
HAILING THE STATE
INDIAN DEMOCRACY BETWEEN ELECTIONS
LISA MITCHELL

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COVER ART: Students staging a *dharna* in front of the district collector's office in Khammam to draw attention to the inadequate supply of textbooks, July 3, 2010. Photo by G. N. Rao/ *The Hindu*.

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To Leela and Rohan,
with the hope that they will know a world that protects freedom
of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly

The English people thinks it is free; it is greatly mistaken, it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as they are elected, it is enslaved, it is nothing.—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, "Of Deputies and Representatives," *The Social Contract*, 1762

Sumati, a serpent is powerful, but it can be killed by many tiny ants. A similar fate awaits a strong man who does not care for other people and behaves with them rudely. A strong man cannot always depend on his strength and behave in an arrogant fashion with others. A horde of weaker people may defeat and destroy him.—BADDENA, *Sumati Śatakamu* (A Hundred Moral Verses), thirteenth century

If a group of jute strands are braided together, it becomes a rope and you tie an elephant with that rope; so, too, a union is also like that.—TIRUNAGARI RAMANJANEYULU, *Saṅgaṃ: Telaṅgāṇā Pōrāṭa Navala* (The Union: A Novel of Telangana Struggle), 1986

CONTENTS

Words from Indian languages that are commonly recognized in English, contemporary place names, and personal names have been transliterated without diacritics. For all other terms transliterated from Indian languages, long vowels are marked (*ā* as in *h*o*t*; *ī* as in *d*ee*p*; *ū* as in *f*oo*l*; *ē* as in *f*a*de*; *ō* as in *h*o*pe*), and short vowels—half the length of their long counterparts—are left unmarked (*a* as in *h*u*t*; *i* as in *d*i*p*; *u* as in *f*u*ll*; *e* as in *fed*; *o* as in the first *o* in o*h-oh*). An underdot beneath a consonant (*ṭ*, *ṭh*, *ḍ*, *ḍh*, *ṇ*, *ṣ*, *ḷ*) indicates a retroflex consonant, pronounced by curling the tip of the tongue back toward the palate and flipping it forward, except for *ṛ*, which indicates a vowel sound similar to the *ri* in *merri*ly. *Ś* is pronounced as the English *sh*. For consistency and to assist English readers, I have departed from conventional Telugu transliteration practices in using *ch* (rather than *c*) to indicate the English *ch* sound and *chh* to indicate an aspirated *ch*. Within quotations, I have kept an author's original transliteration scheme and markings. All translations from Telugu are my own unless otherwise indicated.

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INTRODUCTION. HAILING THE STATE

Collective Assembly, Democracy, and Representation

A people who can do this, and do it soberly and intelligently, may be weak and unresistful individually, but as a mass they cannot be dealt with too carefully. —LORD CANNING, governor general of India, to Sir Charles Wood, secretary of state for India, October 30, 1860

Democracy doesn't just mean elections. Elections are only one part of democracy. The real essence of a truly democratic system is that people must be able to continuously voice their problems and their turmoil, and democracy must provide a wide range of opportunities for people to communicate their concerns every day. The difference between a democracy and a dictatorship is that in a democracy, the people speak, and the rulers listen. In a dictatorship, the rulers speak, and the people obey. —G. HARAGOPAL, Hyderabad, May 15, 2018

On December 16, 2010, in what has been described by the *Economic Times* as one of the "largest political rallies across the world," well over a million people gathered in the city of Warangal, ninety miles northeast of the south Indian city of Hyderabad, to join in a Maha Jana Garjana (lit., "great roar of the people").[1] Hundreds of thousands of additional supporters were stranded along the highways leading to Warangal, blocking roads outside the city as they struggled to reach the assembly grounds.[2] The Jana Garjana followed repeated efforts to hold elected officials accountable for unfulfilled campaign promises pledging the bifurcation of the existing Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and sought to make advocates of a new Telangana state more visible[3]

Nine months later, on September 12, 2011, in the wake of continued administrative stalling on the promised bifurcation of the state of Andhra Pradesh, more than a million people again assembled with growing frustration in the town of Karimnagar, one hundred miles north of Hyderabad, for another Jana Garjana in preparation for the next day's initiation of what was to become a forty-two-day Sakala Janula Samme (general strike; lit., "All People's Strike").[4] Those participating in the 2011 general strike included

lawyers, coal miners, schoolteachers, state road transport corporation and electricity board employees, movie theater owners, auto rickshaw drivers, and members of other public and private sector unions, among many others. Together, their efforts effectively closed offices and schools, halted traffic, and brought everyday life in the districts of Telangana to a standstill.[5]

The massive Warangal and Karimnagar assemblies and the subsequent forty-two-day general strike were just three events in a much longer series of collective actions that intensified efforts to hold elected officials accountable to their repeatedly broken campaign promises and sought to represent the widespread support for the formation of a separate administrative state of Telangana within the Indian nation.[6] Although these events in southern India in 2010–11 occurred simultaneously with actions elsewhere in the world that came to be known as the Arab Spring and Occupy Movements, they garnered virtually no international news coverage.[7] This is perhaps because unlike the Arab Spring and Occupy events—consistently portrayed as both spontaneous and exceptional, and understood as rejecting the existing state and advocating alternative sovereignties—the Telangana movement's *garjanas* and strikes were understood in India as neither spontaneous nor exceptional in form. Instead, they were seen as tried-and-true methods of appealing to elected officials between elections and holding them to their electoral commitments, and therefore as working very much *within* accepted political structures and processes of engagement with the state and its elected representatives.

A wide range of organizations both old and new were involved in mobilizing people to participate in this long series of collective assemblies, including the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, a political party founded in 2001 with the sole agenda of creating a separate Telangana state, and the Telangana Joint Action Committee, an umbrella organization established in 2009 that successfully brought together a wide range of older and more recently established social, political, and cultural organizations. Although collective mobilizations of people in public spaces in India are most often mediated through organizations, unions, political parties, or neighborhood leaders, the Telangana movement also attracted individuals who were not already affiliated with specific organizations or political networks. A rally on March 10, 2011, for example—dubbed the "Million March" to evoke the February 1, 2011, Egyptian "Million Man March," which had received extensive international coverage—was regarded as exceptional for the way it attracted people independently of any organization affiliations. One feminist activist remarked,

> Individuals don't come. Only organizations, they'll come. That kind of common sense, it's not there in the people. But the Telangana Million March? There, people, voluntarily they participated in the March, without the organizational membership. First time in my life I saw that! Individuals also, whoever was born in Telangana region, they participated in the rallies and meetings. Every Telanganite, they identified with the movement, so they owned up. . . . every individual, every person from rickshaw puller to even an industrialist or any politician, they owned up the movement.

She concluded by emphasizing that everyone felt that "it is my movement, it is our movement, it is for our people, it is for my children. That kind of understanding was there in the people."[8]

Despite this, the Warangal and Karimnagar collective assemblies in 2010 and 2011 were not only understood as building on existing organizational foundations and practices whose use had intensified since the late 1990s, but were also framed in relation to sixty years of earlier efforts by Telangana residents for political recognition (see figure I.1). Other actions included rallies, processions, long-distance pilgrimages to the site of a seat of power (*yātra*, journey or pilgrimage; *padayātra*, journey by foot), roadblocks (*saḍak bandh* or *rāstā roko*), rail blockades (*rail roko [āndōlan]*), walkouts

FIGURE I.1. "Praja Garjana" (People's Roar) public meeting organized by the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Hyderabad, December 11, 2004 (photo: H. Satish/*The Hindu*).

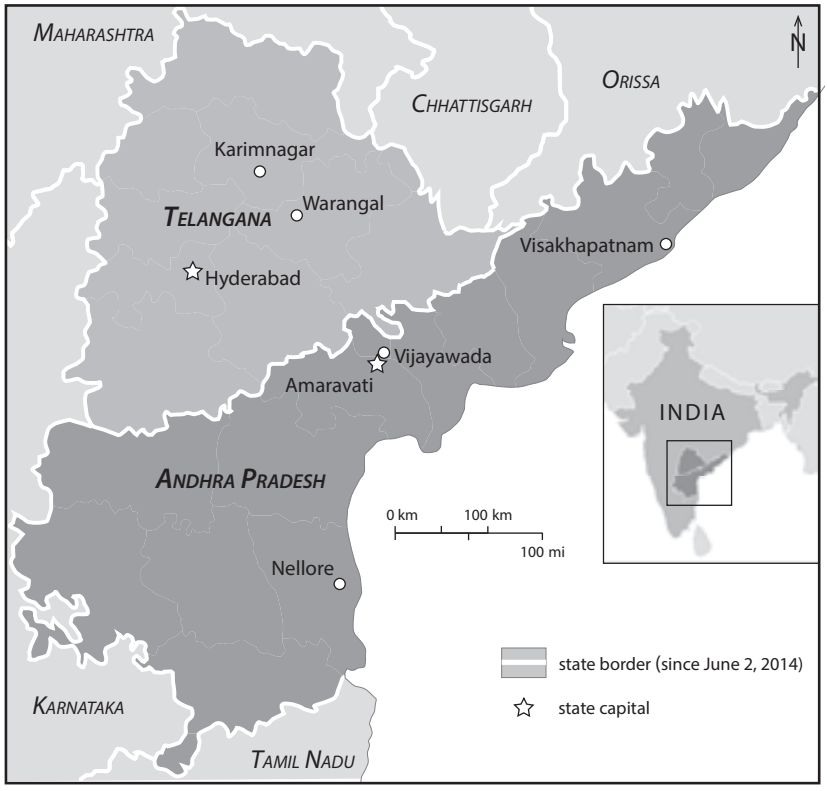
of government employees, mass resignations of elected officials, the "Million March," and a "Chalo Assembly" (Let's Go to the Legislative Assembly) mobilization, as well as similar counteractions carried out by those opposed to the formation of the new state. These became increasingly frequent as both Telangana supporters and opposition groups sought to publicly communicate their opinions on the proposed administrative reorganization, and political parties vied to get in front of, define, and represent the various positions.[9]

The Telangana movement culminated on June 2, 2014, with the creation of India's twenty-ninth state, which bifurcated the existing Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (see Maps I.1 and I.2).[10] The new state of Telangana not only contains some of the region's poorest and most arid districts but also includes India's fourth largest and fourth wealthiest city, Hyderabad, home to special economic zones and knowledge parks like HITEC City, the Financial District, and Genome Valley. These new urban spaces host divisions of major multinational corporations such as Microsoft, Amazon, Bank of America, and Facebook, as well as biotech research centers for companies like Dupont, Monsanto, and Bayer.[11] The rapid growth of Hyderabad—a city dominated economically and politically by migrants from well-irrigated and prosperous districts of coastal Andhra—has further exacerbated long-standing feelings of exclusion among residents of Telangana and prompted the renewal of demands for greater inclusion in administrative state structures and more equitable approaches to economic growth.[12]

Although the questions this book seeks to answer were prompted by repeated periods of residence in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh over the past three decades and by my close observation of the political practices described earlier, this is not a book about Telangana or the Telangana movement. Instead, it uses observations in Telangana as a starting point for interrogating understandings of the practice of democracy in India more generally and challenging the dominant historical and sociological categories used to theorize democracy. Although some may perceive the Telangana region (particularly outside Hyderabad) as marginal to India, the practices used within it are not marginal to Indian democracy. The many collective assemblies that sought to hold elected officials accountable to their promises to create the new state of Telangana are just one set of examples of the many similar practices that animate India's wider political terrain. Collective assemblies range from small local actions to large transregional and national mobilizations. Whether a crowd of schoolgirls staging a sit-down strike in front of the district collector's office to draw his attention to the lack of text-

MAP I.1. Map of India. Jutta Turner/©*Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology* (courtesy of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany).

books in government schools (see figure I.2), or a few dozen slum dwellers sitting in the middle of a key intersection during rush hour to hold representatives of the state accountable to their promise of cyclone relief (see chapter 6), collective assemblies are widely seen in India as everyday communicative methods for gaining the attention of officials, making sure that election promises are implemented, and ensuring the equitable enforcement of existing laws and policies.



MAP 1.2. Map of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh on June 2, 2014. Jutta Turner/©*Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology* (courtesy of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany).

Such assemblies also serve as checks and balances in the face of hastily implemented laws that have not been adequately vetted through public discussion and debate. In the farmers' agitations of 2020–21, large and small farmers converged on the national capital of Delhi to demand inclusion in a dialogue with government leaders regarding a series of three farm acts introduced in September 2020 that deregulated the wholesale trading of agricultural commodities. The acts raised fears of the eventual removal of existing protections and systems of price supports that, when introduced decades ago, helped end widespread famine and ensure the survival of small farmers.[13] Following a rail blockade on September 24, 2020, an all-India *bandh* (shutdown strike) on September 25, scattered bullock-cart rallies, and another nationwide general strike on November 26, which trade union

FIGURE 1.2. Students staging a dharna in front of the collector's office in Khammam to draw attention to the inadequate supply of textbooks, July 3, 2010 (photo: G. N. Rao/ *The Hindu*).

leaders claimed involved 250 million people, farmers marched toward the nation's capital in a Dilli Chalo ("Let's Go to Delhi") movement. The rail blockades, strikes, and marches to the capital were followed by blockades of major roads into the nation's capital by hundreds of thousands of farmers (November 28–December 3), a major procession on January 26, 2021, and roadblocks on state and national highways throughout the country on February 6, 2021, reflecting the long history of the effective use of many of these communicative techniques.[14] This series of collective assemblies resulted in the passage of the Farm Laws Repeal Bill on November 19, 2021, although many farmer unions continued to remind the government of earlier commitments to guarantee minimum support prices and double farmers' incomes by 2022.[15]

The collective emptying and filling of public spaces for these purposes—gaining recognition, encouraging dialogue, making representational claims, amplifying unheard voices, gauging public support for substantive agendas, vying to shape political decision making, defining and strengthening identity, performing power, and holding elected officials accountable to their campaign commitments—are not only widespread but also form a fundamental

feature of the way that democracy works in India between elections. Practices such as *dharṇā* (hereafter, *dharna*, a sit-in, often in front of a government office or other seat of power); *nirāhāra dīkṣa* or *niraśana vratam* (a fasting vow or hunger strike); *garjana* (a mass outdoor public meeting, lit., "roar"; also *bhērī*, "kettledrum" in Telugu, or *murasu*, "drum" or "voice" in Tamil); neighborhood political meetings held on platforms erected in the middle of public roads; rāstā or rail roko [āndōlan], *saḍak bandh*, or *chakka jām* (a road or rail blockade); *samme*, *bandh*, or *hartāl* (a strike or work stoppage); *gherao* (the surrounding of a government official or administrator); *ūrēgimpu* or *pōru yātra* (a rally or procession, also *julūs* in Hindi/Urdu); padayātra (a pilgrimage on foot to a seat of political power); mass ticketless travel to attend meetings and participate in rallies; and *mānavahāram* (a human chain) all involve the coordination and movement of large numbers of people into and out of spaces claimed as public. These spaces include not only parks and open grounds but also streets, highways, intersections, railway stations, rail lines, and junctions.[16] The routine visibility of such collective assemblies within everyday contemporary Indian politics suggests the importance of understanding the specific social, economic, political, and legal genealogies that have established the local knowledge of how one "does" democracy. It also offers a challenge to more "modular" understandings of democracy as a fixed or homogeneous set of ideas or practices.[17]

Hailing the State: Beyond Althusser and Foucault

This book takes seriously acts of what I call "hailing the state," a wide range of practices that can be grouped together around their common aims to actively seek, maintain, or expand state recognition and establish or enhance channels of connection to facilitate ongoing access to authorities and elected officials.[18] Typically, such acts entail various types of public collective representation and performance. Interrogating the role of these forms within local understandings of democracy, I offer a counter and complement to existing Foucauldian analytic frameworks that prioritize attention to the expanding panoptic aspirations of states, which are sometimes implicitly assumed to be historically unidirectional. In doing so, the argument of this book inverts the Althusserian perspective upon which Michel Foucault built, in which representatives of the state are the sole active agents of the act of "hailing" and, by extension, of the act of surveillance.[19] In Louis Althusser's famous illustration of how ideology works, those on the street—the "subjects"

of ideological state apparatuses—are significant only as passive recipients of the action and initiative of representatives of the state. In his most well-known illustration, that representative is a police officer.[20] Althusser refines the "categorical" Marxist understanding of the state as "a repressive 'machine' that enables the dominant classes to ensure their domination" by attributing the constitution of subjects to the institutions that recognize them: "I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace form of police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'"[21] Such an approach treats ideological state apparatuses as always already constituted, even static, and focuses on the process of interpellation as unidirectional.

Althusser's attention to this process raises several questions. First, how do institutions and their representatives themselves come to be recognizable and recognized? Might acts of hailing not also be seen as playing a significant role in constructing, reifying, and continually reshaping and repopulating ideological state apparatuses? Second, how can we understand processes of subject formation and subjectification when institutions and state apparatuses *refuse* to recognize potential subjects? This book addresses the first set of questions by attending to the ways that collective acts of hailing effectively create, alter, and reshape not only the composition of the state but also its existence, structures, practices, and ideologies. It answers the second question by considering ethnographic and archival examples of such refusals of recognition within the contexts of much longer chains of efforts to produce and sustain recognition and then tracing the impact of these chains on the production of populations and collective identities.

Althusser's analysis also assumes that ideological state apparatuses are always fully successful in recruiting their intended subjects.[22] But as Asif Agha argues, Althusser invests "magical efficacy in the act of initiation," portraying the receiver of the act of interpellation as powerless.[23] Althusser shows no interest in the processes through which individuals may interpret or attribute meaning to the act of hailing or to the impact of hailing on the representatives of the state who are enacting it. Agha suggests that for Althusser, "the act of hailing is presumed to identify addressees in such a way that 'identification creates identity.'" This collapses "the notion of 'subject-position' [which] identifies the one addressed . . . with the generic *subject-of* the State who is also the one normatively *subject-to* political control." Agha notes,

"The conflation achieves too much all at once: To experience the hail is to be shaped by it. Yet to hail someone is simply to draw their attention to a social role. Any such attempt may succeed or fail."[24] This critique can similarly be extended to Foucault's analysis of governmentality, by which he means "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target *population*" and that constitutes "the 'governmentalization' of the state."[25] Populations are targets and objects of the "tactics and techniques" that bring them into being; analysis is unidirectional.[26]

In contrast, this book seeks to better understand the interactions between those "on the street" and authorities such as elected officials and bureaucrats, analyzing not just acts of hailing but also the responses to those efforts and the relationships that are created as a result. In addition to ignoring the possibility that ideological state apparatuses might fail to fully interpellate their intended addressees, Althusser also overlooks the fact that representatives of ideological state apparatuses sometimes misrecognize, ignore, or *refuse* to recognize potential subjects. In examining processes of subject formation under such conditions, this book responds to the state's refusal of recognition in two ways: by challenging existing scholarship that sees collective action only as resistance to state authority or ideology and by offering a framework that acknowledges desires for public recognition and voice. It is no coincidence that Althusser chose to locate his primary illustration of the practice of hailing in the street, rather than in a private home, government office, or an institutional site. Like Althusser, the following chapters demonstrate that the street is one of the most significant sites through which ideological formations are negotiated. They furthermore argue that collective performances of representation are an essential element of this process. However, unlike Althusser, the evidence offered in this book portrays the multidirectionality of practices of hailing, while also recognizing the conditions that enable some efforts at hailing to be more successful than others.

Not all collective acts are acts of hailing the state, however. This book advocates for the recognition of distinctions among collective actions despite their superficial resemblances. More specifically, it attends to differences between collective mobilizations that appeal to authorities and seek their recognition and response, and collective actions that explicitly reject the authority of the state. In the former instance, collective actions acknowledge and, in the process, reify state authority. In the latter, they resist, ignore, or challenge the sovereignty of the state and seek through their actions to establish an

alternate sovereignty. The most extreme versions of resistance to the state and rejection of its sovereignty include armed revolutionary movements, such as the Maoist-inspired Naxalite movement or People's War Group in India or the Shining Path in Peru.[27] Because collectives massed in public often address multiple audiences simultaneously—recruiting both participants and witnesses in an effort to influence popular opinion, increase surveillance of the state, and exert pressure—these distinctions between hailing the state and rejecting its sovereignty function more like poles than absolute differences. Nevertheless, I lay out the contrast to encourage closer attention to the various audiences that collective actions address. Asking to whom a collective action is addressed, what its participants are seeking, what constitutes success, and what conditions determine whether it is successful or not, can help to accomplish this.[28]

In attending to state-hailing practices specifically, rather than to all forms of collective action, I am therefore prioritizing actions that seek—through collective forms of public assembly that explicitly address the state or its representatives—to expand inclusion and incorporation within state processes of decision making and the distribution of attention and resources. These practices may seek audience and greater dialogue with representatives of the state, they may demand political recognition and more rigorous or equitable enforcement of existing laws or administrative policies, or they may advocate for structural changes that promote broader inclusion such as smaller subnational administrative units (as in the Telangana movement) or expanded affirmative action initiatives.[29]

Many of my empirical examples therefore focus on collective assemblies organized by coalitions of members of minority or historically marginalized groups, rather than those carried out by majoritarian movements. Of course, majoritarian movements also make use of collective assemblies but often to assert sovereignty or domination, sometimes by displaying their ability to engage with impunity in unchecked violence against stigmatized minorities.[30] Padayātras, rallies, riots, and pogroms organized by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Shiv Sena, and Bharatiya Janata Party have, for example, been used to target and instill fear within minority groups, and as such have not always been addressed to the state as their primary audience.[31] Other examples of majoritarian assemblies, however, such as the rallies and road blockades used to express objections to the Mandal Commission's expansion of affirmative action quotas to include additional historically disadvantaged groups (from which historically dominant caste groups were excluded) can be seen as addressing the state.[32] As Tarini Bedi and Christophe Jaffrelot

argue, people become involved in majoritarian movements for a wide variety of reasons, suggesting that in each case finer-grained analyses of the conditions through which individuals become involved in collective actions and the audiences they see themselves as addressing can better help map the distinctions I am proposing.[33] For now, it is enough to reiterate that not all collective assemblies are efforts to hail the state.

There is a growing literature on the politics of recognition, most of it generated in relationship to discussions of cultural difference and multiculturalism.[34] Central to these discussions, as Charles Taylor argues, is the problem of how to resolve the tension between individual rights, on the one hand, and collective goals, on the other.[35] In *Hailing the State*, however, I argue that this distinction between individual claims and collective claims may in many cases be a false one. By situating the emergence of collective claims within longer genealogies of state-hailing practices and efforts to achieve individual recognition, I demonstrate the relationship between individual and collective efforts to engage in communicative action. When individuals fail to gain recognition in response to their own communicative efforts, they begin to seek out others with similar concerns. Together, each hopes to improve his or her chances of being heard or acknowledged, recognizing that it is easier to garner attention collectively than individually.

Thus, my intervention is, at its most basic level, a temporal one that places synchronic snapshots of particular collective actions into much longer diachronic frames. Rather than understanding collective actions as demands for recognition by those with preformed social, political, or cultural identities, attention to the much longer trajectories of efforts to gain a hearing can help challenge understandings of identity as a preexisting foundation on which claims can be collectively amplified. Representations of identities, such as Telangana or Dalit identities, thus appear in my analysis as the eventual outcomes of the joining together of many separate individuals into collective mobilizations, rather than as preexisting foundations that precede political engagement.[36] Such an approach also makes visible the fact that not everyone within a movement shares identical interests and objectives, but that participants do feel that their own particular concerns have a better chance of being addressed when joined with the concerns of others.

There is no doubt that some collective identities have at various moments been more easily recognizable (and willingly recognized) by representatives of the state than others.[37] Yet even recognizable identities are not static, and much of the work involved in movements centers around changing the state's ability or willingness to recognize efforts to communicate as *political* acts

(rather than as private or criminal acts, or as invisible) by making collectives more visible and therefore recognizable, a process I label "political arrival" (see chapter 7).[38] The Telangana identity, once widely presumed by many to be a natural part of a broader "Telugu" linguistic identity in southern India, offers an ideal context for tracing the shifting foundations for identities that have been constructed out of collective action and been made to appear in retrospect as natural platforms for that collective mobilization. Language, which reached its pinnacle as a foundation for regional political recognition in India in the second half of the twentieth century, has given way to the construction of new foundations for minority political recognition in the twenty-first century, exemplified by the creation of the new states of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal, and Jharkhand in November 2000 and Telangana in June 2014.[39]

Given these understandings of collective actions as performances of "state hailing" that produce and enable subject and identity formation, I ask why collective forms of assembly are so often assumed only to be protest against, opposition or resistance to, or rejections of authority, rather than also being understood as desires to contribute to or participate in policy making, or as appeals to elected officials or policy makers and efforts to hold officials accountable to their promises and to equitable implementation of existing legal and constitutional provisions. In answering this question, I place specific contemporary political practices—and their theorizations in relation to democracy—within longer histories of collective engagements with forms of authority in South Asia and within the colonial, historical, and social science literatures that have sought to understand them or contain and limit their impacts.

Theoretical Limits to "Resistance"

As the following chapters illustrate, despite frequently being described as "protests," many collective actions are efforts to seek recognition and inclusion. Yet, it is often in the interests of those in positions of authority to frame collective actions as rejections of (their) authority and as disrespect for existing institutions. These are framing mechanisms that function as methods for refusing recognition, silencing dissent, and denying expanded inclusion. The chapters that follow map this distinction by illustrating and exploring examples of efforts to seek political recognition and expand inclusion, attempts to establish and strengthen connections with or incorporation

into networks of the state, and tactics for cultivating relationships with or collective influence over its representatives. They also track the varied government responses to these efforts. In approaching collective forms of action historically, the book takes seriously their roles not only in influencing the specific ways that democracy has come to be understood and practiced in India but also in continuing to shape the contours, meanings, and practices of engaged citizenship in India today.

Current scholarship encourages us to read collective action only as resistance, rejection, or rebellion, reflecting academic trends that Sherry Ortner characterizes as "dark theory." Ortner defines "dark anthropology" as "anthropology that emphasizes the harsh and brutal dimensions of human experience, and the structural and historical conditions that produce them," tracing its origins to the rise of "dark theory" more generally, defined as "theory that asks us to see the world almost entirely in terms of power, exploitation, and chronic pervasive inequality."[40] She identifies the writings of Karl Marx and Michel Foucault as exemplifying, as well as having shaped and perpetuated, this shift to dark theory. Writes Ortner, "Some of Foucault's work is an almost perfect exemplar of this concept, a virtually totalizing theory of a world in which power is in every crevice of life, and in which there is no outside to power."[41] Although acknowledging that Foucault's thinking shifted over the course of his career, Ortner maintains, "It is fair to say that it is the dark Foucault—the Foucault of the Panopticon, of *Discipline and Punish* (1977), of capillary power, and of multiple forms of governmentality—who has been having the greatest influence on sociocultural anthropological theory."[42] Actors who seek recognition, connections with, or incorporation into structures of state power—especially those from working-class, impoverished, peasant, or other marginalized origins—are thus regarded as suffering from "false consciousness" (Engels); as co-opted by bourgeois ideology (Marx), hegemonic consciousness (Gramsci), or ideological state apparatuses (Althusser); or as subjects of successful disciplinary discourses or practices (Foucault). In each case, the active desire for recognition and incorporation into state networks is regarded as passive ideological co-optation of the subject in question, ignoring other possible meanings of that goal.

Ortner contrasts dark theory with what Joel Robbins calls an "anthropology of the good," ending her analysis (which is particularly directed toward American anthropology) with a discussion of what she calls new forms of "anthropology of the good: the anthropology of critique, resistance, and activism."[43] In contrast to Ortner's turn, this book neither embraces dark theory nor offers an anthropology of the good. Instead, the book shifts

attention to the many ways that people in India actively and self-consciously *seek* to be seen, heard, and recognized by the state. It focuses not only on the obstacles they encounter in attempting to gain such recognition but also on the ways that these efforts can and do alter the state. It also traces the resort to ever greater—and usually increasingly collective—efforts to actively achieve recognition and create connections (however heavily mediated) with the state, often leading to the escalation of efforts over weeks, months, years, or even decades, as in the case of the Telangana movement.[44] The result of this book's interventions is therefore a portrait of the Indian state that attends not simply to its ever-expanding powers and its increasingly micropolitical techniques of governance but also to the various forms of practice that seek—sometimes successfully—to surveil and place limits on the state and the forms of violence it condones, while also simultaneously seeking expansions of its interventions within the social and economic status quos.[45]

In approaching collective action in this way, I point to the widespread suspicion and cynicism directed toward the state within academic literature, suspicion ironically shared by those at opposite ends of the political spectrum—from anarchists on the Left (represented by prominent scholars such as James C. Scott and David Graeber) to libertarians and "limited-state" conservatives on the Right who seek to roll back government employment opportunities, state regulations, and the government administrative and regulatory bodies that generate them.[46] And yet, in the regions of South India where I have been living and doing research on and off for more than thirty years, many of my interlocutors continue to believe the state to be capable of providing individual opportunities and possibilities for social mobility, as well as catalyzing broader societal transformation. This belief is held by interlocutors I have spoken with on both the Right and the Left. People believe that the state has the capacity to act in ways that are socially and personally transformative, and they therefore believe in the utility of trying to persuade the state to act accordingly. In both the Telangana movement and the 2020–21 farmers' protests, the demands made were not for the overthrow of the state, but rather for dialogues with representatives of the state, for inclusion within the processes that would determine state policies, and for the fulfillment of earlier political promises that had not yet been realized.

Participants in the Telangana movement fervently believed that the new state would offer long-term benefits for them and their children. As Laxman, an auto-rickshaw driver who lived up the street from me, said on the evening of July 30, 2013, the day that the new state was approved by the United Progressive Alliance coalition government, amidst much jubilation

in Hyderabad, "Now my children will have a future." Laxman is not alone in India in his belief in the power of the state to achieve social transformations. We can see this in the continued investment in India today in the affirmative action–style reservation quota system that governs public sector employment and admissions into government-aided educational institutions.[47] From 22.5 percent in 1950, the proportion of positions it governs has grown to nearly 60 percent in 2019.[48] Although this system was originally intended to be temporary, more and more groups have appealed to the state for recognition as historically marginalized communities.

Rather than disappearing, then, belief in government social engineering through the reservation quota system and in the power of the state to transform lives and the structure of society more generally has instead grown. This is true despite corruption, despite inequality, and despite neoliberalism and the growth of the informal sector. A long history of government employment offering one of the few routes for social mobility under British colonial rule no doubt plays a significant role in cultivating this view. Its legacy lives on in contemporary India, as new groups seek the mobility and security of the government employment that they saw previous generations experience. One Indian colleague, for example, told me about his father's reaction when he announced that he wanted to go to college to study history. His father, a government clerk, replied, "Why do you want to go to college? Only rich people go to college. You should get a government job, and then you'll be set for life." Although private sector employment since the liberalization of India's economy in the 1990s has offered significantly higher salaries, many in India still seek the stability and long-term security of public sector employment. Contestations over who should be eligible for reserved quotas for this employment, as well as for educational opportunities, remain one of the biggest fault lines of conflict in contemporary India.

Rethinking the Public Sphere: Collective Assembly and the "Conditions of Listening"

Despite the ubiquity and long history of the wide range of forms of collective assembly in India and elsewhere, there has been surprisingly little effort to theorize their histories and significance in shaping the development, understanding, and practice of democracy today. Jürgen Habermas offered an early and remarkably influential history of the importance of coffeehouses within the development of democracy, arguing for their critical role in encouraging

public debate and opinion making.[49] Yet the popularity of his work illustrates the fact that some practices—especially those that have been associated with bourgeois or mercantile engagements with the public sphere in placing limits on the aristocracy—have been authorized as more relevant to our understandings of the development and spread of democracy than others. Worldwide, there are many everyday practices and sites of communication and opinion making that have failed to be taken up for similar analysis. Habermas has rightly been critiqued for his exclusive interest in an idealized *bourgeois* public sphere and for his role in solidifying hegemonic liberal understandings of acceptable forms of participatory democratic practice.[50] Nancy Fraser, for example, demonstrates that competing "subaltern counterpublics" have always contested the norms of the bourgeois public sphere.[51]

Rather than seeing the public sphere as a space defined by the norms of the dominant masculine bourgeois society and reading the entrance of new and conflicting groups and interests as its decline (a common refrain among some historically dominant groups in contemporary India), Fraser suggests that we may be better served by attending to the sites where interactions not only of competing interests but also of competing *styles* of political participation occur. "Virtually from the beginning," she writes, "counterpublics contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative *styles* of political behavior and alternative norms of public speech."[52] As a historian and anthropologist, I read this to mean that more careful genealogical tracing of the everyday practices and spaces used by various publics can help disrupt the ideological domination perpetuated by those segments of society that have traditionally held the reins of power even under the sign of "democracy." This means expanding our focus beyond the deliberative forms of speech action privileged by Habermas or those styles of communication that represent themselves as "rational" and portray their claims as free of emotion and directed toward the "common interest" or "universal" goals.

However, rather than attributing all differences of style to distinct "cultures," which the category of subaltern counterpublics implies, I depart from Fraser by arguing that some of the "differences" that have been assumed to be differences of *style* have instead been produced through failures of recognition.[53] When individuals and groups find that their speech actions and efforts to articulate their concerns are mocked, dismissed, or ignored, they are forced to find ways to amplify their voices to enable them to be heard by bureaucratic administrators, political leaders, and the general public or, to

put it another way, to make it more difficult for their voices to continue to be ignored, as chapters 2 and 3 illustrate.

Similarly, Habermas's explicit interest in the bourgeois public sphere makes it clear that he recognizes the existence of other kinds of public spheres, most notably a "plebian" public sphere that he originally considered "a variant [of the bourgeois public sphere] that in a sense was suppressed in the historical process."[54] He suggests, however, that the relevance of these other publics to the history, practice, and theorization of democracy is both relatively recent and a product of technological transformations, arguing that it is only television that enabled these other publics to become significant factors worth examining. He writes, "The physical presence of the masses demonstrating in the squares and streets was able to generate revolutionary power only to the degree to which television made its presence ubiquitous."[55] In part, Habermas's downplaying of the relationship between corporeal mass assemblies in public space and the history of democracy comes from his privileging of speech action over all other forms of communication, and in part it emerges out of his understanding of the differences in the historical visibility of bourgeois and plebian public spheres. Either way, it ignores the many pre-televisual historical examples of the revolutionary power of collective assemblies in public space, including the American and French Revolutions, and the influence of coal miners, dockworkers, and railway employees' strikes on the expansion of democratic participation to include the working classes in Europe and the United States.[56] Characterizing these as separate "spheres," however, runs the risk of implying that mass demonstrations are a direct function of one's class status (plebian vs. bourgeois), rather than a result of the reception one's voice and interests receive.

In contrast to both Fraser's emphasis on differences of *style* and Habermas's association of specific communicative methods with particular *spheres*, I problematize the implied temporality of subject formation within liberalism. When one's interests are already well represented and one can be certain that one's voice will be heard, there is little need to mobilize collectively in the streets. However, when one's voice and interests repeatedly fail to find recognition, an alternative is to make one's articulations more difficult to ignore by joining together in collective communicative action. My ethnographic and archival examples take seriously the words and actions of my interlocutors in Telangana and elsewhere by giving primary attention to the rallies, processions, collective seeking of audiences with government officials, occupations of road spaces, halting of trains, and massing of bodies in public spaces that they see as fundamental to democracy. Close attention

to the histories of these practices also suggests that Habermas makes a too hasty dismissal of pre-televised forms of mass political practice and their representations, however much television may indeed have produced qualitative changes in those representations.

The examples offered in this book prompt us to recognize ways in which other forms of communication—like the movement of people and vehicles or the prevention of their movement—have been used to broadcast political messages, hold officials accountable, compel dialogue, and recalibrate relations of power, even prior to the emergence of televisual forms. They make clear that as effective mediums of political communication, techniques such as mass processions and road or rail blockades function in India both via their performative effects and through their temporary control of communicative channels—telegraphing political messages over long distances by preventing and regulating the smooth flow of traffic and providing opportunities to cultivate, test, and make visible the effectiveness of collective networks and relationships. Attention to these less-privileged forms of practice takes seriously Partha Chatterjee's argument that we need to give equal attention to the forms of popular political practice that make up what he calls "the politics of the governed."[57] However, in placing particular practices within longer historical genealogies, it also disrupts the easy distinctions that have been made between the *practices* of "civil society" and those of "political society," making it more difficult to draw clear lines between the two. Chatterjee characterizes the practices of civil society as those stemming from "the closed association of modern elite groups, sequestered from the wider popular life of the communities, walled up within enclaves of civic freedom and rational law."[58] Members of civil society, writes Chatterjee, frame their demands in terms of *universal* claims and create hegemonic understandings of acceptable norms of participatory democratic practice. Members of political society, in contrast, "transgress the strict lines of legality in struggling to live and work" and use their positions within specific populations subject to governance to make *particular* demands of the state and ask for exceptions to existing laws.[59]

Close analysis of the historical trajectory of specific political practices like alarm chain pulling (chapter 5); road and rail blockades (chapter 6); processions, rallies, and the ticketless travel that supports them (chapter 7) shows that, although many commentators today would consider such forms of action to be characteristic of political society, their roots as forms of political practice often lie squarely within the Indian civil society of the early twentieth century. These historically informed analytic methods illustrate the

fact that such practices are usually employed only after recourse to the types of practices typically associated with civil society have been unsuccessful—practices such as efforts to participate within public debates and deliberations and sending letters, petitions, and memoranda. Rather than being used only to demand exceptions to existing legal structures, there is evidence that collective assemblies are often organized to ensure that members of marginalized groups receive the *same* recognition within existing legal structures as is accorded to those in more privileged positions.[60] Bringing Chatterjee into conversation with Nancy Fraser, I interpret Chatterjee's interventions to mean that many of the limitations of both historical and contemporary analyses of democracy stem from the specific sites and channels of communication that are privileged for study at the expense of others.[61] The ethnographic and historical examples offered in this book expand our understandings of the sites and practices of political communication to illustrate both the politics spawned by governmentality and the forms of governmentality spawned by politics.

Genealogies of Democracy in India

In contrast to the heavily ideological approaches to the history of democracy that have foregrounded liberalism, Timothy Mitchell offers a materialist genealogy for democracy that does not rely primarily on a history of ideas.[62] He introduces new methods for approaching the study of democracy by attending to the processes and material conditions that enabled various individuals and groups to come together collectively to help shape more inclusive structures of rule.[63] Mitchell focuses on the ways that coal miners, railwaymen, and dockworkers were able to demand recognition and inclusion within political decision making from the 1880s onward through their ability to restrict the movement of coal—a crucial commodity on which urban centers were fundamentally dependent. He argues that it was their particular connections and alliances that enabled the workers to control the movement of this essential commodity. Their ability to prevent coal from reaching its destination through strikes and work stoppages, thereby paralyzing urban centers, brought about the advent of both universal suffrage and the modern welfare state.[64] In *Hailing the State*, I extend Mitchell's method by approaching democracy not as a fixed and modular set of institutions put into place in *response* to such demands for inclusion, but rather as the various forms of practice through which actors establish connections

and build alliances to produce greater inclusion within ongoing processes of collective decision making.

In embracing Mitchell's materialist analytic framework, I am following my Telangana informants in regarding democracy as something one *does* and in regarding access to spaces of participation and inclusion therefore as a fundamental part of what democracy means. As G. Haragopal emphasizes, "Democracy doesn't just mean elections. Elections are only one part of democracy. The real essence of a truly democratic system is that people must be able to continuously voice their problems and their turmoil, and democracy must provide a wide range of opportunities for people to communicate their concerns every day."[65] This approach sees democracy's history not simply as the introduction of electoral institutions that were earlier absent, but rather as a dynamic and ongoing set of contestations over recognition, inclusion, and voice within structures of decision making and economic transformation and over the spaces, mechanisms, and institutions that extend opportunities for participation.[66] In the Indian context, most existing histories of Indian democracy begin with Indian independence from Britain in 1947, or with the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 or the first parliamentary elections in 1951–52, with very limited attention to earlier periods. As Atul Kohli observes, "India's 'transition' to democracy in the 1940s is understudied and ought to be further researched."[67] He points out that "historians have often left such issues to political scientists," and political scientists (and, I would add, many sociologists and anthropologists) "often do not concern themselves with the 'past,' the domain of historians."[68] There has therefore been little effort to connect post-1947 political practices with their pre-independence precursors. The little attention that has been paid to pre-independence democratic practices has focused almost exclusively on representative electoral institutions introduced under British colonial rule, understood to "prefigure" the "age of democracy in India."[69] These included the appointment (and eventually election) of Indian representatives to municipal boards and provincial councils in British India in the latter half of the nineteenth century and eventually the establishment of a Legislative Assembly, for which elections were first held in 1920.[70]

The methods offered by anthropology, however, offer promising opportunities for rewriting existing analyses and theories of the everyday practices of democracy by including corporeal communicative practices like garjanas, dharnas, yātras, and rāstā and rail roko actions. In bringing ethnographic approaches to bear on the study of democracy, Julia Paley and her collaborators demonstrate how anthropological methods can advance

our theories of democracy by forcing us to account for practices as they happen on the ground, placing together subjects of analysis that are otherwise typically kept apart and thereby bringing them into a single framework. By situating "powerful and non-powerful actors within the same frame" and "examining how they selectively choose and resignify elements of a globally circulating discourse," we are forced to question the dominant representations of how democracy works worldwide.[71] Thomas Blom Hansen similarly emphasizes the importance of starting with practices on the ground when he writes, "Performances and spectacles in public spaces—from the central squares to the street corner in the slum, from speeches to images—must move to the center of our attention."[72]

"Combinations" and Law: Genealogies of Collective Political Practice

The existing repertoires of political action routinely employed in the world's largest democracy are practices drawn from a long—but largely unrecognized and certainly undertheorized—history of practices in the South Asian subcontinent. This makes not just the region's political history but also its long history of intellectual thought and scholarship particularly rich contexts for examining the encounter of such practices with the new ideological, legal, and policing mechanisms introduced in the nineteenth century to curb the power of what the British routinely characterized as "combinations." Work stoppages, mass migrations, and collective strikes to shut down commerce and transportation are evident in South Asian archival sources from at least the seventeenth century, perhaps even earlier, and were clearly used to make representations to state authorities at the highest levels (see chapter 4). My growing awareness of the influences of earlier practices on the ways that people understand, talk about, and "do" or "perform" democracy in contemporary India, even in the face of the many shifts brought about by colonial and postcolonial political reconfigurations, has propelled me to rely centrally on historical methodologies in this book. This not only enables me to place contemporary practices into broader historical perspective but also facilitates an examination of the ways that scholarly writing is complicit in the framing of collective action almost exclusively as resistance.

Collective public performances of local opinions in response to East India Company (EIC) policies and procedures continue to be evident throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Local merchants and artisans

routinely sought to negotiate with the East India Company-State and influence its decisions.[73] They did so by implementing a wide range of collective forms of communication in response to pricing, type, and timing of payments (e.g., payments for woven goods in overpriced grain rather than in cash); procurement systems; corrupt intermediaries; and overly invasive control of types and quality of goods, particularly in the wake of the EIC's establishment of a monopoly over trade by the end of the eighteenth century. These methods included petitions to the Board of Trade, British residents, and district collectors, as well as collective deputations and oral testimonies. When these petitions, deputations, and testimonies failed to be acknowledged, artisans and others subject to the EIC's administration used a variety of means to amplify their messages and make them more likely to be received. Well-organized processions from village to village were used to gather together larger groups that would then travel to meet with a higher authority to convey concerns in person and lobby to have them acknowledged and addressed.[74] Collective abandonment of homes or workplaces; collective relocation to an open space or temple outside an urban center; migration to neighboring territories; prevention of the movement of commodities through boycotts organized among porters, boatmen, palanquin bearers and others; and the stationing of those with grievances outside the office or residence of a person in authority in hopes of compelling a face-to-face meeting are all examples of historical strategies that have left substantial imprints, both in existing archival records and on contemporary repertoires, as part I demonstrates. By the nineteenth century, Indians also began to use newly available technologies, particularly the railway system, as communicative networks to amplify their voices and opinions. Part II illustrates the ways that practices such as alarm chain pulling, rail blockades, and ticketless travel that were initially regarded as criminal eventually came to be redefined by the government as political, providing officials with new strategies for confronting them and historians like myself with opportunities for tracking changes in the political.

East India Company officials—and later, Government of India administrators—referred to these collective actions as "combinations" or, less generously, as "insurgencies," "mutinies," "insurrections," "revolts," or "rebellions," even when their participants sought only to gain an audience with officials in circumstances in which earlier communicative efforts were ignored or refused. Because administrators saw such actions as challenges to their own authority and sovereignty, their first recourse was usually to seek methods of breaking or delegitimizing the ability of Indians to act collectively. Indeed,

British administrators often refused to acknowledge collective forms of representation or were quick to send in military troops, frequently insisting that Indians with grievances should represent only themselves as individuals, rather than cooperating collectively (see chapter 3). This state response suggests that the colonial invocation of liberalism, with its emphasis on the autonomous individual as the only legitimate subject of both legal and political action, offered a convenient mechanism for British authorities seeking to derail the surprisingly effective collective forms of representation that they encountered in British India. When they did acknowledge collective representations, they often misread or intentionally construed such group actions as "communal" in nature. Although studies have questioned colonial constructions of communalism, some scholars are still quick to associate (often dismissively) collective actions in India with caste or religious-based identitarian politics even when this may not be the case.[75] Although not denying that caste or religious connections can play a role by intersecting with substantive claims, this book approaches collective claims as not always premised on already reified prepolitical identities, but as emerging in relation to processes of alliance-building and the establishment of new connections, often involving substantive claims (see chapter 4). The book therefore seeks to identify the concerns that preceded and precipitated collective action, rather than assuming a communal or identitarian motivation post facto.

Democracy and the Representation of Collective Assembly

The World Trade Organization protests in 1999, Arab Spring (2010–12), Occupy Movement (2011–12), Black Lives Matter mobilizations (2013–present), and Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong (2014) are just a few of the collective mobilizations that have stimulated renewed interest in understanding the political significance of bodies massed in public.[76] They have encouraged a return to scholarship on crowds, as well as new inquiries into the relationship of public space to democracy and representation.[77] William Mazzarella's critical overview of crowd scholarship, for example, challenges our inheritance of the nineteenth century's scholarly legacy that saw crowds as subject to primal—even pathological—emotions and therefore as the antithesis of reason.[78] The history he offers suggests that crowds and their strong associations with "emergent energies [that] threaten the strenuously achieved

autonomous liberal subject," play a key role within a "story about changing forms of political representation" and help shore up "an underlying narrative about an epochal shift in the deployment of modern power" that centers on the autonomy of the individual.[79]

What reading Mazzarella together with Timothy Mitchell brings into relief, however, is the fact that the advent of the celebration of the modern autonomous individual occurs at the same moment as the appearance of the successful political demands by large groups of workers on whom urban life crucially depended. Mazzarella points to recent liberal and postliberal desires to rehabilitate "the political possibilities of the masses" toward democratic ends, the former by turning them into "autonomous enlightened citizens . . . nurtured in the bosom of reasonable civic assemblies," and the latter, exemplified for Mazzarella by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's writings on the "multitude," through an investment in a sort of pure politics "imagined as an absence of mediation."[80] This book offers a third possibility. What Hardt, Negri, and Mazzarella share is an investment in imagining new possibilities for political configurations. These new possibilities appear in Hardt and Negri's writings as hopeful investments in "revolutionary politics . . . that can create a new world" in the future,[81] and in Mazzarella as an ethics that is situated in relation to an abstracted "moment of generative possibility in all social relations"—one that is "not external to the mediations of structured relations" but rather is "a moment in their enactment."[82] I take this to mean that social theorists play an important role in articulating the thinkable and therefore the realm of the possible and that, together with anthropologists' and historians' careful attentions to configurations of possibilities in other places and other times, they can offer new models of practice for the future. Before we give up on the present in favor of a future that has yet to be imagined and can only be grasped in the most abstract terms, however, this book argues that we still have substantially more work to do in concretely recognizing and understanding the ways in which social relations and forms of mediation within democratic polities actually do work in practice today. We also need to acknowledge the specific ways in which our theories and descriptions of democracy perpetuate particular ideologies of the unmediated autonomous individual in their failure to capture these social relations and forms of mediation.

Despite the renewed interest in collective forms of assembly and the widespread recognition of their historical roles in bringing democracies into being, collective corporeal forms of assembly and communication are still rarely theorized as playing a significant role within the *ongoing* routine processes and

internal institutions of democracies. An important question is why we assume that collective assemblies are oppositional movements against the state, rather than efforts to reach out to the state's representatives and be recognized or heard by them. As the French democratic theorist and historian of political thought Bernard Manin writes in *The Principles of Representative Government*, the fact that representative democracy today gives no institutional role to the assembly of people, is "what most obviously distinguishes it from the democracy of the ancient city-states."[83] But we have yet to account for why and how this significant shift in the meaning and practice of democracy occurred. Manin's project involves tracing how elected representative forms of government, recognized by their founders as inegalitarian and elitist and therefore as the antithesis to democracy, have today come to be understood as both egalitarian and as one form (or even the only viable form) of democracy.[84] An equally important parallel project, and one that this book initiates, is tracing the changing concepts of the political that have pushed popular collective assemblies out of our understandings of the theory and practice of democracy.[85]

In continuing to be misunderstood and ignored as playing a significant role within "actually existing" ongoing routine processes of contemporary democracies, collective forms of political assembly are too often seen, as William Mazzarella argues, as belonging to an "earlier sepia-tinted version of industrial modernity," growing out of a bygone era.[86] At best, forms of collective assembly are today recognized as *external forces on* democracy or as playing a role in the *transition to* democracy. Jeffrey Schnapp and Matthew Tiews capture this widely accepted view when they write that historical shifts in the role of "mass assembly and collective social action" and the representation of "the equation between crowds and modernity" today "assign to large-scale mass political actions a fallback function restricted to times of exception (war, acute social conflicts, and the like)."[87] Judith Butler, writing in the wake of the Tahrir Square demonstrations in Egypt in 2011, likewise defines bodies massed in public as efforts to "redeploy the space of appearance in order to contest and negate the existing forms of political legitimacy"—rather than as a reification of state sovereignty or a desire to be recognized by the existing state and be actively (willingly, even eagerly) interpellated into its networks and included within its legal structures and ongoing processes of decision making.[88] Dipesh Chakrabarty—who has done much to model the value of tracing historical genealogies of contemporary forms of political practice into the pre-independence period—nevertheless similarly regards the escalation of collective strategies to gain recognition

and inclusion as "techniques of challenging the sovereignty" of those in power.[89] Dario Azzellini and Marina Sitrin argue that slogans like "They don't represent us!" have been embraced "in mobilizations all over the world" and that these "are not phrased as rejections of specific political representatives, but as expressions of a general rejection of the logic of representation."[90] More recently, Jason Frank argues that "the resonant claim—sometimes implicit, at other times explicit—made by popular assemblies across an entire history of democratic enactments, from the storming of the Bastille to today's popular insurgencies, is: 'you do not represent us!'"[91] These assertions ignore the many examples—including those offered throughout this book—of people massing in public to express the idea that *because* you represent us, you must hear us or give us audience. This book argues not only that these claims are not the same but also that it is much easier for bureaucrats, elected representatives, and even elites more generally to dismiss or ignore the communicative efforts of those who are seen as rejecting their authority than it is to dismiss those who are recognized as embracing the legitimacy and responsibilities of those who formally represent them. In this sense, social scientists and historians must be careful not to frame collective assemblies in ways that align with the interests of those who do not wish to acknowledge or hear the communicative efforts of those they ostensibly represent.

Given the absence of formally acknowledged institutional roles for collective assembly within contemporary democratic processes, our historical memory of its earlier significance as a form of representative practice within democracy has also largely disappeared. Paul Gilje, for example, shows that in the decades leading up to American independence and continuing into the first five or six decades of the newly independent American republic, the belief was widespread that popular collective assemblies and street politics, even riots, were essential to preventing tyranny and maintaining a check on the excesses of the state.[92] In the wake of the American farmers' protests of 1786 and 1787 that came to be known as Shay's Rebellion, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison that "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."[93] Although not everyone shared his view, Jefferson was certainly not alone in his suggestion that collective expressions of popular opinion in the street played a regular and routine role within a healthy republic. His belief that "the people are the only censors of their governors" and that "even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institutions" was widespread enough to sanction public crowd actions and even riots in the eyes of both elite and plebian community members.[94] Gilje suggests that

this acceptance of the "politicization of the common man, clearly linked to the heavy dependence on crowd activity from 1765 to 1776," played a crucial role in compelling early American political leaders to "reformulate their own conception of good government" and expand decision-making processes to become even more inclusive. "By 1774," he continues, "laborers, seamen, and mechanics assumed that they had a voice in the affairs of the province, and the local congresses, committees, and conventions could do little without gaining the assent of the newly sovereign people." In short, he argues, "it was the persistent use of mobs and street politics that propelled the common man into the political arena."[95] His analysis shows that outdoor forms of street politics were not only essential to the politics of the American revolution but also the *only* means through which common folk were able to make their voices heard.

Bernard Manin demonstrates that thinkers as varied as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78); the American founding father, James Madison (1751–1836); and the leading political theorist of the French Revolution, Emmanuel Siéyès (1748–1836), all viewed systems of elected representation as quite radically opposed to what was understood as democracy in the late eighteenth century.[96] Madison, for example, characterized this difference as resting on "the total exclusion of the people in their collective capacity" from participation in the modern republic he was helping form.[97] And Siéyès, writes Manin, "persistently stressed the 'huge difference' between democracy, in which the citizens make the laws themselves, and the representative system of government, in which they entrust the exercise of their power to elected representatives."[98] Manin concludes by observing, "What is today referred to as a crisis of political representation appears in a different light if we remember that representative government was conceived in explicit opposition to government by the people, and that its central institutions have remained unchanged."[99] By taking us back to the contrasts made in the eighteenth century between indirect representative and direct democratic forms of governance, Manin is able to capture earlier understandings of democracy as "government by the people" and to show that the elected forms of representation that emerged in the wake of the English, American, and French Revolutions and that are today seen as "indirect government by the people" were once understood in radically different terms.

Today, in the United States and much of Europe, the term *democracy* has gradually come to be associated almost exclusively with electoral processes of determining representative government. Yet in South Asia, despite widespread investment in electoral processes and participation in voting at

far higher rates than in the United States, elections are not the only or even the primary way in which many Indians conceptualize democracy. This suggests that the frameworks through which democracy is understood in India, shaped by the particularities of India's unique history, differ from understandings that have come to dominate contemporary Euro-American theoretical writings and practice. Indeed, ethnographic engagements with those from a wide range of economic and social backgrounds—along with archival research into the longer histories of many of the practices outlined in this book—have challenged my own understanding of what democracy means and pushed my inquiries beyond the study of elections to gain a better understanding of how people practice democracy in India *between* elections.

Democracy and Public Space

Krishnamurthy, a teacher I have known since the mid-1990s, made this clear to me one afternoon in 2012 as we sat talking over a cup of tea. "Democratic spaces in Hyderabad have become more and more limited since 1987, and even more restricted since 1997," he declared.[100] Recalling an earlier era in which public space was more freely available to be used for everyday forms of political expression, he narrated the recent emergence of more restrictive government attitudes toward processions. "On earlier occasions people were permitted to go up to the Assembly, that was in the 70s and early 80s," he explained. Now, in contrast, he continued, "there are court orders which do not allow any processions at all. In Hyderabad, in fact, in the entire Telangana, the democratic activity had come to a standstill, after '87 all over northern Telangana. And the situation has worsened after '97, further deteriorated." Even in the increasingly rare instances when permission was granted, he lamented that the spaces in which political activity was allowed had dramatically contracted. "Now," continued Krishnamurthy, "if you want to take out a procession . . . only one route is permitted: Lower Tank Bund Road via Dhobi Ghat to Indira Park."[101]

In his view, however, the resurgence of the Telangana movement from 2009 has reinvigorated democracy. "With great difficulty during the Telangana movement we could create small spaces, and therefore people could come, meet, organize dharnas, hold discussions, it has become a little easier," he maintained. His comments are illustrative of an emphasis on space and the collecting together of people in urban public space as fundamental features of democracy. Venkat, a middle-aged human rights activist in

Hyderabad, echoed this emphasis when he told me, "Aspirations of Telangana people, that we want separate state, is conveyed democratically in diverse forums, not just elections. People, in their own way, they conveyed it through their festivals, in their rituals. In a very democratic way they are holding dharna. There was no violence anywhere. [Once] all people came out into the street one day [to perform a roadblock] and they cooked their food [there]. I always say that [Telangana] is one of the greatest democratic movements in the world so far that I have ever witnessed. Not even in the China revolution did this take place."[102] Startling to those for whom China and its revolution represent the antithesis of democracy, rather than a pinnacle, Venkat's comments reinforce the idea that democracy is understood not simply in "local" terms but also in transnational terms that differ quite dramatically from understandings in those parts of the world that have historically laid claim to the founders, promoters, and protectors of democracy.[103]

In an era in which much attention to the political has shifted to the virtual worlds of social media activism, the democratic theorist John Parkinson argues that democracy still "depends to a surprising extent on the availability of physical, public space, even in our allegedly digital world," and demonstrates that this physical space is currently under threat.[104] Using data from eleven capital cities across six continents, he traces increased restrictions on the uses of public space, suggesting that many of these restrictions apply only "when we act as politically engaged citizens, not when we act as shoppers or employees on a lunch break."[105] As more and more elected officials and city planners envision transformations of their urban settlements into "world-class" cities like Hyderabad, he predicts that such restrictions are likely to increase. Of particular concern to Parkinson is the growing inaccessibility of public buildings, and the importance of public spaces that are adjacent to political buildings.[106] He emphasizes the importance to democracy of not only prioritizing public spaces for political uses by engaged citizens but also ensuring their visibility and proximity to decision makers.[107]

Railways, Roads, and the Indian Political

In focusing on methods used to amplify voices and telegraph political messages across both distances and social worlds, this book is also concerned with the ways that political practices create, engage, and materialize larger net-

works of circulation and communication to enable marginalized individuals to gain audiences with elected representatives and other government officials. The methods explored throughout the book convey political messages through communicative circuits that connect towns and cities to one another and to their respective hinterlands and also make visible powerful networks and relationships. Rather than focusing exclusively on the more conventional communicative channels of print, audio, cinematic, televisual, and social media, sites that privilege speech action and images and that have generated entire departments and schools of scholarship, I turn my focus to the less thoroughly studied domains of road and railway networks as forms of public space. In doing so, I focus on these domains not in their capacities as networks of transport but rather to show the various ways that these spaces have been used as powerful mediums for the performance of political communication.

The significance for politics of the spaces of transportation networks was first made clear to me as I completed research for an earlier book on the formation of the first Telugu linguistic state in 1953.[108] The death of Andhra State activist Potti Sreeramulu in Madras (now Chennai) on December 15, 1952, was the culmination of a well-publicized fifty-eight-day fast, and as news of its fatal conclusion began to spread, enormous assemblies of people began to gather in towns throughout coastal Andhra as far as 700 kilometers to the north of Madras. In four of those towns, dozens of people were killed or injured by police bullets as authorities struggled to maintain order. Yet almost all of the assemblies, injuries, and police violence occurred *in and around railway stations* on the main east coast Madras–Calcutta railway line. Police fired on assembled crowds at the railway stations in Nellore, Anakapalle, Waltair (Visakhapatnam), and Srikakulam, all important stations along the main railway line, resulting in deaths in each location and pointing to the centrality of transport networks within the history of the political in India.[109] As I learned more, I realized that in 1952, the railway station served as the most important communicative node connecting towns to the wider world. Newspapers, mail, and examination results arrived by train, and news stories and headlines were often posted on a board in the station. News obtained firsthand from someone who had just arrived from a place where something had happened was considered much more trustworthy than the news printed in newspapers (seen as linked to specific political factions) or broadcast on the radio (seen as controlled by the government). Men often came to the station daily to meet their friends for a cup of tea or coffee, read

the paper, and discuss the day's news, making the station a kind of coffeehouse and center for the circulation of news and political views.

The Indian Railways offer a particularly important set of sites for tracing the genealogies of everyday forms of political practice. First and foremost, the vast size of the Indian Railways has given them a central role within everyday life in India. Not only do the Indian Railways carry more than seventeen million passengers per day but they have also been recognized as the largest employer in the world.[110] Historically, the Indian railway system was one of the very first direct interactions that many people had with the British colonial state. Railway stations—and the platforms, tea shops, bookstalls, and surrounding businesses through which they were integrated into local contexts—quickly became important new sites of public space in India as they spread during the second half of the nineteenth century. Later, during the first half of the twentieth century, railway stations provided a crucial forum for Gandhi and other nationalist leaders to arouse popular support for the anticolonial movement. Leaders traveled from station to station, giving public addresses from the backs of trains. Indian railway stations have been imagined as social spaces that extend people's domestic contexts; as intra-national "in-between" sites that bring individuals of all languages, classes, castes, and ethnicities together as members of a single Indian nation; and as one of the most important historical locations for integrating the larger world into local contexts via the newspapers, mail service, telegraphs, goods, passengers, and ideas conveyed by the railways. Under British rule, the railways were also a primary site for the inscription of what have been described as new structures of identity, including the "castefication of wage labor," racially based strategies of employment, and new class divisions shaped by the establishment of separate refreshment rooms, water fountains, and train compartments.[111] As the most essential form of transportation in India, the railways and the stations that connect them to local communities have provided a new communicative context for the circulation and transmission of news and rumor, for everyday routine social and economic exchange, and for unprecedented displays of collective political activity.

As the railways began to spread in the second half of the nineteenth century, their significance not only for transportation but also, even more importantly, for bringing remote locations "into . . . communication" was widely recognized, "opening up the country by means of extensions into hitherto isolated places."[112] It is therefore not surprising that railways should also have been early sites of political engagement. The Disorders Inquiry Committee of 1919–1920 reported,

> Attacks on communications were in many cases motivated by sheer *anti*-Government feeling. The railway is considered, quite rightly, a Government institution and railway damage is in these cases simply a part of the destruction of Government property. . . . In the country districts the railway afforded almost the only opportunity for destruction of property other than Indian-owned private property, and the easiest and most tempting opportunity for loot. At night it was also the most difficult, of all the forms of violence, to discover or prevent; at the approach of an armoured train, the mobs could hide in the crops and return when the train had left.[113]

Today the Indian Railways continue to be seen by many as a key site for political communication. The chief minister of Bengal and two-time railway minister, Mamata Banerjee, noted in 2010, "Railways is a soft target as it is very visible. We lose substantial revenue due to frequent rail-rokos (stop the trains) on various issues where there is no connection with the railways. If any local issue happens, grievances find their outlet on railways."[114] Indeed, in its reach and penetration into India's hinterlands, the great visibility of the Indian Railways as a representative of the central government has made it one of the most convenient political targets from its very earliest days. Ranajit Guha shows this to be true almost immediately after construction of the very first railway line in India in 1853, even among those who directly benefited from its presence:

> There can be no doubt about the fact that the introduction of railways added considerably to income and employment in the Santal country. . . . For the Santals this provided an opportunity to extricate themselves from the state of landlessness, low wages and bonded labour into which they had fallen. . . . Yet when violence [during the Santal rebellion] actually broke out in July 1855 the beneficiaries seem to have had no hesitation about slaying the goose that laid the golden eggs for them. . . . Railway works were among the very first and most frequently destroyed objects mentioned in the reports received from the disturbed areas within the first week of the uprising.[115]

This targeting of the railways—and, more recently, roads—as a form of communication with the state continues today. Recent actions by Telangana state advocates and opponents in south India, migrant laborers in Bihar, minority groups in Rajasthan, and farmers across India illustrate the ongoing importance of these networks of transportation as widely used mechanisms for political communication.[116]

The railways as sites for political practice also function in another spatially significant way. Using Henri Lefebvre's "conception of the state as a 'spatial framework' of power," Manu Goswami writes about how the railways helped consolidate the Indian state as a single conceptual and material space while at the same time reconfiguring it within "a Britain-centered global economy," producing and reinforcing "internal differentiation and fragmentation," and "spawn[ing] a new uneven economic geography."[117] Precisely because railways were "crucial instruments for the consolidation of political and military domination within colonial India,"[118] they quickly became media for the expression of political opinions and targets for political resistance and protest. By linking regions throughout India to a single network of communication, the railways also made themselves available for the rapid communication of political messages. Halting a train in one location enabled the broadcast of a message up and down the entire length of a railway line and forced those from other regions of India to pay attention to the cause of a delay. Grievances from one locality could be rapidly broadcast and transmitted to new audiences and locations across a mobile landscape. Such actions affected passengers from different regions who were on the train and those living in far distant locations. They also generalized concerns that might otherwise have remained locally contained. From localized immediate concerns over overcrowding in third-class railway carriages, alarm chain pulling, for example, was eventually popularized in ways that linked local concerns with more generalized translocal politics, such as the anticolonial movement and later regional movements, as chapter 5 demonstrates.

Although the use of rail lines for political communication has a history in India nearly as long as the railways themselves, with the increase in road travel, roads, too, became media for transmitting political messages.[119] Streets and intersections have become sites for rallies, processions, and roadblocks, with buses and cars targeted rather than trains to telegraph political messages by blocking and delaying passengers. The practice of letting air out of bus tires, known locally in Telugu as *gāli tīyaḍam* (lit., "taking out air"), is frequently used to create a rapid roadblock (chapter 6). Buses—run by state bus companies—are typically targeted for state-level concerns, whereas the centrally run railways are reserved for national-level central government issues. During the Telangana movement, *mahā rāstā roko* actions (great road blockades) blocked not just single intersections but entire lengths of national highways, ranging from 115 to 250 kilometers (chapter 6), and political pilgrimages (yātras and padayātras) often use both roads and mass ticketless rail travel to enable participants from distant cities to join rallies elsewhere (chapter 7).[120]

Although much work still needs to be done to expand the ways in which we approach the study of political communication between elections to capture the many practices used to attract the attention of state representatives and establish connections with them, I am fortunately not alone in these efforts. Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, for example, has shown that "the street is not only a product of the disciplinary techniques of rational governance" but also "an outcome of a negotiated process."[121] His intimate ethnographic work among street hawkers in Mumbai points to the very incomplete execution, and even failure, of projects of governmentality, suggesting that the hegemony that scholars attribute to ideological state apparatuses or to middle-class visions of urban governance are not always victorious. Careful ethnographic and historical engagements of this sort offer dramatic revisions to dominant understandings of citizenship and governmentality.[122] Some may see the failure of political leaders and members of entitled classes to control and shape cities to match their visions of global centers of capital as a sign of the failure of Indian governance, but the careful treatment of the claims made by a wide range of actors seeking recognition from state officials and inclusion in state processes and decision making instead suggests that we can also read this as a kind of success of a more inclusive type of governance when viewed through other eyes. This is the perspective I bring to the analysis of the success of those who have felt excluded from government spaces, universities, and the rapid urban economic growth that has occurred in cities like Hyderabad across India. In helping expand participation within existing structures of governance, state-hailing practices can be understood along with other forms of democratic participation as referendums on how such growth is distributed.[123]

Organization of the Book

The evidence offered in the chapters that follow suggest that it often takes much greater effort on the part of marginalized groups to make their voices heard and their concerns considered. Escalating strategies to amplify communicative efforts can help create conditions and spaces where marginalized interests can be heard, recognized, and brought into public discussion. This process of recognition, which I refer to as "political arrival," can take months, years, or even decades to achieve. Using historical and ethnographic examples drawn from the world's largest democracy, I argue that to understand and theorize democracy—in India and elsewhere—we must move beyond a focus on elections and forms

of "indoor" deliberative and associational politics. These academic foci have pushed outdoor corporeal collective assembly out of our understandings of the history and theory of democracy, though not out of its practice.

This book therefore views collective forms of assembly that seek state recognition not as the antithesis to a healthy democracy, or as external signs of ill health that threaten liberal democratic sovereignty from the outside, but rather as fundamental and ongoing mechanisms for political representation and inclusion and for the shaping and reshaping of the state. I argue that efforts to theorize democracy must take into account not just what happens during elections but also that which occurs *between* elections. The book is therefore organized around seven sets of practices: (1) sit-ins (dharna) and hunger strikes (nirāhāra dīkṣa); (2) efforts to meet or gain audience (*samāvēśam*) with or present a petition or representation (*vinatipatram*, *vijñapti*, or *vijñāpana[m]*) to someone in a position of authority; (3) mass open-air public meetings (garjana); (4) strikes (samme, bandh, hartāl); (5) alarm chain pulling in the Indian railways; (6) road and rail blockades (rāstā and rail roko agitations); and (7) rallies, processions, and pilgrimages to sites of power (yātra, padayātra), along with the mass ticketless travel that often enables these gatherings. I trace genealogies of each of these forms of contemporary practice, mapping shifts in each over time, to make a series of interventions that explore the influences of these practices on the ways that democracy has come to be understood and practiced in India today. Particular attention is given to moments in which the meanings of practices are altered by shifting understandings of the criminal and the political.

Research for this book was conducted over the academic year 2008–9 and during the summers of 2007, 2012, 2013, and 2017, building on earlier fieldwork in 1995–97, 1999–2000, 2002, and 2004. Research in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi was supplemented by archival research in the British Library in London. Archival collections in the National Archives of India (Railway, Public Works Department, and Home Political series), the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (All India Congress Committee collection), the Indian Railway Museum in New Delhi, and Government Railway Police and private archival collections in Nellore, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, and Lucknow provided the foundation for extensive ethnographic and oral history interviews with Government Railway Police, Railway Protection Force officers and administrators, and Indian Railway officials in Secunderabad, Nellore, Lucknow, and Delhi, as well as with social and political activists, party leaders, and members and former members of human rights and student political groups in Hyderabad, Warangal,

Nellore, Lucknow, and Delhi. Although many of the questions in the chapters that follow emerged from my ethnographic encounters, historical and textual methods have played a significant role in developing the answers.

In chapter 1, "Sit-In Demonstrations and Hunger Strikes: From *Dharna* as Door-Sitting to Dharna Chowk," I argue that access to public spaces gives disenfranchised groups power and that the banning of access to such spaces—or, as is common today, the preventive arrest of activists—narrows communicative possibilities. Building the argument that collective actions may not always be acts of opposition, protest, or resistance, this chapter illustrates how such actions can be understood as efforts to use public opinion to create spaces in which authorities can be encouraged or even compelled to hear marginalized voices. Dharna can prompt those in asymmetrically more powerful positions to give audience to those in less powerful positions. Such sit-ins and hunger strikes are often used to hold officials accountable to their campaign promises or to ensure that existing laws are equitably enforced across social difference. What is often elided from efforts to represent the forms of political work that scholars have labeled as "peasant insurgency," "subaltern politics," or the actions of "political society" is the fact that collective actions, street politics, and even violence generally occur only *after* other efforts to make voices heard have failed. They are almost never embraced as options of first recourse.

Chapter 2, "Seeking Audience: Refusals to Listen, 'Style,' and the Politics of Recognition," argues that rather than focusing on speakers' failures to communicate, we should instead attend more closely to the other, less theorized end of the communicative chain, what Richard Burghart characterizes as "the conditions of listening."[124] Doing so enables us to better recognize the ways in which those in positions of dominance attempt to avoid hearing and refuse to acknowledge some efforts to communicate while acknowledging others. Offering evidence for why we should not immediately assume that all collective assemblies are rejections of state sovereignty, chapter 2 advocates for an openness to the possibility that such efforts may reify existing forms of sovereignty and embody the desires of citizens to be recognized, included, and heard by the state—either directly or through ongoing and dynamic networks and collectives that actively connect them with electoral representatives and government officials. The chapter also uses efforts to gain audience with authorities as a way of setting up the theoretical framework through which subsequent chapters historicize specific forms of practice.

Chapter 3, "Collective Assembly and the 'Roar of the People': Corporeal Forms of 'Making Known' and the Deliberative Turn," asks what deliberative

democracy means in a context in which the majority do not speak in the dominant medium or dialect of communication and explores the responses of those who are ignored, mocked, or dismissed when they do speak. Illustrating conditions that make it nearly impossible to receive any sort of hearing, this chapter builds on chapter 2 to outline the options that are available when one's articulations are not able to be heard.

Chapter 4, "The General Strike: Collective Assembly at the Other End of the Commodity Chain," offers a preliminary example of the larger ramifications of this book's argument. Revisiting older scholarship to reflect on the ways that histories of the political have been written, this chapter uses comparative historiography of the general strike in Britain and India to argue for a new approach to the history of collective action. Despite evidence of long histories of collective negotiations with authorities in India that predate the European encounter, historians have persisted in attributing the rise of collective assembly within the Indian political to European origins.[125] Chapter 4 asks how these narratives of European origins came to be constructed and offers other frameworks for thinking about historical changes in the political within both Indian and transnational contexts.

Chapter 5, "Alarm Chain Pulling: The Criminal and the Political in the Writing of History," builds on the methodological interventions of earlier chapters by exploring the ways in which those in power play with the categories of the criminal and the political as tactics for managing (and limiting the impact of) demands for recognition and inclusion. The chapter also dismantles the binary distinctions made between civil society and political society, and between the political styles of elite and subaltern actors, by focusing on the distinctions made by representatives of the Indian state and their role in abstracting certain collective actions and removing them from their longer genealogies of efforts to communicate with state representatives.

Chapter 6, "Rail and Road Blockades: Illiberal or Participatory Democracy?" offers tools for distinguishing between participatory and adversarial forms of collective assembly, arguing that these tools enable more sensitive distinctions to be made among practices that too often get lumped together as the same. The ongoing interactions between the relationship- and network-building capacity of behind-the-scenes actors and the public performances, affirmations, and material manifestations of these relationships and networks offer opportunities for everyday public referenda that occur far more frequently than formal electoral decision making. This is not the Habermasian ideal of a public sphere in which all participants debate and deliberate

equally in an open forum until the best solution is reached, nor is it one in which everyone votes every few years but goes about their private business in between elections. Rather it is one in which opportunities for creating and maintaining active and ongoing channels of representation are constantly being engaged and evaluated, and efforts are made to hold elected official accountable to their promises and to equitable enforcement of existing laws.

Chapter 7, "Rallies, Processions, and *Yātras*: Ticketless Travel and the Journey to 'Political Arrival'" explores methods of "making known" (Telugu, *āvēdana*) that move beyond the deliberative forms of speech communication that asymmetries so often preclude. These alternative mediums of "making known" illustrate how participation in larger networks functions to provide connections to various "axes of access" to representatives of the state and other authorities. Extending the focus on the always shifting line between the criminal and the political, chapter 7 demonstrates the ways that individuals coalesce into groups to eventually achieve what I characterize as "political arrival." It focuses on moments in which the state offers support to actions that are technically illegal—for example, by adding extra carriages or even full trains to accommodate ticketless travel to political rallies—thereby redefining practices viewed as criminal and transforming them into political acts. Arguing that these moments constitute a form of political recognition on the part of the state in which people simultaneously also recognize themselves, the chapter illustrates what successful "hailing" of the state can look like.

Tracing the continued use of colonial-era legal codes in postcolonial India to silence dissent, limit collective action, and prevent participation, the conclusion offers a cautionary warning for the future of democracy, both in India and elsewhere. Today's forms of electoral representation include both democratic and undemocratic features. Bernard Manin reminds us that "the absence of imperative mandates, legally binding pledges, and discretionary recall, gives representatives a degree of independence from their electors. That independence separates representation from popular rule, however indirect."[126] At the same time, he continues, "The people are at any time able to remind representatives of their presence; the chambers of government are not insulated from their clamor. Freedom of public opinion thus provides a democratic counterweight to the undemocratic independence of representatives."[127] It is these reminders—the "clamor" of the people that occurs between elections and that seeks to hold elected representatives accountable, along with the specific sites in which this takes place and their vulnerabilities—to which this book attends.

INTRODUCTION

1 *Jana* (adj., from *janam*, n., people, folk) and *prajā* (adj., people's, public, from *praja*, n., people, folk) are widely used in Telugu in conjunction with the noun *garjana* (roar) to refer to an outdoor collective assembly. Exceptionally large gatherings often also include the adjective *maha* (great or large). For a more detailed discussion of garjana, see chapter 3. Although crowd estimates are notoriously difficult to determine, estimates of attendees ranged from 1.2 to 2.5 million. The *Economic Times* included the December 16, 2010, Telangana Maha Garjana in a list of the largest political rallies in world history, estimating that more people were present than in the 1963 civil rights march on Washington, DC; in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989; in the February 15, 2003, antiwar protest in London (described as "the largest-ever political demonstration in UK history"); or in the 2004 Orange Revolution in Kiev ("Largest Political Rallies across the World," *Economic Times*, September 30, 2013). See also "KCR Fails to Roar at Garjana," *Times of India*, December 17, 2010. Numerous other articles (perhaps citing the capacity of the assembly grounds at Prakashreddypeta, Hanamkonda) suggest there were 25 lakhs (2.5 million) in attendance; for example, "TRS Maha Garjana: We Are Losing Our Patience on Telangana," *Siasat*, December 16, 2010.

2 "Traffic Blocked for over 20 km: Half the People on the Roads," *Andhra Jyothi*, December 17, 2010; "Telangana Maha Garjana: Traffic Jam up to 35 km," *Eenadu*, December 17, 2010.

3 Andhra State was formed in 1953 from two predominantly Telugu-speaking regions of the former Madras State (Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema). A third Telugu-speaking region, Telangana, had been part of the Nizam's state of Hyderabad, India's largest princely state, and was never under direct British rule. After the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, which reorganized many of the states of India along linguistic lines, Hyderabad State was split into three linguistic portions, with predominantly Marathi-speaking districts added to the existing Bombay State, Kannada districts to Mysore State, and Telugu districts combined with Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema to form the new state of Andhra Pradesh. Widespread opposition to this linguistic merger existed from its very inception, with fears that Telangana, already underdeveloped, would be disadvantaged economically.

Opposition swelled during several periods—especially in 1969, 1985, and 1999—with the most recent efforts occurring in the wake of the formation of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti in 2001. See Seshadri, "Telangana Agitation"; Forrester, "Subregionalism in India"; Gray, "Demand for a Separate Telangana"; Simhadri and Vishweshwar Rao, *Telangana*; Kannabiran et al., "On the Telangana Trail"; and Muppidi, *Politics in Emotion*.

4 Thirmal Reddy Sunkari, "Telangana Roars at Karimnagar," *Mission Telangana*, September 13, 2011, http://missiontelangana.com/telangana-roars-at-karimnagar/. See also Gowrishankar, *Ā 42 Rōjulu*. On the administrative stalling after publicly announcing in Parliament the creation of the new state on December 9, 2009, see Pingle, *Fall and Rise of Telangana*, 1 and 105.

5 Gowrishankar, *Ā 42 Rōjulu*.

6 An electoral promise to create Telangana as one of four new states was first made in the 1999 general election as one among a number of promises made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)–led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which included the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) as one of the parties in the alliance. Ultimately, however, the NDA created only three of the four states, leaving the promise of Telangana unfulfilled. In the 2004 general election, the Congress Party–led United Progressive Alliance allied with the newly formed Telangana Rashtra Samiti and "capitalized on the Telangana sentiment to drive the TDP and its ally, the BJP, out of power in the state and at the centre," but they, too, "did not deliver" (Pingle, *Fall and Rise of Telangana*, 100–103). In the 2009 election, all of the major political parties pledged their support and promised to bifurcate the state and create Telangana. But following Home Minister P. Chidambaram's announcement of a resolution to move forward, a backlash from landowners and political leaders in Coastal Andhra caused the government to backpedal on their promise (Pingle, *Fall and Rise of Telangana*, 105; Mahesh Vijapurkar, "Telangana: Of Broken Promises and Congress's 'Catch 22,'" *Rediff News*, December 16, 2009).

7 The day after the Warangal Jana Garjana, on December 17, 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi, a Tunisian street vendor, set himself on fire in response to police harassment, launching what came to be known as the Arab Spring. Just five days after, the Karimnagar Jana Garjana, a group of activists in New York City, took over Zuccotti Park, launching the Occupy Movement. Although both the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements prompted worldwide media coverage and an initial sense of optimism and possibility, their long-term impacts have been less impressive. On the paucity of international media coverage of the Telangana movement, see Muppidi, *Politics in Emotion*.

8 Interview, feminist activist, Hyderabad, August 15, 2012.

9 Pingle, *Fall and Rise of Telangana*, 100–109.

10 On October 31, 2019, the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir was reconstituted into two union territories, "Ladakh" and "Jammu and Kashmir," removing the former state's government and placing the two new territories under the central administration of the Government of India. This reduced the number of Indian states to twenty-eight.

11 Population data taken from Government of India, *Census of India 2011*. Wealth measured by GDP per capita in 2013 (Parilla et al., *Global Metro Monitor 2014*, 4).

12 Frustrations on the part of local Hyderabadis at their exclusion from government administrative positions first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, leading to the development of two distinct categories: "non-Mulki" (applied to bureaucrats and administrators recruited from British-ruled North India brought in to help modernize Hyderabad's administrative systems) and "Mulki" (locals or natives). See Leonard, "Hyderabad"; Haragopal, "Telangana People's Movement."

13 Ravinder Kaur, "How a Farmers' Protest in India Evolved into a Mass Movement that Refuses to Fade," *New Statesman*, February 19, 2021.

14 Sukhbir Siwach, "Explained: How Farmers Have Tweaked Protest Strategy to Stay Put at Delhi Borders for Many More Months," *Indian Express*, March 2, 2021.

15 "Farmer Agitation: Centre Issues 'Formal Letter' Agreeing to Farmers' Demands," *Economic Times*, December 10, 2021.

16 The Hindi term *morchā* (lit., a "front" or "battlefront"; *mōracā* in Marathi, "A battery: also fortified lines or fortifications") is also sometimes used to describe rallies, processions, mass public gatherings, and protests, as well as efforts to motivate a meeting with a government official. It also appears in the names of political organizations (in the connotation of a "front'), such as the Maratha Kranti Morcha, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, and the BJP Dakshina Kannada Yuva Morcha, which regularly lobby the state and organize such actions. For Hindi definitions, see Bahri, *Learner's Hindi-English Dictionary*, 525; Chaturvedi, *Practical Hindi-English Dictionary*, 622. For Marathi, see Molesworth, *Dictionary, Marathi and English*, 394.

17 For a critique of democracy as an "idea," see Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*, 2–3.

18 In focusing on acts that hail the state, I am aware of the complexities surrounding the concept of the state (see, for example, Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State"; and Mitchell, "The Limits of the State"). However, I use the term here to stand in for the range of elected representatives and appointed officials who populate "the State" as defined in the Indian Constitution: "Unless the context otherwise requires, 'the State' includes the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India" (excerpted from Article 12 of the Indian Constitution).

19 On the panoptic expansion of state power, see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. On the ocular capacities of democracies analyzed from the perspective not of states but of citizens, see Green, *Eyes of the People*. Green highlights Max Weber's discussion of the people's role in subjecting elected officials to surveillance that "would render politicians in mass democracy *responsible*" (156, emphasis in original).

20 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 173–75.

21 Althusser, *Reproduction of Capitalism*, 70; Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 174 (emphasis in original).

22 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

23 Agha, "Meet Mediatization," 168. My thanks to Indivar Jonnalagadda for drawing my attention to Agha's reading of Althusser (Jonnalagadda, "Citizenship as a Communicative Effect," 541).

24 Agha, "Meet Mediatization," 168 (emphasis added).

25 Foucault, "Governmentality," 102–3 (emphasis added).

26 Foucault, "Governmentality," 100. See also Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*; *Birth of Biopolitics*; "Subject and Power"; and "Technologies of the Self"; and Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect*.

27 Shah, *Nightmarch*, 12–25. However, even the term *revolution*, typically associated with the overthrow of the existing state, is sometimes understood in South Asia as describing the hailing of state attention. Describing the "revolution" declared by the Dalit Panther movement in Bombay, Juned Shaikh writes, "In Bombay, this revolutionary fervor demanded responsiveness from the democratically elected municipal, state, and federal government in meeting Dalit demands, which included housing and employment" (Shaikh, *Outcaste Bombay*, 135).

28 I am grateful to Lisa Björkman, whose essay "The Ostentatious Crowd" offers an excellent model of this type of attention and from whose thinking I have greatly benefited.

29 India's Constitution includes a list of historically disadvantaged groups ("Scheduled Castes," or those once regarded as "untouchable" by orthodox Hinduism, and "Scheduled Tribes" or Indigenous groups) who were designated to benefit from affirmative action quotas in government employment and admission into government educational institutions. Additional groups have lobbied to be included in the expansion of these reserved quotas (see note 48).

30 Hansen, *Wages of Violence*; Mehta, *Maximum City*; Valiani, *Militant Publics in India*; Ghassem-Fachandi, *Pogrom in Gujarat*; Asim Ali, "'Hindu Rashtra': How Hindutva Has Created a Self-Propelled Market of Mobs," *The Quint*, April 19, 2022; Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "With Eyes Wide Open, We're Hurtling into an Abyss," *Indian Express*, April 26, 2022. See Frykenberg, "On Roads and Riots," for an early example of the use of a hartāl by dominant caste groups to prevent lower castes from accessing a "public" road.

31 Govindrajan, Joshi, and Rizvi, "Majoritarian Politics in South Asia"; Anderson and Longkumer, "'Neo-Hindutva'"; Ramdev, Nambiar, and Bhattacharya, *Sentiment, Politics, Censorship*; Rollier, Frøystad, and Ruud, *Outrage*; Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*; Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalist Movement*.

32 The widespread protests against the 1990 efforts to implement the Mandal Commission's Report included roadblocks (*The Tribune*, Chandigarh, August 31, 1990), rallies, demonstrations, self-immolations by upper-caste college students, and attacks on government buildings and property (Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 602–4). See also "Mandal Commission."

33 Bedi, *Dashing Ladies of Shiv Sena*; Jaffrelot, "Hindu Nationalist Reinterpretation of Pilgrimage."

34 Taylor, "Politics of Recognition"; Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" and "Rethinking Recognition"; Glen Coulthard, "Indigenous Peoples and

the 'Politics of Recognition,'" *IC*, May 6, 2007, https://intercontinentalcry.org/indigenous-peoples-and-the-politics-of-recognition/.

35 As Charles Taylor famously frames the issue, "Collective goals may require restrictions on the behavior of individuals that may violate their [individual] rights" (Taylor, "Politics of Recognition," 55).

36 *Dalit* is a term "widely used to describe India's former untouchables" (Rawat and Satyanarayana, *Dalit Studies*, 2).

37 See, for example, Elizabeth Povinelli's discussion of the ways that those who have been empowered to act as representatives often seek to protect their own privileged positions by denying recognition to those who do not conform to impossible standards of "authentic cultural tradition" (Povinelli, *Cunning of Recognition*).

38 Mitchell, "Visual Turn in Political Anthropology."

39 The creation of these four smaller states has been widely regarded as a response to economic and cultural marginalization. On the role of the region in cultivating and producing cultural differences among those who appear to be speakers of the "same" language, see Srinivas, "Maoism to Mass Culture."

40 Ortner, "Dark Anthropology," 49–50.

41 Ortner, "Dark Anthropology," 50–51.

42 Ortner argues that the same is true of Marx: "Although there are certain optimistic aspects of Marxist theory, the Marx in play in anthropological theory today is primarily the darkest Marx, who emphasized the enrichment of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and powerless, and the relentless global expansion of capitalism as a brutal and dehumanizing social and economic formation" (Ortner, "Dark Anthropology," 51).

43 Ortner, "Dark Anthropology," 58–60. See Robbins, "Beyond the Suffering Subject."

44 As the work of Ramnarayan Rawat shows, activism among Dalits in Uttar Pradesh sought recognition outside Dalit neighborhoods from as early as the 1920s but only became more widely visible, audible, and recognized from the 1980s and 1990s (Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability*). As a result, many scholars assume that Dalit political activism during the earlier decades was nonexistent, rather than recognizing that it was the "political arrival" of Dalits that enabled recognition by a much wider audience which has only recently become aware of their political activism; see, for example, Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*.

45 On the placing of limits on violence, see Balibar, "Three Concepts of Politics." On upper-caste violence and the failure of the state to place checks on this violence as an important catalyst for Dalit political mobilization, see Satyanarayana, "Dalit Reconfiguration of Caste," 46; Muthukkaruppan, "Critique of Caste Violence" and "Dalit."

46 Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, and *Against the Grain*; Graeber, *The Democracy Project*; Von Mises, *Human Action*; Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*; Friedman and Friedman, *Free to Choose*; Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*.

47 Such quotas predate independence. For a discussion of the Mulki (local/native) versus Non-Mulki (nonlocal/migrant) employment debates in the Nizam State of Hyderabad going back to the mid-nineteenth century, see Narayana Rao, *Internal Migration Policies in an Indian State*; Leonard, "Hyderabad: The Mulki–Non-Mulki Conflict"; and on the relationship between reservations for local natives and education, Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam*, 125–26.

48 In 1950, the Indian Constitution introduced reservation quotas in government-aided educational institutions and public sector employment for two historically disadvantaged groups—15% for members of designated Scheduled Castes (groups who had been regarded as "untouchable" by orthodox Hinduism) and 7.5% for members of designated Scheduled Tribes (Indigenous groups). In 1991, spurred by the 1980 Mandal Commission Report, an additional 27% of seats in government-aided educational institutions and public sector employment were reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs), bringing the total to 49.5%. On January 14, 2019, the 103rd amendment to the Indian Constitution awarded an additional 10% reservations for members of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) within the general category (communities that had previously been ineligible for reservations, including members of upper-caste groups), bringing the total to 59.5%. See Subramanian, "Meritocracy and Democracy"; Nath, "Employment Scenario and the Reservation Policy."

49 Habermas, *Structural Transformation* (see especially sections VI and VII).

50 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere." For another critique of Habermas, see Lilti, *World of the Salons*.

51 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 68.

52 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 61 (emphasis added). See also Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*.

53 Nivedita Menon similarly suggests that it is more useful to see differences of "style" not as reflecting "actual empirical groupings" but rather different "*styles of political engagement* that are available to people," and that "the availability is fluid and contextual, not fixed by class." Menon, "Introduction," 11–12 (emphasis in original).

54 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, xviii.

55 Habermas, "Further Reflections," 456.

56 For a discussion of the role of street politics in the American Revolution and in subsequent decades, see Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*. On the role of labor strikes, particularly among coal miners, railway employees, and dockworkers, in expanding electoral participation in democracy, see Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*.

57 Chatterjee, *Politics of the Governed*, 25.

58 Chatterjee, *Politics of the Governed*, 4.

59 Chatterjee, *Politics of the Governed*, 40.

60 Michael Collins, for example, shows that Dalits in Tamil Nadu use disruptions in public space to advocate for "the delivery of basic rights alongside an impartial administration of law," rather than as a form of "availing augmented welfare pro-

visions" or "wrangling tentative concessions from authorities" (Collins, "Recalling Democracy," 71).

61 Attention to the definitions of what constitute "universalist" and "particularist" ideals finds a parallel in Fraser's treatment of the spatial distinctions made between "public" and "private" interests. She writes, "These terms, after all, are not simply straightforward designations of societal spheres; they are cultural classifications and rhetorical labels. In political discourse, they are powerful terms that are frequently deployed to delegitimate some interests, views, and topics and to valorize others" ("Rethinking the Public Sphere," 73).

62 Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*.

63 Mitchell cautions that this is not simply a replacement of "the idealist schemes of the democracy experts with a materialist account" but rather a careful attention to transformations that "involve establishing connections and building alliances . . . to translate one form of power into another" (Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*, 7).

64 Mitchell, "Carbon Democracy," 406.

65 Professor G. Haragopal, address given on the one-year anniversary of the closing of Hyderabad's Dharnā Chowk [designated space for political assembly], Press Club, Somajiguda, Hyderabad, May 15, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8qHBjDrrUs (translated from the Telugu original).

66 My focus not on consensus, stasis, and finality but on contestation, disagreement, and dynamic change has been influenced by Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus*, and Chantal Mouffe, *Chantal Mouffe: Hegemony*.

67 Kohli, "Introduction," 4.

68 Kohli, "Introduction," 4.

69 Jayal, "Introduction," 19–23. Dipesh Chakrabarty's discussion of continuities in political practices offer a notable exception, about which I say more in chapter 7.

70 Municipal and local boards, to which Indians were appointed, were formed in most of the provinces of British India in 1882. The British government's motivation was largely fiscal; it was able to shift financial responsibility for municipalities to Indians while still maintaining significant political control. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 set up provincial legislative councils in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, and an 1892 act increased the number of nominated India representatives on these councils. See Seal, "Imperialism and Nationalism," 12–14. A Legislative Assembly was created by the Government of India Act of 1919 as the lower chamber of the Legislative Council, implementing the Montagu-Chelmsford recommendations of 1918. For a description of the Indian Legislative Assembly that was elected in British India from 1920 onward, see Indian Statutory Commission, *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, 164; Robb, *Government of India and Reform*.

71 Paley, "Introduction," 6.

72 Hansen, "Politics as Permanent Performance," 24. Hansen's characterization of Indian politics as permanent performance offers a very important intervention for understanding democracy not just in India but also elsewhere in the world. At the same time, he grounds his analysis in the Shiv Sena's usage of forms of

political practice that he characterizes as "a politics of spectacle." Approaching their *style* of practice/performance as what sets them apart leaves open the question of whether practices that appear similar across varied contexts can be distinguished through the different audiences they address and the ends toward which they are striving. In the Telangana movement, for example, a similar "politics of spectacle" was used to hold political parties to their campaign promises rather than to assert an alternative sovereignty by displaying the ability to engage in violence with impunity (see note 6).

73 Stern, *The Company-State*.

74 See chapter 4.

75 On the former, see Pandey, *Construction of Communalism*; Ziad, "Mufti 'Iwāz." Ziad offers examples of contemporary historians who have been overly quick to accept colonial representations of the 1816 "Disturbances at Bareilli" as the result of Wahhabism.

76 Shiffman et al., *Beyond Zuccotti Park*; Bayat, *Revolution without Revolutionaries*; Dabashi, *Arab Spring*.

77 For an overview, see Schnapp and Tiews, *Crowds*.

78 Mazzarella, "Myth of the Multitude."

79 Mazzarella, "Myth of the Multitude," 698, 700.

80 Mazzarella, "Myth of the Multitude," 713. Hardt and Negri's more recent book, *Assembly*, published in 2017, could also be included within this latter position.

81 Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 357.

82 Mazzarella, "Myth of the Multitude," 727.

83 Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 8. For a proposed new model of representative government that addresses this lack, see Landemore, *Open Democracy*.

84 Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 1.

85 In public talks, I have repeatedly been asked why I frame practices that predate the formal implementation of electoral institutions in India as part of the history of Indian democracy.

86 Mazzarella, "Myth of the Multitude," 700.

87 Schnapp and Tiews, *Crowds*, xi.

88 Butler, *Performative Theory of Assembly*, 85.

89 Chakrabarty, "Early Railwaymen in India" and "'In the Name of Politics,'" 38.

90 Azzellini and Sitrin, *They Can't Represent Us!*, 41.

91 Frank, "Beyond Democracy's Imaginary Investments."

92 Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*, 27.

93 Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 30, 1787, in Appleby and Ball, *Jefferson*, 108.

94 Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787, in Appleby and Ball, *Jefferson*, 153. Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*, 71.

95 Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*, 42.

96 Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*, 1–3.

97 James Madison, "Federalist 63," in Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *Federalist Papers*, 387, quoted in Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 2.

98 *Dire De L'abbé Sieyes*, 12, quoted in Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 2–3.

99 Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 232.

100 Hyderabad, August 21, 2012. In keeping with ethnographic convention, names have been changed to protect the privacy of my interlocutors.

101 Hyderabad, August 21, 2012.

102 Hyderabad, August 20, 2012.

103 For examples of related projects, on Senegal, see Schaffer, *Democracy in Translation*; on Argentina, see Sabato, *The Many and the Few*; on Yemen, see Wedeen, "The Politics of Deliberation."

104 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 2, 11. For attention to virtual political mobilization, see Hardt and Negri, *Assembly*. For a nuanced discussion of the historical reconfiguration of the work of politics in an era of networked social media, see Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*.

105 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*, 4.

106 Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space*. For a discussion of the former, see his chapter 6; for the latter, see chapter 7.

107 For additional discussion of the relationship between public space and democracy in Western contexts, see Henaff and Strong, *Public Space and Democracy*; and in the context of Latin America, see Avritzer, *Democracy and the Public Space*. From the discipline of geography, see Barnett and Low, *Spaces of Democracy*. Rudolph and Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*; Frankel et al., *Transforming India*; Jayal, *Democracy in India*; Kohli, *Success of India's Democracy*; Chatterjee, "Violence of the State" and *Politics of the Governed*; and Bhargava, *Promise of India's Secular Democracy*, offer an introduction to the vast literature on democracy in India. For anthropological approaches to Indian democracy, see Appadurai, "Deep Democracy"; Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries" and *Red Tape*; Spencer, *Anthropology, Politics and the State*; Banerjee, "Democracy, Sacred and Everyday" and *Why India Votes?*; and Michelutti, *Vernacularisation*. From communication studies, see Gaonkar, "On Cultures of Democracy." On Bangladesh, see Chowdhury, *Paradoxes of the Popular*; and Suykens, "Hartal." On Nepal, see Lakier, "Highway and the Chakka Jam," "Illiberal Democracy," "Public of the Bandh," and "Spectacle of Power"; and Kunreuther, *Voicing Subjects* and "Sounds of Democracy." It is worth considering why theorists have been more interested in the study of public space in the context of processes of democratization than in contexts where democracy is already established.

108 Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics*.

109 See chapter 5, note 31.

110 According to the Indian Railways, 6.219 billion passengers are transported annually, for an average of 17.04 million per day (Indian Railway Board, *Year Book 2006–2007*, 42); *Guinness World Records 2005*, 93.

111 On "the castefication of wage labor" see Pandian, "Building of Indian Railways." For a discussion of racially based strategies of employment in the Indian Railways, see Bear, *Lines of the Nation.* Prasad, "Tracking Modernity" offers a useful analysis of the ways in which class and identitarian divisions were shaped through the provision of railway facilities for the "traveling public."

112 Campbell, *Glimpses of the Nizam's Dominions*, 144.

113 Committee on Disturbances in Bombay, Delhi, and the Punjab, *Report*, 90.

114 "Mamata Banerjee Appeals to Public—Railway Is 'Your Own Service,'" *India-server.com*, February 24, 2010, http://www.india-server.com/news/mamata-banerjee-appeals-to-public-21780.html.

115 Guha, *Elementary Aspects*, 142–43.

116 As in Telangana, the 2006 Gujjar rail blockades and roadblocks in Rajasthan were a response to the failure of elected officials to implement their campaign promises—in this case, promises by the BJP during the 2003 state assembly elections to confer "Scheduled Tribe" status on the community (entitling them to reserved quotas in government employment and educational institutions).

117 Goswami, *Producing India*, 32–33, 59; Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

118 Goswami, *Producing India*, 49.

119 For an early example of the relationship between roads and shifting forms of sociopolitical communication, see Frykenberg, "On Roads and Riots." For a more recent analysis of roads as sites for citizens' engagements with representatives of the state, see Annavarapu, "Moving Targets."

120 One example is the Telangana Rashtra Samiti's 250-kilometer "Maha Rasta Roko" event held on December 29, 2006. See "'Maha Rasta Roko' Peaceful," *The Hindu*, December 30, 2006.

121 Anjaria, *Slow Boil*, 8.

122 See also Anjaria and Rao, "Talking Back to the State"; and, in political science, Auerbach and Thachil, "How Clients Select Brokers"; Kruks-Wisner, *Claiming the State*; and Auerbach, *Demanding Development*.

123 Viewed in this way, the Telangana movement, for example, can be understood as a referendum on the inclusiveness of efforts to remake Hyderabad into a "world-class" city.

124 Burghart, "Conditions of Listening."

125 David Hardiman, for example, briefly acknowledges that Gandhi's *satyagraha* practices were influenced by existing Indian forms of protest against and dialogue with the state in India. But ultimately, he characterizes the mass civil resistance that Gandhi led as something associated with complex state systems and locates its emergence "in Europe in the ferment of the post-French revolutionary period." Mass civil resistance, he continues, "came from the sphere of civil society—the site of a free association of individuals in public bodies, associations and the like—which were valorized in the political thought of the Enlightenment as providing a means for checking and correcting the excesses of state power and governmental authority." Hardiman, *Gandhi*, 39. See chapter 4.

126 Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 236.
127 Manin, *Principles of Representative Government*, 236.

ONE. SIT-IN DEMONSTRATIONS AND HUNGER STRIKES

Portions of chapter 1 originally appeared as "Spaces of Collective Representation: Urban Growth, Democracy, and Political Inclusion," White Paper Series for World Urban Forum, University of Pennsylvania, 2018.

1 Hardiman, *Gandhi*; Gandhi, *Gandhi*.
2 Hardiman, *Gandhi* (especially chapter 3); Spodek, "Gandhi's Political Methodology." Although Spodek argues that the political methods that influenced Gandhi were unique to the region in which Gandhi grew up, there is evidence of the long history of similar practices in other parts of the subcontinent as well (see chapter 4). For discussion of hunger strikes in a global context, see Scanlan et al., "Starving for Change"; Grant, *Last Weapons*; Shah, *Refusal to Eat*.
3 Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics*, 1–2, 16, 22, 90, 189–90, 205–7, 218–19. See also Sreeramulu, *Socio-Political Ideas*.
4 Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics*, 22. See also the medical report in Murthi, *Sri Potti Sriramulu*.
5 Mitchell, 2009, *Language, Emotion, and Politics*, 205. Many in the town of Nellore where he lived recalled him parading around town wearing signboards declaring the practice of untouchability to be a sin and advocating for intercaste dining and temple-entry rights on behalf of Dalits, suggesting that his fasts were part of his larger political program.
6 Police statistics show that nearly two thousand protests were held at Dharna Chowk in 2016, of which approximately 1,500 were granted permits. See U. Sudhakar Reddy, "Dharna Chowk out of Hyderabad," *Deccan Chronicle*, February 24, 2017; Yunus Lasania, "In Search of a 'Dharna Chowk' in Hyderabad," *Livemint*, May 4, 2017.
7 "Anganwadi Workers Clash at Dharna Chowk in Hyderabad," *Hans India*, March 17, 2015; K. Sajaya, speech at "Prajā Gontuka Dharnā Chowk Pustakāviṣkaraṇa" [People's Voice Dharna Chowk Book Release], Press Club, Hyderabad, May 15, 2018; D. G. Narasimha Rao, speech at "Prajā Gontuka Dharnā Chowk Pustakāviṣkaraṇa" [People's Voice Dharna Chowk Book Release], Press Club, Hyderabad, May 15, 2018; Aihik Sur, "Thousands Swarm Dharna Chowk against CAA, NRC," *New Indian Express*, January 5, 2020. All speeches translated from Telugu.
8 K. Sajaya, speech, May 15, 2018.
9 Interview, Hyderabad, August 15, 2012.
10 K. Sajaya, speech, May 15, 2018.
11 From the Telugu definition of *dharnācēyu* (intransitive verb), Gwynn, *Telugu-English Dictionary*, 278; and the Hindi definition of *dharnā* (masculine noun), Chaturvedi, *Practical Hindi-English Dictionary*, 337.
12 Naidu was chief minister of the united Andhra Pradesh from 1995 to 2004. During this period, he explicitly sought to turn Hyderabad into another Singapore