PETER BERGER
University of Groningen

Dimensions of Indigeneity in Highland Odisha, India

This article describes and analyzes forms of indigeneity with reference to a highland community in Odisha called Gadaba. Three types of indigeneity are distinguished: indigenous indigeneity, ascribed indigeneity, and claimed indigeneity. The first concerns local sacrificial practices through which indigeneity is constructed. Significantly, this type of indigeneity is local, symmetric, relational, and the Gadaba are themselves the creators of this representation. Different forms of ascribed indigeneity, by contrast, assign indigeneity to the Gadaba unilaterally, and the relationship between those who ascribe and the Gadaba is asymmetrical and monolithic. The third type of indigeneity is as yet in a nascent state as only a few Gadaba voice an indigenous identity in the larger political field of the state, and no cultural performances are referred to nor do political organizations exist to support such a claim.

KEYWORDS: Odisha—*ādivāsī*—Gadaba—indigeneity—performances

Tʜɪs ᴀʀᴛɪᴄʟᴇ outlines different dimensions of the construction of indigeneity in highland Odisha, India.[1] I am mainly concerned with a community called the Gadaba, their neighboring communities, and their relationships to external agents such as tourists and the state. In analyzing how indigeneity is constructed, reproduced, made, and unmade, I will mainly focus on performances of various kinds. I will distinguish three types of indigeneity: (1) local practices asserting and reproducing an indigenous status, indigenous indigeneity; (2) the ascription of an indigenous status, ascribed indigeneity; and, (3) the political claim of an indigenous status, claimed indigeneity. I will start with the first case, in which indigeneity is constructed in opposition to other local communities.

Iɴᴅɪɢᴇɴᴏᴜs ɪɴᴅɪɢᴇɴᴇɪᴛʏ

The Gadaba[2] people live almost exclusively in the Koraput District of Odisha, a plateau about 900 meters above sea level that is part of the Eastern Ghats mountain range.[3] They are classified as a Scheduled Tribe but not as a Primitive Tribal Group, which is relevant as this means they receive less attention from nongovernmental organizations and state development institutions. Like many other tribal communities in Middle India, the Gadaba are subdivided into two sections: a senior section that speaks an Austro-Asiatic language called Gutob (the Gutob Gadaba), and a junior section who speak a Dravidian language called Ollari (the Ollar Gadaba). All Gadaba, about fifty thousand in total, also speak a local Oriya dialect called Desia (*deśīýa*) as a second mother tongue. The Ollar Gadaba villages are located mainly in the vicinity and east of the small town of Nandapur. The chain of Gutob Gadaba villages stretches west from Nandapur for about 40 kilometers to where the villages of the more famous Bondo and the almost completely unknown Didayi begin. This article mainly considers the senior or Gutob Gadaba community (henceforth simply called Gadaba).

At the outset, the names of the languages, which are also labels for ethnic groups, are a matter of indigeneity. Gutob means "creature of the earth" (Gʀɪғ-ғɪᴛʜs 2008, 675), although this meaning is obscure to most Gutob speakers. Desia means "people of the land" and this category includes a whole range of local communities that are variously labeled as Scheduled Tribes (sᴛ), Scheduled Castes

(sc), or Other Backward Classes (obc) by the state government; they do not speak any language other than Desia. The word "Gadaba" was probably ascribed by others but is nowadays used by all Gadaba as a self-designation. The word is said to derive from the name of the Godavari River, the mythical place of origin of the Gadaba to which they may never return.

A Gadaba would not describe himself or his people as "tribal" or "indigenous." Instead, he would use the term "Gutob people" (Gutobnen*[4] or Gutob *lok*), Desia, Hindu (pronounced "Indu"),[5] or *ādivāsī*. The word choice depends on the context and the status of the person the Gadaba is addressing. The most important local reference is the village, which is not only the place where people live but also a sacred unit that combines territory, descent, and sacrificial commensality. I will return to this context later because the village is the place where indigeneity in its local form is displayed and performed.

Although the Gadaba live in a clearly confined area, one cannot properly speak of a Gadaba territory because the region is far from homogenous. In each village, a cultivating group dominates economically, numerically, and ritually. Aside from Ollar and Gutob Gadaba, other cultivating communities of the region are the Joria, Parenga, Kond, Bondo, and Didayi.[6] Other non-cultivating communities with specialized economic functions are spread over the whole region and live in the villages of the cultivators or in separate hamlets close to these villages. The communities include gardeners (Mali), herders (Goudo), potters (Kumar), blacksmiths (Kamar) and, most ubiquitous of all, the Dombo, who are petty traders, musicians, and weavers. For their services, these groups receive an annual share of the cultivators' harvests (Berger 2002).[7]

The history of the region is difficult to assess. The non-cultivating communities probably found their way up the Koraput plateau after the cultivating communities had settled there. The Dombo were probably the first "immigrant" community, although this can be little more than an informed guess based on the fact that the cultivators live in close symbiosis with the Dombo in areas where no other service communities are found (for example, the Dongria Kond; see Hardenberg 2005). Moreover, the Dombo are the only community for which the Gadaba have a separate Gutob name (Goren*). However, in a Gadaba version of a creation myth that is known in various forms throughout Middle India, all *deśīẏa* communities are considered to be "twelve brothers" descending from a divinely sanctioned incestuous relationship between a brother and sister (Berger 2007, 186–89; 2014). Thus in this mythical sense, all *deśīẏa*s are indigenous to the region.

Much more in evidence than the conjectural history of migration are the sociological similarities of the various communities included in the *deśīẏa* category of the plateau today. As Pfeffer noted (1997), all communities, whether cultivating or not, patrons or clients, share the same totemic descent categories called *bonso*. This is a set of eight categories—cobra, tiger, sun, monkey, cow, bear, vulture, and fish—of which the Gutob Gadaba employ only the first four and the Bondo only the first two. These categories are exogamous and so relate to intermarriage. However, this system of classification results in an opposition between us and them,

agnates and affines, or brotherhood and otherhood, to use Chris Gregory's (2009) apt phrasing of the local terms *bāī* (*bhāī*) and *bandu* (*bandhu* [*dādābāī* and *saga* in Bastar, the place of his research]). This opposition is extremely relevant to all aspects of Gadaba social life and religion. In practice, the descent categories become manifest in villages, and it is here that the notion of indigeneity becomes relevant as the idea of brotherhood is connected to precedence, seniority, and the earth.

The multitude of empirical settlements in the region inhabited by the Gadaba is conceptually structured by the notion of the original village that I call "village clan" (Berger 2007; 2009). Gadaba who belong to any of the four clan categories may settle in various villages. A man may, for example, invert the usual rule of patrilocal residence by moving to his wife's village because his father-in-law has no sons of his own to cultivate the land. Over a few generations, this may result in a small resident group of Gadaba having a different clan category than the locally dominant group. However, these Gadaba will not forget their original village and it is only there that they will be entitled to share sacrificial food with their brothers and the local deities. For example, the village of Cheliamenda is called Giseungom* ("village of the Gise") and the original inhabitants who have a right to share sacrificial food are called Messing.* Messing* belong to the tiger category. Some men from Cheliamenda have settled in Orna (Osolungom* in Gutob, meaning "village of the Osol*"), an original village belonging to the cobra category. The Messing,* who have lived in Orna as long as anyone can remember, may not share the sacrificial food of the Osol* because they are the affines of the latter. Thus they do not belong to the local "earth-people" (*māṭiẏa*) and are regarded as "latecomers" (*upriẏa*). Only the earth-people of an original village, the Osol* in this case, may share sacrificial food.

This indigeneity is ritually enacted during annual sacrificial rituals according to *niẏam*, which could be translated as "socio-cosmic order" or "tradition." The village where I conducted most of my research is called Gangreungom* and belongs to the cobra category. Thus the Gangre* are considered the earth-people and the others are latecomers. Among the latecomers are other Gutob Gadaba from Cheliamenda (Messing,* tiger) and Ridal (Ruda'el,* tiger), as well as Ollar Gadaba from the village of Mundagor (Mundagoria, fish). There are also Dombo and herders, and as the former blacksmith died recently, another may settle there in the future.

On several occasions throughout the annual cycle, the earth-people assert their precedence over the latecomers though sacrificial communion. This is most conspicuous during the sacrifice for *pǎṭhā kandha*, a shrine outside the village. There, a goat is decapitated and the head, blood, and liver are consumed as sacrificial food (*tsoru* or *go`yang**) by the earth-people. The intermediate portion of the animal, the neck, is consumed as "junior sacrificial food" (*sano tsoru*)—a euphemism in sacrificial terms—by their Gadaba affines (Mundagoria, Ruda'el,* and Messing*). The rest of the body is distributed raw to all other household heads (Gadaba,[8] herders, blacksmith, and Dombo), who take the meat and cook their inferior sacrificial food (*lakka'**) several hundred meters away from the shrine. At the end of the ritual, the dignitaries (sacrificer, cook, and headmen) of the earth-people are

carried into the village on the shoulders of the latecomers, more specifically, their affines.

Indigeneity in this context is undisputed and need not be claimed; it is just performed and reproduced. It is internal in the sense of "local," implicit in most ritual and non-ritual activities in the village, and "indigenous" as it is interwoven in the social and religious fabric of the community and expressed in terms of those categories that structure the Gadaba and Desia socio-cosmic order (*niẏam*, that is, brothers and others, senior and junior, earth-people, and latecomers). Thus, I speak of indigenous indigeneity. This local "religious" form of indigeneity can further be described as symmetric or alternating. All Gadaba are earth-people and thus indigenous to one village and latecomers in all others. It is neither a monolithic claim of a single ethnic group nor a static ascription. This status is a taken-for-granted fact that is permanent when perceived from the viewpoint of original villages and their earth-people and latecomers. However, when we consider interaction between villages, the status of who is indigenous and who is not changes depending on the location and the actors engaging in various relationships in diverse contexts. In these relationships, brotherhood is associated with indigeneity, ritual priority, and agnatic continuity, but it is always complemented by relationships with "others." Most importantly, these others provide "fertility" and are a necessary condition of agnatic continuity, hence the perpetuation of indigeneity.

Ascribed indigeneity

In contrast to the local and relational form of indigeneity are various forms of what I call ascribed indigeneity, which are translocal, less dependent on context or alternating, and more monolithic. Of the three forms of ascribed indigeneity I will discuss, two rest on the opposition between "tribes" and "mainstream" and aim at different, though clearly related, representations of highland communities. The first is the representation of "colorful" tribalness at state-sponsored Tribal Fairs (*ādivāsī melā*), which mainly aspire to turn tribal communities into folklore and feed facile tribal symbolism into the notion of statehood. While the "exotic" dominates in this representation of indigeneity, the second form of ascribed indigeneity, performed in local primary schools, mainly constructs notions of "backwardness" within the dominant ideology of development. Here, inversely, mainstream symbols and ritual practices are infused into the local lifestyle. Attempts are made to "mainstream" local lifestyles by eradicating unwanted aspects of local culture and, in this sense, unmaking indigenous indigeneity. Although apparently contradictory, both strategies go together. The first wants to display citizens as "tribal" and the second wants to turn "tribal" people into citizens. There is also a third, Western, form of ascribed indigeneity in the form of tribal tourism, which takes recourse in the altogether different discourse of authenticity, as opposed to folklore. I will deal with the contexts of primary schools first, then turn to the Tribal Fair and finally to Tribal Tours.

In the area under consideration, education and educational facilities have developed significantly in recent years. When I first stayed in the area in 1996, and regularly visited a Gadaba village for about two months, the school was virtually deserted and I never came across the teacher. This illustrated the proverbial absence of teachers in tribal villages as described in a popular Desia song available on cassette in the late 1990s: "We have a school in our village but the teacher never comes" (*gāo iskul ācchi kintu māshṭāro asla nāi*). In contrast, the larger Gadaba village where I conducted my research from 1999 onwards already had a well-functioning government primary school. The school was founded in the 1960s, but the registration of children had only been recorded from the 1980s. In the 1990s, a hostel was built to house students coming from other nearby villages, and about thirty to forty children were then staying there.

The first seven years of primary education are now offered at the school and there are six teachers. One is a Gadaba woman, who grew up outside the Gadaba area and does not know the Gutob language or the local culture. The other teachers are Hindus from the plains. After the school day is over, all of them leave as soon as possible and hardly ever visit the Gadaba village itself, as the school lies outside the confines of the village proper. The exception to this rule is one teacher who knows the local conditions very well and tours the village daily, talking to the people and motivating parents to send their children to school. He has been teaching in this school for sixteen years and previously taught in a neighboring Gadaba village for eleven years.

All of the teachers, however, share what can be called the "ideology of development."[9] In 2010, I interviewed the teachers from this school and had another long discussion with about twenty teachers from the local administrative unit, the "Block." They attended a four-day training program on the "Construction of Knowledge" and then agreed to hold a discussion about the theme I suggested, "Primary School Education and Local Culture." While various opinions were raised, all the teachers shared the ideology of development, constantly referring to concepts such as backwardness, simplicity, low social status, and uplift. It became very clear that local cultural practices were regarded as the main obstacle in forming "good citizens," as one young female teacher put it. Among these obstacles were, most notably, consumption of beef and liquor, and "superstition" such as death rituals involving the killing of buffalo. The general instructor of the workshop summarized his strategy for "mainstreaming" (his expression) the children with the apt words "education and exposure."

For their part, the Gadaba are not too concerned about school. Most adult Gadaba see it as a matter for children, something that has little influence on their own daily lives. In 2000 when the Ganesh *pūjā* (worship service) was not celebrated as usual inside the school but in the village center next to the shrine of the earth deity, not many cared about it: "These gods are for the children, it won't do any harm," one elderly Gadaba said. Very few men and even fewer women between the ages of thirty and forty can read or write at all. In 1999, one Gadaba

boy from the village tried to finish the tenth grade (*meṭrik*) in the nearby town and was therefore christened with the Brahman name "Mishra" for this effort. He never finished it, but he still has the nickname. Ten or fifteen years ago, I did not feel that the pupils were learning much at school and those few who managed to go more or less regularly for four years (as it was then) went on to cultivate their land just like their fathers afterwards.

As mentioned above, teachers perceive certain features of the local lifestyle to be mainly responsible for the "backwardness" of the Gadaba. In 1999 the teachers made the children parade through the village while chanting "become educated and stop drinking" (*pāṭh paṛho madh chaṛo*). This motto was addressed to the children's parents but it had no effect. The campaign against consuming beef was more influential. All non-Gadaba teachers I met said that educated people do not eat beef.[10] Fifteen years ago all students had to abandon eating beef and pupils told me that transgressions were punished with beatings. Some students resumed eating beef after they left school, but there has been a general, recognizable trend among the younger, just married, generation to avoid beef. They told me that they had stopped also because they occasionally visit Hindu temples and it would therefore be inappropriate.

The result was that a considerable number of young men decided to stop sacrificing cattle during marriage and death rituals, which had been part of *niyam* or tradition. When I stayed in the village in early 2010, it became apparent that cattle sacrifices in the context of life-cycle rituals had been completely abandoned (unless a "bad" death occurred). However, cattle are still sacrificed for local deities during annual village festivals. Even with no one left to eat the meat, I was told, these sacrifices could not be discontinued.

Several conspicuous changes had occurred in the village in 2010 since my research period about ten years earlier. The village was added to the power grid in 2006 and people now gather in some homes in the evenings to watch Oriya films on DVD. Several young people have decorated their parents' homes with posters of Bollywood stars, Hindu deities, or "Western" motifs such as cars or skyscrapers. Due to an increase in wage labor among young, still unmarried men, considerable economic resources are available to them and they invest without hesitation in consumer goods, such as stereos, mobile telephones, watches, and especially, clothes. I also heard the word *style* for the first time in 2010. I did not iron my shirts, which one teenager commented upon, which was obviously not a matter of *style*. Neither was my old Rajdoot motorcycle, which received pitying looks although it might have been considered a vintage bike in the West. On the whole, adolescent Gadaba are now embracing the mainstream with regards to consumer goods. Moreover, I observed a certain adaptation in gestures. For example, for the first time I noticed Gadaba performing the Hindu gesture of blessing when feet touch incidentally or when passing by a temple. Together with adopting Hindu dressing styles and gestures, I saw Gadaba playing the most national and "mainstream" of all sports, cricket, for the first time in 2010. Earlier a kind of volleyball was popular among the young, but I never came across Gadaba swinging bats in the region.

While many young Gadaba strive for greater wealth by working in unskilled wage labor for long periods in far-off places in order to buy consumer goods, a small minority of mostly men try the path of education instead of wage labor. While a boy called Mishra was the educational high-flyer among the village Gadaba fifteen years ago, four young Gadaba men are attending college (as of 2010). They appear to take their studies seriously and they distance themselves from wage labor. At the same time, educational possibilities have considerably improved in the area. Within short reach are two medium schools (upper primary), a government high school, an Ambedkar college (established in 1997), a high school particularly for sc and st girls, and a Christian English medium school (the last two of which were established in 2008).

The teacher's earlier assumption that "education and exposure" would lead to "mainstreaming" young Gadaba has thus proven to be largely correct. While a few students stay on the path of education with the probable aim of getting white-collar jobs, the majority of students have been exposed to examples of *style* provided by their *(h)eroes* on TV and want to invest their earned money in consumer goods.

The older generation does not regard these changes with suspicion or see them as a threat to their culture, and there are no ostentatious demonstrations of their indigeneity to counter the "mainstreaming" forces. The performances I discuss in the next two sections are not perceived by the Gadaba to be claims of "tribalness" but are rather seen as entertaining ways to make some money without much relevance for their lives.

The performances that take place in primary schools are mainly unrelated to the social and religious life of the children and are intended to contribute to their "mainstreaming." Therefore, no local festivals are celebrated or even discussed in school. Performances either celebrate state holidays, such as Independence Day or Republic Day, or Hindu worship. Saraswati and Ganesh Puja are the only religious performances conducted in the school.

The Saraswati worship I witnessed in 2010 certainly was a performance to unmake indigenous indigeneity. The classroom had been converted into a temple with the image of Saraswati in the center of a decorated wall at the back of the room. The teachers assisted a Brahman priest who was touring by motorcycle from one school to the next to perform the fire sacrifice for the occasion. A Brahman initiated one child as a "chalk child." When I asked the teacher afterwards what this was and why only one child was initiated, he answered, only "those who know" (*je jānibe*) would do it and the Gadaba generally do not seem to belong to this category. The children watching this authoritative performance learned a form of religious worship quite different from the type their fathers perform in their village and houses. Bloody sacrifice was replaced by fire offerings, Sanskrit *mantra*s, and the taking of *darśan* (auspicious sight).

The institutional structures of governmental primary schools in the area, and the discourse and practices of underdevelopment and mainstream superiority associated with it, have consequences for local expressions of Gadaba culture as the changes of clothing styles, gestures of the young generation, and the substitution

of sacrificial victims indicate. Both the demonstration of mainstream culture transported by the schools and their representation of the uneducated, underdeveloped *ādivāsī* they ascribe are semantically far removed from local patterns of meaning and practice I described in the section on indigenous indigeneity. The former (mainstream culture) is perceived as powerful, at least by some, and the latter (represented as uneducated) as undesirable—at any rate, by a few—for example, the present-day teenager who is ashamed of her father's habit of beef consumption. This situation thus involves aspects of the experience of "humiliation" as described by Marshall D. Sahlins—the process of learning to hate what you are in order to then want to become somebody else (2005, 38). However, this experience is not yet shared by the majority. The next form of ascribed indigeneity I discuss is also semantically removed from local Gadaba ideas and practices, even though it is a parody of some aspects of the latter, but its impact is much less than that of government schools.

Tribal fair:
appropriation of traditional "tribalness" by the state

Since 1982, the government of Odisha has organized an annual Adivasi Mela in the capital, displaying the "62 tribes of Odisha" in terms of food, dress, houses, and dance performances. The word "display" is appropriate since the event is frequently described as an "exhibition." The website advertising the event says: "[The] *Ādivāsī* exhibition is the earliest institutionalized steps [*sic*] towards mainstreaming the tribal people of the state through societal dynamics of interaction and interface with their Non-tribal counterparts."[11] The tribes are supposed to meet the nation and vice versa. Accordingly, national symbols such as the tricolor flag are on display, and administrators and politicians abound. The whole event begins on the eve of Republic Day, and in 2010, for the first time, it lasted for two weeks instead of one. Because of his visit to New Delhi, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was only able to visit the Adivasi Mela on the second day.

For many years, perhaps since the beginning of the 1980s, the fair's Gadaba representatives have been recruited from the village of my research. In 2010, I accompanied the "troupe"[12] on their trip to Bhubaneswar. It consisted of ten Gadaba women and one man, five Dombo musicians (who were not mentioned throughout the performance, perhaps because they do not fit the cliché of colorful tribals and are frequently taken to be an "untouchable caste"), the Block Development Officer (BDO), and his assistant.

From the earliest reference to the Gadaba in the census reports, this community has been associated with the women's circle dance, called *demsa*, and with their attire. Women used to wear self-spun clothes (*kisalo**) with blue, white, and red stripes. One piece was worn around the hip and another was tied above the left shoulder. Furthermore, the women used to wear huge earrings that pierced the ear conch and wore their hair in what Elwin described as the "door-knocker" style with the hair tied together in the back like a swing.[13] In the eastern part of the Gadaba area, where I conducted most of my research, this attire has not been worn for several decades

and has been replaced by the general Desia style: short colorful saris purchased on the local markets, three nose rings,[14] and oiled hair tied in a knot behind the right ear. When we embarked on our trip to the capital, the young women, whom I had known since their childhoods, displayed the latest development in clothing style: they wore their hair and their long saris in the Hindu fashion and had abandoned the nose rings for nose pins. However, they all brought their *kisalo** and big brass earrings to wear during the dance performance.

After a tedious journey that was complicated by the fact that the Maoists (or Naxalites) had proclaimed a strike (*bandh̲*) on public transport, we reached Bhubaneswar and the troupe was lodged in the Tribal Museum's hostel. Since I had no Adivasi Mela identification badge and was not officially part of the troupe, I was not allowed to stay overnight and so I left the group until the next morning. The following day, the girls rehearsed their dance, mainly under the guidance of the leading Dombo musician, the *moira*, who always plays the *moiri*, an oboe-like instrument. Significantly, whereas the circle dance is performed in a standard way during village festivals, the girls were improvising a lot and were also instructed to do so by the *moira*. Once he told them, "Do it with pleasure [*kuśi*], this is not tradition [*niẏam*]!"

That evening the troupe was driven to the fairground by bus for the inaugural show. We were joined by a troupe of Kond women, whose faces had been painted to mimic the Kuttia Kond-style of facial tattoo. At the fairground the women kept close together, walking alongside a larger-than-life image of the chief minister surrounded by dancing tribal women. The women then disappeared behind the stage and only appeared on stage after two hours of speeches by organizers and politicians who were announcing new publications about tribal development, honoring tribal students, noting particular achievements in tribal welfare, and so forth.

While the Gadaba dancers were preparing backstage for their performance, I walked to the "traditional Gadaba house" to meet other Gadaba from the village of my research, whom I had not seen for six years. They had already been in Bhubaneswar for a week to build the traditional round house, which, even more than the female clothes, has completely disappeared in real life. In front of the round house was a kind of open museum displaying a miniature Gadaba world. A small landscape was modeled, containing a female figure dressed in the *kisalo** who was sitting behind the loom weaving the same piece of cloth; in a different place, another woman was pounding rice. There was a small shrine to the earth deity amidst the small houses in the village. References to modern life were not absent, however. A tall radio tower stood in the center of the landscape and power lines crisscrossed the area. Their own village had been electrified four years before. Various boards informed the visitor about Gadaba issues: "Do you know? Rice domestication is Gadaba's initiation," and "Weaving of *kisala* [Gadaba cloth] by *kereng̲* fibre," but also, "We are very happy to get rights on forest land."

The Gadaba dance group was the second troupe on stage on this first evening of the Adivasi Mela, and their performance lasted about twenty minutes. However, it had gotten so late due to all the talking and honoring that a large part of the audience was soon ready to leave again. After the performance, the Gadaba

women reappeared from backstage together with the Kond women with whom they had made friends, and we all went to the Gadaba round house. On our way, we passed by the house of the Dongria Kond, where some Dongria and others were gathered. When the Gadaba women passed by, I overheard someone from that direction comment: "They are *artificial*" (using the English term).[15] I found this comment quite remarkable because the whole fair was so obviously a perfor- mance of "tribalness" and the Gadaba were aware of this.

What did the Gadaba think of it all? For most of the elder Gadaba men and women, the Adivasi Mela is simply a job to earn some money and an opportunity to see some- thing else. Round houses and the *kisalo** belong to the "people of the past" (*agtu lok*). One middle-aged woman said that the Adivasi Mela would be like *rājā beti*, the "duty to the king." "Previously," she said, "the king called us to Jeypore to work, and now this is work for the government [*sarkār kām*]." The young women, most of whom were visiting the Adivasi Mela for the first time, had little to say about it. For them it was an exciting event, but also one that involved a lot of bad food, a very tire- some ride to Bhubanswar, and an awful trip back to Koraput on the first completely overcrowded train running after the ban on public transport. These women were already used to the fact that outsiders like to see them dance in that way because they grew up with short but regular visits to their village by Western tourists who wanted to see the Gadaba women perform in exactly the way they did in Bhubaneswar. But the visits of the Western tourists took place in a framework very different from the state paternalism the Gadaba are exposed to at the Adivasi Mela.

Tribal tours: demanding tribal authenticity

The third example of ascribed indigeneity is based on the idea of the highland population's cultural "authenticity" rather than the idea of a sociocul- tural mainstream. While the Adivasi Mela in Bhubaneswar is almost exclusively visited by Oriya speakers (the whole program is in Oriya), who enjoy tribal folklore on their doorstep, only Western tourists pay a lot of money to be taken by guides on dusty roads from Bhubaneswar to "remote" tribal villages. One website prom- ises: "Finally it [the tour] allows you to spend a few days in the remote uplands of Orissa among some of the most primitive tribal groups, who have kept their cul- ture alive in spite of the onslaught of modern civilization."[16]

Since the late 1980s, more or less around the same time as the advent of the regular Adivasi Mela in Bhubaneswar, tourists have been taken to the tribal areas of south Odisha during the dry season. This tourism still functions on a very small scale. As the site of my research is the village most involved in the Adivasi Mela, two senior Gadaba from that village also managed to attract the tour guides to their vil- lage for the last twenty-five years or so. Tourists are expected to come on Thursdays so they can visit the "Bonda market," which is virtually at the end of the road. On their way to the market, they make arrangements with the senior Gadaba, jokingly known as the "dance guru" (*nāṭ gurū*), and they visit the village on their way back. In the meantime, the senior Gadaba arranges for Dombo musicians to come from

another village and motivates a group of women to dress up in their *kisalo** and big brass earrings.

Usually after a brief walk through the village, the tourists wait outside the village for the dance to begin. While the Gadaba usually dance inside the village on the central place close to the assembly platform and the shrine of the earth deity, dances for tourists always take place on a threshing ground outside the village boundaries. On one occasion, an annual festival was taking place and men and women were dancing when the tourists arrived. The dance stopped and the women were sent back to their houses to dress up, an order which they reluctantly followed. Half an hour later, the dance was continued outside the village, now without men and with the women in "Gadaba" dress. Everything is usually over within half an hour, and the tour guide deals with the financial demands of the Gadaba while the tourists climb back into their jeeps.

On one occasion, the tourists also wanted to see a sacrifice, and the village sacrificer agreed to offer a chicken to the earth deity, reasoning that an extra offering would do no harm. After the brief and very unspectacular performance, one of the tourists complained to me that the sacrifice was not "authentic" because the shrine, a heap of stones with a stone "door," had not been opened. I explained to him that the door would only be opened on three yearly occasions but that this would not be particularly exciting either.

While tourists ponder the question of authenticity, I was always puzzled by the indifference with which the Gadaba men and women (who have to dress up) perceived the whole affair. They had no idea about the motives of the Western tourists nor were they interested. They were used to people who liked to see them dance in a way their ancestors, the "people of then" (*agtu lok*), did. Although I noticed a certain embarrassment the first few times I watched the Gadaba women turn into "Gadaba," something that they confirmed in conversations, I never had the impression that the tourists' regular but short appearances had any influence on how they perceived themselves.

Also, nobody was interested in making more money from this. Fifteen years ago I asked some old women to show me how they wove the *kisalo*,* and they agreed after some hesitation. When they enjoyed the work they had not done for years, I suggested that they should teach the art to the younger generation and could also sell *kisalo** to the tourists for an amount of money they would otherwise have to earn by engaging in government-sponsored construction work for maybe a hundred days. However, nobody ever seriously considered that option.

The scenarios of representation presented in this section share the quality of being one-sided: tourists, the deputies of the state, and teachers all ascribe a certain kind of indigeneity and oppose it to a stated or implicit counterpart. In this process of ascription the Gadaba are not devoid of agency. On the contrary, they initiate the contact with the tourists and try to get the most from them, they choose to listen to the teachers or not, and they decide to go to Bhubaneswar for the Adivasi Mela. However, the act of representing and defining their indigeneity they deliberately leave to others. This is different in the last form of indigeneity I will discuss,

in which the act of representation is reappropriated. Claiming indigeneity in this respect resembles the act of performing indigeneity locally, the indigenous indigeneity; however, it differs from the latter inasmuch as it is directed to the outside and located on a wider political field, if only tentatively so.

CLAIMING INDIGENEITY

Gadaba do not yet formulate claims to indigeneity in the general public and political sphere; there are no Gadaba associations or any other formal representative body to voice the demands of this community or organize cultural performances of any kind. When I started my research in 1999, I knew of very few Gadaba who had regular paid work outside the village. In the village where I did my research, one Gadaba was working for the local Forest Department (*foreshṭī*) and was supposed to watch over the illegal cutting of trees. In the region as a whole, I only knew of very few Gadaba primary school teachers.

The situation has changed. One Gadaba teacher told me that there are now about twenty to twenty-five Gadaba teachers employed in the region's schools, although I could not verify this number. During my stay in 2010, I only had the chance to interview this one teacher, here called Guru Sisa, a Gadaba whom I knew from the beginning of my research. I assume his views and opinions are quite exceptional because other Gadaba I know who are keen to make contact with local politicians and administrators tend to downplay their status as Gadaba. Guru Sisa, on the other hand, emphasized that Gadaba are neither Hindu, Christian, nor Muslim, but *ādivāsī*: "We sacrifice cows, so how can we be Hindus?" "Previously," he said, "when we could not read and write they told us we would be Hindus, but this is not the case." He encounters Gadaba students who are ashamed (*lāj*) of their language, but he strongly opposes this view and tells them not to "hide" but to embrace their languages (Gutob and Desia) and culture. As such, he speaks Desia as well as Gutob in class because he has observed that new pupils felt uncomfortable with Oriya and do not say anything.

While he has a very clear opinion about the necessary continuity of language and culture, for example, in terms of worship, he is not an advocate of the status quo. "We can enter the mainstream, but only in terms of knowledge," he said. As far as development is concerned, he observes that politicians try to implant their vision of development, while he thinks the Gadaba should find their own way. He clearly identified the field where improvement is necessary: he thinks pupils need more motivation to come to school, since knowledge is the key to improvement. Furthermore, schools need to be better equipped. In the school where he teaches, he is one of four teachers (and the only Gadaba) who manage 241 pupils in 3 classrooms. He says this has to improve.

Moreover, he tried to organize meetings of the region's Gadaba teachers to discuss these issues. But his colleagues are hesitant and his attempts have not been successful so far. However, his actual demand for an organized forum to deal with questions about Gadaba education makes it seem very likely that there will be such

a platform in the future. Although Guru Sisa is in contact with the UNICEF office in Koraput town and all his pupils carry light blue satchels with the UNICEF logo, he did not refer to the UN jargon of "indigenous peoples" to support his claims of cultural distinctiveness.

CONCLUSION

I have described different performances related to indigeneity: the Adivasi Mela, dance performances for tourists in a Gadaba village, Saraswati worship in the local school, and sacrificial rituals of the annual ritual cycle. I have argued that these performances construct very different types of indigeneity: first, a symmetric, local, and relational form of indigenous indigeneity, and second, different forms of ascribed indigeneity. What these latter forms have in common is that they are more asymmetric in the sense that the construction process remains a one-sided representation, and more monolithic in the sense that the framework is less relational and shifts less with reference to particular contexts. That is, while the identities of earth-people and latecomers alternate depending on context and locality, the identities of those who ascribe indigeneity to the Gadaba—the state agents, teachers, and tourists—and those representations they create, are fixed. No matter to which village the teacher goes the identities of educated and underdeveloped do not alternate. The third form is claimed indigeneity, and I have pointed out that, like indigenous indigeneity, this form of representation is local. Moreover, the Gadaba are themselves the creators of the representation. However, the two forms of indigeneity are different inasmuch as claimed indigeneity involves a new form of outwardly directed political agency, which is not yet manifested in particular performances. On the basis of the little I can say about this nascent form of indigeneity it is likely that it will develop into an equally substantialized and less relational identity like the ascribed types of indigeneity.

While it may be a truism that identity constructions—indigeneity being only a particular case—are relational processes, the present examples show that this aspect merits particular attention. If we look at this relational feature, further differences between the types of indigeneity construction become apparent. In the symmetric case of indigenous indigeneity, various oppositions are constructed to refer to notions of precedence, seniority, and territory as, for example, in the contrast between earth-people and latecomers. This hierarchy, however, is always made and remade on a local level and all the communities in the region are, on a more inclusive level, conceptualized as Desia or indigenous people sharing a common mythological origin.

In two examples of ascribed indigeneity—Tribal Fairs and government schools—the opposing pole is the notion of "mainstream." This little researched term would also merit a conference and a publication of its own. I discuss it only briefly here in relation to the concept of indigeneity since the two terms reciprocally define each other, albeit in a negative way: what is indigenous is not mainstream, and vice versa. Subhadra Channa described the term in the following way: "The 'mainstream' of a nation-state is that culture, historical stream or way of life, which provides the

primary symbolization of a new nation-state" (Channa 2008, 73). Thus, for her, the mainstream is a powerful conglomerate (rather than a system) of symbols and a "myth of commonality" (72). Further, she stresses that as a symbolic conglomerate the mainstream is heterogeneous in origin and composition (not only Hindu but also Western, and so on) and essentially diffuse, which is the characteristic that lends it adaptability and power. Mainstream is not an analytical concept but a vague notion in opposition to indigeneity that connotes further homologous oppositions such as "developed" and "backward" (71).

In comparing the cases of Adivasi Mela in Bhubaneswar and the Sarasvati Puja in a Gadaba village school, it can be noted that the construction of mainstream and indigeneity influence each other. In Bhubaneswar, on the eve of Republic Day, the state attempts to include aspects of tribal indigeneity in its own symbolism. The tribes are represented as "different" but also as part of the state of Odisha and the Indian nation as a whole. The common slogan, "unity in diversity," applies here. The motivations behind this appropriation are probably diverse and complex. Among other things, it is a justification of the "development regime" and an argument against Maoist insurgency as the state displays an ethic of concern toward the *ādivāsī*. Conversely, at the local level of the Gadaba village, primary school teachers act as agents of the state by trying to infuse mainstream symbolism in the form of Hindu forms of worship and national celebrations into the lifestyle of the local population. At least they hope it will become part of the children's habits, helping to turn them into "good citizens."[17]

In relation to claimed indigeneity, it is significant to note that Guru Sisa approaches the notion of the mainstream in a selective manner, as a Gadaba primary school teacher. Gadaba should, he asserts, join the mainstream with respect to knowledge, but they should resist it in religious and cultural terms. However, Channa's argument (2008, 75) is certainly true: in order to assert a separate identity, you first have to assume the features and means of the mainstream.

Unrelated to the notion of the mainstream is the third example of ascribed indigeneity, namely the ascription by the organizers of Tribal Tours and their Western clients. They prefer to leave the notion of mainstream out of the picture since this minimizes the claim of, and demand for, authenticity. The pole opposing the ascribed indigeneity is unstressed in this case in comparison to the others.

Putting the present case in a more comparative perspective, it is useful to refer to an article by Robert Parkin (2000) in which he compares three cases of identity construction in Middle India: first, the Juang and Hill Bhuiya; second, the Santal; and third, the campaign of a local elite supporting tribal claims to land in what is now Jharkhand. Parkin argues that the Juang and Bhuiya do not assert a separate *ādivāsī* identity, nor do they emphasize "tribal" elements in their culture. At the same time, their communities drift towards assimilation into caste society. The Santal, by contrast, have a long history of consciously making and remaking their identity (that is, separation, Hinduization, Santalization) in opposition to the colonial regime, the postcolonial state, and the policies of the mainstream. By using modern media, they strongly assert a separate *ādivāsī* identity and revive and

reconstruct "tribal" performances, myths, and language (see also Schulte-Droesch in this special issue). Parkin's third example refers to the globalized discourse of indigeneity used by a Western-educated elite to support *ādivāsī* land claims. They propose a pseudo-scientific argument that supposes prehistoric links between indigenous people, in South Asia and abroad, and mainly supports such statements by noting the similarity of art forms.

If these examples are taken as ideal types, then the Gadaba case most resembles the first example of Juang and Bhuiya. Gadaba do not, yet, assert a separate *ādivāsī* identity in any organized form and have, accordingly, not fashioned performances to support such a claim. The rituals and symbols that would suggest themselves to such an end are rather obvious and already serve as symbols in the dimensions of indigenous indigeneity (the secondary burial called *go'ter** that is identified with the Gadaba in the region) and ascribed indigeneity (*demsa* dance and attire).

Much like the Juang and Bhuiya described by Parkin, the younger, adolescent Gadaba strive toward what they consider to be mainstream in various ways. The majority of unmarried young men seek financial means through prolonged wage labor in far-away places, such as working on a pineapple plantation in Kerala for nine months. Much of their money is then invested in consumer goods such as stereos, television sets, watches, or clothes. In contrast to a few years ago, before the village was added to the power grid, these young men and women receive a thorough education in the concept of *style* from the Oriya movies they watch in the evening. Such examples of *style* not only pertain to outer appearance and consumer culture but also, much more subtly, to gestures. Another, smaller group of mainly young men approach the mainstream through education rather than wage labor. The Hindu teacher thus quite appropriately summarized the strategy of unmaking indigenous indigeneity and "mainstreaming" the *ādivāsī* in the formula "education and exposure." In the future, the younger generation may utilize the social and symbolic resources of the wider society to politically assert a separate Gadaba identity.

These changes are partly the result of the more momentous aspects of ascribed indigeneity, not so much of the paternalistic attitude of the Tribal Festival that displays the tribals' colorfulness in the state capital and perhaps even less of the brief visits from Western tourists, but particularly of the governmental education system that systematically produces an environment for the experience of what Sahlins called humiliation, the downgrading of one's own culture in the face of a powerful and promising "modernity," here Hindu mainstream society. However, economic (wage-labor) and technical (television) changes contribute to and facilitate the impetus provided by the schools and governmental policies in general.

Notes

1. Until 2011 this state of the Indian Union was called Orissa.

2. Serious ethnography of the Gadaba began with a publication by Fürer-Haimendorf (1943) on "megalithic rituals." The few ethnographers who followed were also mainly interested in the "secondary burial" of the Gadaba, called *go'ter* (Izikowitz 1969; Pfeffer 1991; 2001). Among the ethnographers of the region, only Pfeffer had a sustained interest in the

Gadaba and he published an article on their relationship terminology (Pfeffer 1999). Another noteworthy publication is Mohanty (1973/1974) on "bond-friendship." Some useful information can also be found in a publication by the Anthropological Survey of India on the Ollar Gadaba (Thusu and Jha 1972), a development "handbook" (Nayak et al. 1996), and an account by a trained biologist (Kornel 1999). My monograph on Gadaba religion and society is the first comprehensive study of the Gutob Gadaba (Berger 2007; 2014).

3. Research was conducted in southern Odisha for 22 months between 1999 and 2003 and was financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Fazit Foundation. More recent research was conducted for two months in 2010 and was supported by the University of Groningen.

4. Gutob terms are marked with an asterisk, such as *kisalo**; all other indigenous terms are Desia.

5. The Gadaba do not aspirate and so "Hindu" becomes "Indu," "hero" becomes "ero," and so forth.

6. The Rona, who were the militia of the local kings, received significant grants of land and are also mainly cultivators (for example, see Otten 2006).

7. What looks almost like a traditional account of a local *jajmānī* (the traditional system of division of labor and gift-giving among Hindu castes of a locality) system displays, nevertheless, some distinctive features. Not only would this be a caste system without a top (Brahmans) and bottom (Harijans)—as Chris Gregory (2009) observed for Bastar—significantly, the division of labor is not structured by the value of purity and pollution in the first place. Gadaba, for example, eat beef (see below for qualifications) and need no other community to dispose of their dead cattle (which they cut up, distribute, and consume themselves). However, the notion of purity (irrespective of the concepts of birth and death, when pollution is referred to as *sutok*) is not absent and relationships between communities (prohibition of intermarriage and commensality, and so on) are similar to those observed among castes. But while in caste society all social segments within a caste are hierarchically ranked according to purity, the Gadaba community differs because it has no such ranking and no prohibition on interaction.

8. Unmarried Gadaba or those who did not bother to fast on the day of the sacrifice are excluded from *tsoru* commensality and may only share the *lakka** food.

9. This ideology of development is a discourse of deficiency and has to be seen in connection to the decades-old discussions and policies about disadvantaged segments of the population. At the same time, it is related to the notion of the "mainstream" discussed below. The lifestyles and educational and economic statuses of tribal communities are considered to be backward or primitive, and the need to "develop" these communities, or bring them closer to the "mainstream," is taken for granted. Even though this ideology and the policies of development are meant to improve the lot of the tribal communities and ideally to merge them with the mainstream, they simultaneously reify, objectify, and reproduce the distinction between those in the mainstream and those considered lagging behind. A huge administrative and governmental apparatus depends on the continued existence of backward communities to be developed.

10. In 2010 a teacher told me: "If you eat beef, you cannot learn" (*goru māṅgsa khāibe pāṭha āsiba nāi*, literally, "If you eat beef, knowledge/education won't come to you").

11. See http://odishaadivasimela.com/history.htm (accessed 30 June 2010).

12. They are described this way in the newspapers. For example, in *The Hindu*, 27 January 2010, 2: "Troupes representing the 62 tribes inhabiting the State are slated to present traditional dance and music during the evenings."

13. The earliest photograph of a Gadaba of which I am aware of appeared in Carmichael's "manual" (1869). Attached to the book is a small booklet entitled "Portraits of the wild races" that includes a photograph of a Gadaba woman in the described attire, carrying a child.

14. The Gadaba women, like the Bondo, did not wear nose rings earlier, as Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1943) noticed when he visited the area in the 1940s.

15. Indeed, the Dongria I saw that day looked exactly the same as when I saw them in the Niamgiris in 2000 when I visited my colleague, Roland Hardenberg, who was conducting fieldwork there (Hardenberg 2005).

16. See http://www.dovetours.com/orissa-tribal-tour.htm (accessed 6 November 2010). Some typos have been corrected in this quotation.

17. Moreover, and more materially, parliamentary politicians sponsored the construction of a Gandhi memorial in the village a few years ago, right beside the shrine of the earth deity and a memorial stone naming the politicians who—at about the same time—brought electricity to the village.

References

Berger, Peter
2002   The Gadaba and the "Non-ST" Desia of Koraput, Orissa. In *Contemporary Society. Tribal Studies, Volume Seven: The Concept of Tribal Society*, G. Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera, eds., 57–90. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
2007   *Füttern, Speisen und Verschlingen. Ritual und Gesellschaft im Hochland von Orissa, Indien*. Berlin: LIT. (For the English translation, see 2014 below.)
2009   Conceptualizing and creating society in Highland Orissa. Descent, territory and sacrificial communion. In *Contemporary Society. Tribal Studies, Volume Eight: Structure and Exchange in Tribal India and Beyond*, G. Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera, eds., 119–34. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
2014   *Feeding, Sharing and Devouring: Ritual and Society in Highland Orissa, India*. Boston: De Gruyter.

Carmichael, D. F.
1869   *Manual of the District of Vizagapatnam in the Madras Presidency*. Madras: Asylum Press.

Channa, Subhadra
2008   Concept of the mainstream. In *Indian Tribes and the Mainstream*, Sukant K. Chaudhury and Soumendra Mohant Patnaik, eds., 69–76. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von
1943   Megalithic ritual among the Gadabas and Bondos of Orissa. *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Society of Bengal* 9: 149–78.

Gregory, Chris
2009   Brotherhood and otherhood in Bastar: On the social specificity of "dual organisation" in aboriginal India. In *Contemporary Society. Tribal Studies, Volume Eight: Structure and Exchange in Tribal India and Beyond*, Georg Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera, eds., 57–90. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Griffiths, Arlo
2008   Gutob. In *The Munda Languages*, ed. Gregory D. S. Anderson, 633–81. London: Routledge.

HARDENBERG, Roland
    2005   Children of the Earth Goddess: Society, Marriage, and Sacrifice in the Highlands of Orissa (India). Postdoctoral dissertation. Münster: Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität.

IZIKOWITZ, Karl Gustav
    1969   The Gotr ceremony of the Boro Gadaba. In *Primitive Views of the World*, ed. Stanley Diamond, 129–50. New York: Columbia University Press.

KORNEL, Das
    1999   *Tribal Cultural Heritage and Cult: The Gutob Gadaba Tribe of Orissa*. Bhubaneswar: Modern Book Depot.

MOHANTY, U. C.
    1973/1974   Bond-friendship among the Gadaba. *Man in Society* 1: 130–55.

NAYAK, Radhakant, Barbara M. BOAL, and Nabor SORENG
    1996   *The Gadabas: A Handbook for Development*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

OTTEN, Tina
    2006   *Heilung durch Rituale. Vom Umgang mit Krankheit bei den Rona im Hochland Orissas, Indien* (Healing through rituals: On dealing with illness among the Rona in highland Orissa, India). Berlin: LIT.

PARKIN, Robert J.
    2000   Proving "indigenity," exploiting modernity: Modalities of identity construction in Middle India. *Anthropos* 95: 49–63.

PFEFFER, Georg
    1991   Der intra-agnatische "Seelentausch" der Gadaba beim großen Lineageritual [The intra-agnatic "soul exchange" of the Gadaba during their great lineage ritual]. In *Beiträge zur Ethnologie Mittel- und Süd-Indiens* [Contributions to the ethnology of Central and South India], ed. Matthias S. Laubscher, 59–92. München: Anacon.
    1997   The Scheduled Tribes of Middle India as a unit: Problems of internal and external comparison. In *Contemporary Society. Tribal Studies, Volume One*, Georg Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera, eds., 3–27. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
    1999   Gadaba and the Bondo kinship vocabularies versus marriage, descent and production. In *Contemporary Society. Tribal Studies, Volume Four: Social Realities*, G. Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera, eds., 17–46. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
    2001   A ritual of revival among the Gadaba of Koraput. In *Jagannath Revisited: Studying Society, Religion and the State in Orissa*, Hermann Kulke and Burkhard Schnepel, eds., 99–124. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors.

SAHLINS, Marshall
    2005   The economics of Develop-man in the Pacific. In *The Making of Global and Local Modernities in Melanesia: Humiliation, Transformation and the Nature of Cultural Change*, Joel Robbins and Holly Wardlow, eds., 23–42. Aldershot: Ashgate. (Originally published 1992.)

THUSU, Kidar Nath, and Makhan JHA
    1972   *Ollar Gadba of Koraput*. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India.