 acres(8 hectares) for families(Herring 1991, 177; Roy 2016, 125-126). Note that the maximum ceiling of West Bengal was 17.3 acres(7 hectares). On the success, Moolakkattu(2007) illustrates,

> "The implementation of the first two[the tenancy reform and the redistribution for hutment dwellers] was relatively successful. The first led to the transfer of 1,970,000 acres to 1,270,000 households, the second to 20,000 acres[8093 hectares] for 270,000 households, and the third[the ceiling] to 50,000[20234] acres for 90,000 households. Although the amount of land that was transferred in each case was small, the total effect was considerable; about 40 percent of the total 1966-1967, only 43% of the total households in the state had any land, whereas in 1982, it doubled to 86 percent"(Moolakkattu 2007, 91).

Desperate resistance of the landlords under auspices of the Congress Party was as similar to that of West Bengal. In 1959, the communists of Kerala were even

forcibly dismissed by the Congress Party that dominated New Delhi(Heller 1995, 648). How then, did the communists overcome these obstacles? In this period, it was obvious that feudal rights of the landed were undermined the most as the reforms did not seriously consider their material interests(Parayil and Sreekumar 2003, 473).

First, the CPI-later the CPI(M)-had maintained strong solidarity with the peasants' grass-root organizations that were penetrative into secluded rural villages even before independence. For example, some of these held popular dramas aiming at 'disabusing' tenants with titles as 'Arrears of Rent' or 'Drinking of Blood'(Herring 1991, 176). By contrast, the shibboleth of the Congress Party failed to please such lower classes because, "in subordinating everything to the cause of Gandhian nationalism, defined as it was by a vision of social harmony that explicitly rejected the idea of class conflict, the Congress could not come to terms with the underlying tensions and contradictions of the existing social order"(Heller 1994, 99).

Second, the communists maximized its rural hegemony by aligning themselves with a majority of tenants, agricultural laborers, and the working class by 'revisionism' of the orthodox communism(Heller 1995, 648). By contrast, the Congress Party's support was mostly limited to the upper classes and their small numbers of the clients including poor tenants, and agricultural laborers(Frankel 1971, 140). Last, they provided incentives to peasants by giving up nationalization of the

arable land that was supposed to be realized according to the orthodox doctrines. Keralite communists instead pursed 'embourgeoisment' of rural villages. In addition, plantation for cash crops remained intact as they conceived such areas as the bases of future capitalistic development of agriculture(Herring 1991).

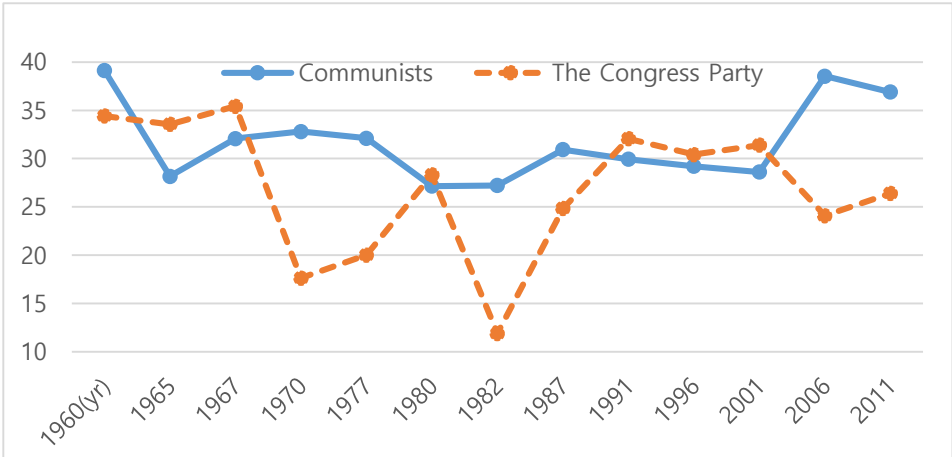
Besides, the mainstream communists of Kerala did rarely resort themselves to revolutionary armed struggle as Bihari Naxalites did in rural villages. Though their slogans toward land reforms and redistribution were equally radical, the communists endeavor to cope with these by 'parliamentary struggle' and policy implementations as alternatives. Furthermore, the Naxalite campaigns were at best constricted to limited areas in Kerala. For instance,

> "In Kerala, the activists of the Naxalites were fairly sporadic and unorganized, and were confined to Malabar. Two raids were conducted in Kerala in November, 1968. The first occurred at Tellicherry, where a group of three hundred poorly armed men staged an abortive attack on the local police station. The second raid took place at Pulpalli, in Wynadtaluk, where one man was killed…Following the emergence of the CPI-ML[Marxist-Leninist; affiliated group of the Naxalites] and the other extremist factions, the CPM stood as *a centrist* party among the left in Kerala politics. On the one hand, the CPM accused the Naxalite groups of extremism"(Egan 1976, 99-100).

I have presented about the risk of armed struggle by what was happening in Bihar. India had very unequal feudal structures and landowners possessed a lot of resources with lower class allies to crush communists or land reformers. In this situation, the struggle by radical communists paradoxically evoked landlords to use

violence. For instance, Bihari Naxalites were crushed by the Senas, militiamen patronized by upper classes and the security forces. In Kerala however, there existed few justifications for the landed to carry out such actions against the communists.

<Figure 4.2: Vote Share(%) of the Communists(CPI+CPI[M])' in the local Elections>



Source: Election Commission of India

According to the <Figure 4.2>, the popularity of Keralite communists is stable and persistent. Obviously, the successful reforms were responsible for the survival of the communists. For example, more 1.25 million tenants individualized around 1.9 million hectares of the leased land after the reforms. As mentioned, numerous agricultural laborers were benefited from the hutment policy(Harilal and Eswaran 2016, 301). By the ceiling, among 77,244 acres of surplus land(31259 hectares; around 97% of the total), 50,384 acres(20389 hectares; around 65% of the total) were redistributed to 80,825 the actual tillers(Radhakrishnan 1981, A130). Based on Herring(1991, 197)'s observation, almost all farmers became landowners

in Palghat district and the tenancy disappeared from 1979 to 1980. Consequently, the Congress Party had to support the land reforms as the communist-peasant coalition outdid the influences of landowners(Moolakkattu 2007, 91).

<Table 6.4: Outcomes of the Land Reforms in Kerala>

Surveyed from 1987 to 1988	**Sampled(N:17,273)**			***Total Rural Population***
	Sampled	*Self-employed*	*laborer*	
		The Original Data Are Not 100% Accurate		
Landless	2,461(14.3)	492(2%)	1,002(40.7%)	3,152,900(16)
0.01 – 0.4(ha) Marginal	9,672(56)	1,528 (15.8 of 56%)	3,366(34.8)	12,305,200(62.4)
0.41 – 1.00	2,616(15.2)	1,402(53.6)	340(13 of 15.2%)	2,617,900(13.3)
*1.01 – 2.00*Small	1,675(9.7)	1,305(77.9)	82(4.9)	1,205,400(6)
*2.00 – 4.00*middle	626(3.6)	543(86.7)	21(3.3)	319,600(1.6)
4.01 – above Large	223(1.3)	178(79.9)	15(6.6)	117,200(0.6)
Total	17,273(100)	4,934(28.6)	4,599(26.7 of 100)	19,718,200(100)

SARVEKSHANA_43rd_Special Issue(Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

The <Table 6.4> shows that less than 1% of the total population had more than 4 hectares. Simultaneously, only 16% of the locals were landless and most of them possessed the land at least marginally. Above all, only 28.6% of the sampled villagers were self-employed as farmers. This signifies there existed alternative jobs beyond agriculture. Moreover, the liberated peasants from sharecropping were able to sustain their households with small tracts of land by cash crops. Factually, the % of the independent farmers surged from 15.8% to 53.6% if they had more than 0.41 hectares in the sample. Besides, it was observed that many landless were the tribal

groups(Adivasis) alienated from the reforms(Haseena 2014). Nonetheless, the % of agricultural laborers is still less than 30%.

Finally, the moral economy was demolished as "landlords tended to react by immediately withdrawing all *customary facilitie*s from tenants…loans in times of emergency, illness, or marriage. Embittered tenants responded by refusing to recognize any right of the landlord *beyond* that of collecting rent. For example, they ignored the landowner's advice about proper cultivation"(Frankel 1971, 144). The <Table 6.4> shows the land reforms reduced the % of the landlords to 1% while almost 80%(0.01 to 2 hectares) became independent landowners.

6.3. Even Green Revolution Was Successful in Kerala

Kerala's green revolution indeed led to the unprecedented agricultural commercialization. Under auspices of the Ford Foundation, New Delhi, Kerala Agricultural University, and the state government, the first project was operated in Kuttanad and Palghat regions during 1962-1963 as the Intensive Agricultural District Program(Aniyankunju 2004, 95; Radhakrishnan *et al* 1994, 167). Like what they did in West Bengal, the reformers provided HYV, tractors, fertilizers, chemicals, irrigation, and loans(Aniyankunju 2004; Frankel 1971; Heller 1994). It was intended

to get rid of sustenance farming by replacing it with cash crops.

<Table 6.5: Agricultural Inputs Provided by the Green Revolution in Kerala>

Year	HYV	Fertilizers	Loans from Agricultural Development Banks
1960	-	-	15,761(Rupee)
61		12,000(tones)	-
65		-	58,722
69	1,300,000(ha)		-
70	-		145,321
71		57,000	-
76	2,300,000	-	
80	-		1,394,960
81		98,900	-
85		-	3,236,938
87-8		181,000	-
89		-	5,324,180

Source: Aniyankunju(2004, 96-98); Heller(1994, 202)

The reformers extended the projects in 1968-69 and in 1975-90 respectively to other areas which covered the state's major divisions(see the <Table 6.6>).

<Table 6.6: Notable Areas Under Green Revolution in Kerala>

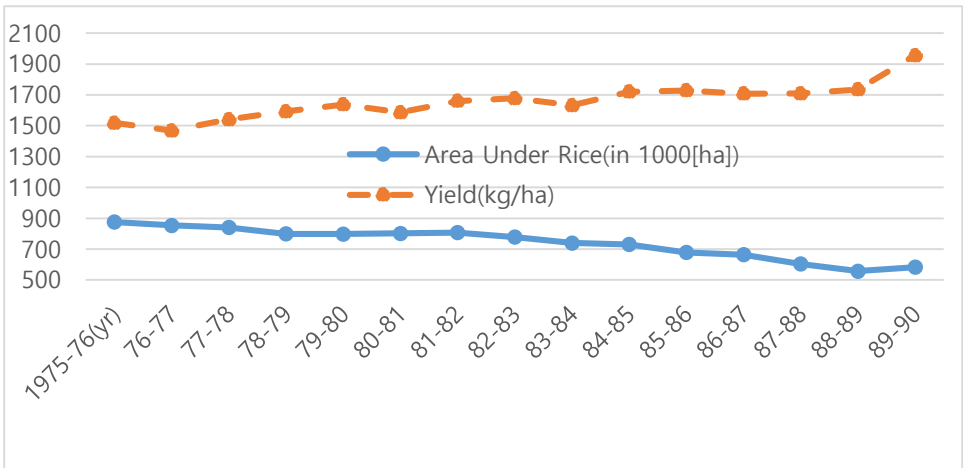
Areas/Districts	
Trivandrum	Quilon
Alleppey & Kottayam: Firstly Implemented as a sub-region of Kuttanad	
Ernakulam	Kozhikode
Palghat: Firstly Implemented	Trichur
Cannanore	-

Source: Bardhan(1970, 1243)

Thanks to the green revolution, sustenance farming under tenancy almost disappeared in Kerala(Aniyankunju 2004; Viswanathan 2014). The <Figure 4.3>

illustrates dramatic changes in rice productivity. Even if the areas under paddy *decreased* due to cash crops as alternatives, the overall productivity rather *increased* thanks to HYV, the abolishment of landlordism, and the cutting-edge inputs.

<Figure 4.3: Changes in Productivity(Yield) of Paddy Since Green Revolution>



Source: Aniyankunju(2004, 97)

Importantly, the peasants unfettered from landlordism and tenancy soon began to perceive farming as the method enhancing their economic gains but for the 'everyday survival'. Therefore, Viswanathan(2014) argues only those who adapted themselves to the newfangled modes survived during the green revolution and remaining others had no choice but to give up sustenance farming. Besides, more and more Keralite farmers attempted the 'risky business' by replacing paddy to commercial products or cash crops. Thus, diversification of agriculture was further accelerated by Kerala's green revolution projects.

<Table 6.7: Commercialization of Land Use Since Land Reforms/Green Revolution>

Crop food crops underscored	**Area(ha)** 1961-62 to 2006-07		**Kerala's Share(%)** 2003-04	**(De)increased?**
Paddy	753009	263529	1.1	Decreased
Tapioca	236776	87128	55.4	Decreased
Coconut	505035	872943	50.2	Increased
Pepper	99887	226094	81.1(black pepper)	Increased
Cashew	55051	70463	14	Increased
Rubber	133133	502240	92.5	Increased
Groundnut	159932	2813	N/A	Decreased
Sesamum	11953	732		Decreased
Cotton	9587	1300		Decreased
Pulses	43546	6870		Decreased
Ginger	12050	11082	11.7(dry ginger)	Decreased
Turmeric	4847	3917	1.5	Decreased
Banana	42693	59143	9.7	Increased
Coffee	18807	84571	32.6	Increased
Tea	37426	35365	2.7	Decreased
Total Cereals	766381	266497	N/A	Decreased

Source: Combined Data from Thottathil(2012, 40); Viswanathan(2014, 84)

Based on the estimation of the <Table 6.7>, it seems obvious that *food crop*s[23] including paddy, tapioca(cassava), groundnut, sesamum, pulses, and cereals in total decreased in Kerala's agriculture. When it comes to paddy, the areas under cultivation decreased by almost 50%. By contrast, farmers had been interested in

[23] On distinction of cash crops from food crops, I follow Viswanathan(2014, 68-69)'s.

cultivating *cash crops* including coconuts, peppers, cashews, and coffee by plantation or as a family business. The one exception might be cotton. Interestingly, the green revolution intended to maximize paddy outputs also encouraged farmers to attempt cash crops. For instance, rubber increased almost five times than before.

For example, Wadakkancherry village, located at central Kerala experienced the unprecedented commercialization due to the projects combined with the land reforms. Traditionally, the locals had been bounded by sustenance farming of rice. Since Kerala's two reforms, however, the village's primal mode of production changed. First, the total dryland used for commercial agriculture or cash crops almost doubled in 2004 compared to that of 1909(22.5% to 45.4%). Second, arecanuts(a palm-like crop used in medical purposes) instead of rice became a major product of export. Moreover, several banks were settled to finance Wadakkancherry farmers who decided to cultivate cash crops(Scaria 2010, 195).

Some would misunderstand the fact that small independent farmers in Kerala(those having less than 2 hectares according to the <Table 6.4>) were not interested in cash crops as their possessed land would be too marginal for these types of agriculture. However, this is not necessarily the case. Many Keralites likewise replaced paddy by cash crops notably as rubber. First, the price of the land mattered since the reforms. As the locals were without sustenance farming, they tended to

dispose of land whenever the selling price surged. From 1975, the average value per deed of land was 2,934 Rupees. In 1985, the average increased by 6,340 and it was two times more than a decade ago. Following the price, the total number of the transactions increased from 315.6 to 503(Roy 2016, 128).

Commercialization of farmland was also related to the rising wages of the laborers. In this situation, cash crops were more profitable as they do not require huge unskilled employees under paddy cultivation(Radhakrishnan *et al* 1994, 167). In Neduveli village, the daily wage for paddy laborers was only 1.85 Rupees in 1960. However, it increased by 8.95 Rupees in 1975, 23.6 in 1985, and 31.96 in 1989. Naturally, lots of Neduveli villagers turned themselves into commercial farmers raising tapioca, banana, pepper, and coconut(Morrison 1997, 75-81)

Third, as the 'survival of the fittest', those who failed to adapt themselves in cash crops were marginalized in the local agriculture(Viswanathan, 2014). The urban areas as a response absorbed huge amounts of the marginalized as workers. Based on a comparison between Kerala and India in the <Table 6.8>, it is presumable that agricultural laboring is not a preferred option for impoverished peasants.

<Table 6.8: Workforce Composition in Kerala and India in 1991>

Census(in thousands)	India	Kerala
Main Workers	285,932	8,299
Non-Agricultural	94,592	4,296

Manufacturing	28,671	1,176
Agricultural	162,669(56.9%)	2,827(34.1%)

Source: Heller(1994, 286); I calculated a number of agricultural laborers based on the data

6.4. The Political Economy of SEZs settlement: Why Less Unrest?

Throughout the chapter, I have analyzed in what way Keralite communists accomplished land reforms and green revolution and how two junctures transformed the rural structures. Even if colonial Kerala maintained equally exploitative tenancy/sharecropping, two events resulted in rapid commercialization of agriculture nurturing many independent farmers. I already showed two entirely bypassed Bihar, while West Bengali politicians only achieved land reforms. As my ultimate purpose of this paper is to study the relations between land questions and SEZs settlement, it is important to apply them in the context of Kerala.

Remind that I do not insist the locals *unquestionably* support any new SEZs. The point is, although there existed protests surrounding land acquisitions(especially among the tribal groups), these events were not that severe compared to those of West Bengal and to some extent Bihar. Here, foreignization of land since the SEZs Act, 2005 was also accelerated by the communists who believed such business-friendly zones will lead to local development. Simultaneously, many locals have not

deviated themselves from the traditional 'communist bloc'.[24]

<Table 6.9: Electoral Results of Keralite Assembly After the SEZs Act, 2005>

Election in 2016(seats)			
The Communists	The Congress Party	BJP	Muslim League
CPI(M): 58 CPI: 19 (Vijayan was elected as the Chief Minister)	22	1	18
Election in 2011			
CPI(M): 45 CPI: 13	38	0	20
Election in 2006			
CPI(M): 61 CPI: 17	24	0	7

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, Kerala

Whereas the communists of West Bengal faced severe unrest over land acquisitions which resulted in electoral defeats, it seems obvious that their Keralite counterparts have maintained the status quo regardless of SEZs' expansions. Though they slightly lost the popularity in the 2011's election, the CPI(M) soon recovered it and was able to nominate its candidate as the Chief Minister currently.

How then, have land acquisition issues not oscillated the communists' hegemony? Why have the BJP failed to mobilize the landed against the CPI(M)? About these queries, I argue because a majority of Keralite landowners are independent commercial farmers, developers are able to appease those 'will-be dispossessed' by reasonable compensation packages. Land acquisitions, of course,

[24] The 'Left Democratic Front(LDF)' is another term of the communists. LDF is a congregation of the CPI(M), the CPI, and other leftist organizations. Unlike the 20th century where the CPI and later the CPI(M) took the lead on land reforms, they have coped with SEZs issues inside the LDF as whole.

are a lot easier than the regions where tenancy/sharecropping are dominant.

Let us have a look at the acquisition processes of the KINFRA SEZ(see the <Table 6.10>). The land of Thuravur, Manjapura, and Mattur villages in Ernakulam District were designated to settle the new SEZs. The total amount of land notified was around 180 hectares and approximately 1118 to 1600 landowners were supposed to be evicted. The major food crops of the villages were paddy and tapioca, while the farmers were also cultivating coconut, rubber, pepper, and others by plantation as cash crops. As typical villages of Kerala, cultivation of food crops had decreased and had been replaced by cash crops(Chitra 2013, 250-258).

<Table 6.10: Land for Paddy Cultivation of the Three Villages Under Acquisitions>

Village	Area(Ha)	Areas (Ha) of paddy cultivation in 2009-2010
Thuravoor	113.4732	35.5
Manjapra	70.2617	48
Mattur	7.2319	12 *the author combined Mattur village with the neighboring land
Total	190.9668	95.5

Source: Chitra(2013, 258)

The villagers at first opposed to the acquisition. They angered as much of the arable land that was officially deemed as infertile. Second, the locals apprehended that the government should offer alternatives to housing since the construction. They expressed that the land is *alienable* only if such concerns are properly dealt. As a response, the government under the CPI(M) agreed on the

tentative solutions by offering avoidance of house demolition as possible as the developers could, rehabilitation with arable land, and compensation of houses with 50% of the current value-added if the villagers are evicted(Chitra 2013, 272-278).

Besides, not only the communists but also the Congress Party and the ordinary citizens did not oppose the 'Keralite Developmentalism' *per se*. It contrasts with Bihar where Nitish Kumar opposes foreignization of land as a majority of the dwellers(landlords & tenants) are bounded by tenancy. The owners *to be dispossessed* expressed the idea that they are willing to hand their land over for SEZs unless several issues remain unsolved. The concerns include environmental concerns, food security, acquisitions of inhabited areas, speculation, and negative past experiences caused by lack of transparency(Chitra 2013, 287). Some highlighted,

"The price is decided at the last stage of the land acquisition[for the KINFRA]. There is no reference to the price of the land anywhere in the initial stage. Only after all the procedures are over, after measuring and demarcating all the lands that even a discussion about the price take[s] place. Then if the farmer had heard that he will get 60,000[Rupees] for the paddy field in the present stage then there is some conspiracy behind it. Many farmers had believed it"(Interview, as cited in Chitra 2013, 321).

"There is concern among people that whether they will get reasonable price for acquisition. That is the main issue. The chance is that they may not get the market price. In many places, acquisition has been done like that"(Interview as cited in Chitra 2013, 300).

"The land to be acquired is agricultural land. In addition to paddy there were income yielding varieties like cocoa, coconut, nutmeg etc. That is why there are so much issues from the side of the people when they were called for hearing [for the KINFRA]. The

authorities say that no houses will be acquired. But how will the people live even if their houses are not acquired? Their income is from the agriculture land. That is why people are opposing…I gave the report that the land being acquired is agricultural land *more discussions have to be don*e with the people before acquiring"(Interview as cited in Chitra 2013, 289).

Similar phenomena were also observed in the CPI(M) dominated Keezhattur village when the state has planned to construct a new highway. The local protests since 2018 toward the project have been concentrated at ecological concerns and compensation issues for the dispossessed but the construction *per se*(Irshad 2019). In both cases, the BJP endeavored to mobilize the locals against the CPI(M) to construct a new cleavage by addressing land questions.

About the Keezhattur project, for example, the members of the BJP compared the situation with that of Nandigram(Scroll.in 08.08.2018). Nonetheless, they at best were perceived by the locals as 'agitators' who purposefully take advantage of such crises as the land is still alienable by reasonable compensation packages. The party's existence with two local unrest above is not sufficient to outdo the historic alliance between the CPI(M) and the farmers. According to the locals,

"They[the BJP] are trying to gain politically out of it. Theirs is not a strong party. They do stand together and actively participate in the struggle. Their state leaders are coming. Their intention is also very clear. They want to build the party…BJP has said that they will be there with us. If they get power, they also will say they need development. Their objective is to show that they are present. They say things because GP[Panchayat] election is coming"(Interview as cited in Chitra 2013, 349-350).

Being confident at the land questions, Vijayan and the CPI(M) claimed that

land acquisitions will further be progressed. At the initial stage of Kerala's SEZs projects, one senior of the CPI(M) argued "The party state committee had taken a major policy decision for the economic development of the state. We have 10 SEZ proposals ready for the Cabinet's perusal, before moving them to Delhi"(The Indian Express 08.16.2008). Vijayan also stresses the constructions will not be paused or discarded even if there exists several unrest surrounding acquisitions. He says,

"Land acquisition is a problem in Kerala because the available land is limited. When that has to be used for infrastructure projects, those who have to give up should be adequately compensated and rehabilitated...The rehabilitation package should be sufficient and attractive so that giving up land does not cause any hardship"(Livemint 06.22.2016).

"The people are no longer averse to big projects. You can see that all big projects which involves land acquisition in Kerala today are processed very quickly. That's because of people's cooperation. The people need jobs, they understand…Usually there's a common thread of understanding and cooperation with the center but sometimes they are playing politics. For instance, on the coach factory project, we have completed most of the land acquisition from our side…Now I've written a letter detailing how far the land acquisitions have been completed and invited him for a joint review here(Livemint 07.04.2018).

About the ecological concerns of SEZs he also comments,

"Land availability is a big issue in ecologically sensitive Kerala. Therefore we are coming out with seven industrial parks with plug and play facilities in identified seven thrust areas like defense, biotechnology, petrochemical"(Business Today 02.11.2019).

There were also novel compromises of land acquisition between SEZs developers and the farmers. In 2017, for instance, it was reported that the state government decided to promote coconut farming inside the SEZs of Kozhikode

(Deccan Chronicle 05.04.2017). This was possible as Kerala's main agriculture is capital-intensive cash crops that do not necessitate huge spaces and laborers.

However, not all peasants are satisfactory with the situations. Notable examples are the tribal groups(Adivasis). During the early 21st century, they have shown how failed land reforms adversely affect prospective land acquisitions. The major tribes(Kanikkar, Mala Aryan, Muduvan, and Urali) occupy around 1% of the entire population(Bijoy and Raman 2003, 1976; Haseena 2014, 76). Unlike the mainstream, the tribal groups maintained their livelihoods via sharecropping. Besides, many tribal communities were deprived of their land by the non-tribal groups during the reform period. Consequently, the tribal groups have not yet been liberated from grim poverty under sustenance farming(Haseena 2014. 77).

In other words, they are vulnerable to land acquisitions as they are either landless or marginal farmers. In 2003, the tribal groups of Muthanga region revolted against Kerala. They berated the government as it did not implement the agreement enabling compensations of the deprived land. In Plachimada area, the villagers closed the Coca-Cola factory(Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages) down by uprisings. The factory was believed to increase salinity of the wells used for paddy(Bijoy 2006).

To sum, the critical junctures transformed the rural structures into the places where land acquisitions arise less hostile responses. First, land reforms by Keralite

communists abolished not only Jenmon landlordism but also sustenance farming, and tenancy/sharecropping *per se*. Similarly, by the green revolution, rural villagers transformed themselves into commercialized (independent)farmers and began to perceive land as transactional assets. The point is, they are willing to give up their properties for SEZs when suggested acceptable economic compensations.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

Throughout the paper, I have argued that the regions of India have not been converged as neoliberal regimes at least when it comes to the settlement of SEZs. The previous works based on locational advantages as an economic term righteously suggested that there is local divergence of the settlement. However, they do not point out that even such advantages only work if land acquisitions between developers/state governments and landowning farmers are *smoothly* resolved.

Admittedly, this research has some theoretical flaws and limitations. For instance, I pick only three states for the analysis and insisted that they represent other regions. This would result in 'selection bias', which might be the fate of qualitative researches. I acknowledge that locational advantages also can barely be disregarded. Nonetheless, I believe, through the political economy of land acquisitions in Bihar, West Bengal, and Kerala, I will persuade the reader that the dynamics of the agrarian class politics in land acquisitions are the foremost factors of the settlement in India.

By applying the comparative historical analysis, I presented how 1) land reforms and 2) green revolution diversified the future land acquisitions in three

regions. In Bihar, the post-independence politicians failed to achieve both. As a consequence, landlordism, sharecropping/tenancy, and sustenance farming have steadily remained in the local economies. Naturally, those un-commercialized farmers(landlords and tenants) do not perceive land as alienable for future SEZs. At last, the local politicians have almost given up the settlement for foreign investors.

In Kerala, land reforms and green revolution were obviously one of the most successful in India. Owing to the accomplishments, the government has faced little unrest from the locals whose predominant mode of production is commercial agriculture with cash crops. Above all, West Bengal's peasants showed similar hostile responses as Bihari counterparts to SEZs. Interestingly, when the land reforms were quite successful as Kerala, green revolution was seriously distorted by careless decentralization and clientelism. As a result, the conventional rural structures characterized as sustenance farming, informal sharecropping, and agricultural labor and they have almost unchanged except the landlordism.

Finally, the parties of India, which are responsible for the local statecraft had to reflect the pivotal material interests of the dominant classes and their allies. Otherwise, they had to endure the risk of being kicked out from the governments by future elections. The CPI(M) of the West Bengal was a notable exception from this trend. Their newfangled political experiment of foreignization of land by alienating

peasants and laborers at last backlashed in the form of subsequent electoral defeats.

This point is what Marxist scholars do miss out. Their convergence theories are seemingly plausible in that, power relations are deemed as crucial in land questions. Admittedly dominant classes have power, resources, and outside support while subordinate classes are vulnerable to their manipulations. Nonetheless, they tend to forget that the weak are able to utilize political processes as the 'weapons of the weak'. As the case of West Bengal shows, subordinate classes are not too passive or subjugated to carry out 'the class warfare' to those against their interests. It is unlikely that politicians push acquisitions regardless of such considerations.

In this aspect, moral economists were right to point out that subordinate classes have their own logic, resources, and a variety of methods to cope with harsh exploitations. However, the 'everyday forms of resistance' suggested by them are generally confined to villages or communities but societies or the world as whole, probably due to peasants' lack of education or high illiteracy. For instance,

> "This [the unrest] in its turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties *within the community*, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. An outrage to these moral assumptions, quite as much as actual deprivation, was the usual occasion for direct action. While this moral economy *cannot be described as "political"* in any advanced sense, nevertheless it cannot be described as unpolitical either, since it supposed definite, and passionately held, notions of the common weal"(Thompson 1971, 79).

"[T]he vast majority of peasant risings with which I am familiar are without doubt largely *defensive* efforts to protect sources of subsistence that are threatened or to restore them once they have been lost. Far from hoping to improve their relative position in the social stratification(Scott 1976, 187).

"Let us suppose for a moment that poor peasants in Sedaka[a village in Malaysia] had instead chosen to emphasize the larger causes of their difficulties. They are not, as we have seen, unware of these larger issues…Can one imagine a rural protest movement with banners proclaiming "stop agrarian capitalism" or "down with the cash nexus"? Of course not…they fail completely to capture the texture of local experience"(Scott 1985, 238).

Based on my analysis, however, farmers, especially those in West Bengal, regardless of their socio-economic status and castes, comprehended that their interests over acquisitions are contingent upon the *realpolitik* of larger societies. In addition, their protests were obviously beyond the villages/communities by aiming at the nationally oriented political parties. Bengali farmers precisely comprehended that the neoliberal reforms were threatening their livelihoods. Will future researches verify that feudal structures are not great obstacles for peasants' political struggles? We will have to wait and see.

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Abstract in Korean

최근의 세계화 현상은 각 국민국가를 신자유주의체제로 수렴하게 할 것인가? 여러 학파들 중 특히 마르크스주의자들은 그렇게 될 것이라 믿어 의심치 않았다. 하지만 본 연구는 전지구적 신자유주의 헤게모니를 결코 무시할 수 없지만, 각 국가/지역의 특수성에 관계없이 일방적 수렴을 가능하게 할 것이라 보지 않는다. 인도 공화국의 경제특구설치 문제가 그러하다. 1990년대 인도 중앙정부와 집권 국민의회는 기존의 사회주의식 혼합체제를 과감히 포기하며 급속한 신자유주의 개혁을 시행하였으며, 지속적인 자본유입을 위해 지방 정부에게 경제특구 설치를 현재까지 권장해오고 있다. 그럼에도 불구, 인도 내 일부 지역들만 그러한 방향을 충실히 따르고 있으며, 나머지의 경우 1) 설치 자체를 아예 고민하지 않는 지역과, 2) 경제특구가 심각한 대중의 반발을 불러와 좌절시키는 경우들로 분화하고 있다.

이 '**경제특구 설치의 지역적 다양성**'을 연구하려, 연구는 각 지역의 특수한 계급정치의 동학이 중요하다는 가정을 했다. 먼저, 지역 내 각 계급은 경제정책에 대한 개별적 선호를 보인다. 무엇보다 농촌지역 계급 구조가 가장 중요한 변수인데 이는 이들의 토지가 결국 경제특구 개발에 활용되기 때문이다. 따라서 각 계급의 상대적 정치적 영향력이 특구 설치의 향방을 결정한다고 여긴다. 즉, 토지 자체를 양도가 불가능하다고 압도적 구성원들이 인식하거나 비상업적 농업을 특징으로 하는 지역은 토지 거래에 대한 저항으로 경제특구 설치가 어려울 수밖에 없다. 대조적으로, 자영농들의 상업적 농업이 발달한 지역은 이러한 문제에서 자유롭다. 왜냐면 이들은 대체적으로 토지를 거래 가능한 자산으로 여기며, 합리적인 보상이 토지 획득을 유도할 수 있기 때문이다.

이러한 가설을 입증하기 위해, 필자는 인도의 지역들 중 비하르(Bihar), 케랄라(Kerala), 그리고 서벵골(West Bengal)주(州)를 사례로 선정했다. 분석을 진행하며, 필자는 1) **토지 개혁**과, 2) **녹색혁명**이 농촌의 계급구조를 변화시키는 결정적 변수들이라 설정하였다. 독자들의 이해를 돕기 위해 녹색혁명이란, 비상업적 농업을 다변화된 상업적 농업으로 변화시키기 위한 국가주도 프로젝트 일체이며, 이를 통해 국가는 "개량종자, 농약, 화학비료"등 최신 기술과 재료들을 농민들에게 투입한다.

먼저, 비하르는 토지개혁과 녹색혁명에 둘다 완전히 실패했다. 그래서 전근대적 지주/소작 관계가 비상업적 농업과 함께 농촌지역에서 지속되었고, 이들은 역내 특구 설치를 막는 주요 집단으로 변모했다. 반대로 케랄라는 토지개혁/녹색혁명을 성공적으로 이뤘기 때문에 특구 설치에 큰 저항이 없었다. 서벵골의 사례는 주목할 만 한데, 이는 집권 공산당이 토지개혁으로 봉건적 잔재를 청산한 반면, 녹색혁명을 정치적 후원주의와, 부주의한 분권화로 왜곡시켰기 때문이다. 결론적으로 소수 부농들 만이 상업 작물을 재배하는 자영농들로 변모했고, 이들은 대다수의 빈농, 소작농, 그리고 임노동자들과 공존했다. 이러한 맥락에서 공산주의자들의 경제특구 설치 시도는 후자의 심한 저항과 봉기들을 야기했고, 따라서 2010년 이후 설치 시도 자체가 중단되었다.

주요어: 경제특구, 계급정치, 농지개혁, 녹색혁명, 토지 구입, 인도
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