

# Political deliberation and democratic reversal in India: Indian coffee house during the emergency (1975–77) and the third world “totalitarian moment”

Kristin Plys<sup>1</sup>

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2017

**Abstract** While the coffee house as a space of political deliberation has been a common feature across the globe, there are few historical cases in which one can analyze the role of such face-to-face political deliberation under totalitarian moments in heretofore democratic states. Of the analogous cases of democratic reversal, India is one of the most important and under-researched. In 1975, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was convicted of corrupt election practices. Rather than concede to the high court ruling, she suspended the constitution and installed herself as India’s sole political authority. The Indian Coffee House in New Delhi became the key site of resistance to the Emergency (1975–77). The totalitarian moment pushed contentious politics into the Coffee House, initially galvanizing it: even the older members of Indira Gandhi’s Congress Party, who were active participants in India’s Freedom Movement, were key participants in coffee house deliberations. Eventually, however, Indian Coffee House was bulldozed and political deliberation crushed. The space of the coffee house may foster political deliberation among different viewpoints, but when interaction is concentrated in one such space, it becomes easier for the state and its agents to suppress oppositional politics and more difficult for both establishment and oppositional politics themselves to retain a diversified public sphere character. While coffee houses and analogous institutions are not adequate substitutes for other forms of democratic politics, therefore, they can encourage expression when other avenues are closed off and nourish the memory of a democratic political culture for the future.

**Keywords** Contentious politics · Deliberation, democracy · Public sphere · States of emergency · Totalitarianism

In 1975, Indira Gandhi was sworn in for her third consecutive term as Prime Minister of India. Soon after, workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, and journalists united in

---

✉ Kristin Plys  
kristin.plys@yale.edu

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociology, Yale University, PO Box 208265, New Haven, CT 06520-8265, USA

non-violent protest against her rule (Dhar 2000, p. 301; Henderson 1977, p. 5; Nayar 1977, p. 68). On June 12, 1975, The Allahabad High Court found Indira Gandhi guilty of corrupt election practices and barred her from holding office for six years (Chandra 2003, p. 64; Dhar 2000, p. 258; Henderson 1977, p. 1; Nayar 1977, p. 4). Instead of conceding, however, Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, thereby installing a dictatorship in India (Devasahavam 2012, p. 3; Dhar 2000, p. 259; Driberg & Mohan 1975, p. 1; Frank 1977, p. 465; Henderson 1977, p. 2). Political meetings, rallies and agitations were banned, state agents arrested and people detained without trial; both academic freedom and the free press were eliminated (Chandra 2003, p. 160; Dhar 2000, p. 223; Frank 1977, p. 465; Henderson 1977, p. 80; Kalhan 1977, p. 9; Mavalankar 1979, p. 86; Tarlo 2003, p. 36). Students, intellectuals, and journalists were subject to surveillance (and condemned without trial) for dissenting views (Chandra 2003, p. 156; Devasahavam 2012, p. 35; Dhar 2000, p. 223; Kalhan 1977, p. 11; Henderson 1977, p. 16; Nayar 1977, p. 72; S. Sinha 1977, p. 58; Tarlo 2003, p. 35). Police shot and killed protesters without repercussion (Henderson 1977, p. 62). Peasants were rounded up and taken to “family planning camps” where they were forcibly sterilized (Chandra 2003, p. 203; Henderson 1977, p. 69; Kalhan 1977, p. 12; Tarlo 2003, p. 37), while in cities, entire slums were bulldozed, leaving the most vulnerable urbanites without food, sanitation, water, shelter, or access to health care (Chandra 2003, p. 207; Henderson 1977, p. 63; Nayar 1977, p. 128; S. Sinha 1977, 60). These measures were carried out under the explicit rubrics of “development” and “progress” (Gandhi 1984, pp. 374, 440–441; File no. 1(3)1973(LAW), DA; 19/25/73-IA, National Archives of India citation; PN Haksar Files, Instalment I & II, Subfile no. 57, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library citation).

The Indian Coffee House in Connaught Place in New Delhi became the key site of resistance to the Emergency in Delhi—the most embattled city in Emergency-era India. Socialist party members who gathered there engaged in a wide variety of actions in response to the Emergency including demonstrations, leafletting and slogan-shouting, as well as forms of violent resistance, but intellectuals representing the entire spectrum of Indian politics—Naxalites, Communists, Socialists, Congress, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)—used the space to debate and voice opposition to the state. The Indian Coffee House, like coffee houses in early modern Europe (Ellis 1956; Ellis 2004; Pincus 1995) became both symbol and constructive instantiation of the public sphere. But in 1976, Sanjay Gandhi, son of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, bulldozed the Indian Coffee House at Connaught Place (Kalhan 1977, p. 10). The totalitarian moment of the Emergency pushed contentious politics into the space of the Indian Coffee House, initially galvanizing resistance but eventually ushering in its demise. However it is less surprising that the postcolonial totalitarian state eventually could and did eviscerate this public space than it was that it had become so ideologically broad and politically successful under very difficult circumstances.

Under colonial rule, and then later under non-democratic postcolonial states, coffee houses flourished as spaces of anti-state political deliberation and discourse across the colonial and postcolonial Pan-Islamic world. Even before coffee houses were part and parcel of European colonial expansion, they were inseparable from Arab-Islamic cultural expression. The world’s first coffee houses opened in 1500 in Mecca and Cairo (Tucker 2011, p. 143), after nearly eight centuries since coffee had first developed a particular cultural meaning related to its popularity among Sufi scholars across the Arab-Islamic world (Ellis 2004, p. 14; Hattox 1985, p. 28; Mauro 1991, p. 20; Wild

2005, p. 29). Venetian traders first brought coffee beans to Europe in the early seventeenth century via North African trade based in Cairo (Mauro 1991, p. 30). It then spread through Europe and later diffused to the colonial world as part of colonial expansion, repackaged as a European cultural tradition.

In colonial Zanzibar, British colonial agents gathered intelligence on nationalists under a colonial policy termed the “Coffee House Gossip Intelligence Ring” (Meyers 1995, p. 1351), indicating the importance of the coffee house for political deliberation among nationalists in colonial Zanzibar. In the postcolonial period, Zanzibar City’s coffee houses remained important spaces of political deliberation when Zanzibar became a constitutional monarchy under Sultan Jamshid bin Abdullah Al Said. The Sultan’s agents placed informants in the coffee houses, because coffee houses continued to be one of the most significant spaces of political deliberation and anti-state political discourse in postcolonial Tanzania (Meyers 1995, p. 1352). In colonial Malay, guerrilla fighters organized their resistance to colonial rule from coffee houses (Aljunied 2014, p. 67). In independent Malaysia, the *kopitiam* (Hokkien for coffee house) remains a space that attracts people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, and social classes to engage in critical democratic discourse despite the fact that Malaysia remains a constitutional monarchy (Khuo 2010, p. 87). Similarly in Cairo, one of the first places in the world to open coffee houses, coffee houses once again became important sites of political deliberation and collective action for those organizing the Tahrir Square protests during the Egyptian Revolutions (Lim 2012, p. 243).

While the coffee house as a space of political discussion and deliberation is a common feature across the globe, the coffee house has also been important as a face to face political sphere under totalitarian moments in heretofore democratic states. For example, coffee houses were viewed by the monarchy as “dangerous centres for subversive activity” during the English Restoration (Cowan 2004, p.34). India during the Emergency is another case, as this article contends, but there are others. In the 1920s and 30s, Italy (1922), Portugal (1926), Germany (1933), and Spain (1939) (Huntington 1991, pp. 17–18; Ermakoff 2008, p. 41; Linz 1978, p. 18). Again in the in the 1960s and 1970s, several democratic states across the globe including Greece (1967), Brazil (1964), Argentina (1966), Peru (1962), Ecuador (1972), Uruguay (1973), Chile (1973), Indonesia (1965), Philippines (1972), and India (1975) experienced similar periods (Huntington 1991, pp. 19–21; Rama 1982, p. 135).

Coffee culture was an essential component of Fascist modernity in the 1920s and 1930s (Schnapp 2001, p. 259). Intellectuals in fascist Europe soon found that traditional expressions of leftist politics were ill-suited to everyday life under fascism. This frustration pushed intellectuals from spheres of traditional leftist politics and into the café culture, where a modernist avant garde offered a potent form of intellectual expression that could and did coexist with life under Fascism (Adamson 1990, p. 368; Bronner and Kellner 1982, p. 93). In Berlin, “the café remained, to protest against the cruelty, the loneliness, the vacuity of the city of Berlin” (Bronner and Kellner 1982, p. 97), and even though Nazi repression initially energized coffee house culture, it ultimately decimated the movement that was launched from the German coffee houses (Bronner and Kellner 1982, p. 108).<sup>1</sup> In Italy, the fascist regime, in attempts to repress

<sup>1</sup> In the Steven Spielberg film and video archive at the United States Holocaust Museum, there is a video of coffee house patrons watching a political demonstration from the balcony of a coffee house ([https://secure.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file\\_num=3958](https://secure.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file_num=3958)) (Accession No. 1991.263.1, SSFVA).

coffee house culture, banned the installation of new espresso machines in coffeehouses, and restricted imports of coffee (Livorni 2013; Morris 2008). Instead, the Italian state subsidized private firms who were competing to create the first espresso machine for home use (Morris 2008), which promised to lure men away from the coffee houses and back into the home (Schnapp 2001, p. 264). Bialetti claimed in its advertisements, “*in casa un espresso come al bar*”, which promised that, “the home would become a cafe, instead of the cafe becoming a home away from home” (Schnapp 2001, p. 264). Similarly, in Vienna, Jewish intellectuals who had been denied access to the professoriate, gathered in the city’s many coffeehouses to write, discuss, deliberate, and share news of current events (Segel 1989, p. 13). During the Anschluss, these cafés became an important site of resistance against Nazism, both as a place for political organizing and for the circulation of antifascist newspapers and pamphlets, in addition to being a space in which literature, music, and political satire against fascism and Nazism was penned (Segel 1989, p. 300).

During the democratic reversal across Latin America in the late 1960s and early 1970s, coffee houses were spaces in which intellectuals and artists gathered to discuss politics and plan activities (Carrillo 2006, pp. 78–79). While the literature on coffee in Latin America tends to focus more on the exploitative conditions of coffee production rather than coffee house culture (Hough 2010; Hough and Bair 2012; Paige 1997; Roseberry 1983; Roseberry et al. 1995; Topik 2000, p. 225), the coffee house had already amassed a centuries-long essential role in Latin American culture and politics (Tocancipá-Falla 2001, pp. 429–430). Latin American coffee house intellectuals resisting dictatorship benefited from this past as well as being explicitly inspired, as Carrillo (2006, p. 79) notes, by both the coffee house culture of the Fascist states of the 1930s and the life and work of Antonio Gramsci and Jean Paul Sartre.

Of the cases in which café culture played an important role in expressing opposition to democratic reversal, India is the least well-known. While India has had a vibrant coffee culture since the sixteenth century (Govt of India 1941, p. 1; From KN Raj Memorial Library and De Poerck 1968, p. 369; Mauro 1991, pp. 21, 145), and is currently one of the world’s largest producers of coffee (Plys n.d., p. 9), only recently has a literature emerged that analyzes coffee house culture and politics in India (Bhattacharya n.d.; Plys; Robinson 2014). This article is the first to examine the role of India’s coffee house culture during India’s period of democratic reversal during the Emergency (1975–77).

The British colonial firm, “Coffee House,” was founded in 1936 by M.J. Simon, Secretary of the marketing wing of the Indian Coffee Cess Act Committee (IOR/V/24/663, IOR; IOR/V/27/621/12, IOR; ST 344, IOR; Chakrabarty 2000, pp. 202). Simon created Coffee House to increase domestic demand for coffee in India in response to the Empire-wide commodity surplus crisis of the 1930s (IOR/L/E/8/546, IOR; L/E/8/2333, IOR; Mss Eur/F174/1984, IOR). In 1946, three Communist Party of India (undivided) members and workers at the Coffee House in Calicut—M. Chathukutty, K.N. Narayanan, and T.P. Raghavan—published the pamphlet, “Coffee House Labourers are Also Human Beings,” written in Malayalam and circulated among workers at all locations (Pillai 2005, p. 30). Because Coffee Board Secretary MJ Simon staffed Coffee Houses exclusively with workers from his home state of Kerala, and set minimal education requirements (through fourth grade) for employment, all Coffee House workers could read the pamphlet. Soon after the circulation of this pamphlet, Coffee Houses were one-by-one occupied and renamed *Indian* Coffee House.

For a decade, from 1947 to 57, the Indian Coffee House workers continued to occupy the coffee houses while running and maintaining them. The Coffee Board of India made attempts to close Indian Coffee House, or to sell off locations to private owners, but these attempts were half-hearted and unsuccessful. In 1957, the Coffee Board of India presented a formalized plan to sell off the Indian Coffee House and, in response, Union vice-president, A.K. Gopalan organized a hunger strike (Pillai 2005, pp. 33, 35). After several weeks, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru intervened, and proposed a plan in which the Indian Coffee House could become a legal firm if the workers paid half the cost of the firm upfront, which would ensure the workers legal rights to the firm for one year, after which the Coffee Board would determine whether to close the firm or to sell it to private ownership (Pillai 2005, p. 40). The Coffee Board would also be given the responsibility of inspecting all locations of Indian Coffee House and closing those that were not up to code. The union voted this proposal unsuitable, as too much subjectivity was given to Coffee Board bureaucrats, and the workers staged a sit-in strike. After fifteen days of striking (Pillai 2005, p. 41), A.K. Gopalan compromised with Jawaharlal Nehru that Indian Coffee House would be registered under the Indian Cooperative Societies Act (Pillai 2005, p. 42).

In the 1970s, The Indian Coffee House at Connaught Place in New Delhi was one of the few places where people were free to discuss the social and political repression of the Emergency. If you went there, you could find out who had been arrested during the previous night, you could learn the latest news, and you could even meet those who were actively engaged in countering the dictatorship. In January 1976, with little fanfare, Indira Gandhi's son, Sanjay Gandhi, had the Indian Coffee House razed to the ground. Today, the space where Indian Coffee House used to stand remains empty, adorned only with a flagpole that waves a huge Indian flag. At the site, underground, is Palika Bazaar, built after the Emergency: an underground market that has seen better days, and sells mostly illegal items including pornography and sex toys, stolen goods, fake designer handbags, and pirated DVDs.

## Coffee houses and public spheres

Public spheres matter. In democratic states, publicity enables an aggregative process of opinion- and consensus-formation, checking power and domination (Habermas 1991, pp. 201–208). While the modern democratic state relies on the public sphere, or spheres, to lend it legitimacy (Habermas, p. 208), totalitarian states both massify and isolate people. One effect of this process, described by Hannah Arendt as basing, “itself on loneliness, on the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man. Loneliness, the common ground for terror, the essence of totalitarian government, and for ideology or logicity the preparation of its executioners and victims, is closely connected with uprootedness and superfluosity which have been the curse of modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution and have become acute with the rise of imperialism at the end of the last century” (Arendt 1966, p. 475). This experience of loneliness represses private life and destroys the inner life of the individual, preventing him or her from engaging in collective action (Arendt, pp. 245, 474–278). In this extreme instance of subversion between general law and regulatory measures (Habermas, p. 179), the

public sphere loses its meaning as a sphere of rational-critical debate and becomes simply “publicity that is staged for show or manipulation” (Habermas, p. 247). Under these circumstances, public spheres are, over time, co-opted by privatized media that perform ideology in the guise of publicity. But the events in the Indian Coffee House during the Emergency depart from this pattern. While there were journalists who were active participants in the debates and discussions in the Coffee House, they were some of the most vocal voices against the state.

However, claims Habermas, public opinion can be generated if mediated by critical publicity. “Such a mediation is possible on a sociologically relevant scale,” writes Habermas, “only through the participation of private people in a process of formal communication conducted through intraorganizational public spheres.” (Habermas, p. 248). That is the kind of space that the Indian Coffee House provided to members of different political parties and political viewpoints that were similarly opposed to the state of emergency. Spaces of this sort “permitted an internal public sphere, not merely at the level of functionaries and managers, but at all levels,” such that there was “a mutual correspondence between the political opinions of private people and ... quasi-public opinion” (Habermas, p. 248). Because debate in the Coffee House could not be co-opted by private interests, even given Indira Gandhi’s censorship of the press, the Coffee House was able to structure political debate to such an extent that it threatened state power, and was, therefore, eliminated.

Through processes associated with colonialism and empire, spaces for rational political deliberation modeled after the European salons and coffee houses (Aljunied 2014; Awasom 2010; Mauro 1991; M. Sinha 2001; Tucker 2011) diffused to the colonized world where they were then transformed from within, often by anticolonial agents. How these colonial public spheres affected postcolonial politics remains an open question. And while many scholars have examined the linkages between the public sphere and democracy in North America and Europe (Calhoun 1993; Benhabib 1993; Ferree et al. 2002; Fraser 1993; Zaret 1996), increasingly, scholars are examining the role of deliberative politics and the public sphere in creating and sustaining democracy outside Europe and North America (Fraser et al. 2014; Gibson 2012; Kaviraj 2001; Sivaramakrishnan 2008; Wedeen 2008). The relationship among deliberative politics, totalitarianism and democratization in the postcolonial world has by and large been neglected despite the fact that the question of democratic transitions, particularly in the Global South, has been of considerable interest.

In *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966), Barrington Moore 1966 analyzes the path to democracy and modernity in some of the world’s most wealthy post-industrial countries such as England, Germany, France, and the United States. Moore 1966 finds that there is a positive correlation between time and difficulty to modernize, ultimately asserting that the paths to modernity and democracy of the world’s wealthiest countries could not be replicated by other countries. Modernization theorists alternately contended that economic development would uniformly lead to democracy in the developing world (Lipset 1959, Rostow 1960, Huntington 1968). In *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (1992), Dietrich Rueschmeyer, Evelyne Huber Stevens, and John D. Stephens counter that economic crises and economic stagnation led to breakdowns of democratic regimes in Latin America (Rueschmeyer et al. 1992, p. 212). In Latin America’s second transition to democracy, they contend, an organized working

class plays a key role (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, p. 270), as do strong competing political parties (Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stephens, p. 215).

India's experience of a second transition to democracy does not conform to the Latin American experience. Instead, India before the Emergency was a one-party state with a relatively weak labor movement. Surprisingly, political deliberation in the coffee house was far more significant. While modernization theorists contend that dictatorial regimes fall once the state had achieved a certain level of modernization (Lipset 1959, Huntington 1968), and Rueschemeyer, Stevens and Stephens look to class forces and political parties to explain transitions from dictatorship to democracy, in *Democracy and Development* (2000), Przeworski et al. 2000 argue that on the micro level, transitions to democracy are far more uncertain (Przeworski et al. 2000, p. 97). Przeworski et al. 2000 claim that in highly developed countries, once established, democracies are likely to endure (Przeworski et al. 2000, p. 103). Reversals of democracy are more likely to occur in countries where democracy was established when that country was poor (Przeworski et al. 2000, p. 106). In transitioning to democracy, Przeworski et al. 2000 find that neither economic crises nor political mobilization were significant causes of regime change (Przeworski et al. 2000, p. 114). (This finding has been supported by Daron Acemogulu and James A. Robinson (2006), who claim that democratic transition occurs not as a direct result of a social movement but rather when elites extend voting rights in order to avoid a potential revolution (Acemogulu and Robinson 2006, pp. 26–27)).

In both democratic reversals and transitions to democracy, spaces of face-to-face political deliberation affect not only whether a transition occurs, but also the quality and content of political deliberation in the newly restored democracy. There are special public spheres across the globe, and through time, that survive a democratic reversal and go on to play an important role in shaping the political landscape of democratic transition. They may even help nurture the memory of deliberative democracy during its occlusion. India during the Emergency is one such case. In this article, my goal is to illuminate this important case of the role of the public sphere during a democratic reversal. What took place in Coffee House at Connaught Place in New Delhi? Why was the Indian Coffee House able to continue as a space of vibrant political debate for nearly a year after the Emergency was declared? What impact did it have, in both the short and medium run? In retrieving the Indian Coffee House and its historical role in the Emergency (1975–77), I reconstruct historical memory against two counter-narratives: that of the Indian Coffee House as purely a site of consumption, but also that of Indian Coffee House as a space for solely leftist political organizing. I highlight its historical legacy as an important deliberative space for a broad spectrum of political viewpoints.

## Methods

To answer these questions, I constructed an original database based on archival sources and oral history interviews (see Methodological appendix). I spent two years in India doing archival research and oral history interviews and three months in London doing archival research. In London, I utilized the India Office Library at the British Library to detail the colonial origins of Indian Coffee House, along with the global politico-economic context in which it was created. In India, I have worked in various archives across the country in order to research India's anticolonial labor movement, of which

the Indian Coffee House workers were a part, along with the political economy of postcolonial India from 1947 to 1977. I spent considerable time at the larger archives including the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, but have also made use of smaller and regional archives. In New Delhi, these include the VV Giri Archives on Indian Labor, the PC Joshi Archives on Contemporary History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Central Secretariat Library, and the Delhi Archives. I have also conducted archival research outside of Delhi, including in The Punjab State Archives in Chandigarh, Haryana State Archives in Panchkula, The KN Raj Memorial Library, and Kerala State Archives, both in Thiruvananthapuram.

Archival records of the Emergency remain classified, and newspapers were censored, therefore newspapers are not reliable and archives are not available sources on the Emergency. To learn more about the Emergency and the resistance to it, I conducted oral history interviews with the men who led the movement for democratization in India. I interviewed 11 activists, all male and high-caste; 10 Hindu and one Jain. They ranged in age from 60 to in their 80s. They include one trade unionist who is a professional activist from Bengal; two Communist sympathizers: one, a physics professor and Indian classical musician from Bengal, and another, a journalist for *The Hindu* from Uttar Pradesh; eight Socialists: a journalist for the *Hindustan Times* from Bihar, a Poet from Bihar, an administrator at Max Muller Bhavan and later Heidelberg University from Bihar, a Businessman from Punjab, an Art History professor from Uttar Pradesh, a Hindi Literature professor from Delhi, a Law professor from Delhi, and a Gandhian peace studies professor from Bihar. I was put in touch with these men through my contacts in student politics at Jawaharlal Nehru University. I enlisted the help of contacts in both Communist and Socialist student groups, and while my Communist contacts told me that CPI(M) Headquarters at AK Gopalan Bhavan believed that I was a CIA agent and therefore refused to facilitate any interviews, my Socialist contacts on the other hand helped to arrange interviews. (I myself was not active in Socialist or Communist groups during my time as a student at Jawaharlal Nehru University.) The interviews were conducted in the homes and workplaces of the activists in question, or at the Indian Coffee House at Mohan Singh Place in New Delhi. I logged a total of 33 h of interview time: the shortest interview lasted one hour and the longest eight hours.

As the state archives across the Global South continue to “reflect the old regimes,” (Richie 2015, p. xii), and to fail to preserve documents on anti-state protest, oral histories have become an increasingly popular approach. For decades, oral history methods have been used by historians and historical social scientists to recover narratives—mainly of leftists and feminists—whose voices have been disproportionately silenced in historical documents (Abrams 2010, p. 153; Yow 2005, p. 3). As Alessandro Portelli puts it, “Ever since the Federal Writers’ Project interviews with former slaves in the 1930s, oral history has been about the fact that there’s more to history than presidents and generals” (Portelli 1991, p. viii). However, oral history in the Global South often necessitates a set of different research and interview techniques in order to make the dialogue between interviewer and narrator more compatible with indigenous norms of communication (Thompson 1998, pp. 582–583). In addition, as with archival sources, and survey research responses, it is well to remember that oral histories can and do contain gaps, embellishments, lies, and otherwise exhibit patterned deviations from what is already an elusive historical truth (Portelli, pp. viii-ix).

To complement and triangulate my oral sources wherever possible, I have sought verification in the few secondary sources available on the Emergency, a common practice for evaluating oral history interviews in academic research (Abrams, p. 7; Ritchie, p. 103). In so doing, I am able to adjudicate among contradictory materials, signaled below, and evaluate various sources in order to draw my own conclusions about the events of the Emergency. In some instances however, neither historical documents nor secondary sources are available in order to evaluate the interview data. In instances where written historical sources are unavailable, I have asked narrators to comment on what other narrators have said, thereby providing a widely accepted check on the interviews I conducted. In cases where narrators gave answers that differed from evidence I found in archives or secondary sources, I first allowed the narrator to tell his story, allowing him to challenge my preconceptions about the historical events in question; then, later in the interview, I would challenge his version of the facts in order to foreground and wrestle with inconsistencies among interviews or between interviews and written sources. (See Ritchie, pp. 114–116).

I also employed a research assistant, a well-known Indian Socialist with an activist legacy, who helped to put the narrators at ease by his presence at the interview and support of the project and his conviction that their views would be done justice in the finished project. While he attended each interview, I led the interview and asked the questions of narrators.

While oral historians strive to provide an environment of mutuality and equality in the interview setting in order to foster open communication (Portelli, p. 31), race and gender hierarchies along with cultural norms of gendered interaction (a particularly salient concern in the South Asian context) have been shown to influence the reliability of oral history interviews (Yow, pp. 170–172). Given the fact that I am a white woman, my race and gender potentially hindered my non-white, male narrators from feeling comfortable sharing details of their lives with me, and my gender could (and in my view, very likely did in some instances) cause narrators to “talk down” to me, simplifying their answers based in the assumption that as a woman, I lacked knowledge of the topics of discussion. Nevertheless the latter dynamic may actually have been an advantage, encouraging more in-depth answers to my questions. In addition, I attempted to compensate for racial and gender differences not only through the presence of my research assistant at the interviews (Thompson, p. 583), but also by showing through my professional credentials, and through conversations with the narrators, that I was capable of having informed discussions about politics (Yow, p. 172). As a non-white man whose family is known to the narrators, my research assistant also afforded narrators the opportunity (which several took up) to make asides or give responses to him in Hindi, which many narrators assumed I did not understand or speak. Nevertheless, my research assistant made clear to the narrators at the beginning of the interview that Hindi responses or comments would be translated and included in the records of the project.

Although I strove for neutrality in my interviews, many times narrators would ask me about my personal views on politics and about whether or not I was sympathetic to their political views—a common question many oral historians face (Ritchie, p. 118). I responded honestly to narrators who asked about my political views, expressing to them that while I am a leftist (as were the majority of social, labor, and feminist historians who first developed oral history methodologies in the early twentieth century

(Abrams, p. 5)), I would not characterize my political views as socialist or communist. While I was friendly, empathetic, and tactful, I also voiced scholarly skepticism where appropriate. Researchers are taught that they are not supposed to intrude their own beliefs and identity into the interview, but narrators pick up on the class, manner, speech, and other characteristics of the oral historian and may self-censor or tell a sanitized version of events based on the narrator's assumption of the oral historian's political views based on this assessment (Portelli, pp. 30–31). By having this conversation with the narrator about politics, especially when conducting interviews about leftist politics, the oral historian is more likely to obtain useful material.

## Results

For most of the Socialists I spoke with, it was Rammanohar Lohia who drew them into the Socialist movement. In the 1950s and 1960s Lohia published a weekly column in local papers, and these men as teenagers or college students felt that Lohia's message was new and fresh. It resonated with them. For the Biharis, Jayaprakash Narayan was also an important source of early inspiration, but interviewees from Uttar Pradesh and Delhi were more taken with Lohia, and felt that he was the more serious intellectual and the more committed activist within the Socialist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. After becoming leaders in student politics, some of these men met Rammanohar Lohia, and it drew them further into Socialist activism. Narrators would tell me that they began to spend time at the Indian Coffee House at Connaught Place because Lohia, upon his return to Delhi after completing his PhD in Germany in the 1930s, wanted to create a space that mimicked the German coffee houses—a coffee house that fostered political discussion and deliberation but also adhered to broadly socialist principles. The Socialist narrators would tell me that Lohia started the Coffee House as a cooperative, to fill the need for a leftist intellectual space in Delhi. In a group interview with two men who had become close friends over numerous cross-table conversations at the Indian Coffee House, even though one was a Socialist and the other a Communist (both were originally from Uttar Pradesh), the two narrators had conflicting stories about how the Indian Coffee House became so important during The Emergency.

The Socialist art history professor proceeded to relate a familiar trope about Lohia setting out to recreate the coffee house culture of 1930s Berlin in 1960s New Delhi, and the Communist journalist respectfully disagreed that it was in fact AK Gopalan who transformed the coffee house into a cooperative, but admitted that he did not know much about the history of the Indian Coffee House before AK Gopalan led the workers' movement in the 1950s. Consistently, Socialist narrators expressed disdain, even vitriol, for all things Communist, but some would make a caveat for AK Gopalan, saying that he was an independent thinker, and for that, he deserved some respect despite his ties to the Communist Party.

The friendship between the Socialist art historian and the Communist journalist was ignited over conversations and deliberation in the coffee house among the socialists and communists. The art history professor told me that while today it would be unthinkable for sitting politicians to sit amongst the “riff raff,” let alone engage them in conversation, at the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House, sitting Congress Party politicians would regularly gather to entertain questions from people of all social classes and

political affiliations, which often led to debates involving coffee house patrons representing a wide range of political views. But cross-table deliberation was not simply relegated to politics. The physicist and classical musician told me that intellectuals who did not identify as politically left or right—poets, filmmakers, theater directors and actors, painters, literary figures, musicians, and music composers—would gather at the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House to “exchange ideas” and discuss a “vision of a new society.” While each type of artistic expression had its own table at the coffee house, I was told that these conversations were particularly generative in that they often involved cross table deliberation, and it also linked the artistic movement in Delhi to politics. The physicist and musician told me that these linkages assured that when there was protest or “political turmoil” in Delhi “creative people came out” to voice their political views.

The atmosphere in the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House was exciting in the 1960s and 1970s. It was described to me as “Democracy in action,” that the place itself had “positive vibrations,” it was “glamorous” and filled with the sounds of loud, heated, passionate, discussions; it was an intellectual hub—and not simply for the Left. It was also described to me as “what JNU claims to be today.” The Coffee House, I was told, was a regular hangout for poets, filmmakers, music composers, and creative people of all types. Each political group (see Table 1) had their regular table—the Communists, the Socialists, Naxalites, Congress, and the right wing Hindu nationalist party, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).<sup>2</sup> There would also be a table for poets, writers, filmmakers, and musicians who did not necessarily identify as right or left. In the 1980s, when explicit “identity politics” became increasingly influential, the physicist and musician told me, there was a regular table for LGBT activists, where people of all sexual orientations discussed sexuality and politics. If there was a protest in Delhi, many of the men I interviewed told me that the protesters would end up at the Indian Coffee House afterward.

The men I interviewed had many reasons for gathering at the Indian Coffee House: for political meetings, to hear the latest news, to see friends, to discuss politics, to talk about art, to interact with foreigners, and to look at “pretty girls.” When newspapers began to be censored during the Emergency, several narrators said, journalists and activists would spread the latest news in the coffee house, which had long been a regular hangout for journalists as most major newspaper offices were located nearby. Pamphlets and poems against the Emergency were penned in the coffee house and circulated among the regulars (Aziz 2008; Banerjee 2012; Perry 1983). The Indian Coffee House was a cool place to be; many of the men I talked to described it as the most interesting and most “happening” place in Delhi. They told me that many people used the coffee house as their address since they were there all day and every day, and that hippies and leftists from Europe would go there when they were travelling through India. It was cheap, it was centrally located, and it had some of the most “unconventional crowds” of any place in the world. Because it was a cooperative, nobody was told to get up and leave after finishing a cup of coffee. Some people would arrive at 9 am and leave at 9 pm or later. The workers knew most of the regulars and would serve you even if you did not have enough money pay your check that day. Most of the men who stayed at the coffee house for dinner were unmarried or separated and had nowhere else to go for meals. (I was told that most of these types of regulars were usually Naxalites or “JNU Leftists.”)

<sup>2</sup> Table 1 gives a capsule description of each political party involved.

**Table 1** Political parties during the emergency

Political Party	Abbreviation	Years in Existence	States where Party is Strongest	Ideology	Ideological goals	Views on Caste	Pro- or Anti-Emergency	Supported JP Movement	Illegal during Emergency?
Communist Party of India	CPI	1964-Present		Left (Bolshevik)	Align with the Center against the right to enact progressive policies, Pro-Soviet	Anti-Caste	Pro, then Anti	No	Legal
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	CPI(M)	1964-Present	Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Punjab	New Left	Align with the Left against the Center and Right to push for revolutionary goals	Anti-Caste	Pro, then Anti	No, but some members were actively involved	Legal
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)	CPI(ML)	1969-Present	West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab	Left (Maoist), Anti-Lin Bao	Peasants Revolution	Anti-Caste	Anti	No, but some members were actively involved	Illegal
Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) - Liberation	Liberation	1974-Present	Bihar	Left (Maoist), Pro-Lin Bao	Peasants Revolution	Anti-Caste	Anti	No, but some members were actively involved	Illegal
Indian National Congress Party	Congress	1885-Present	Uttar Pradesh, Delhi NCR	Centrist	industrialization, weak labor movement, increased agricultural production		Pro	No	Legal

Table 1 (continued)

Political Party	Abbreviation	Years in Existence	States where Party is Strongest	Ideology	Ideological goals	Views on Caste	Pro- or Anti-Emergency	Supported JP Movement	Illegal during Emergency?
Indian National Congress Opposition Party	Congress (O)	1969–1977	Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar	Progressive Centrist	Opposed to Indira Gandhi		Anti	Yes	Legal
Socialist Party	SP	Congress Socialist Party 1938–1951; Indian Socialist Party 1951; Praja Socialist Party 1952–1971; Samyukta Socialist Party 1964–1972; Socialist Party 1972–77;	Bihar	Social-Democrat	Support village cooperatives; handicrafts production; cooperative movement	Some members strongly Anti- and some members strongly pro-Caste system	Anti	N/A	Legal
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh	RSS	1925-Present	Maharashtra, Gujarat	Religious Right (Hindu)	Religious nationalism	Pro-Caste System	Anti	Yes	Illegal
Janata Party		1977–2013		Left and Right coalition (anti-centrist)	Pro-Democracy, Reversing the policies of the Emergency	Divided on Caste issues	N/A	N/A	N/A

However, the narrators originally from Calcutta lamented that the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House in New Delhi was not as “cool” as the College St. Indian Coffee House in Calcutta. At College Street, the physicist and musician told me, men and women alike wore torn khadi kurtas, carried *jholas* full of books, and smoked Charminar cigarettes one after another. In Delhi, in contrast, female leftists would generally dress fashionably, sport the latest hairstyles, and wear heavy makeup. And while Calcutta leftists spoke Bangla, or at least made some effort, they said, Delhi leftists, and more specifically, the “JNU Leftists,” showed off their English and bragged about their public school education and their wealthy family backgrounds.

### Repression of spaces of political deliberation

During the Emergency, the feel of everyday life changed in Delhi (Kalhan 1977, p. 11). I was told by the Socialist journalist I interviewed that, “India is a warm climate so people live their lives outside.” This “outside culture” of India is may be due to the weather, the seasons—but during the Emergency, most people did not talk. “They would just look at the ground when they walked; there was no smiling, no laughing. If you smiled during the Emergency times people would think you’ve gone mad. India became a different society then.” The Socialist administrator at Max Muller Bhavan similarly told me, “there was no more discussion in any of the typical meeting places, not in the pubs. Dictatorship fears loud discussion.”

In trade union meetings, I was told by the socialist journalist, people feared arrest for voicing anti-Emergency views. Even public transportation was eerily silent, “If you took a bus during the Emergency, nobody said a word in the busses. And every white person was a suspected CIA.” University campuses were closely monitored and repressed (Chandra 2003, p. 160; Nayar 1977, p. 142; Sahasrabuddhe and Vajpayee 1991, p. 281). I was told by a Communist professor that, “One time we tried to have a meeting outdoors in JNU. Security came and threw us out.” Private homes, I was also informed, were not safe places for political meetings. The Gandhian peace studies professor mentioned that police noticed that he had many male visitors coming and going from his house and therefore conducted regular searches of the house and made inquiries about his visitors.

The closure of these and other spaces of human interaction—public parks, universities, pubs, public transportation, private homes, union offices—served to push people further into the deliberative space of the Indian Coffee House. The Socialist administrator at Max Muller Bhavan said that, “The coffee house was changed by the violent dictatorship, and it was a full on dictatorship not an exceptional situation. ... During the Emergency there were more people in the coffee house. It was a contact point for people who went underground and it was a place to defy the Emergency.” He added that, “All of those opposed to the Emergency came to the coffee house.” The Socialist poet I interviewed told me that people came, not just out of defiance, but also because, “the coffee house became the only source of news of government activities that were censored in the press.” But it remained a place primarily for political deliberation. The Socialist Hindi literature professor said: “political workers rushed to the Indian Coffee House to find out what to do after the Emergency was declared. Sanjay Gandhi was afraid because it united the left, so he demolished the coffee house.” Consistently, according to narrators, those in Delhi who opposed the political

repression of the Emergency gathered at the Indian Coffee House to spend time together, discussing the situation and strategizing about how to address it.

This raises another question, of course: why was the Indian Coffee House allowed to continue as a space of political deliberation for nearly a year after the Emergency was declared, while other spaces for political opposition and deliberation were more quickly eliminated or repressed? Examples include the day-long student protest at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in August 1975 (Nayar 1977, p. 142) and the Turkman Gate uprising that similarly lasted for nearly 24-h until it was violently subdued, leaving up to 1200 people dead (Henderson 1977, p. 63; Tarlo 2003, p. 39). One of my interviewees, the Socialist Hindi literature professor, offers a clue: the Indian Coffee House was an important space for Indira Gandhi's Congress Party in addition to the other political groups that would gather there. "Even before the Emergency," he said, "the Congress would come to the coffee house. They would talk at a low pitch though, they were always defensive. Now, the ruling party doesn't like opposition, but it wasn't that way at the coffee house. They would listen—even top politicians would come and listen." The Gandhian Peace Studies professor also told me that he believed that Congress' participation in this space was key in its remaining a space of political deliberation after the Emergency had been declared. "The older Congress members who fought the British Empire were still alive," he said, "and they were unhappy about the Emergency because it reminded them of British rule and suffering." But as the Emergency wore on, as the Socialist poet told me, "police and intelligence agents would sit there and journalists who were police informers. They would inform if people were anti-Emergency. Attendance thinned, but it remained the meeting place of those against the Emergency." Among the narratives of the Socialists with whom I spoke, many point to Congress' continued involvement in and commitment to the political deliberation in the Coffee House as the key reason that the space not only remained a space of political deliberation for nearly a year after the Emergency was declared, but became more lively, reminding older Congress Party members of their participation in India's struggle for independence.

### Resistance to the postcolonial totalitarian state

On the night the Emergency was declared, Socialists led protests in front of the home of Indira Gandhi and at the Ram Lila Grounds. By the next morning, most of the people who attended the protests had been arrested and thrown in Tihar Jail, thereby quelling public demonstrations against the Emergency. For those who stayed out of jail, leafletting in the coffee house was their main form of protest. The law professor I spoke with wrote two regular pamphlet series; one in Hindi called *Janvaani* (translation: 'The People's Voice') and another in English called, *Resistance*. These pamphlets were usually about four pages long, contained a list of people who were arrested, a recap of the latest news about the Emergency, and some opinion pieces about the dictatorship. The law professor and other Socialists mentioned that they would visit small presses outside of Delhi, bribing printing press workers with alcohol. They would then destroy the printing blocks and store the pamphlets in an ashram where one of the Sadhus had socialist sympathies. They would take the pamphlets to the Indian Coffee House, throw them from the balcony, shout a few slogans, and then run out of the building to evade police.

Some Socialists, however, told me that they felt that leafletting, political deliberation, and other peaceful forms of protest were all too subtle, and they said that the

socialists needed to make more of a statement, one that would send a message worldwide. I interviewed one of the three main people accused in the Baroda Dynamite Conspiracy Case, a poet from Bihar, and he told me that he, along with several other men, had planned to blow up the All India Radio Station and to set off bombs on Safdarjung Road near the Prime Minister's residence, although (he said) at night when nobody would be on the roads or in the radio station (Henderson 1977, p. 140; S. Sinha 1977; pp. 70–71). The poet told me that dynamite was procured from a mining site in Baroda, stolen by the miners, and given to journalists who brought it to the Patna location of Indian Coffee House where it changed hands before being brought to Delhi. This account was confirmed to me by the law professor. When the poet showed up at the All India Radio Station, it was surrounded by police so he abandoned the plan and went into hiding. The safe house where he stayed was run by another of the men I interviewed, the Gandhian peace studies professor from Bihar. The law professor went to hide out there as well. The bed in the safe house that the law professor had been sleeping on was extremely uncomfortable, and when he looked to see why, he realized that he had been sleeping on sticks of dynamite. He told me that that year, the monsoon rains were heavier than usual, and as a result, most of the sticks were waterlogged. The law professor had been recruited by the poet to participate in blowing up the All-India Radio Station, but he declined because he thought the plan was flawed and that the dynamite would not have exploded (Henderson 1977, p. 147).

According to the professor of Gandhian peace studies, he believed that providing a safe house for those who went underground along with support for those arrested was his main contribution to the resistance to the Emergency. He was single and from Bihar, so he told his neighbors and the police that he kept an open house for his male relatives who were coming to Delhi from Bihar for work. The Gandhian peace studies professor said that he had to disassociate himself from the more visible protests in which his fellow Socialists were partaking in order to maintain a certain image for neighbors and the police. The poet and architect of the Baroda Dynamite Conspiracy Case was eventually apprehended by police while staying in this safe house, and the Gandhian peace studies professor raised money for his defense and, in the face of repeated police threats, attended the trial every day to show his support.<sup>3</sup> He was the only witness to that trial.

For other socialists, protest took the forms recognizable as weapons of the weak (Scott 1985). One of the journalists I interviewed, for example, was a member of the National Union of Journalists; he informed me that, in one of their meetings, the RSS proposed that the National Union of Journalists pass a resolution in support of Indira Gandhi's 20-point plan. The journalist stood up at the meeting and gave a lengthy speech explaining that the 20-point plan should not be supported by the union, but it should not be condemned either.<sup>4</sup> Everyone in the room gasped, because this comment would surely lead to his arrest (Devasahavam 2012, pp.33–34, Nayar 1977, p. 134).

<sup>3</sup> For those incarcerated during The Emergency, jail became almost a second coffee house. There were about 25 men of various political persuasions housed in each cell in Delhi's maximum security prison, Tihar Jail. One narrator said that in his cell there were Naxalites, Socialists, Communists, Jamaat-e-Islamis, and Jan Sanghis. He, along with other narrators, recounted the slogan shouting, political discussions, and reading groups that would take place in jail cells in Tihar—particularly Capital reading groups organized by detainees to teach each other about Marxist theory.

<sup>4</sup> Indira Gandhi's 20-Point Plan was unveiled on July 1st, 1975, proclaiming the major policy goals of her Emergency-Era administration.

This journalist, when going to visit a friend who was on the faculty at Jawaharlal Nehru University, was repeatedly told not to wear a kurta-pyjama on campus because it could lead to the arrest of both the professor and the journalist (Chandra 2003, p. 160; Nayar 1977, p. 142; Sahasrabuddhe and Vajpayee, p. 281). The *khadi kurta-pyjama* (or *khadi kurta-dhoti*) was the unofficial uniform of left-leaning regulars at the Indian Coffee House, in emulation of how Rammanohar Lohia would dress while spending time at the Indian Coffee House (Kelkar 2010, p. 6). Because wearing a *khadi* kurta had Left-leaning associations and associations to the Indian Coffee House, I was told that simply wearing this attire around Delhi during the Emergency could lead to the wearer's detention by police. While most men, I was told, would not take chances and began wearing a shirt and pants instead of a *kurta-pyjama*, some of the narrators continued to wear their *khadi kurta-pyjama* to this day in protest of the Emergency and in support for the Socialist cause.

### Repressing the public sphere

In January 1976, socialists leafleted in the Indian Coffee House every day for four days. On the fifth day, bulldozers came to demolish the Indian Coffee House (Kalhan 1977, p. 11). When Sanjay Gandhi and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation razed the Indian Coffee House, the journalists I interviewed told me, it was not covered by the newspapers. The papers that reported this event in Connaught Place, they said, praised Sanjay Gandhi for his urban development policies, neglecting to mention that Indian Coffee House had been bulldozed. For the anti-Emergency activists, this loss was a great tragedy. They told me that the loss of the coffee house, “made me feel lonely,” “I felt I lost everything,” “I was unhappy but was scared to do anything,” “I felt personally offended by the bulldozing,” “It was so horrible and we couldn't oppose,” after the bulldozing “the things that found expression in the coffee house were stopped up,” and, “I felt empty.” The Hindi literature professor recounted how he was being transferred from Tihar Jail to the courthouse for trial when he saw that the Indian Coffee House had been demolished. He told me how he wept in the back of the police jeep upon seeing the rubble. He told me, his voice full of emotion, “It was the only place where we met. It was as though they demolished our house.” The socialist administrator at Max Muller Bhavan took a more defiant tone, passionately proclaiming that, “the demise of the coffee house is *clinching* evidence of Indira Gandhi's dictatorial administration,” and went on to compare Gandhi to Francisco Franco and António Salazar who similarly destroyed coffee house deliberative culture during their ascent to power. All the activists with whom I spoke were personally affected by the loss of the space to which they felt so attached.

There is no direct evidence, however, for why the Indian Coffee House was demolished. While the men I interviewed—socialists and communists alike—related to me that it was common knowledge among the left that Sanjay Gandhi bulldozed the Indian Coffee House because he and his mother were threatened by the resistance in that deliberative space, any historical record that might confirm this supposition is either long destroyed or remains inaccessible to researchers. The only published source that mentions the bulldozing of the Indian Coffee House simply claims, “conversation was sought to be banished.... For several days after the Coffee House was mowed down one saw the regulars gazing at the rubble. In normal times they would have protested wildly. But during the Emergency all voices of dissent and protest were

stilled.” (Kalhan 1977, p. 10). While the story I was told—many times over—that Indira Gandhi’s Administration was threatened by the political deliberation in the Indian Coffee House may well be the “true” reason behind the demolition of the Indian Coffee House, equally plausible is the explanation given by the censored newspapers: that Sanjay Gandhi wanted to repurpose the land on which the Indian Coffee House was constructed for urban development projects. The two accounts are not mutually exclusive: the Gandhis were able to silence oppositional voices while also profiting from land appropriation and redevelopment.

While a new Indian Coffee House location was erected on the terrace of Mohan Singh Place, located further up the road from Connaught Place in a shopping complex that mainly sells made-to-order designer knockoff jeans, this space was qualitatively different from the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House. The Communist journalist I interviewed told me that, “The coffee house was essential for democracy in India. Nowadays people in the new coffee houses just talk business, but before the Emergency, we only talked politics.” Others echoed this sentiment that the coffee house just was not the same, “they just could not build a new coffee house. It was an institution,” the Socialist journalist said to me. Each one of the men I interviewed lamented that the Mohan Singh location is out of the way, and one has to climb several flights of stairs to get there whereas the Connaught Place coffee house was more centrally located and on the ground floor. While the Connaught Place coffee house attracted a wide range of customers, because the new location is not easily accessible (Kalhan 1977, p. 10), only people who seek out the Indian Coffee House frequent the Mohan Singh Place location. The architecture of space as well as historical tradition matter for the functioning of the public sphere.

The bulldozing of the Connaught Place Indian Coffee House led to a change in location and atmosphere for the Indian Coffee House, while also fragmenting political deliberation in New Delhi. I was told consistently that during the Emergency, people interested in political action against the state gravitated to the Indian Coffee House regardless of their political affiliations or views. But after the bulldozing, I heard, alliances that were forged out of a common goal of resisting the Emergency-Era state soon fell apart. The RSS and Congress Party, I was told, failed to follow the Socialists, Communists, and Naxalites into the new Indian Coffee House location at Mohan Singh Place. The socialist poet forcefully summed up this predicament when he told me that after the Emergency, “the left became meaningless and the RSS were cowards.” The left was “meaningless” because it only deliberated amongst itself, becoming isolated from the rest of the political spectrum, and the RSS were “cowards,” in the poet’s eyes, because they failed to continue with their oppositional politics after the Emergency, and instead sought mainstream acceptance.

The Socialist journalist told me that after their experiences in jail during the Emergency, the RSS became closer aligned with the Congress Party. RSS members had a difficult time in jail (Malkani 1978, pp. 35–42; Sahasrabuddhe and Vajpayee, pp. 247–281), because firstly, they were not accustomed to being jailed for their political work, unlike the Socialists, Communists, and Naxalites, and secondly, because of the torture inflicted upon MISA detainees during the Emergency<sup>5</sup> (Nayar 1977, p. 182; Sahasrabuddhe and

<sup>5</sup> Secondary sources, along with some of the men I interviewed, described torture inflicted on political prisoners during the Emergency including being deprived of food, water, and sleep; being beaten unconscious; waterboarding; having red chili powder rubbed on genitals and inserted into anal cavities; electric shocks; being forced to drink their own urine or the urine of prison guards, along with other “techniques” (Nayar 1977, p. 182; Sahasrabuddhe and Vajpayee, pp. 247–281).

Vajpayee, pp. 247–281). To avoid similar persecution in the future, narrators told me, the RSS became more closely aligned with Congress. The Socialists, Communists, and Naxalites continued to deliberate in the Indian Coffee House, but without the center and right, the conversation in the Indian Coffee House became more insular.

While the right and center dropped out of the deliberative space of the Indian Coffee House, a newly formed coalition party of the Socialists and the RSS, the Janata Party, took political power in India after elections were reinstated in 1977. The Janata Party government did not last long, mostly due to infighting, as the Socialists and RSS could not agree on which policies to implement, thereby driving the RSS Janata Party members to align with the right wing of the Congress Party (Jaffrelot 1996, p. 288). The political fragmentation in the Indian Coffee House, however, of an allied center and right on the one hand, and Communists, Socialists, and Naxalites deliberating solely amongst themselves on the other, continues to the present. The Communist journalist I interviewed told me that, “left parties, the CPI(M), CPI, Socialists—after the Emergency they were affecting politics. Now the situation—today the left is ineffective. The CPI is weak.” The far right in India has become empowered (Hewitt 2007), in part through its post-Emergency alliance with Congress (Vanaik 1997, p. 45). The Socialist art history professor told me that, “Congress has weakened, and now the BJP, [Bharatiya Janata Party, the contemporary successor to the RSS], is the strongest. Socialists and Communists need to unite to make a viable option for the left. Some are fighting, but the future of the left is not so bright. In Modi’s first speech as Prime Minister he said that the Socialist Movement is over.”

The common theme among anti-Emergency activists while reflecting on the relationship between the bulldozing of the Indian Coffee House and the political constellations of the present is that the RSS was the big winner of the anti-Emergency movement, while the left failed to remain relevant in mainstream politics. This is evidenced in the 2014 election for Prime Minister in which the Hindu Right (Bharatiya Janata Party, the contemporary successor to the RSS) won 39% of the vote (winning the election), Congress received 19.1% of the vote, while the CPI(M) won just over 3% and other left parties received a negligible number of votes.

With the weakening of the Indian left since the Emergency, the Indian Coffee House as an institution also grew weaker. As the Communist journalist said to me, “the Indian Coffee House was very important during the Emergency. People were working for the masses; it was very important. After the Emergency, the coffee house is still there, as are the workers. There’s more contract labor today, but it’s still a cooperative. The union is still there, but weakened. The Indian Coffee House workers helped in all aspects. Now, the Party doesn’t care so much.” He continued, “We said we would bring revolution from the coffee house. We tried. But our politics began from the coffee house.”

## Conclusion

The consensus view produced in the Indian Coffee House served as a powerful motivating ideology that helped to animate the resistance to Indira Gandhi’s dictatorship. The loneliness of the totalitarian moment (Arendt, p. 476) of the Emergency pushed all those who opposed Indira Gandhi’s regime into the space of the Indian Coffee House as all other spaces were repressed. When the Indian Coffee House at Connaught Place was

bulldozed, the space for political deliberation among a wide range of political parties was squashed. While the loss of political deliberation was significant, as many interviewees told me, it was the palpable loneliness that the bulldozing left in its wake that was even more upsetting. They were more than strategically disabled by the end of Coffee House as they had known it; they were traumatized.

The Indian Coffee House was rebuilt at Mohan Singh Place, but only the left gravitated to this new space and the centrist Congress Party along with the right wing Hindu nationalist party, RSS, no longer participated. The post-Emergency political deliberation of Indian Coffee House at Mohan Singh Place, therefore, could no longer be viewed as representative of the larger spectrum of Indian politics. This public sphere, once a bastion of rational-critical debate, instead transformed into a symbol of the past, with which people might identify (Habermas, p. 206). The Indian Coffee House soon became a source of nostalgia for the left, a space in which they could continue to inhabit the coffee house and recall the deliberative space it once was. While other key public sphere spaces have emerged since 1977—such as parts of Jawaharlal Nehru University—that are similar to the deliberative atmosphere in the Indian Coffee House at Connaught Place, the presence of centrist and right wing politics are not frequently part of the political deliberation in these spaces as well. Correlatively, when democracy was restored in 1977, leftist voices were no longer part of the mainstream conversation on contemporary politics in India (Habermas, p. 203).

And what of coffee house culture in India today? Economic liberalization has brought drastic changes to India's political economy (Kohli 2006; Nagaraj 1997) that have allowed new coffee house firms to enter the Indian market in the 1990s, to commodify the nostalgia for this public sphere, and thereby sell what seemed to my interviewees to be a watered-down radicalism to India's upper-middle class youth. Being a consumer at one of the new coffee house firms is hipper than being part of the political deliberation in one of the Indian Coffee Houses (Habermas, pp. 159, 211). Youth cultures were transformed by the coffee house firms that entered the Indian market after liberalization, from their more subversive forms as seen in the Indian Coffee House in the 1970s, and repackaged in ways that distinguish and reify the culture of India's upper-middle class while still providing young customers with the facade of youthful rebelliousness (Plys, p. 22). While Indian Coffee House still attracts artists and leftist intellectuals at locations near university campuses across India, the cultural connotations of being an Indian Coffee House regular—a leftist intellectual interested in literature and art—is anathema to the cultural connotations of the new coffee culture—favoring young, progressive, status-oriented professionals on the move (Plys, p. 22). Given the more fragmented coffee house landscape since liberalization, the possibility for a new public sphere to reemerge in one of India's many coffee houses—a public sphere that incorporates the entire spectrum of Indian politics and can produce powerful motivating ideology for anti-state movements—seems even more unlikely now than it did after 1977.

Across the globe, coffee houses have played a key role in fostering oppositional political discourse in moments of democratic reversal. When conventional political expression is repressed, intellectuals and activists and other opponents of the totalitarian state are pushed into spaces like that of the coffee house. This initially fosters political deliberation and cross-conversation among different viewpoints, while also making

activists more visible and vulnerable to the state and its agents. The Emergency was an attempt to destroy civil society and in destroying the coffee house, the state was a step closer to achieving this destruction. Markers of the elite, such as high caste and education, were no longer protection from state power once democracy was rescinded. Yet the longer-run impact of these dramatic moments of “publicity” may be more positive. The jury is still out.

**Acknowledgments** Many thanks to Julia Adams, Nicholas H. Wilson, Zophia Edwards, Ravi Ahuja, Manu Goswami, Cedric de Leon, Richard Lachmann, Wei Luo, Milind Eknath Awad, Vikramaditya Thakur, Neha Dhole, Yasushi Tanaka-Gutiez, Gabriel Winant, Anna Jurkevics, Kevan Harris, the Editors and reviewers of *Theory and Society* for their helpful comments. Thanks to Iqbal Abhimanyu for his invaluable assistance to this research. I gratefully acknowledge financial support for this project from the Joseph C. Fox International Fellowship from the MacMillian Center at Yale University, the John. G. Bruhn Fellowship from Yale University, and the Darius Thompson Wadhams Fellowship from Yale University.

## Appendix 1

### Methodological appendix

Given the specific barriers involved in conducting archival research in the Global South and given the obstacles I faced because of the controversial nature of research on The Emergency, I believe this warrants an Appendix further discussing the methods employed in this article.

I visited eleven different archives, in India and in the United Kingdom, where I examined sources on the Emergency along with other pieces of key information. I spent nearly two years in India (Aug. 2012 - Aug. 2013, July 2014-Jan. 2015), along with three months in London (March 2014, May 2014 - Jun 2014), conducting archival research.

At the **British Library** in London, UK, I used the India Office Library’s collection in order to research the colonial origins of the firm, Coffee House. I relied on the founding documents of the firm, reports detailing its growth and diffusion, and statistical series on the Coffee Houses along with statistical series on the coffee sector in colonial India. I also found key information about the larger political economy of coffee in the British Empire, including files on the commodity surplus crisis in the 1930s and 40s, files detailing inter-empire competition within the coffee sector, and intelligence reports on the Communist Party of India, which organized the Coffee House workers.

At the **National Archives of India**, in New Delhi, I collected information about Indira Gandhi’s economic policies, both domestic and foreign. I was the first researcher to examine certain reports on her family planning policies, and I also discovered documents about the relationship between India and the World Bank in the years leading up to the Emergency. While there are several files on the Emergency listed in the catalog of the National Archives of India, they remain classified, have not yet been transferred from the Home Department to the National Archives, and are not (as of this writing) accessible to researchers.

At the **PC Joshi Archives on Contemporary History** at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, I collected key files on the inner workings of the Indian Communist Party, their views on economic development in India, and their relationship to the Indian trade union and labor movement.

At the **Central Secretariat Library** in New Delhi, I collected statistical series on the coffee in India, including statistical series containing fiscal data on the Indian Coffee House. I also found statistical reports on the cooperatives in India, along with government reports on the relationship between cooperatives and economic development in India.

At the **Delhi Archives** in New Delhi, I found information specific to the Indian Coffee House locations in New Delhi and records of disputes the Delhi Indian Coffee Houses have had with city government since Independence. I also found information in the Delhi Archives about the slum clearances in Delhi under Indira Gandhi.

At the **Punjab State Archives** in Chandigarh, I found documents on the colonial and postcolonial labor movement in Punjab.

At the **VV Giri Archives on Indian Labour** in NOIDA, I collected documents on the Indian labor movement and the relationships among organized labor, the Communist Party of India (undivided), the Congress Party, and Congress Socialists in the years leading up to and just after India's independence.

At the **Haryana State Archives** in Panchkula, I found key documents about the agricultural cooperative movement in colonial and postcolonial Punjab and its role in agricultural development.

At the **KN Raj Memorial Library** in Thiruvananthapuram, I found government documents on the political economy of coffee in postcolonial India and government documents on consumer preferences and tastes for coffee over time in India.

At the **Kerala State Archives** in Thiruvananthapuram, I found documents detailing the role of trade unions in Kerala in the fight for India's Independence, along with documents about the Indian Coffee House from 1938 to 1968. These documents on the coffee house include information about how MJ Simon, Coffee House founder, sourced coffee from plantations in Kerala for all coffee house locations, and about plans to expand the Indian Coffee House in Kerala in the 1960s after it had become a cooperative.

I also sought to access records at the **Coffee Board of India's office in New Delhi**, having been told by several senior social scientists in Delhi that the Board kept a small archive. After repeated attempts, I was able to set up a meeting with a special duty officer. This official asked me for sexual favors in exchange for access to the archives, at which point I cut off contact. At a later date, I asked a male friend to try to gain access to these records on his own behalf. After several months of trying, my friend was able to get a phone meeting with a higher-level official at the Coffee Board in Bangalore. This more senior official told him that the Coffee Board's policy is to destroy records at the end of each quarter and therefore, we discovered, the Coffee Board of India records on the Indian Coffee House no longer exist.

Because none of these archives has records available on The Emergency itself, I initially thought to look to newspapers for information about the events of The Emergency. However, the press was heavily censored during this period of Indian history, a fact confirmed to me by the journalists I later interviewed. The information that I was seeking, about slum clearances, forced sterilization, and about resistance to the Emergency, was explicitly censored. Some journalists who tried to publish information about these topics and others were arrested; others were picked up by police and beaten in order to reinforce this censorship.

My decision to conduct oral history interviews with anti-Emergency activists who frequented the Indian Coffee House was informed by the above challenges. To contact

these men, I enlisted the help of my friends and contacts in student politics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, where I was a research fellow from 2012 to 2013 and tangentially involved in student politics through the New Materialists group.

My friends and contacts in the Socialist party were able to find leaders in the anti-Emergency movement, arrange interviews, and accompany me on these interviews. Having a committed young socialist at the interviews, I believe, helped the narrators to feel more comfortable during the oral history interviews. There was however one instance when, upon finding out that I had ties not just to Jawaharlal Nehru University but also to Yale University, one socialist leader assumed that I had right-wing sympathies and he was therefore reticent to be interviewed. After several conversations, and by sharing my published articles with him, I was able to convince him that I was a bona fide academic. Ultimately I was able to interview all key leaders of the Socialist resistance to the Emergency residing in Delhi.

I had somewhat less success with the Communists. Despite having several friends and contacts get in touch on my behalf with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) headquarters in Delhi, nothing ever materialized. I was told that the CPI(M) believed that I was a CIA agent and for that reason I was refused help in facilitating interviews. While I would have liked to have more Communist voices in this project, it remains the case that the Socialists were the most active group in leading the opposition to the Emergency.

I was ultimately able to interview Communists and Trade Unionists through my Socialist narrators' contacts, but was not able to interview any Naxalites or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh anti-Emergency activists.

My hope is that their recorded contributions will serve as an important counterweight to the censored newspaper records and to government reports (should they ever be declassified). For now, these interviews are the only primary source record of the contributions of Indian Socialists and their allies to the restoration of democracy in postcolonial India and of the importance of Indian Coffee House during The Emergency.

## References

### Archival Sources

- Delhi Archives, New Delhi, *India* (DA).  
 India Office Records at the British Library, *London, UK* (IOR).  
 National Archives of India, *New Delhi, India* (NAI).  
 Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, *New Delhi, India* (NMML).  
 PC Joshi Archives on Contemporary History, *Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, India* (PCJ).  
 KN Raj Memorial Library, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, *India* (KNRL).  
 Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive at the United States Holocaust Museum *Washington DC, USA* (SSFVA).

### Works Cited

- Abrams, L. (2010). *Oral history theory*. London: Routledge.  
 Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 Adamson, W. L. (1990). Modernism and fascism: The politics of culture in Italy, 1903-1922. *The American Historical Review*, 95(2), 359–390.

- Aljunied, K. (2014). Coffee-shops in colonial Singapore: Domains of contentious publics. *History Workshop Journal*, 77(1), 65–85.
- Arendt, H. (1966). *The origins of totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt.
- Awosom, N. F. (2010). The emergence of public spheres in colonial Cameroon. *African Development*, 35(1&2), 201–220.
- Aziz, K. K. (2008). *The coffee house of Lahore: A memoir 1942–57*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
- Banerjee, S. (2012). *Thema book of Naxalite poetry*. Kolkata: Thema.
- Benhabib, S. (1993). Models of public space: Hannah Arendt, the liberal tradition, and Jurgen Habermas. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Bhattacharya, B. (n. d.). The Indian Coffee House: a Social History of Public Consumption in Postcolonial India. (<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/190174.html>).
- Bronner, S. E., & Kellner, D. (1982). Expressionism and Café culture. In H. M. Pachter (Ed.), *The Weimar Etudes*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Calhoun, C. (1993). Introduction: Habermas and the public sphere. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge: MIT press.
- Carrillo, C. V. (2006). Grupos Poéticos Innovadores de la Década de los Sesenta en Latinoamérica. *Contribuciones desde Coatepec: Revista de Humanidades*, 10, 63–87.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chandra, B. (2003). *In the name of democracy*. Gurgaon: Penguin Books India.
- Cowan, B. (2004). The rise of the coffeehouse reconsidered. *The Historical Journal*, 47(1), 21–46.
- Devasahavam, M. G. (2012). *JP movement, emergency, and India's second freedom*. New Delhi: Vitasta.
- Dhar, P. N. (2000). *Indira Gandhi, the 'emergency', and Indian democracy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Driberg, T., & Mohan, S. J. (1975). *Emergency in India*. New Delhi: Manas.
- Ellis, A. (1956). *The penny universities: A history of the coffee houses*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Ellis, M. (2004). *The coffee house: A cultural history*. London: Phoenix.
- Ermakoff, I. (2008). *Ruling oneself out: A theory of collective abdications*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ferree, M. M., Gamson, W., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society*, 31, 289–324.
- Frank, A. G. (1977). Emergence of permanent emergency in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21(11), 463–475.
- Fraser, N. (1993). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Fraser, N., Coudry, N., Hutchings, K., Kurasawa, F., & Nash, K. (2014). *Transnationalizing the public sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gandhi, I. (1984). Selected speeches and writings of Indira Gandhi. Vol. III, September 1972-March 1977, New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- Gibson, C. (2012). Making redistributive direct democracy matter: Development and Women's participation in the gram Sabhas of Kerala, India. *American Sociological Review*, 77(3), 409–434.
- Government of India Pamphlet. (1941). The story of Indian coffee, NMML
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hattox, R. S. (1985). *Coffee and coffeehouses: The origins of a social beverage in the medieval near East*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Henderson, M. (1977). *Experiment with untruth*. New Delhi: Macmillan.
- Hewitt, V. (2007). *Political mobilisation and democracy in India: States of emergency*. London: Routledge.
- Hough, P. A. (2010). Hegemonic projects and the social reproduction of the peasantry: Examining the National Federation of coffee growers and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in world historical Perspective. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 33(1), 25–67.
- Hough, P. A., & Bair, J. (2012). Dispossession, class formation and the political imaginary of Colombia's coffee producers over the longue Durée: Beyond the Polanyian analytic. *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 18(1), 30–49.
- Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political order in changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University press.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (1996). *The Hindu nationalist movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kalhan, P. (1977). *Black Wednesday: Power politics, emergency and elections*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Kaviraj, S. (2001). In search of civil society. In S. Kaviraj & S. Khilnani (Eds.), *Civil society: History and possibilities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kelkar, I. (2010). *Rammanohar Lohia*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Khoo, G. C. (2010). Kopitiam: Discursive cosmopolitan spaces and National Identity in Malaysian culture and media. In A. Wise & S. Velayutham (Eds.), *Everyday Multiculturalism* (pp. 87–104). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kohli, A. (2006) Politics of economic growth in India, 1980-2005 part II: The 1990s and beyond. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 76, 1361–1370.
- Krug, C.A. & R.A. De Poerck (1968). World coffee survey. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, KNRL.
- Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs, and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004–2011. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 231–248.
- Linz, J. J. (1978). *The breakdown of democratic regimes: Crisis, breakdown, & Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review*, 53(1), 69–105.
- Livorni, E. (2013). The Giubbe Rosse Café in Florence: A literary and political alcove from futurism to anti-fascist resistance. In L. Rittner, W. S. Haine, & J. H. Jackson (Eds.), *The thinking space: The café as a cultural institution in Paris, Italy, and Vienna*. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Malkani, K. R. (1978). *The midnight knock*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Mauro, F. (1991). *Histoire du café*. Paris: Editions desjonquères.
- Mavalankar, P. G. (1979). *No, Sir*. Ahmedabad: Sannishtha Prakashan.
- Meyers, A. G. (1995). A stupendous hammer: Colonial and post-colonial reconstructions of Zanzibar's other side. *Urban Studies*, 32(8), 1345–1359.
- Moore, B. (1966). *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Morris, J. (2008). Storia dell'espresso nell'Italia e nel mondo. In M. Cociancich (Ed.), *100% Espresso Italiano*. Antorami: Trieste.
- Nagaraj, R. (1997). What has happened since 1991? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 8(Nov.), 2869–2879.
- Nayar, K. (1977). *Emergency retold*. New Delhi: Konark Publishers.
- Paige, J. M. (1997). *Coffee and power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Perry, J. O. (Ed.). (1983). *Voices of emergency: An all India anthology of protest poetry of the 1975–77 emergency*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Pillai, N. P. (2005). *Koffeehousinthe Katha*. Thrissur: Current Books.
- Pincus, S. (1995). 'Coffee politicians does create': Coffeeshouses and restoration political culture. *The Journal of Modern History*, 67(4), 807–834.
- Plys, Kristin. (n. d.). Liberalization, class formation, and the new Indian coffee culture: A geospatial analysis. Unpublished Conference Paper.
- Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in oral history*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Przeworski, A., Alvarez, M. E., Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. (2000). *Democracy and development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rama, C. M. (1982). Modelos Autoritarios Latinoamericanos Del Siglo XX. *Revista de Sociologia*, 18, 121–137.
- Richie, D. A. (2015). *Doing oral history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Robinson, T. P. (2014). *Café Culture in Pune*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Roseberry, W. (1983). *Coffee and capitalism in the Venezuelan Andes*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Roseberry, W., Gudmundson, L., & Kutschbach, M. S. (Eds.). (1995). *Coffee, society, and power in Latin America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rostow, W. W. (1960). *The stages of economic growth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rueschmeyer, D., Stephens, E. H., & Stephens, J. D. (1992). *Capitalist development and democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sahasrabudde, P. G., & Vajpayee, M. C. (1991). *Aapatkalin Sangharshgatha*. New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan.
- Schnapp, J. (2001). The romance of caffeine and aluminum. *Critical Inquiry*, 28(1), 244–269.
- Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Segel, H. B. (1989). *Vienna coffeehouse Wits, 1890–1938*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
- Sinha, S. (1977). *Emergency in Perspective: Reprieve & Challenge*. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers.
- Sinha, M. (2001). Britishness, Clubbability, and the colonial public sphere: The genealogy of an imperial institution in colonial India. *The Journal of British Studies*, 40, 489–521.
- Sivaramakrishnan, K. (2008). Crafting the public sphere in the forests of West Bengal: Democracy, development, and political action. *American Ethnologist*, 27(2), 431–461.
- Tarlo, E. (2003). *Unsettling memories: Narratives of the emergency in Delhi*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Thompson, A. (1998). Fifty years on: An International Perspective on oral history. *The Journal of American History*, 85(2), 581–595.
- Tocancipá-Falla, J. (2001). Cafés in Colombia: Socio-political and cultural forms of representation at the turn of the century. *International Social Science Journal*, 61, 425–436.
- Topik, S. C. (2000). Coffee anyone? Recent research on Latin American coffee Societies. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 80(2), 225–266.
- Tucker, C. M. (2011). *Coffee culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Vanaik, A. (1997). *The furies of Indian communalism: Religion, modernity, and secularization*. London: Verso.
- Wedeen, L. (2008). *Peripheral visions: Publics, power, and performance in Yemen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wild, A. (2005). *Coffee: A dark history*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Yow, V. R. (2005). *Recording oral history: A guide for the humanities and social sciences*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Zaret, D. (1996). Petitions and the ‘invention’ of public opinion in the English revolution. *American Journal of Sociology*, 101(6), 1497–1555.

**Kristin Plys** is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at Yale University and has been a visiting researcher at the Indian Labour History Research Group at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies at the Georg-August-Universität-Göttingen and at the Centre for Historical Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research agenda embraces the analysis of the historical trajectory of global capitalism as seen from working-class and anti-colonial movements in the Global South and it sits at the intersection of the sociology of development, political economy, postcolonial theory, labor and labor movements, historical sociology, and area studies. Her recent publications include “Worker Self-Management in the Third World 1952-1979” in the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, “Eurocentrism and the Origins of Capitalism,” in *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, and the entry “Immanuel Wallerstein” for *Oxford Bibliographies in Sociology*. Her PhD dissertation analyzes linkages between India’s anti-colonial labor movement and social protest against The Emergency, showing how the worker occupied and self-managed colonial firm, Indian Coffee House, became an important node of resistance against the postcolonial totalitarian state.