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# EVERYDAY YOUTH POLITICS AND THE ‘INDIAN VILLAGE’

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An Examination of *Connectivity*, *Knowledge*, and *Unity* in Uttar Pradesh and  
Uttarakhand

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by

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# 1

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## Introduction

My research explores the extent to which youth politicking in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Uttarakhand (UT) influences ‘notions’ of the ‘Indian village’ within those states. Previous village studies have been criticised for their depiction of bounded, timeless and backward ‘Indian villages’, and for overlooking the agentive capacity of villagers themselves (Wiser, 1936; Marriott, 1955; Srinivas, 1955; Majmundar, 1958). One recent volume in particular (Mines & Yazgi, 2010), however, has sought to move away from these *a priori* understandings of the village, repositioning it within the interpretive research paradigm (Weber: 1864-1920) as a facet of social action. Mines and Yazgi’s (2010) volume focuses on the way in which ‘notions’ of the village – here encapsulating the idea that a village is not only created by social action but sets the limits for and constrains that action – are dialectically created and resisted, focusing on contextualised ethnographic work. This process of village creation is hereafter termed ‘co-creation’ to emphasise the role that ‘the village’ itself has on constraining social action.

Whilst each village in Mines and Yazgi’s volume is explored in great detail they provide no discussion of how wider cross-case structural forces may influence co-creation, or how specific societal groups may serve different agentive roles; a particularly pertinent omission being the specific role that India’s bulging, and newly conceptualised, category of ‘youth’ has to play in village construction. Youth have been at the forefront of a wave of non-violent, progressive politicking in recent times – from the anti-Putin protests, to the January Revolution in Egypt (Leontidou, 2012). In India, with the exception of Jaiprakash Narain’s movement<sup>1</sup>, this mobilisation has been one of the everyday, a vernacular form of politics that has been particularly prominent in rural areas and is paramount to any discussion of politics in contemporary India. If

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<sup>1</sup> Bihar, 1970s.

then, as Mines and Yazgi suggest, villagers “shape their own and others’ political worlds” (2010: 25) through their everyday action, an examination of the role that the influential category of youth has to play in this co-creation is a noticeable omission from their account.

Subsequently, whilst my analysis follows Mines and Yazgi’s in problematizing the bounded, static and timeless notions of villages in the early literature, I deviate from their account in also problematizing the omission of ‘youth’ as an important lens through which to view co-creation. By analysing the role that young *men* play in co-creation I point to the *unique* nature of their village creation, the way in which it is influenced by wider and subtle forces of ‘domination’ (Lefebvre, 2008), and the implications of *their* notions for social and political life in UP and UT. As no previous work has been done on linking youth action to co-creation this study follows a grounded theory (GT) methodology; rather than testing my findings against a hypothesis based on previous theories, I use GT to uncover patterns *through* the analysis of secondary data. I develop the analysis and look to form recommendations for future research with reference to secondary ethnographic research conducted in numerous villages across the two states.

## 1.I Research Questions and Outline

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1. **How does youth politicking influence notions of village connectivity, knowledge and unity in UP and UT?**
    - a. To what extent does youth politicking *create* these notions in UP and UT?
    - b. To what extent does youth politicking *resist* these notions in UP and UT?
  2. **What is the unique role of ‘youth’ in creating and resisting these notions of the Indian village?**
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The first question relates to the extent to which youth politics *creates* or *resists* notions of village connectivity, unity and knowledge. These notions have been drawn from existing writings by village studies scholars and are defined in section 2.II. This is answered qualitatively and the exploratory findings are related back to existing literature. The second question is answered by identifying commonalities from the

cases to theorise the *unique* impact that young men have in relationships of village co-creation, drawing attention to the wider forces that may influence this relationship.

The rest of this chapter attends to conceptual clarification and contextualisation. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature, before Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study, highlighting the advantages of using GT analysis for an exploratory piece of research such as this. Chapter 4 presents a cross-case analysis of the role of youth politics in constructing notions of the village in the region, and Chapter 5 draws together the findings to conclude and present the unique role that young men have in co-creation.

## 1.II Conceptual Clarification

‘Youth’ is defined in accordance with what Durham (2000: 115) calls a *shifter* – a word that is tied directly to the context of speaking, taking much of its meaning from situated use. Subsequently, Jeffrey’s (2008) contextualised classification of youth in UP and UT as falling between the ages of 16 and 30 is applicable, reflecting how ideas of youth have been stretched in the district. ‘Politics’ mimics Jeffrey and Dyson’s definition of generative politics as “acts of generating consensus and navigating conflict in the pursuit of a definite end” (Forthcoming). The definition is extended to include action that young men themselves consider to be ‘political’. The ‘everyday’ level of the examination is inspired by what Dyson calls the ‘third generation of youth anthropology in South Asia’ (2008: 170) , one that focuses on the everyday practices of young people. This is not defined so rigidly as to exclude any association to wider political fields but is merely in recognition of that fact that the majority of youth politicking in UP and UT takes place on the quotidian level.

### 1.III Context: Young Men in UP and UT

To conclude this introduction, a brief contextualisation of everyday politicking in UP and UT. Writings on everyday experiences in UP and UT (borne out of UP in 2000) are populated with descriptions of a politics of resourcefulness that involves the generation of consensus through innovative and unconventional techniques (Dyson, 2008; Jeffrey, 2012, 2013; Young, 2012).

This everyday politicking is particularly prevalent amongst young men. As a reason for this, Jeffrey and Young (2012) suggest a conjuncture of three contextual factors in the area, or a ‘perfect storm’ of socio-economic trends. The initial factor is the ‘bulge’ in the youth population in the area observed during the 2000s (Census Commissioner of India, 2004)<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, the liberalisation of the Indian economy has had a negative impact on the public provision of education; the fiscal crisis of the UP government in the 1990s, coupled with neoliberal economic restructuring eroded the government’s higher education provision, with a vast gulf opening up between a small number of high quality establishments and a mass of poorly funded government institutions. This is not to say that education isn’t regarded highly in the region, and many young men obtain good educations emerging steeped in notions of rights and citizenship. The final factor is the diminution in employment opportunities due to a reduction in government placements that began in the late 1990s and early 2000s and to the failure of liberalisation to generate private-sector employment in the region (Jeffrey & Young, 2012). In agreement with multiple studies on youth politics in UP and UT (Dyson, 2008; Jeffrey, 2010; Jeffrey & Young, 2012; Kumar, 2012) the conjuncture of these three factors has produced a generation of educated, unemployed, and frustrated men, to whom everyday politicking acts as an outlet for their political and social frustration.

This discussion highlights two silences in my account: the voices of women and the uneducated. I concentrate throughout on the everyday politics of young *men* in the region. This focus is partly pragmatic, as the research is based upon secondary ethnographic accounts, most of which involved interviews taken in

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<sup>2</sup> In 2001 there were 50% more young men in the category 15-30 than there were 31-44

settings from which women were excluded, and, partly related to the patriarchy that marks rural UP and UT, meaning that women are not involved in everyday politicking in the same way as men (Dyson, 2008; Dyson, 2010). This discussion also only charts the politics of young educated men, firstly reflecting a decision to highlight those men faced by the 'perfect storm' of socioeconomic conjunctures, and secondly because it is this group of 'educated', but often unemployed men, who are the most active in politicking.

# 2

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## Notions of the ‘Indian Village’

This chapter is split into two sections, the first focuses on the Village Studies approaches of the twentieth century, outlining the visions of the ‘Indian Village’ that they created, and the second drawing attention to the notions of connectivity, knowledge and unity that have emerged from more recent literature, highlighting the way that notions of the village are involved in a process of ‘co-creation’ with villagers.

### 2.1 The Indian Village: Bounded and Timeless

‘Village Studies’ didn’t emerge as a sub-discipline until the 1950s, as, apart from the study of what were variously termed scheduled tribes, aborigines, or animists, anthropologists didn’t pay much attention to Indian society prior to Independence (Clark-Decés, 2011). The studies that appeared saw the ‘village’ and the ‘village community’ as existing *a priori*, representing fundamental social realities. From this stance, two pertinent visions of the Indian village emerged: the village as bounded, and timeless. Firstly, the adaptation of anthropological field techniques to examine ‘cultural areas’, allowing researchers to reduce their study areas into smaller territorial and social *units*, positioned the village as an object of study; in this methodological light the vision of a bounded village developed. Subsequent studies (Srinivas, 1955; Marriott, 1955; Dube, 1955; Majmundar, 1958) saw villages as *units* within which the functioning of social relations could be traced, whilst relations with external ‘units’ (village-city, village-region, village-state) were documented only to highlight that India as a whole was ‘united in diversity’ (Majmundar, 1958).

Secondly, this bounded vision of the village was predicated upon an interest in how villages *functioned*. This view of the village stems from Wiser’s (1979[1936]) emphatic description of the ‘cohesion’ of the Hindu caste system. Wiser was influential for his description of the *jajmani system*, an idealised caste-based



division of labour, in which all component parts of a village worked for the good of the whole; lower castes such as carpenters, potters and blacksmiths worked for high caste landowning families. The functioning of the village system was explained via emphasis on the balanced integration of rights and obligations. Although the authors of the 1950s took issue with Wiser's emphasis on 'cohesion' they followed down similarly functionalist and structural paths, viewing the village as a 'system' of timeless and pre-ordained social relations. For example, Marriott (1955) focused on clarifying the functioning of the village community, what he called the 'little community', paying no attention to how this 'community' was created or resisted by the actors themselves. Similarly, Mayer (1960) compiled data on the 'minutely structured' village society in Central India, concerned entirely in delineating the functioning of caste and kinship relations with no attempt to historicise the account or to elicit the impact of villagers within this structured 'village society'. Furthermore, even when attempts were made to integrate an appreciation of 'change' into these accounts it was most often related solely to change *within* these excepted social structures and communities. Srinivas (1955), for example, centred his analysis on a dominant caste thesis that saw a caste of 'middling ritual status' and of numerical dominance holding power over others; within this view, people held 'official places' within a jajmani system based upon singular occupations (1955: 8). His mode of change and 'social mobility' was based upon 'mimicking' upper-caste practices (Sanskritisation), rather than any form of change outside of the caste system.

Additionally, various scholars chose to focus on the economic functioning of Indian villages, further enhancing the vision of Indian villages as timeless by positioning their economies at the static, backward and traditional end of modern/traditional dichotomies. For example, whilst B eteille (1969) may have criticised the relationship between inter-caste interaction and 'solidarity' that had been central to other village studies, he depicted the village economy as a pre-ordained self-perpetuating system. Additionally, Frankel's (1971) critique of agricultural and village change in five widely dispersed Indian districts in Bihar sought to demonstrate how villages were 'failing to modernise', whilst Marriott and Inden (1977) depicted

the village economy, as well as village social life, as the sum of various fixed transactions (food exchanges, marriage, worship) that aimed to preserve people's 'hereditary substance', or 'traditional code'.

In light of these trends, by the mid 1970s the anthropological study of villages in India either underscored their unchanging character (timeless village economies, social structures, and cultural values), their failure to 'modernise', or their bounded nature. In this sense village studies risked negating the importance of 'change' in 'Village India' whilst also essentialising the village as a traditional unit. Missing from all of these accounts was the agentic capacity of villagers themselves, and it is this lacuna to which I now turn.

## 2.II Ways of Villaging the World: An Interpretive Turn

The above conceptualisations of villages were challenged in the 1980s as anthropologists began to emphasise the importance of historical change to their research (Cohn, 1977; Appadurai, 1981; Dirks, 1987). Such studies evoked the idea that history, context and experience were more important in shaping societies than timeless structures. Villages were no longer theorised and accepted as existing *a priori* but were now analysed within the emerging interpretive paradigm as products of meaning and action.

In current literature this interpretive approach has been taken further to elicit the *implications* of social constructions (Mines & Yazgi, 2010). This approach, that attempts to focus on the grounded study of social relations and the meanings that dialectically arise from these, stems from the work of Weber (1864-1920). Weber held that the person affects society – viewed as a 'social system' – *through* their social action and that in turn the society may have an influence on the person (1978 [1922]). Mines and Yazgi see this process as capturing what Giddens (1993) has called the 'double hermeneutic', highlighting the need to pay attention to the way in which social constructions both constrain action and make meaningful action possible. Mines and Yazgi use this sociological understanding as a theoretical point of departure. They and others (specifically Sax, 2010) subsequently see constructions of the 'village' as possessing forms of agency, influencing the social and political lives of diverse actors. They aim to trace these constructions,

sharing in an anthropological posture that attends to the reflexive and strategic dimensions of human action and existence in the contexts of villages. In particular they focus on uncovering the roles and norms involved in social action, and assessing how these ‘produce’ the social system. Their focus on tracing social action and ‘village creation’ thus serves as useful methodological touchstone for this project.

From their study, and from wider reading of current village literature, notions of the Indian village have been split into three pertinent categories. This section highlights previous work done on tracing notions of connectivity, knowledge, and unity, and pinpoints the omission of youth influence from these studies. These notions are by no means rigid and there exists a considerable amount overlap between them.

### 2.II.i. *Connectivity*

Although emphasis on connection and change was not uncommon in the early writings on Indian villages<sup>3</sup> it was seen as a ubiquitous factor across villages, rather than a constructed element of village life that is constantly in flux.

Recent studies have worked to change this view. Firstly, villages are discussed as ‘multilocal’, implying that they occupy ‘multiple social spheres’, allowing “external actors to make internal decisions” (Yazgi, 2010:64). This multilocality, Yazgi (2010) suggests, rewrites the ordering of power relations within the village as it hands external actors significant power. Rodman (1992), who discusses the mixing of power structures and cultures amongst different village spheres, sees young people as the ‘gatekeepers’ of this multilocal flux, largely through their enhanced migration. Moreover, Sekri identifies how migration flows reconstitute village connectivity, providing the specific example of young ‘multilocal voters’ in the UP elections (2012:107). Sekri notes the importance of the notion of ‘village networks’ in this process.

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<sup>3</sup> The well known village studies of the 1950s (Dube, 1995; Majmundar, 1958) and those studies contained in the trio of 1955 collections, including Srinivas’s *India’s Villages*, Marriott’s *Village India*, and Majmundar’s *Rural Profiles*, all tried to explain relations of villages to wider social, economic, political and ideational arenas. They rejected static conceptions of villages and saw a relational analysis of ‘change and connectivity’ as most appropriate.

Secondly, accounts of village connectivity have helped to rid what Inden calls the ‘presupposition of a dichotomy between village and state’ (1990:159). As Yazgi (2010) details in his account of villages on the campaign trail in the Himalayas, we should view the state as acting *within* the village; he does this with an examination of how state functions are performed through ‘imbedded village actors’ such as local fixers and ‘big men’. Gottschalk (2010) indicates how this ‘connectedness’ may in fact limit social action, as villagers tend to see fixers as their only route to resources. How youth politics may act as a form of association with the state, thus addressing this dichotomy, is of interest in politically complex and geographically sparse states such as UP and UT.

### 2.II.ii. *Knowledge*

Moving on from the essentialised accounts of ‘traditional’ knowledge from the 1950s, and notions of the village as in need of modernisation (Frankel, 1971), writers have traced the way that ‘village knowledge’ is constructed. Golds (2010) advocates what she calls a ‘post-romantic’ approach to the notion of village knowledge that allows an appreciation of both ‘miracles and committees’, both the indigenous and the scientific. This is in line with Dube’s (2002) volume called *Enduring Enchantments* in which Dube speaks of a need to break down the persisting dualism of modernity and nature in the social sciences. Golds (2010) follows Dube’s sentiments in highlighting how romanticised notions of harmony stemming from subaltern village communities can be useful in the science of conservation. She suggests that the notion of village knowledge as ‘traditional’ has previously held back this development. Similarly, in a discussion of the ‘rural’ and its connotations, Pandey (2003) argues that we would do well to reconsider this concept and introduce different analytic constructs. He begins with a critique of approaches that presume rural or ‘village knowledge’ *a priori* as the ‘traditional’ end of urban/rural and modern/traditional dichotomies. Pandey suggests that ‘rural knowledge’ is thus envisioned as needing ‘modernisation’. Such a view tends to negate the role of “human action in making sense of their own existence” (2003: 35). In this sense, analyses such as that of Mines and Yazgi (2010) that attempt to trace the ways in which villagers make up the realities within which they participate is preferable. Such an approach has led to an understanding of village knowledge as

hybrid knowledge, specific to a particular locality. The role that youth politics play in constructing or resisting the knowledge duality is of relevance.

### 2.II.iii. *Unity*

Highly visible within current scholarship on Indian villages is the notion of ‘village unity’; two points are of note. Firstly, ‘unity’ is used as a strategic resource. As Gupta (1997) indicates, this means that unity isn’t viewed as a feature of timeless tradition seated in villages or as part of an anthropological fiction linked to functionalist agendas. Rather, Gupta shows that unity is best seen as an historicised resource, strategically invested for good or for bad. For example, Yazgi (2010) discusses the way that jeeps transporting milk from one Himalayan village to another deploy ‘village unity’ to siphon milk and sell it to tea-stalls belonging to the same village at a preferential rate, before diluting the remaining milk for sale to tourists. Thakur (2005) discusses how villagers use ‘village unity’ as a mode of self-understanding and action, appropriating the knowledge of being ‘together as villagers’ in order to self-represent themselves as a worthy ‘group’ of recipients of state development.

Secondly village unity can create the conditions of possibility for certain actions and behaviours, or what Weiz calls an ‘official life’ (2010:140). This is in recognition of the fact that discourses of village unity can work to legitimise a structure of caste and gender relations based upon pre-existing and engrained discrimination. Weiz details the way in which the construction of village ‘unity’ fosters a discourse of ‘inclusion and exclusion’ providing different castes with their particular ‘village-based’ functions or naturalising gender divisions of labour. This official place can of course be challenged, as Weiz indicates when he cites the example of a low caste village ‘slave’ who challenges his role through the use of humour. Here the notion of ‘village unity’ is discursively distributed to reinforce pre-existing structures of ‘domination’ (Srinivas, 1955). For Weiz, these notions of unity are constructed, resisted, and fluid in nature yet he makes no attempt to outline the specific role of different groups in influencing them.

To conclude this chapter, a reflection on the above literature, the various omissions, and my treatment of it throughout this dissertation. My discussion of villages in UP and UT differs from previous and current literature in two ways. Firstly, rather than assuming, like the early functionalist studies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that a timeless village community exists in rural India, within which social organisation is static and uncontested, I analyse the village and its social relations as a set of understandings, institutions and dispositions that are fluid in nature, eliciting how various notions of the village are co-created, and the implications of such notions. Secondly, my analysis deviates from recent village studies as I focus on the cross-case influence that young men have on village co-creation. Whilst a contextualised approach to the study of villages is central to recent studies of co-creation this context is rarely extended to incorporate wider regions, or to compare several villages. Each of the studies in Mines and Yazgi's (2010) volume focuses intently on one village, recognising the historical factors, rules and rituals inherent to that particular locality. However, in states such as UP and UT where broader cross-regional factors influence segments of the rural population, such as the 'Perfect Storm' that Jeffrey and Young (2012) highlight, there is something to be said for a broader approach. The above body of literature fails to theorise the importance of young people as such a cross-case demographic in the creation of village notions. This may be damaging for two reasons. Firstly, in UT and UP, where everyday youth action is common and the youth population swells, attention to *their* notions of 'the village' and the way in which these constrain social and political action is of great interest. Secondly, because a global tide of neoliberal capitalism has radically changed the conception of India, thus warranting a broader reflection upon our understanding of India's village. An analysis that focuses on young men steeped in the discourse surrounding this global change is therefore of interest, and may unearth wider 'forces' that are influencing village co-creation; a broad perspective that Mines and Yazgi (2010) appear to avoid.

# 3

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## Methodology

To determine the unique role of young men in village co-creation I used a multiple case study design combined with a GT analysis of secondary ethnographic sources<sup>4</sup>. This section outlines the approach, looking first at the cross-case method and secondly at the coding system employed to analyse the cases.

### 3.1 Cross-case Analysis

Each ethnography is treated as an intensive study of a single *node* for the purpose of understanding a larger *class* of (similar) nodes; the word node used to emphasise connectivity and escape the trap of treating the villages as ‘bounded entities’ (Gerring, 2004). The villages were examined in a cross-case manner reflecting a potential neglect in much of the ethnographic work done on villages in recent years. A move away from the essentialist writings of the 1950s has rendered it poor practice to employ any system of cross-case examination, a shift that risks masking important wider patterns of action. Whilst a multiple case approach is often criticised for resulting in the loss of case idiosyncrasies (Stoecker, 1991), I mitigated this risk by following Yin (2009) who suggests no more than 15 secondary source cases can be examined to allow individual cases to be adequately explored. In order to constrain the sample size I narrowed my search using the following criteria:

**i. Content:** A sufficient depth of information regarding youth action in contemporary village settings in UP & UT. I used a purposive sampling strategy, grouping ethnographies according to preselected criteria relevant to the research questions (i.e. ‘youth politics’; ‘villages’; UP; UT; ‘quotidian’).

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<sup>4</sup> A list of ethnographies is provided in Appendix.1

**ii. Quality:** Ethnographies were favoured if they make attempt to seek out the multiple perspectives of those involved, aiming to trace forms of social action. To ensure that this variable didn't compromise the content, I employed a secondary sampling method – a snowball sampling strategy (Biernacki *et al.*, 1981). This form of chain referral sampling allowed me to sample based upon information given by citations <sup>5</sup>.

**iii. Period:** 2000-2014. I chose to search for ethnographies within this period for two reasons; firstly it coincides with the 'perfect storm' of socioeconomic conditions (Jeffrey & Young, 2012), rendering it appropriate for an analysis of young men's politicking; secondly it allowed sufficient flexibility for the above sampling method to work. A shorter time period would have compromised either quality or content.

**iv. Source:** Searches were carried out using the purposive sampling criteria on the 'Search Oxford Libraries Online' and *Economic and Political Weekly* webpages.

Using these search criteria I narrowed the pool of ethnographies down to 13.

### 3.II Grounded Theory and Youth Action

Like Mines and Yazgi, and allowing for Giddens's (1993) 'double hermeneutic', I see society as a social system constantly in co-creation. From this standpoint I look to trace the social action of young men and assess how this influences 'village' co-creation. In order to make this approach more rigorous the cross-case method was coupled with a GT analysis, which involved the coding of key points within the data and their subsequent categorisation (Straus & Corbin, 1994). An advantage of GT over other textual analysis methods is its explicit position to trace and organise forms of social action into a theoretical conclusion. Furthermore, for a project of this scope, the stages of analysis that GT lays out were useful in providing a guide for analysis. The coding structure is outlined below.

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<sup>5</sup> This section was informed additionally by my prior knowledge of the ethnographic work carried out in villages in UP and UT, specifically thanks to my undergraduate supervisors Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson.



The first coding level (C1) is designed to categorise the actions of ‘youth politicking’ along the lines of its resourcefulness, and social and negative agentive nature. These three categories stem from Jeffrey’s (2012) synoptic categorisation of youth agency. Resourcefulness relates to young men’s use of strategic short-term tactics to solve problems. Jeffrey’s categorisation is heavily influenced by the writings of Mannheim (1972 [1936]) who indicates that youth frequently display a ‘fresh contact’ with their material environments, strategizing solutions in fleeting moments of action (Mannheim 1972 [1936], Jeffrey, 2010). Secondly, whilst the anthropological youth literature has tended to link young people’s agency to their capacity to create spaces of *individual* assertion (Durham, 2008), Jeffrey (2012) draws attention to recent writings on the deeply social nature of young people’s agency; young people increasingly see ‘youth’ as a life-period in which to enact ‘collective change’ (Adebe, 2007; Dyson, 2010). Lastly, Jeffrey (2012) highlights how youth action often leads to the reinforcement of contentious norms and structures, drawing attention to studies that see this ‘negative’ agency reinforcing patriarchal norms (Dyson, 2008), caste-divisions (Gupta, 1997) and economic hierarchies (Jeffrey, 2010). These three theoretical approaches to the study of youth action are used to categorise youth action and highlight its pertinent features. This level of the coding acted as a barometer for youth action in each village and each incidence of ‘youth action’ was examined separately.

Coding on the second level (C2) involved grouping these first codes into wider categories that assessed how these forms of action *created* or *resisted* notions of connectivity, unity and knowledge. This level of analysis followed Mines and Yazgi in tracing both the dialectical production and social creation of village notions, embracing the double hermeneutic to appreciate how these notions constrained further action. Finally, these categories were organised in a cross-case manner, bringing them together to form the basis of the third level of coding (C3)<sup>6</sup>. This third level of coding focused on the *unique* influence of youth in the relationship of village co-creation, attempting to draw out a particular mechanism by which the relationship could be best understood. This involved the examination of pertinent features of the analysis to identify those that affected all cases, and the subsequent refinement into a theoretical conclusion. Chapter 4 presents

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<sup>6</sup> Although each case was analysed separately, concepts from previous cases inevitably influenced subsequent data analysis by raising additional questions.

the findings of the C2 level of analysis whilst Chapter 5 assesses C3, attempting to theorise the *unique* role of ‘youth’ in village co-creation.

### 3.III Considerations

There are two methodological considerations of note. First is the question mark over whether this secondary analysis is tenable, given that ethnographies involve inter-subjective relationships between the researcher and the researched (Glaser, 1992). I mitigate against this limitation by using ethnographies with sufficient reflexivity towards the influence of their theoretical, cultural, and political contexts, whilst also recognising that, in accordance with Lauckner *et al.* (2012), my lack of control over the data may be a positive factor in a GT analysis as it reduces the deductive elements of the methodology connected with taking fieldwork (e.g. choice of research area, choice of research participants, length in the field). Secondly, a criticism of GT is that the analysis is too heavily influenced by the author’s pre-existing knowledge, and that it constitutes a mere ‘reworking’ of previous thoughts. Subsequently I undertook the process of ‘memoing’ (Dunne, 2011), writing down my internal dialogue with the data at specific points in time.

# 4

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## Analysing Village Co-creation

Four principal themes emerged from the second level of coding (C2) and are developed below.

### 4.1 Territorial Unity

A salient cross-case theme from C2 was the relationship between young men's everyday politicking and the creation of a geographical form of village unity, which sees a 'loyalty' to the village manifested through a desire to conserve its territorial environment.

In Jayal's (2001) account of two villages in the Tehri Garhwal district in 2000, young men held the conservation of the village *gavand* (territory) as central to their everyday politicking. In *Jardhargaon*, one of the two villages, young men were essential in sanctioning a neighbouring village for not helping protect the oak forest during a fire. These young men circulated a discourse of us against them, expending equal amounts of energy on cultivating unity within the village whilst also ensuring that the nearby settlement lost its 'right' over the forest. They were also pivotal in the formation of a Van Suraksha Samitii, a seven-member council for the protection of the forest, which postulated a discourse of "respect for the village *gavand*" (2001: 658). Similarly, in the village of *Khavada*, young men set up an environmental movement called the Chetna Andolan group, who circulate messages such as "*jungle hi jeevan hai*" (the forest is our life) (2001: 661). This group has been instrumental in merging 'sacred' practices with rational conservation discourse, organising two ceremonies in 1996 and 2000 that involved tying a 'sacred thread' around the trees – adopting them as community brothers (2001: 661).

Similarly, in Jeffrey and Dyson's (Forthcoming) account of youth action in Bemni, a Himalayan village, young men created notions of territorial unity through their everyday politicking, which involved frequent momentary gatherings in makeshift committees to solve resource-based problems. In one case, a group gathered to solve a problem with water flow to the village. They would periodically disperse, fanning out around the village checking water routes, negotiating with other villages, and discussing the problem amongst other young men. After several hours they succeeded in securing the flow, with one member of the group indicating that this had been an act of 'loyalty' to the village (Forthcoming). This sense of loyalty to the village was largely cultivated through such momentary 'events'. Furthermore, Jeffrey and Dyson highlight the case of Kirpal, a young educated man, who was involved in the building of a road to Bemni, and in the circulation of the notion that this road was a 'village' achievement: "villagers built this road" (Forthcoming). Through the circulation of this notion Kirpal critiqued the state's development programme, positioning the road built by 'villagers' against the poorly constructed state roads in hope of "embarrassing" the district administration into action.

In these C2-level examples, young men were influential in *creating* notions of 'territorial unity', reacting to environmental stresses and resource demands with a politics of resourcefulness (C1). The men exhibited distinguishing relationships with their territorial environments, bringing to mind Mannheim's theorisation of youth and their 'fresh contact' with material environments (1972 [1936]). This fresh contact was manifest in moments of resourcefulness in which young men used their new ideas to solve problems and was captured in Kirpal's statement: "the new generation have new ideas, new projects... we have a chance to alter what is happening" (Forthcoming). In Jayal's (2001) account, this resourceful politicking led to the creation of a notion of territorial unity as a centripetal force for community-based action and organisation. In accordance with Gupta's (1997) discussion, these young men used the notion of 'village unit' strategically during moments of crisis, such as forest fires, in order to encourage community participation. As one young man voiced, "ordinary folk have to help for the good of the village" (2001: 662). This strategic creation the village 'community' challenges the views of previous writers who wrote of the 'little community' and the

‘village society’ as pre-ordained sociological realities (Marriott, 1955; Mayer, 1960). In Jeffrey and Dyson’s (Forthcoming) account this politics created a notion of territorial unity that was used as a mode of ‘self-representation’. Similarly to Thakur’s (2005) discussion of the village as a resource for self-representation, young men like Kirpal mobilised the notion of ‘village unity’ and togetherness to pursue state resources. This example of the ‘village’ as a strategic bargaining chip contests the visions of Indian villages that saw caste identity as the only sanctioned system of resource transfer (Srinivas, 1955; Mayer, 1960).

#### 4.II Contentious Unity

C2 also points to the fact that the relationships of co-creation between young men and ‘village unity’ were more complicated than this territorial notion would indicate. A commonality present amongst the C2 categories was that of ‘contentious unity’. Young men were frequently involved in reinforcing *and* challenging notions of village unity that saw each caste occupying an ‘official life’ within the village structure (Weiz, 2010). Similarly to Weiz’s discussion of village unity, these ‘official lives’ appeared to be based upon deeply engrained caste divisions in the region. Mostly upper caste or ‘intermediate caste’ Jeffrey *et al.*, 2005) young men were involved in the creation and reinforcement of contentious notions of unity. Rather than viewing the village as merely a territorial resource to be conserved, these young men created notions of the village as something to be ‘ruled over’. This was largely manifest through their frustration in response to what they felt was “pampering” by the government towards Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backwards Classes (OBCs).

In Gupta’s (2010) study of the village of *Muzaffarnagar*, Meerut, young men circulated a discourse of exaggerated ‘happiness’ and of the content nature of the village. Young Jat men were responsible for often overstating the material wealth of Harijans in the village to insist that they would readily work uncomplainingly in the fields for Jats. In one encounter, a Jat youth pulled a young Harijan man over to the crowd of people he was talking to:

“Look at him...These are children of cobblers and leather-workers in this village, and now they wear machine-made shoes by Bata. Even *I* could not afford such things.” (Gupta, 2010: 100)

Here the young Jat man hints at the content nature of Harijans in the village through highlighting items of conspicuous consumption. Yet, as Gupta indicates, the Harijans were most often actually poorly dressed, and Jats heavily exaggerated Harijan ‘happiness’ in fleeting encounters with their lower-caste village neighbours. Comparably, in Jeffrey’s (2001) discussion of the village of *Masuri*, Meerut, young Jat men were central in decorating the importance of their *biradari* (caste identity) for ‘cattle fodder’, and for the ‘good relations’ of village unity. Despite the fact that the village *pradhan* was a SC man, the young Jat men saw SCs as far below them: “Why should they rule over us? We should teach them a lesson and maybe then they would realise our *importance* to this village.” (Jeffrey, 2001: 222). The discourse of Jat ‘importance’ was spread through the use of young men’s political and social networks.

On the other hand, the C2 level analysis did point to the importance of lower caste young men in *resisting* these notions of unity. For example, in Jeffrey *et al.*’s (2005) account young Chamars in *Nangal* challenge the ‘official life’ placed upon them by village unity by exaggerating stories of Dalit heroism during their political activity. One young man, Btjpal, recounts the story of Jotirao Phule who fought for Chamar rights in the village. Moreover, in Dutta’s (2012) and Michelutti’s (2007) accounts young Yadav men use extravagant discourses of their cow herding pasts to question the ‘rule’ of Jats. In Dutta’s (2012) discussion of *Raipur Raja*, near Lucknow, one young Yadav questions why “in a village like this, where Yadavs constitute half the population, Jats who once worked in our fields now rule us like kings” (2012: 341). Young men manoeuvred these discourses to their advantage during momentary and sporadic political encounters with other caste members and other young men.

Clearly young men reacted to their ‘official lives’ by *creating* or *resisting* notions of ‘village unity’ in a social politics of exaggeration (C1). Central to their politics was the exaggeration of existing discourses and their subsequent circulation. In the case of upper-caste young men this exaggeration was often entwined with negative agency, manifest in moments of exchange with lower caste villagers. For example, in Jeffrey’s (2001) account, young men maintained a type of village unity through their exaggerated discourses of their *biradari*’s ‘importance’ for the functioning and unity of the village. They were well versed in ideas of village occupations and hierarchy, strategically investing these in a ‘contentious’ way. Jeffrey notes a case in which a young Jat man, one of the largest farmers in the village, struck an older SC man across the face for questioning why the a SC *pradhan* should want to help Jats. This event sent a ripple of rumours and anxiety through the fabric of *Masuri* society. Throughout the following hours villagers of all castes were active in highlighting the need for SCs to remain ‘good caste relations’ with the Jats, recognising the ‘importance’ they held for ‘unity’. Seemingly the discourse of Jat importance to village unity had acted to constrain the collective response. This exaggerated discourse of ‘village unity’ chimes with Weiz’s (2010) discussion of a village ‘official life’, but also challenges the conceptions of harmonious caste relations posited in earlier village studies (Wiser, 1936; Marriott, 1955; Majmundar, 1958). In these examples, rather than caste occupying the only institution of social organisation (Mayer, 1960), and acting as a pre-ordained fixed social structure, it is instead conflictual and contested, interlinked with a call for ‘village unity’ that is at once complex, loaded and subtly deployed by young men.

Young men also used a politics of exaggeration to *resist* contentious notions of village unity. In Michelutti’s (2007) account, young Yadav men manoeuvred the discourse of their ‘former glory’ to launch political critiques. A group of young Yadav men challenged the BJP’s anti adulterated milk campaign, which they thought to be exploiting their ‘village brothers’. They used their cow-herding heritage as a strategic resource to be emphasised in their politics, arguing that the campaign was damaging villages ‘unity’ by stripping Yadav’s of their central roles in villages: “villages need cow-herders” (2007: 346). Unlike in Weiz’s

account young men challenged their ‘official place’ not through humour but through an approach that drew upon ‘traditional’ accounts of lower-caste importance.

#### 4.III ‘Traditional’ Village Knowledge

The third theme deciphered from the C2 analysis is the relationship between young men’s politicking and ‘traditional’ notions of village knowledge. This notion of ‘traditional’ village knowledge was established via two avenues: through the cultivation of educated identities vis-à-vis traditional ones; and by situating salaried employment and economic gain in opposition to ‘village-based’ artisanal knowledge and economic stasis.

In Jeffrey *et al.*’s (2004) discussion of youth in *Qaziwala* – Bijnor – young men cultivated a sense of progress that was connected to obtaining an education. Education was equated with a path to ‘civilised adulthood’ and most often with a route out of the village. For example, young educated Chamar men referred to illiterates as ‘beasts’ and ‘savages’ and as modern day village idiots (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004: 969). This construction of the uneducated village ‘savage’ was translated onto dress sense as well. Educated young men scrutinised appearance, stressing the need to be dressed in a clean and well-pressed way, “like someone from the city, not a village” (2004: 971). Connected to this was a sense that everyday youth politics was only possible if one was educated and had the required self-assurance, dignity and independence to engage properly in social situations. The group of young men that Jeffrey *et al* discuss saw themselves as social reformers, intent on changing the ‘savage’ nature of village knowledge: education for them was “benefit itself” (2004: 970).

Traditional-knowledge identities were also constructed in relation to ones ability to ‘hook in’ to everyday technology, and illiterates were taunted for their inability to familiarise themselves with these icons of modernity. Young men equated their everyday use of technological devices as distinct from everyday “village politics”. For example, in Jeffrey and Dyson’s (Forthcoming) discussion of life in Bemni, a young



man named Kirpal frequently took photos of broken bridges and untidy footpaths indicating that the photos might be useful in court. He understood this activity as part of his everyday political existence but as thoroughly distinct from the politics of other “villagers”. He associated his political techniques largely with an educated youthful identity distinct from a purely village-based one.

Young men also *created* notions of ‘traditional’ knowledge by situating economic gain in opposition with a static village economy. In Dyson’s (2008) discussion of young people’s work in the Bemni, young men spoke proudly of the money they made from their political activity and their lichen collection, imagining a connection between this forest work, which they saw distinct from ‘village work’, and the occupations of ‘knowledgeable’ men who had left the village. Part of their resistance to a traditional village identity involved a desire to work in an urban area ‘outside of the hills’ in salaried employment (2008: 173). Similarly, in Jeffrey *et al* (2004) a group of young educated men indicated that all forms of hand or ‘village work’ was below their ‘dignity’. They were central to the everyday politicking of *Qaziwala*, having been involved in channelling milk resource to the village and regularly engaging in ‘political committees’ regarding village resources. Throughout all of this activity they maintained a view of themselves as above ‘village-based craft’, taunting other young men who were removed from salaried employment by linking them to former artisanal occupations, shouting *Nai* (barber) or *Darzi* (tailor) (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004: 969).

In each case young men understood their political activity as social. They recognised their collective existence in a generational stage of ‘change’, within which ‘progress’ was central to their mutual politicking. Through their social agency (C1) the young men *created* notions of village knowledge that occupied the traditional end of modern/traditional dichotomies (Dube, 2002; Pandey, 2003). This challenges the general sentiments of Mines and Yazgi (2010), and authors writing within their volume such as Golds (2010), who express the tendency of villagers to resist ‘traditional’ identities; Golds’s ‘post-romantic’ approach may thus not apply to young men. Furthermore, the notion of the village as a traditional economy was often mobilised by young men who then positioned the village as a ‘client’. In Kumar’s (2012)

discussion of student politicians in Meerut, young men viewed ‘villagers’ as occupying the customer end of patron-client relationships during their brokerage: “students from these villages *need* to get educated, we’re just helping *them* really” (2012: 60). Similarly, young Chamars in both *Nangal* and *Qaziwala* (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2005; Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004) were involved in cultivating patron-client relationships with poorer ‘village-labourers’. This works to reinforce notions of the village as in need of modernisation and chimes with the notions created in the writings of such authors as Bêteille (1969). On the other hand, the negative connotations of ‘traditional’ village knowledge and village labour created by young men have had implications on the labour structure of certain villages. For example, in *Qaziwala* only 4% of Chamar men between the ages of 20 and 34 went into artisanal work in 2000 (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004: 969). In this case, the contentious notion of ‘traditional’ village knowledge challenges the writings of early village studies authors who saw labour divisions as inherently tied-up with caste (Wiser, 1936; Srinivas, 1955; Majmundar, 1958).

Additionally, the idea of distancing oneself from a traditional village identity via the conduit of an education often had the effect of creating a strategic tool that allowed lower-castes to assert a modern identity, challenging notions of caste hierarchy and their passivity vis-à-vis the Hindu rich. In Jeffrey’s (2008) discussion of everyday politics in Meerut, young men presented their politics as having two halves; one traditional half, and one modern half. They frequently discussed their ability to ‘lash-up’ elements imagined locally as traditional with resources considered to be modern. For them, their ability to portray the village as the ‘traditional’ half of this political activity, and their identities as educated young men gave them the ability to “talk back” to upper castes (Jeffrey, 2008: 141). In Jeffrey *et al.*’s (2004) discussion, young educated Chamars indicated that they were no longer “bound by tradition” indicating their novel ability to ‘raise their voices’ (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004: 972). This is an example of how ‘village knowledge’ can be used strategically to set lower-caste young men apart from ‘traditional’ backgrounds, and to thus challenge their submissive positions. This challenges previous village studies that saw few mechanisms for the resistance of caste hierarchy and calls into question Srinivas’s focus on ‘mimicking’ (Srinivas, 1955) rather than strategic resistance.

#### 4.IV Connectivity and The State

The final feature to emerge from C2 is the ability of young men to position their villages within larger social networks, creating ‘multilocal’ villages and acting, in accordance with Rodman (1992) as the ‘gatekeepers’ of the village. Specifically, this connectivity was in relation to the state.

In Jeffrey’s (2008) and Jeffrey and Young’s (2012) discussions they highlight the keenness of young men to establish extensive social networks during their politicking. In particular, these young men create networks by building on a narrative of collective action, targeting other young people as network nodes. There was a strong sense that “youth” was a category of collective action (Jeffrey, 2008: 140). In both ethnographies, these ‘social men’ used their networks to act as cultural brokers with the state, generating support for certain political organisations and brokering deals with local officials. In this sense they allowed for external decision making to influence the village whilst also challenging the village-level political structures such as the *panchayats*, which largely constituted older males. For example, in Bemni a young man named Jaipal used his extensive social networks to bring electricity to the village in 2010, contrasting the politics of the *panchayat* that was largely concerned with solving interpersonal disputes within the village (Jeffrey & Dyson, Forthcoming).

Young men were also involved in writing letters to local ‘big wigs’ or state officials to critique the supply of resources to the village. In Jeffrey’s account a young man called Suresh (Jeffrey, 2008) was involved in regularly critiquing the state via letters, indicating that this form of politics allowed him to choose his words carefully, and that letters were his “main political weapon” (2008: 139). Similarly young men in Jeffrey and Dyson’s ethnography often wrote six or seven letters a day; this was usually a spontaneous process. In both accounts letter writing was associated with a ‘duty’ to both the nation and village. Rajesh, a young man in Jeffrey and Dyson’s account, felt that he could “best help the nation by assisting the people in this village” (Forthcoming). He indicated that all young men should think in that manner. This form of politicking led to a view of the state not as connected to formal politics or party politics but as connected with everyday

action. Young people cultivated a strong sense that they should work with the state to ‘improve the village’ on the everyday level. A reason for this idea was that young men had the time to help local people in their interaction with the state and to work as interlocutors.

In each of these cases young men worked to reconstitute the village as a multilocal space by interacting with the state. This was a form of social politics, with young men creating networks of mutual responsibility (C1). This was linked to a dual sense of national citizenship and loyalty to the village, with young men recognising their ‘need’ to help the village *and* the nation. Interestingly this saw youth acting as ‘village representatives’. The prominence of these village representatives was seen to lead to a widespread negative opinion of professional politicians. Young men who attempted to enter ‘formal’ political work were often humorously described, and their aspirations were mocked (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2005). Young men acted to break down what Inden (1990: 159) calls the ‘presupposition of a dichotomy between the village and state’, challenging previous arguments that saw the village and the state as separate ‘units’ (Marriott, 1955; Dube, 1955). This is due to the fact that young men both represent the village in the eyes of the state, acting as spokespersons, and embody the state *within* the village (Yazgi, 2010). Furthermore, their cultivation of broad social networks allows for the externalities that were previously viewed as separate entities (village-city, village-state etc.) to have internal influence. Kumar (2012) notes how university politics influences internal village relations as young men generate support for their agendas and party goals by cultivating a language of loyalty to their village identities, to the state, and to ‘development’ more broadly.

To conclude this chapter let me reflect on the above discussion. Throughout the ethnographies chosen, young men were central in constructing and resisting notions of the Indian village, bringing to light the way in which these notions actively constrained and set the opportunities for action within and beyond their villages. This double hermeneutic (Giddens, 1993) was evident in the way in which young men created notions of a territorial unity through their fresh contact with their material environment, a contentious unity through their discursive exaggeration, positioned the village at the traditional end of modern/traditional

dichotomies, and worked to break down the presupposition of a dichotomy between the state and the village by impacting village connectivity. The following chapter will bring together the insights from this chapter whilst also highlighting the *unique* aspect of this village co-creation.

# 5

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## The Unique Role of Youth

Youth in UP and UT face a wide range of social frustrations that provide the context for their politicking: the poor condition of local educational institutions, the deterioration in their local environments, a shortage of jobs, and a peripheral existence from modern circuits of capital (see 1.II). In conjuncture with this ‘perfect storm’ of socioeconomic conditions youth politics was found to be influential in the creation and resistance of certain notions of the village. The findings are summarised below.

### 5.1 Connectivity, Knowledge and Unity

In answer to the first question of *How does youth politicking influence notions of village connectivity, knowledge and unity in UP and UT?* the foregoing analysis has pointed to several pertinent conclusions.

Young men were central to constructions of ‘territorial unity’ in certain villages, reacting to their peripheral existence and environmental strains with a politics of resourcefulness, predicated on a ‘fresh contact’ with their material environments (Mannheim, 1972 [1936]). Through a resourceful politics, these men have generated a notion of community and unity that challenged previous conceptions of the ‘little community’ as a pre-ordained reality (Marriott, 1955) and shed light on the way that young men used the village as a ‘strategic resource’ (Gupta, 1997). This action did however appear to have a limited distributive effect, with certain lower-caste villagers excluded from this village community. Furthermore, the notions of village unity created via young men’s everyday politicking were at times contentious; ‘unity’ used to legitimise upper-caste dominance. Young men in these examples exhibited negative forms of agency, as they were involved in self- or caste-interested political activities.

Young men in UP and UT also understood their political activity as ‘social’, in the double sense of being organised around social issues - such as education and ‘progress’ – and involving the construction of networks of mutual responsibility. Through this social politics young men reinforced notions of village knowledge as traditional, interestingly reinforcing the dichotomies that earlier village studies established (Dube, 2002). By resisting village-based identities and setting them in opposition to education, salaried employment and technological capabilities these men created an image of the village as a traditional space that they had left behind. In the case of lower caste men, distancing themselves from the ‘traditional village’ seemed to help them overcome caste boundaries and they frequently used their ‘modernity’ as a strategic resource. Rejection of a village-based identity became an index of social respect, allowing educated lower caste men to challenge their ‘rightful place’ as passive to the Hindu rich. Social politics was also important in the challenging of state/village dichotomies and creating notions of village connectivity. In the cultivation of social networks, young men performed the role of the state, channelling resources and allowing for external decision-making.

The above conclusions offer a basis for widening ideas about how ‘villages’ are co-created by their inhabitants, challenging received ideas about the nature of villages in India as static pre-ordained social units. Furthermore the above analysis calls into question the omission of cross-case comparison’s within much of the current village literature. I have drawn attention to the influential role of a cross-case group in influencing village co-creation, highlighting how young men’s specific ‘notions’ of the village constrain their and others’ social action. It is evident that young men have an influential role in village co-creation in UP and UT however the *uniqueness* of this role, and hence the answer to the second research question, has yet to be established and it is this to which I now turn.

## 5.II Youth: A Unique Theoretical Role?

*What is the unique role of 'youth' in creating and resisting these notions of the Indian village?*

Chapter 4 touched upon the way in which young men were resourceful, social and at times negative in their everyday politics. They employed their 'fresh contact' with their material environments and cultivate extensive social networks to help them create and resist certain village notions. However, this isn't to say that these activities were totally unique. Whilst these three categorisations that Jeffrey (2012) employs were indeed characteristic of youth action they weren't limited to young educated men. Older village members were found, although less frequently, to engage in such forms of resourcefulness, social action, and negative politicking in creating notions of the village; from elderly men cultivating loyalty to the *gavand* by circulating discourses of its economic importance (Jayal, 2001), to the use of exaggeration of village unity as a political stratagem by adults in Gupta's (2010) account.

The first commonality that did exist across the accounts of young men's village co-creation was thus not related to the 'form' of their social action, but rather to its temporality. The forms of politicking discussed above were all transitory 'events', that flashed into life, not in the form of long-term 'planning' but in sporadic 'moments' (C3) such as transitory committee meetings (Jeffrey & Dyson, Forthcoming) or hurried community mobilisation (Jayal, 2001). These flickering moments left traces on the landscape and produced certain ideas. These ideas form the basis of the village notions created and resisted by young men; such as the idea that the village is a territory to be protected, that young men are responsible for making claims on the state, that a 'village-based' identity opposes a modern one, and that members of all castes can use the village as a strategic tool. An analysis of these traces has pointed to the second commonality on the C3 level, the mutual imbrication of both dominance *and* resistance within 'moments' of co-creation. Take for example the way in which momentary constructions of 'village unity' were used to both channel resources to the village *and* to reinforce hierarchical caste structures. In helping to further understand this momentary co-creation, Lefebvre's (2008) analysis of everyday life is a useful theoretical departure. Lefebvre argued that in specific moments of frustration or hardship, such as those faced by young men in UP and UT, people



come to critique aspects of their everyday lives. Crucially, he noted that these moments always bear the traces of dominant power, positioning the everyday as site of tension between creative efforts at social change and the logic of dominant forces. Whilst recent literature has adequately repositioned the study of villages within an interpretive paradigm, focusing on tracing the social action that *creates* village spheres it has perhaps overlooked broader dominant forces that may be at work. Using Lefebvre's theoretical contributions to view young men's co-creation as a mutual overlapping of dominant forces and resistance shows that even though youth politics created notions of the village that helped to *resist* certain forms of exploitation, certain other notions excluded lower castes, reproducing conservative and exclusionary ideas about caste, and enabling the naturalisation of upper-caste dominance.

Where Lefebvre's analysis becomes slightly less helpful is in contextualising this dominant force. His work is founded upon a singular vision of dominant power as 'inevitably in the service of capitalist accumulation' (cf. Jeffrey & Dyson, Forthcoming) yet, this analysis of contemporary young men in north India has shown that powerful institutions are disseminating notions of citizenship and political life that don't conform directly to ideas of self-interested capitalist accumulation. The conjuncture of dominant discourses – the notion of self-maximisation related to salaried employment, the sense of national citizenship forwarded within educational systems, or the notions of village loyalty founded upon 'official' caste positions – partially accounts for youth politicking in UP and UT. Influenced by these various discourses it seems that young people on the whole wanted 'salaried jobs', to interact with the government, and to gain educated-identities from government colleges; they believed in a certain notion of the 'nation-state' and a particular functioning of 'village life'. This was not a universal fact, and the example of young men's affinity with their territorial environments highlights an idiosyncrasy that deserves more attention. Yet this does highlight that the 'domination' involved in the moments of politicking is place specific, perhaps a factor of the socioeconomic conditions confronting these young men.

To conclude, the commonalities underlined from across the various ethnographies have pointed to the way in which young men's politicking was momentary and imbued with domination and resistance. Using Lefebvre's (2008) theorisation of everyday life provides a useful theoretical lens through which to view this unique form of village co-creation and to uncover the way in which the notions created can be both contentious and progressive, how they can exist in a cross-case manner, and how norms and notions are constituted under the influence of 'dominant force'. Despite this, there is a need not to generalise this conclusion. A strength of GT is that it allows for a heavily contextualised approach, and subsequently we see that understanding young men's unique co-creation in UP and UT is heavily context dependent. Further work is necessary to implement this temporal aspect to the study of village co-creation and to offer a more grounded examination of the processes in their fullness. Precisely due to this specificity it is important not to draw strong conclusions from the above analysis but rather to recognise where the contextualised and historicised findings have highlighted continuity or discontinuity with the existing literature, and have perhaps pointed to the potential for a broader theoretical approach to interpretive village studies.

**Words – 9.996**

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## Appendix

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### A.I List of Ethnographies: chronological order

- E1: Jayal, N. (2001) 'Democracy and Social Capital in Central Himalaya: The Tale of Two Villages' *Economic and Political Weekly* 36: 8 (655-664)
- E2: Jeffery, C. (2001) 'A fist is stronger than five fingers: caste and dominance in rural north India' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26: 2 (217-236)
- E3: Jeffery, C., Jeffery, P. & Jeffery, R. (2004) "'A Useless Thing!' or 'Nectare of the Gods?'" The Cultural Production of Education and Young Men's Struggles for Respect in Liberalising North India' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94: 4 (961-981)
- E4: Jeffery, C., Jeffery, P. & Jeffery, R. (2005) 'When schooling fails: Young men, education and low-caste politics in rural north India' *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 39: 1 (1-38)
- E5: Michelutti, L. (2007) 'The vernacularization of democracy: political participation and popular politics in North India' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13: 3 (639-656)
- E6: Dyson, J. (2008) 'Harvesting Identities: Youth, Work, Gender in the Indian Himalayas' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98: 1 (160-179)
- E7: Jeffery, C. (2008) 'From Footballs to Fixer: Suresh and the New Politicians in North India' in Jeffrey, C. & Dyson, J. *Telling Young Lives* (136-147)
- E8: Jeffery, C., Jeffery, P. & Jeffery, R. (2008) 'Dalit Revolution? New Politicians in Uttar Pradesh, India' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67: 4 (1365-1396)
- E9: Gupta, D. (2010) 'Everyday Resistance or Routine Repression? Exaggeration as a Stratagem in Agrarian Conflict' *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 29: 1 (89-108)
- E10: Dutta, S. (2012) 'Power, Patronage and Politics: A study of two panchayat elections in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh' *Journal of South Asian Studies* 35: 2 (329-352)
- E11: Jeffrey, C. & Young, S. (2012) 'Waiting for change: youth, caste and politics in India' *Economy and Society* 41: 4 (638-661)
- E12: Kumar, S. (2012) 'Ethnography of Youth Politics: Leaders, Brokers and Morality in a Provincial University in Western Uttar Pradesh' *History and Sociology of South Asia* 6: 1 (41-70)
- E13: Jeffery, C. & Dyson, J. (In Press) "'I serve therefore I am'" Youth and Generative Politics in India' Submitted to *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.