

The Invisible (mountain) Man

Migrant youth and relational vulnerability in the Indian Himalayas

By

Ritodhi Chakraborty

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Geography)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2018

Date of final oral examination: 5/11/2018

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Stephen Young, Assistant Professor, Geography

Ian Baird, Associate Professor, Geography

Matthew Turner, Professor, Geography

Paul Robbins, Professor & Director, Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies

Luke Whitmore, Assistant Professor, Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-SP

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vi
(Some) Important words/Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1 - Overview	1
Introduction.....	1
Literature review	5
Research Questions	13
Introducing the Chapters.....	14
Chapter 2 - The researcher and the researched	17
Uttarakhand – a place of conflicted temporality	17
The study sites	25
Trying to be a vulnerable observer.....	29
Tools of scholarship: methods and analysis	31
Chapter 3 - Encountering the mountains of risk	39
Introduction.....	39
Producing knowledges and borders: Vulnerability in the Himalayas.....	43
<i>Pahari</i> vulnerability	43
The mountains of risk	44
Relational vulnerability: A heuristic to envision a ‘new materiality’	47
The household as relationships: what constitutes relational vulnerability in <i>pahari</i> homes?.....	54
Encountering the patriarch – Cattle, daughter-in-laws and the culture of agriculture	54
Contracted livelihoods: thekedars, social networks and the promise of precarity	58
Developing reproduction: negotiating discourses of education, overpopulation and security	61
The many lives of death: widows, pensions and unequal afterlives	65
Reimagining the ‘mountains of risk’	70
Empowering vulnerability	70
Witnessing relational people and places in the Himalayas.....	73
Conclusion	77
Chapter 4 - “The future is in-between”	80
Introduction.....	80
Youth - Mobile and In-Between.....	82
<i>Pahari</i> youth: New lives in an old place.....	85

Moving Mountains: Novel mobilities in a transitioning pahar	88
Exploring Routes to Roots: Youth praxis from the ‘in-between’	94
Borderland lives: Producing and living with ‘betweenness’	100
Waiting for the prodigal son	101
Moving between a mountain and a hard place	105
Conclusion	109
Chapter 5 - “I carry my home with me. Not just memories of it, but also where it needs to go” ...	111
Introduction.....	111
Mobile, migrant, modern youth.....	113
Producing relational <i>pahari</i> places.....	116
Encountering the patriarch: Subverting tropes of corruption	118
Contracted livelihoods: Embracing the precarious life	120
Developing reproduction: Performing fatherhood.....	125
The many lives of death: The undertaker.....	129
Beyond mobilees.....	133
Vulnerability, migrancy and place making.....	139
Reimagining <i>pahari</i> youth in pahari homes.....	139
Addressing youth studies and feminist migration research	144
Conclusion	145
Chapter 6 - Conclusion	147
Work Cited.....	157

Dedication

For Ma

Who taught me how to survive and more importantly, to love.

Abstract

Do young migrant men impact the vulnerability of their rural households beyond just financial remittances? Or are they as the literature presents them of little consequence to the reproduction of the household, passive victims of unequal structures of development? In Uttarakhand, a state in the Indian Himalayan region, where I conducted mixed methods research in 2015-2017, there were many young men, engaging with new processes of mobility. Contrary to popular accounts, their journeys were not linear and neither were they catalyzed by exceptional regional and household precarity. Instead they represented attempts at mediating the various process and aspirations that their worlds were embedded in. Different tools of development were transforming communal cultures of work, kinship and reproduction and the youth engaged with these transformations within the vital relationships producing their households.

The role of youth within the household has been rendered invisible in most accounts by a welfarist, component based assessment of and production of household vulnerability. This framing effectively focused on the structural forces at play in the region, marginalizes the aspirations, anxieties and agency of different household members. Additionally, youth desires for informal, mobile lives, lived in-between different spaces and expectations positions them beyond the purview of most placed based explorations. However, viewing the household as a set of relationships exposed an entangled, material and affective assemblage. Intra-household negotiations around agricultural futures, livelihood aspirations, reproduction and death seemed to echo the different emerging subject positions. The youth were intimately involved in these negotiations, mediating generational and historical anxieties about regional trysts with seemingly powerful processes of modernity and development. In the process

they confronted the limitations to their own agency and used such knowledge to justify their subversion and reproduction of particular communal notions of regional belonging and masculinity.

This research makes important contributions to scholarship on critical studies of youth migration, non-elite mobilities research and the relational studies of vulnerability. By focusing on young lives, rendered invisible by both the politics of the state and the politics of knowledge production, it provides valuable insight into the provisional agency of marginal people and their important role in place making.

Acknowledgements

It seems dishonest in many ways to call this a personal accomplishment. The stories that I write about here were co-produced through the generosity, compassion and wisdom of many people.

To begin with, the people of Uttarakhand – the families, the births, the deaths, the festivals that I have been a part of for the better part of a decade, has sustained me both professionally and personally. In retrospect, I have given so little back to the hundreds of families that let me into their homes and their lives. The only promise that I made to most families was that I would finish writing this story, and hold it up to the light when they wanted me to. I hope I have honored that promise.

My advisor Stephen Young – who believed in me from the day we first met on a dusty, sweltering summer afternoon in Delhi. His wisdom and empathy through the birth of my son, my months in the field and the subsequent move away from Madison, was the light at the end of the tunnel. Always nudging me forward.

My dissertation committee (Paul Robbins, Matt Turner, Ian Baird and Luke Whitmore) – who were always critical, but never demoralizing. Their profound experience and inputs guided this work from the very beginning past the many analytical crevasses that lay in its path.

My research assistant/fieldwork companion Mayank Shah – who walked most of the 1500km beside me in Uttarakhand, through valley, forest and stream. Along the way he recited the poetry of Girda and opened my eyes to the rich vein of subversive artistic, literary and political life that flowed through his *pahar*.

My midwestern family Lori Fleury, Sarah Oren, Rita Byk and the Bergfelds – they were there when I needed a place to stay, a pie to eat, a late night conversation or help applying for a visa to the United States. They were my resilient roots in a foreign land.

The *pahari* civil society organizations CHIRAG, Navdanya and USN – they orchestrated my first encounters with Uttarakhand and in doing so, made me aware of the transforming rurality of the Indian hinterland. The vital work they do in Uttarakhand speaks for itself.

Assorted friends who were critical in various ways : Anne Daloz – my partner in interdisciplinary research and collaborator on the many successful grant applications which helped with the paying of rent and buying of bread; Avikal Somvanshi, Karan Joshi, Michael Waylen, Evan Applegate – for helping me administer surveys, draw maps and check my profligate use of commas; Manish Kumar – for the vital discussions about food, water and land in *pahar* and our role in it as scholar-activists.

The various grants/fellowships that paid for fieldwork and write-up – Foundation of Urban and Regional Studies studentship, Scott-Kloeck Jenson Pre-dissertation fellowship (UW-Madison), Office of Sustainability SIRE grant (UW-Madison), Incubator grant from the Institute for Regional and International Studies (UW-Madison), Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation research symposium award (UW-Madison), Mellon-Wisconsin Fellowship (UW-Madison) and the Whitbeck Dissertator Award, Department of Geography (UW-Madison).

And finally, my family – Ma, for finding hope when there wasn't any - Aline, for lovingly sharing all the burdens on and off the paper - Rosangela, for her patience and her wisdom - Kaku, for reminding me to find time for things that mattered most and Theo, for his unconditional love and honesty, reifying the fact that it is actually sons that raise fathers.

(Some) Important words/Abbreviations

Terms	Meaning
BPL	Below Poverty Line – this is a government decided financial bounding of households in India that divides families into haves and have-nots. Having a BPL allows households to access significant state benefits such as subsidized food grains, housing allowance and fuel allowance. Given the value of such a moniker, in many regions of India, the process of acquiring BPL status is deeply political process, often requiring significant bribing and politicking.
BPO	BPO stands for Business Process Outsourcing. Driven by the wave of transnational outsourcing of service labor, the industry in India has become incredibly competitive. Attempting to gain an advantage, certain startups in recent years, have moved their offices to rural locales. Supported by the spread of cheap high speed internet, reliable electricity and a high percentage of educated, unemployed youth, these centers in Uttarakhand are thriving and expanding
Dehradun, Nainital, Almora	These are three of the most important cultural, political and economic urban centers in the region. All three cities trace their roots back to British colonial times and are/have been critical spaces in the production of the <i>pahari</i> identity.
GC/SC	GC stands for general caste, which in India includes most upper caste groups. SC stands for lower caste groups. There are other caste categorizations such as OBC, ST etc., which together inhabit the region's complicated caste landscape.
<i>Lachila</i>	A hard term to translate, <i>lachila</i> , literally means flexible. But, it is a lot more than that. It is also a word that refers to the body of a dancer and the way it moves through space – with the cadence, strength and grace which allows the aesthetic and the utilitarian to merge, without arguing for the significance of one or the other. For a lot of <i>pahari</i> youth, an open revolt against the institutions they are a part of, is out of the question. And in fact they see such a confrontation as a tear in the fabric they are trying to weave between the different worlds they occupy. A successful mediation between these seeming divergences is similar to the movements of a skill full dancer moving through a heterogenous space, the movement of the body tying together various expectations without seeming strained or forced.
<i>Maidani</i>	A word used by many <i>paharis</i> to describe people from the <i>maidan</i> (plains/lowlands). This word carries both pejorative and congratulatory valence depending on the context. While in the past there were simple cleavages between <i>paharis</i> and <i>maidanis</i> , currently such identities are often confounding and contested. Nevertheless it remains a popular descriptor in village parlance when talking about outsiders within the community.
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act – this central govt. policy promises rural families 100 days annually of unskilled manual labor. Employment under the act is a legal entitlement and the overarching goal is to enhance the livelihood security of rural families while building durable assets in regions. While laborers are supposed to be paid govt. established minimum wage rates, this is often unfeasible, due to the informally set wage rates in the area. Gram Panchayats, which are tasked with the management of this act in Uttarakhand, routinely pay double, or triple the minimum wage for MGNREGA work (See Mathur, 2016).

<i>Pahar</i>	<i>Pahar</i> literally translates to mountain, however the term has more than a geophysical connotation. In popular imagination it represents a region that is remote, removed and undeveloped. Furthermore, there are vital elements of environmental determinism that inform these arguments – constructing <i>pahari</i> culture grossly as a function of the highland spaces it occupies
<i>Patwari</i>	“Patwaris constituted the lowest rung of the revenue administration hierarchy in colonial Kumaon and typically oversaw land revenue collection for anywhere up to 30 villages, depending on the size of the village and the distances involved. They continue to be critical to revenue administration and play an important role in the collection of statistics, calling village households to account for minor infractions of official rules, whether related to agriculture or to forestry” (Agrawal, 2005). During my time in Uttarakhand, patwaris, elicited many different responses from the local people. Some of the youth were attempting to become patwaris, while others named them as corrupt government officials. There was at times some confusion about their jurisdiction and legal powers
PWD	Public Works Department. It is the unit of state bureaucracy charged with the materialization of various infrastructure construction policies. PWD while a government body works with a multitude of contractors to complete their tasks. These contractors manage both materials and labor. PWD tasks include road building, public school construction and bridge construction.
SEZ	Special Economic Zone (see an example below under SIDCUL)
SIDCUL	SIDCUL is the abbreviation and the colloquial name for the industrial special economic zone in the plains district of UK. It stands for State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttarakhand Limited. It has been popularly referred to as the 2 billion dollar boomtown. While SIDCUL encompasses 6 different locations/entities, most of the youth from the Eastern half of UK – Kumaon, usually head to the Rudrapur complex. Rudrapur is a bewildering intersection of industrial capital, migrant labor and land use change and is at times referred to as the ‘2 billion dollar boom town’.
Terai	The Terai, all called the foothills are the low-lying lands at the foot of the Himalayas. In the Indian Himalayan Region, the Terai marks the boundary between highland and lowland, a borderland, crisscrossed by the large perennial Himalayan rivers and large swathes of arable land. The 3 <i>maidani</i> districts of Uttarakhand are all located in this zone, along with a majority of the industry, commercial agriculture and educational and health services. Many refugee populations have been settled in the region and thus the population is an interesting mix of cultures. In recent years many <i>pahari</i> families have bought land in the region to access the ‘fruits of development’ and also as a form of investment
<i>Thekedar</i>	The word thekedar roughly translates to contractor. In Uttarakhand, the practice of thekedari (contracting) came out of the complex arrangements that governed the regions development priorities and natural resources. Thekedars became, legal and illegal, arbitrators of petty timber and NWFPs. Currently, most of public development schemes are contracted out to third party contractors. From road construction to running army canteens, <i>pahari</i> thekedars are involved with most of the services and applications of development
<i>Tok</i>	Also called ward, is a term used to differentiate between the various ‘boroughs’ within the village. Most <i>pahari</i> villages have multiple <i>toks</i> , which often follow patrilineal

groupings and/or caste groupings. In village governance, *toks* are usually given equal representative presence and the tok representative is responsible for informing the village development and governance committee about the ‘needs’ of the tok. This can get contentious since a significant portion of development aid for the village is divided among projects in the various *toks*, on recommendations from the tok representatives, and not all the claims can be accommodated in the limited budget. Getting a project accepted and funded by the village government has both symbolic and material value for the tok. Thus, vying for developmental aid is a critical aspect of intra-village negotiations of power.

Vikas

Is the word used by most paharis to talk about development. This development at various times refers to the industrial infrastructure of the region, the public services accessible to them and also their ability to fully realize their potential and their aspirations.

Chapter 1 - Overview

Introduction

In the winter of 2015 as a blizzard battered the Himalayan village of Inari¹ in the Indian state of Uttarakhand (*pahar*²), Kundan, a young man from the village, walked down a precipitous goat path to the next road head. His backpack was full of sheep wool and a large ball of hashish (cannabis resin). He was headed down the mountain to the Indian capital of New Delhi. On the way he stopped at the district administrative offices, turning in paperwork for a livestock compensation claim for a family cow killed by a leopard. At Delhi he clandestinely met with a trader, who bought his hashish and wool. Kundan, took the payment and at the hospital where he cooked at the cafe, handed part of it over to a co-worker, who had sold him a laptop, the rest of it would pay for the inhalers his asthmatic father regularly needed. Back in Inari, as the snow piled on, Kundan's wife used the laptop to go over her college examination materials, while his father, stomped around outside with a bucket, collecting snow to melt into water. He complained, "You see how hard life is here. I am getting old and have no one to help me. Who will take care of the household when I die?"

Kundan's father's anxieties are echoed by many older residents I encountered in *pahari* villages. Kundan is broadly representative of a population of young school educated men that spent significant time and resources interacting with different individuals and institutions that occupied the physical and cultural space between their rural households and regional towns and cities. Their movements are characterized by what their elders see as a certain restlessness as if they were ill at ease with the notion of rooting themselves to a permanent livelihood, place or future goal. Kundan changes his temporary

¹ All names of people and villages changed in accordance with IRB rules and to ensure the wellbeing of subjects divulging potentially 'sensitive' information.

²*Pahar* literally translates to mountain, however the term has more than a geophysical connotation. In popular imagination it represents a region that is remote, removed and undeveloped. Furthermore, there are vital elements of environmental determinism that inform these arguments – constructing *pahari* culture grossly as a function of the highland spaces it occupies.

contractual job a couple of times a year, travels hundreds of km every few weeks, sitting crammed inside public transport vehicles or flying around sharp mountain bends on a borrowed motorcycle, to avail of government development schemes, visit market centers, spend time at popular tourist spots and to deal with household responsibilities. The elders in the village find such travels excessive, confounding and symptomatic of the lack of maturity and inability to deal with the demands of the society around. Furthermore, their concerns about the security and future of the household seem deeply intertwined with trepidations about the transforming generational aspirations of work, reproduction and kinship. Additionally, new designs of development, both state driven and otherwise, are restructuring the region in a variety of ways. Politicians, aid workers and developmental analysts overwhelmingly address the exceptional precarity of the mountains, imagining helpless local lives that are oppressed by an unforgiving Himalayan landscape, lack of viable employment opportunities and an erosion of the security of traditional culture. Surrounded by such invocations, the praxis of young men like Kundan, that are educated in rural schools, and move between the mountains and the plains, the village and the cities, is rendered invisible. In scientific policy reports they are represented as migrants, attracted by economic opportunities of urbanism, whose contributions to the household are often negligible given their precarious employment realities, an inability to send back significant financial remittances and the gendered practices of rural labor. In the process, the vulnerability of the rural household, bounded spatially and administratively, is imagined as a composite of measurable, universally relevant, variables, which align with institutionally advocated notions of development. Represented such, the agency of different members of the household is both essentialized and validated through their presence in pre-identified, formal, social networks. But, as Kundan says, “Our elders think we wander aimlessly, are undependable and afraid to settle down, and people who we work for in the cities of the plains, think we are innocent, simple mountain boys, which is

true?...Neither of them understand us, which is alright, but what makes me sad is that they think we don't care about our responsibilities”.

For mobile, educated, male youth like Kundan, visions of the future and that of home are intimately rooted in their ability to mediate the processes driving the many aspirations and anxieties they find themselves within. *But, how do such negotiations impact the household?* Are they a product of the exceptional precarity that policy makers and certain scholars ascribe to the region, or do they challenge such regional renditions? And ultimately, what, if any, novel insights emerge from a focus on the lives of such young people, which can improve our understanding of the aspirations and anxieties of people and places engaged with the myriad processes of development? Such questions remain regionally unexplored.

This dissertation explores them, through the story of a group of young men who traverse the transforming communities and places of Uttarakhand state in Himalayan India. By youth or young men, I refer here to individuals between the ages of 18-30 yrs. that scholars have identified in different global settings as a population that is still to achieve the affects of adulthood. This includes, but is not limited to, culturally validated notions of job security, marital status and moral responsibility (Jeffrey, 2008; Ruddick, 2003). As Dyson (2010) notes, youth can be understood as a social construct, a transitional state between wild and unruly childhood and civilized and mature adulthood. The *pahari* men I write about represent this interstitiality.

Their lives appear marginal and in flux, due to their location in the borderlands of the Indian state, their apparent exclusion from the machinery of development and their conflicted expectations and responsibilities in the reproduction of their rural communities and their roles in such a process (Mathur, 2016). Most popular and state narratives of the region lament the increasing feminization of agricultural livelihoods, the widespread migration from rural to urban places, leaving ‘ghost villages’ in its wake and the increasing precarity of the rural *pahari* household, tossed around by powerful

ecological and political forces beyond their control (Kala, 2014; Pant, 2016). Migrants are overwhelmingly characterized as products of such forces, their movements catalyzed by the cascading poverty and vulnerability of the household (Chauhan et al., 2001; Negi & Manhas, 2015; Rajesh et al., 2014). But, informed by deepening encounters with education, the growing incursion of motor roads into many formerly ‘marooned’ communities, the widespread access to telecommunication networks and the changing cultures of labor, *pahari* youth represent significant aspirational cleavages from their older kin. Kundan’s friend Arjun, who has a high school degree and wants to be a public school teacher says, “I have opinions today because I am literate. However I sometimes wonder, what’s the point of having opinions if no one listens to you?”

Arjun and Kundan have many aspirations and opinions, many of which echo their particular contestations with different ideas of work, reproduction, kinship and belonging. Aspirations which question the normative narratives of household vulnerability, and complicate tropes of identity and regional belonging. *Pahari* households deal with the specter of local unemployment, decrepit health services, political exclusion and changing agrarian expectations. However, they are also increasingly more ‘connected’ with the outside world – their satellite TV connections, mobile phones and motor roads giving them a glimpse beyond ‘island Himalaya’. Thus the youth are spatially mobile, but their mobility unlike their elders, is intimately intertwined with their daily praxis. But in the process, is the household reduced to a ‘fixed’ counterweight? Bearing the weight of certain material and symbolic responsibilities that cannot be avoided? Or is the household an extension and inspiration of such fluidity? As Kundan’s father Digar notes, “When I was young, home was having a big family and tending to the land. Children and land were the indicators of wealth. What is it today? I am not sure anymore. Times have changed so much”.

Literature review

To situate these questions in broader debates and address the existing lacunae in knowledge, I turn now to some literatures that have grappled with such issues.

To begin with, development studies scholars have challenged both the material and discursive subjugation of people and places in the majority world, by the processes of colonialism, capitalism and state formation (Ferguson, 1990; Gupta, 1998; Li, 2007). The marginalization has been overwhelmingly linked to the reproduction and institution of unequal relationships of power, through both the “forceful expropriations from land and means of subsistence as well as struggles over the very meaning of life, society and nature” (da Costa, 2010, p.505). Building on such insights, critical scholarship has also encountered the claims of objective scientific omniscience underlying the production of such universalizing and hegemonic tools of oppression (Haraway, 1991). Therefore, the concepts used to define and assess populations and landscapes have been revealed as outcomes of a deeply political and subjective process, rooted in differential engagements with existent power structures (Robbins, 2009). This focus on the techniques and tools used to assess the condition of precarity and privilege experienced by human and non-human entities has brought into sharp focus the politics of knowledge production (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2012; Demeritt, 2006).

The production of knowledge is a complex, political process. Knowledge about human and more than human entities and the relationships between them, the ontologies (what the world is) that guide it and the epistemologies (how we know the world) that bring it to fruition, are mired in many relevant debates, whose full exploration is beyond the scope of this work (Whatmore, 2009; Davids & Willemse, 2014; Sullivan, 2016; Barad, 2007). However, a majority of these debates focus on the tension between hegemonic and historically privileged ‘ways of knowing’ and more marginalized and subaltern ones (Burnham et al., 2016; Chernela & Zanotti, 2014; Yeh, 2016). Drawing on these conversations, some critical scholars have asked for multiple pedagogies of assessment, which attempt

to make space for the hybridity of the materially and affectively ‘real’ worlds (DeLyser & Sui, 2014; Nightingale, 2016). Despite such invocations, a majority of the frameworks attempting to assess the ‘state’ of nature-society relationships and represent it’s manifestation within select communal entities (households, villages, cities) as a measure of marginalization and privilege, adhere to ‘welfarist’ component-based approaches (Barnett et al., 2008).

A majority of the frameworks attempting to assess the ‘state’ of nature-society relationships and represent it’s manifestation within select communal entities (households, villages, cities) as a measure of marginalization and privilege, call upon the terms ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’ (Eakin & Luers, 2006). These terms generally refer to the ability of humans and human societies to persist at different equilibriums despite external shocks (resilience) and the production of varying susceptibilities within societies to such shocks (vulnerability) (Turner, 2016). Both these terms have multiple disciplinary traditions informing them, producing different avatars.

Resilience can be epistemically divided into, socio-ecological resilience with its roots in the ‘new ecology’ models that challenge the idea of a single ‘climax’ equilibrium of ecosystems, with a dynamic, multiple state equilibrium concept (Holling, 1973) and psycho-social resilience, originating in epidemiology and child development that focuses on individuals and their response to and recovery from an adverse event (Werner et al., 1971). In both these articulations the normativity of resilience remains absolute – more is claimed to be better (Olson, 2015). Furthermore, the complex adaptive systems ontology, that imagines beings as agents and artifacts in a self-organizing system, interacting constantly and producing an adaptive ‘internal’ structure, underlies both these analytical approaches (Welsh, 2014). Despite recent critical efforts challenging such rationalist and functionalist representations by attempting ‘contentious dialogues’ with more interpretive ontological approaches (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Harrison & Chiroro, 2017; Hoque, Quinn, & Sallu, 2017), resilience

thinking overwhelmingly assumes that scale bound, measurable knowledge of socioecological relations, can be harnessed to build resilience as a capacity.

Vulnerability which is often used in tandem with resilience, as its reverse face, derives from very different theoretical traditions (Turner, 2016). Food security literature built on discourses such as Amartya Sen's entitlements approach (Sen 1976, 1981) envisions the rights and opportunities that individuals possess to manage 'commodity bundles' within a society, as directing and shaping their vulnerability. Additionally, vulnerability has also been defined by scholars of disaster and hazards studies as the ability of a group or individual to 'weather' the impact of a natural hazard (Wisener & Blaikie, 2003). Ultimately, the usage of 'livelihoods' as an ordering tool to view the material and affective movement of power, remains quite popular (Rigg et al., 2016). This carries with it the culture of measurement that methodologically attempts to evaluate, using discrete proxy variables, the changes in vulnerability of different entities, or even in more 'transformative' attempts, the relationships between such entities. Such renditions of vulnerability have received cross-disciplinary critiques. These include expositions that embed the concept in a broader ordering of power-laden social relations while questioning the 'naturalness' of hazards (Watts & Bohle, 1993), question the 'entitlements' focus on legalistic, formal and individualistic notion of rights, instead of the ability to access focus of 'access theory' (Jesse Ribot, 2014) and argue for a more relational perspective of vulnerability (Turner, 2016; Gilson, 2014; Oliver-smith, 2004). The latter of these, conceptualizing vulnerability as inherently relational, challenges the livelihoods driven metrics that coalesce around hazards, highlighting the invisibility of agency in such analysis (Blokland, 2012). Relational vulnerability argues for an exploration beyond simply equating vulnerability with inequality and into the historical political, social and economic relationships that are functional to the production of security and precarity for different populations within marginalized communities. Additionally, inspired by the 'relational studies of poverty' (Elwood et al., 2017) relational vulnerability employs a relational social ontology that posits

a worldview where precarity and privilege are mutually constituted (Wood, 2003). Within such rendering, subjects are seen as emergent and co-produced rather than as bounded and distinct (Mosse, 2010), their particular experience of vulnerability often uncorrelated to the vulnerability of different socio-political groups they belong to (Turner, 2016). Such a framing, though mostly unexplored in regional scholarship, has the potential of highlighting the daily operation of power in “particular patterns of social relations that are interwoven into local ecologies” (Taylor, 2013, p.321).

While a careful consideration of historical power inequalities in the post-colonial spaces of the majority world is a foundational inspiration for much recent critical scholarship, this literature has been rather discursive (Donovan, 2014; Head & Gibson, 2012), with few explorations of the everyday materiality of life, especially in liminal spaces (Gibson-Graham, 2008). Furthermore, merely acknowledging the limitations of categorical orderings of people and places through the concepts discussed before still retains an affinity towards structure at the cost of agency. Thus, the subject is often obscured in analyses of processes, or imagined as “autonomous (and) fully formed” (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003, p.44). Instead, adhering to the relational, fluid, emergent nature of subjecthood and its engagements with the equally emergent processual assemblage, counters such narratives, bringing the focus to the everyday stories of practices of usually marginalized people and places. While scholars in the majority world have addressed this issue by focusing on the accounts of gendered modalities of work, mobility and reproduction (McEvoy et al., 2012; Young, 2010), racism (S. Smith & Vasudevan, 2017), classism (Gooptu, 2013), caste based oppressions (Jeffrey, 2001; Witsoe, 2011) and unequal encounters with the state (Mcguirk & O’Neill, 2012; Snellinger, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2009), intergenerational negotiations hinging on the mediation of the different structural transformations, remains relatively understudied and undertheorized (Hopkins et al., 2012). Additionally, the particular agency of young people and their accounts of the negotiations of the various processual intersections they contend with, have been historically marginalized (Jeffrey, 2011).

This is surprising given the demographic presence of young people in most majority world spaces. The recent focus on youth agency and praxis, and its myriad connections to other social-ecological transformations has addressed this lacuna.

There is a growing interest in non-elite youth politics and agency in the majority world (Calestani, 2012; Crivello, 2015; Jeffrey & Young, 2014; Langevang, 2008; Porter, Hampshire, Abane, Robson, et al., 2010; T. A. Thieme, 2017). It has challenged popular representations of the politics of young people as either demoralized or politically disaffected or as political firebrands seeking to promote violent revolution (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2014). More nuanced understandings of young people's everyday political and labor practices have revealed a more complex and at times contradictory reality. Furthermore, the engagement of youth with new spaces of consumption along with inventing place based notions of entrepreneurship and individualism has critiqued simplistic accounts of oppressive neoliberalism (Jeffrey, 2010b; Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013; Young, 2010). While necessary, this focus on youth has been acutely metrocentric (T. Brown, 2015). It has failed to articulate the multivalent role of transitioning places beyond the major cities and the experiences of youth as they voyage between them (Panelli et al., 2005; Punch, 2007; Shneiderman, 2015). The 'active' city has been visualized as the anti-thesis of the 'passive' rural. The mobile, capital laden, dynamic landscape of the urban has been juxtaposed to the static, immobile rural imaginary (Bell et al., 2010; Milbourne & Kitchen, 2014). Furthermore, the binaries of city/village and urban/rural, has restricted the imagining of youth praxis across a constellation of spatial points that are in various states of becoming and cannot be adequately described by such binaries (Cresswell et al., 2016). Young and Jeffrey (2012) challenge such spatio-temporal and affective binaries by focusing on the narratives of youth that are "in-between". Their account brings to sharp focus the essential experiences of youth, navigating the "interstitial, hybrid spaces" between urban and rural, childhood and adulthood, rich and poor classes. This is a critical

intervention and much needed to reveal the praxis of spatially mobile, non-elite youth, about which we know relatively little.

The interstitiality of youth praxis has also recently been imagined in conjunction with research on informal economies (Young et al., 2017). A growing number of scholars have revealed the resourceful economic and social practices of young people occupying varying spaces and cultures of work (Mains, 2007; Rodgers, 2009; Thieme, 2010). These different cultures of work encountered in the various inhabited spaces provide crucial insights into the changing contours of what Johnson-Hanks (2002) terms as the ‘vital conjunctures’ of young lives (Jeffrey, 2010a; Langevang, 2008; Panelli et al., 2005). Work done by youth within the interdependent moral economy of the household, is often recognized only as filial duties for ensuring the social and material reproduction of the family (Porter et al., 2010; Punch, 2007). However, with transitioning structural factors – neo-liberal economies, agrarian dysfunction, accessible primary and secondary education- there is a shift towards a far greater emphasis on paid labor (Crivello, 2011; Gough et al., 2016; Jeffrey, 2010b). This emphasis while echoing corporeal material necessities is pursued within an acute “mismatch between ambitions and outcomes” (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013, pg.1). Confronted by this precarity, many young people are turning to a dizzying gamut of informal entrepreneurship, attempting to discern the way ahead amidst the changing structural rules of socio-economic engagement (Gough et al., 2016; Munck, 2013; Naafs, 2013).

This mediation of informality often requires a significant amount of movement. For rural youth this means travels out of the village to cities and towns. This movement often resembles migratory excursions and many of the migrant labor in the urban places of the majority world are classified as youth. While migration studies has historically marginalized the agency of migrants in instrumentally rationalistic accounts of economic ‘subjects’ as well as the structurally deterministic Marxist approaches, feminist studies inspired explorations of migration have challenged such

discourses (Silvey & Lawson, 1999). Building on their assertion that migrants are “agents negotiating the material and discursive dimensions of development” (129), Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan’s (2003) contentious exploration of circular migration in rural South Asia, emphasizes the historical mobility of certain marginalized groups and its role in the production of their subjectivities and their cultural/political assertion. Furthermore, challenging Silvey and Lawson (1999), they imagine migrants as more than just Foucauldian objects – ones penetrated and reified absolutely by hegemonic ‘biopower’, revealing an “anti-disciplinarian agency” (202). This revelation challenges reductionist links between migrant aspirations and changes in livelihood security or visions of resource/capital optimization. Empowered such the migrant is seen as a vital agent in the social reproduction of place based identities and the differential encounters between rural communities in the majority world and notions of ‘development’ and ‘modernity’. But, in order to truly behold the subjective particularities of the disparate agents, “The monolithic category called ‘migrant’ increasingly has to be broken down into a complex array of subtypes” (Abu-Lughod, 1975, p.202).

The migration processes of one such ‘subtype’, young people, has been historically neglected in scholarship (van Blerk & Ansell, 2006). But, recently scholars have attempted to highlight the particularities of youth experiences within narratives of migration and mobility (Howard, 2016; Huijsmans, 2016; M. F. Olwig & Gough, 2013; Porter et al., 2015). A significant focus of explorations of youth migration, akin to overall migration scholarship, has been on transnational and immigrant experiences (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017; Ngwato, 2012). While this is a much needed intervention, a smaller field of scholarship has turned the focus to youth migrants within the nation-state, especially between changing rural and urban places (Ansell et al., 2012; Farrugia et al., 2014). In the majority world, explorations of the praxis of such young migrants is still a neglected field (Skelton, 2012), and additionally most accounts fail to address how the youth continue to ground their lives in multiple locations and how these relationships impact migrant homes (Gabriel, 2006; Skelton, 2013).

The encounters of youth migrants with the various structures of power are usually trapped within conceptual models bound to monolithic and depoliticizing renditions of scale and agency. This leaves little room to witness the novel assemblages that are both the architecture and the product of such encounters (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003; Jeffrey & McFarlane, 2008). Moving away from the oppression of such juxtapositions is critical for the formation of a framework that “capture(s) youth as both a shifting social position and a fluid process” (Langevang, 2008, p.2046), and to observe the relational production of the spaces they associate with (Massey, 2005; Winterton et al., 2014). The (not so new) mobilities paradigm by focusing on moving as a central tenet of life elevates ‘movement’ to the status of a core tenet endemic to life, society and space, encouraging explorations between scale and forms of movement, mobility and immobility and production and social reproduction (Cresswell et al., 2016; Kwan & Schwanen, 2016). Furthermore, a mobilities lens by examining the “places of in-between-ness” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, pg.219), directs our focus back to the interstitial spaces and the movement of bodies through these ‘transfer points’, to witness the critical performances that such a journey requires. While some scholarship has addressed the various novel engagements between youth and new forms of mobility (Barker et al., 2009; Korzenevica, 2016; Olwig, 2009; Thorsen, 2013), much of the focus on mobile youth fails to critically engage with the household as a set of relationships and a site of multiple negotiations for the young migrations. The intra-household encounters between generational anxieties, aspirations and moralities remain unexplored (for exceptions see Huijsmans, 2014; Korzenevica & Agergaard, 2017; Punch, 2015). The role of the emerging subjectivities of mobile youth and the relational household in the production of each other continues to be a mystery.

In this dissertation I engage with the literatures mentioned above in order to:

- 1) Encounter the epistemologies of assessment that marginalize the agency of certain populations. I propose an approach grounded in recent critical scholarship on relational ontologies (Castree, 2003) that emerges from theorizations from a variety of traditions (feminist studies, science

and technology studies, political ecology, actor-network theory). Eschewing a component-based approach that is founded in measurements of stasis and ‘impermeable’ subjects/objects, I envision an emergent, fluid assemblage of relationships, which are produced through the aspirations, anxieties, and praxis of rural *pahari* households. This vision is not merely discursive, but acts as a ‘new materialism’ (Barad, 2007), imagining novel entanglements between people, places and processes.

2) Witness the praxis of mobile, migrant youth from rural *pahari* households, that have been undertheorized (Koskimaki, 2017) and subjugated by hegemonic discourses of masculinity, rurality and development (Charsley & Wray, 2015; Tiwari & Joshi, 2016).

Both the efforts mentioned above allow me to simultaneously address the transforming nature of households in rural Himalaya, and the role of regional youth in producing and reproducing such transformations. More specifically, encountering the epistemologies of assessment allows me to challenge the salient categorizations of privilege and precarity, making space in the narrative for more interstitial subjects. These subjects once revealed are then engaged with to produce a more emancipatory discourse.

Research Questions

Informed by previously stated scholarship and experiences, the question I seek to explore in this work is this:

What does a focus on the spatial journeys, aspirations and praxis of young mobile men do to our understanding of household vulnerability in the Indian Himalayas?

This overarching question is answered through the exploration of three related questions,

1) What constitutes vulnerability in rural *pahari* households? How does using a relational ontologies approach challenge or complement the component based welfarist approaches?

2) What do young, mobile *pahari* men, from rural *pahari* households aspire for? What does their daily

movement within the various spaces and relationships of the household and beyond look like?

3) Does the aspirations and praxis of young *pahari* men impact the relational vulnerability of rural *pahari* households? How?

In Uttarakhand akin to other transitioning rural places of the majority world, men, especially young migrant men are seen peripheral to the social and cultural reproduction of the household (Adhikari & Hobley, 2015; G. Kelkar, 2007). Their acts of migration are seen as linear, transitional moments, effectively severing the multitude of ties to the household. Furthermore, their aspirations are usually constructed through the prism of employment and livelihoods (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003). Their absence in narratives of household vulnerability are just as stark as the absence of young women from narratives of migration (Bastia, 2014). By answering these questions I hope to address this ‘silent presence’, by revealing the different, situated entanglements, which young *pahari* men have with the relationships that produce *pahari* households.

Introducing the Chapters

This dissertation is further divided into three central empirical chapters, which explore the lives of young mobile *pahari* men, their *pahari* households and the probable entanglements between. These chapters are bookended by two descriptive chapters. The first of which provides a narrative recourse into: a) the situational perspective on my own relational position as a scholar, highlighting my (successful?) attempts at being a ‘vulnerable observer’ (Davids, 2014), b) the different methods used to address the fieldwork and analytical requirements for the questions that I proposed, and c) a short introduction of Uttarakhand as a region, delving into the historical, developmental and geo-political considerations that have been and are, critical in the material and discursive production of *pahari* people and places. The second descriptive chapter acts as a concluding epilogue to the whole dissertation, chronicling the conceptual end products of the scholarship and how they inform relevant

disciplinary debates. Furthermore, I identify the scholarly lacunae revealed and the future trajectories necessary to meaningfully address them.

The three empirical chapters that form the main ‘body’ of my dissertation follow an argumentative progression, which initially rearticulates an alternative epistemological approach to reveal certain agentive realities about *pahari* households, this is followed by a detailed exploration of mobile youth praxis and ultimately, envisioned through this analytical reimagining of the entanglements and relationships critical to the relational vulnerability of the household, mobile youth are made visible within relational *pahari* places.

In Chapter 3, I focus on disrupting materially discrete, component based articulations of precarity and privileges of *pahari* households. I begin with a focus on vulnerability, which explores the problematic and exclusionary theorizations of the concept and its overwhelming representation through static, bounded indicators that reduce complex human and non-human, material and affective assemblages, to an aggregate, measurable framework. I follow this by situating Uttarakhand within discourses of exceptional Himalayan precarity, the developmental politics that this has regionally mobilized, and the welfarist and structurally dominant approaches to vulnerability and its assessment that such a politics envisions and has made normative. Having identified this shortcoming, I engage with recent scholarship in political ecology, actor-network theory, feminist theory and science and technology studies that disrupt such uncritical and ontologically monolithic imaginaries of vulnerability. Furthermore, building on such critical interventions, I identify recent attempts by human geographers to reimagine vulnerability, as relationally produced emergent, spatially potent relationship between subjects, objects, processes and affects, which is always in the process of becoming. Informed by this vision of relational vulnerability, I employ a prism, through which to understand the many hopes, fears and aspirations, intersectionally producing *pahari* households. In the process I unveil a ‘new materiality’, which extends from the permeable, non-discrete units that goes beyond the static

measurements of various cleaved phenomena. This vision of vulnerability does not reject the existence of the material, but instead argues for a more substantive analytic, one which is cognizant of the problematic reproduction of exclusion and reductionism that arises from a lack of critical and explicit explorations of vulnerability. Witnessed such, certain novel relational assemblages emerge as critical to the production of *pahari* households.

Chapter 4 picks up the argumentative thread from chapter 3 and is centered on an exploration of *pahari* mobile youth praxis. The chapter begins with an exploration of youth mobility and agency in south Asia and the Himalayan region. I identify the critiques of metrocentricity and eurocentricity leveled at the scholarship, and posit that a focus on the ‘non-elite’ *pahari* mobile youth helps bring the focus back to populations that are usually excluded from the narratives. Drawing on detailed ethnographic accounts of my personal engagements with over hundred youth, their families and friends, I reveal the particular aspirational atlas of this group, rooted in their mediation of their transforming relational worlds.

In Chapter 5 I bring the conclusions of Chapter 3 and 4 in dialogue. The relationships underlying relational vulnerability in *pahari* households are explored through the praxis of the youth. In the process the youth are imagined as more than money remitting migrants and the households as more than place based, administratively bounded agrarian units.

Chapter 2 - The researcher and the researched

The many realities of fieldwork in *pahar*

Uttarakhand – a place of conflicted temporality

Uttarakhand (*pahar*) – ‘northern land’, the 27th state of India, came into being in 2000, calving out the Himalayan districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and joining together the two ethnolinguistic regions of Garwhal and Kumaon. The birth was a painful process - marred by political upheavals, colonial grievances, state sponsored violence and the subsuming of regional demands for development by hegemonic discourses of casteism and ecological crisis (Emma Mawdsley, 1999, 2006; Robinson, 2001); Linkenbach, 2007; Hussain, 1995). heralding a transitioning federalism, the post-colonial administration of India, beleaguered with an enterprising populist movement, reconsidered the significant institutional and political calculus of governing a massive, heterogeneous territorial unit (a former British province) and allowed the *pahari* districts of UP to form their own ‘development space’ (Mathur, 2016; Mawdsley, 2002; Kumar, 2011). Despite the seeming sociocultural unity driving the demands of statehood, the idea of *pahar* can be traced back to colonial land divisions during India’s independence in 1947, which combined the princely state of Tehri-Garwhal, British Garwhal and the Kumaon division of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. This (re)drawing of political borders around a sparsely populated region and its insertion within the most populous state, led to justifiable regional anxieties about democratic political representation and the consolidation of historical extractive natural resource management, under the auspices of an authoritarian bureaucracy from the plains (Rangan, 2000; Mathur, 2016). Further antagonizing the situation was the territorial aspirations mediating the restructuring of power in post-colonial Asia. This materialized as various ‘border wars’ between India, China and Pakistan in the 1960s, and essentially militarized vast tracts of the Himalayas,

turning them into ‘zones of exclusion’. As natural security became the primary concern, the porous and ambiguous, borders were reimagined. Trans-Himalayan trade, a significant cultural and economic activity, came to a halt. Small, subsistence farmers and herders, the majority of the region’s population, found themselves crushed between a loss of autonomy over natural resource management, authoritarian border control and dysfunctional developmental promises. The *pahari* identity was forged in this furnace of marginalization (Rangan, 2004; Gellner, 2013). But, what does it mean to be *pahari*?

The mostly rural and mountainous region of Uttarakhand, for the past several generations, has been home to communities that generally identify themselves as *pahari* or ‘hill people’/ ‘mountain people’ (Koskimaki, 2017). Historically these communities have occupied a land sandwiched between the snowcapped 7000m peaks of the High Himalaya (*Himadri*) and the sub-tropical hills of the Outer Himalayas (*Bhabar*) (Bergmann et al., 2011). Along with the mountainous landscape the region is notable as *Dev Bhoomi*—‘Land of the Gods’, a place of immense religious and mythological significance and the birthplace of Hinduism’s most sacred rivers. The *Char Dham Yatra*³, an important pan-Indian Hindu pilgrimage is located here, along with the important Sikh pilgrimage site called Hemkund Sahib (Whitmore, 2016; Linkenbach, 2007). And it is notable that much of popular as well as scholarly focus on the region has involved different aspects of this sacred geography. *Paharis* as inhabitants of this region are often distinguished from *maidanis* (plains people, lowlanders) who occupy the lands beyond the mountainous region. Both *paharis* and *maidanis* tend to essentialize each other, building of the contentious relationship between the ‘rulers’ of the plains and the ‘ruled’ of the mountains (Rangan, 2000). *Paharis*, like residents of other mountainous places of India, have struggled with their colonial characterization as backward, uneducated, superstitious and morally and spiritually inferior to the *maidanis* (Whitmore, 2016; Mathur, 2016).

³ Four Abode Pilgrimage. It is a Hindu religious pilgrimage that is traditionally performed to purify, eliminate sins and attain tangible and intangible desires (See Whitmore, 2016 and Pinkney, 2016)

Most historical explorations of *pahari* identity, inconclusively assume that the first inhabitants of the region were the Dom (the current low caste populations) who were later oppressed by ‘indo-Aryans’ called Khasa. This group was subsequently subjugated by high-caste immigrants from different regions of north India from the seventh century AD onwards (Joshi, 1990). During the Gorkha rule of the region (1790-1815) and the British colonial rule (1815-1947) caste identities and ethnic identities were manipulated as response to the transforming land and revenue management policies, political alliances and regional representations in dominant narratives (Joshi, 2011). This has led to an unusually fluid caste identities, and a much higher presence of high caste individuals compared to the rest of North India with many inter-district examples of caste confusion (Mawdsley, 1996; Joshi, 1990). Other accounts claim a more topographical differentiation across three major cultural areas. The first of these the outer Himalayan hills encompassing the terai region which are culturally similar to neighboring plains areas followed by a middle section that consists of the major population of the groups identified as *paharis* and finally, the higher mountain regions (past 3000m) which are populated by communities that combine Tibetan religious and ethnic elements with north Indian ones (Berreman, 1963; Tolia, 1967).

Current communal articulations in Uttarakhand occupy intersections of ethnic and caste alliances that defy such topographical differentiation and isolation and according to the latest Uttarakhand census, *paharis* are mostly Hindu (83%) and high caste (82.1%). Furthermore the five different Scheduled Tribes (a moniker of ethnic difference), Tharu, Jaunsari, Buksa, Bhotia and Raji, constitute about 5% of the total population and also claim to be overwhelmingly Hindu (99.1%) (GOI, 2011; Directorate of Economics and Statistics Uttarakhand, 2014). Additionally, ST groups such as the Bhotiyas associate their ST moniker with pejorative connotations, due to its anti-nationalist and anti-Hindu renditions and instead describe themselves as descendants of high-caste Hindu immigrants from the plains (Bergmann et al., 2009). Therefore, in the past, the term *pahari* was used by

administrators to differentiate the majority Hindu populations of the middle Himalayan regions from the more mobile trans-Himalayan Buddhist/animist communities of Tibeto-Burman heritage and the lowland populations beyond the outer Himalayas. But, currently inhabitants of the region, across ethnic and caste groups, overwhelmingly identify themselves as *pahari* in contrast to the *maidani* population of the plains (similar to the *pahari/madhese* divide in Nepal) (Yadav, 2010; Kumar, 2011). The prevalence of such a strong cleavage despite sharing cultural, religious and linguistic similarities can be attributed to the powerful movement for state formation and the identity politics that it has (and continues to) leveraged (Mawdsley, 1997; Tillin, 2011). Furthermore, echoing the mobilization of aggressive Hindu nationalism and politicking in the region, most *paharis* espouse allegiance to pan-Hindu religious symbols and processes, while maintaining certain regionally unique cultural artefacts and behaviors (Govindrajan, 2015b; Mawdsley, 2010). However, since three of the thirteen districts of the state of Uttarakhand actually lie in the *maidani* terai/bhabar region, many *paharis* from the mountainous districts have contentious feelings about the identity of the inhabitants of those districts. Especially since there has been a consolidation of political and economic power in the *maidani* districts with the institution of the state capital in Dehradun, against popular demand, and the creation of massive industrial hubs in Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar (Jayal, 2000). This rapid investment in services and infrastructure in the three districts has for some furthered *pahari* fears about ‘developmental inequalities’ between *paharis* and *maidanis* by neglecting the historical grievances of the *pahari* communities, but for others has been seen as the reformation of the backward and peripheral *pahari* region (Bahukhandi & Shukla, 2015; Pant, 2012).

Such industrial projects Uttarakhand have unfolded across an agrarian terrain, markedly different from the mechanized, heavily irrigated, and consolidated plots of the plains. Himalayan agriculture characterized by small farm plots, often with a steep gradient, alternating between the agroclimatic specificities of lush river valleys and windswept ridge tops, has defied attempts at both

mechanization and consolidation, leading to a more equitable distribution of land (Goodman, 2017b; Nickow, 2015). These tiny, terraced fields with great commercial potential for horticulture, given the temperate climate and freezing winters, have failed to provide the needed economic security for most families. While providing an in-depth analyses of the challenges facing regional agriculture is beyond the scope of this paper, scholars, policy makers and local communities⁴ have identified a complex set of socio-ecological contingencies which include: human wild-life interactions, marginal road connectivity, inadequate irrigation infrastructure and fertilizer inputs, intermittent market access and access to financial investments and security nets, exploitative commodity broker systems, migration, changing access to forest land, transitioning livestocking habits, encroachment by invasive species, livelihood aspirations of educated youth and climate change (Jain, 2010; Mamgain, 2008; Minten et al., 2011; Negi, 2007; Sati & Singh, 2010).

Additionally, regional agricultural production which was gendered in pre-colonial times was further entrenched during colonial rule, with women undertaking the primary responsibilities, while men leave the fields to look for wage labor elsewhere (Drew, 2014a). This division of labor has been historically linked to the practice of *begar* (bonded, forced labor), instituted during the Gurkha rule and supported during British administration of the region (Gururani, 2014; Pathak, 1997). The removal of men in large numbers, under the practice of *begar*, and even after its abolishment, has had a transformative effect on the meaning of work as a symbolic and material activity (Gidwani, 2008), in most *pahari* households. *Pahari* men have constituted cheap labor in the plains, while *pahari* women have ‘work(ed) like cattle’, bearing the responsibility for social and cultural reproduction of the rural home (Bose, 2000; Chopra & Ghosh, 2000; Gururani, 2014). The UK movement for autonomy, was a convergence of the various discursive churnings, that were mobilized to address such historically

⁴ From my own larger fieldwork data set, compiling surveys across 6 districts and 400 households, conducted between 2009 – 2016.

and culturally biased relations of power affecting livelihoods, *vikas* (development) and identities in the region.

The fieldwork for this project was conducted in a *pahar* that was more than a decade removed from those early hopeful and exciting days of the fledgling state. While 70% of the region is still characterized as rural and primarily involved in agrarian livelihoods (Directorate of Economics and Statistics Uttarakhand, 2014), in recent years investments in industrial development have been significant, with hydropower taking the center stage. The state currently has 45 dams, and 500 more are planned (Roy, 2008). Selling energy to north India's exploding metropolises is at the heart of the state development policy. This rampant dam construction has evoked significant responses from regional communities, civil society, India's ministry of environment, large construction and energy companies and the state bureaucracy (Drew, 2014b; Emma Mawdsley, 2010). The Himalayas formed at plate boundaries, are a young, very seismically active zone. There are over 32 potential seismotectonic source zones within the state and the state has suffered numerous earthquakes (Mohan & Joshi, 2013). The famed Chipko and anti-liquor movements have long ended, their torchbearers exhausted and cynical (Koskimaki and Upadhyay, 2017; Kumar, 2011). The Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), a political party created to represent regional concerns in state and central electoral politics, has consistently failed to win a majority in regional elections and is subservient to the major national political parties in the state government (Kumar, 2011). Livelihoods and *vikas* (development), the two fundamental issues of the agitation, are still topics of grave concern to most households that I talked with. While capital has flooded the state after its creation, most of it has concentrated in the three plains districts, far away from the 'remote' borderlands (Directorate of Economics and Statistics Uttarakhand, 2014). Controversial land markets have become ubiquitous with rural life, with large parcels of agricultural land being acquired by people from the plains, often through unsavory means (Govindrajan, 2015b). Agriculture has languished, further diminishing, as both an economic and

cultural livelihood. State and Central agricultural extension agencies have pedaled a variety of ‘incentives’ – from livestock breed improvement programs to horticultural crop insurance. But, the uptake and impacts of such programs are ambiguous and many families treat them merely as methods to siphon off govt. subsidies. The public distribution system is foundational to the food security of most families, which rely on the subsidized cereal grains, sugar and oil to achieve food security (Nichols, 2015). Public education has greatly expanded its reach, and in many villages, most children attend primary and middle school (WB, 2012).

Apart from the growing tourism industry (Balodi et al., 2014; Karar, 2010; Kent et al., 2012), most popular narratives of Uttarakhand highlight one of two ‘realities’. The first coalesces around the idea of exceptional regional precarity, augmenting the argument with examples of ‘natural’ hazards and the disasters they frequently cause. These disasters include powerful floods, earthquakes, forest fires and predators. But, they also posit a chronic ubiquitous insecurity rooted in the ‘uncontrollable’, ‘harsh’, ‘supernatural’ landscape of the Himalayas (Gergan, 2017; Sinha et al., 1997) and a ‘backwardness’ that stems from the region’s marginality due to their locational specificity on the ‘frontiers’ of the nation state (Rangan, 2000). The second deals with the anxieties of cultural loss, rural transformation and ultimately marginalization by *maidani* (lowland) ideas and institutions. This is represented through a focus on the formation of ‘ghost villages’ in different districts of the state (Dey, 2017; Venkatesh, 2015). A ghost village is a village that is functionally de-peopled, left with either a few senior community members or is completely uninhabited. The fields lie barren and the homes appear decrepit and crumbling, abandoned by their managers. The formation of such spaces are causally tied to the forces of migration spurred by changing aspirations of young people and failure of state development initiatives to provide basic utilities and generate employment in rural areas. Out-migration, it’s almost deterministic rendition within *pahari* lifeworlds, and exceptional susceptibility to natural hazards, inform regional developmental agendas (Bhatt et al., 2013; Kala, 2014; Rawat, 2017),

dominate political rhetoric during electoral processes (Poonam, 2017; Pioneer, 2018; Mazoomdar and Langer, 2013) and even provide a normative tethering to much scholarship about the region (Jain, 2010; Kumar et al., 2013; Rajesh et al., 2014). Juxtaposed to these stories are visions of the economic miracle that has happened in the state over the last decade. According to industrial statistical indicators of economic potential, Uttarakhand's GDP has grown at a dizzying pace, clocking either the highest or second highest rate in the whole country (World Bank, 2017). The manufacturing, construction, mining and service sectors have overwhelmingly led to this growth, with agriculture posting dismal numbers. Reports have identified attractive investment and business policies, high literacy rates and hydropower assets as probable drivers of this change (PHD, 2015). Furthermore, infrastructural development with a focus on connectivity, purportedly to join people to markets, services and places in the plains, has led to the widespread construction of motor roads and telecommunication networks (Dash et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2014).

Pahari places echo an unruly mix of these different processes. Even though motor roads link many villages, their poor construction and maintenance, is cause for serious consternation. While many public schools have the required funding, teachers often refuse to live in 'remote' locales, leading to significant sporadicity in the formal school schedule. Special Economic Zones (SEZ), created in the *maidani* areas of the state, attract thousands of workers from all over the state and other parts of India and the Himalayas. While on one hand driven by both civil society and state government bodies there is a big push towards 'value-addition' in agriculture, especially through promotion of organic certification and production, on the other hand there is growing access to industrially produced food through both public distribution centers and private retailers. Changing practices of agricultural production and land management, coupled with national policies, and ecological transformation is changing the modalities of human and wildlife encounters. Political aspirations of *paharis*, rooted in the mobilizations around state formation, have been consumed by broader contestations of national

political power struggles. *Pahari* people and places exhibit different anxieties about how to assert a unique identity, while negotiating their myriad encounters with non-*pahari* people and places.

The study sites

The choice of villages was not random. It was contingent on two different factors. First, since the youth are the main protagonists of my narrative, I traced my study sites from the significant connections I made and I entered most homes, not just as a researcher, but also as an invited friend. The youth were often my “gatekeepers” in these communities. Second, I wanted to challenge the more homogenous characterization of rural establishments in the region. Villages in Uttarakhand are social entities and the outcome of multi-local processes and networks (Mines and Yazgi, 2010). All the three places, while situated within the eastern half of the state (Kumaon) and located in the broader cultural and social division that characterizes this region, are different in many significant aspects.

The Himalayas are divided into different physiogeographic layers. The three main ones are the *Terai/Bhabar* – the outer Himalayas (0-1000m), the *Himanchal* – the lesser Himalayas (1500-3000m) and the *Himadri* – the greater Himalayas (3500m-above). The study villages are situated between 1700-3000m in the lesser Himalayas and have basic transportation and communication facilities. A majority of the population is involved in some form of agrarian production and livestock herding. Most households have male members who have had migrant experiences in provincial cities within the state or in *maidani* metropolises in India.

1) The village of **Ghargaon**, located closest to the state SEZ is blessed with some of the best horticultural lands. Peach, apricot, apple, plums and oranges are all grown by most households and usually represent a significant income generating activity. The village is also located next to a massive government veterinary research institute that maintains a large area of forestland. This forestland has an impact on the biogeography of the village farmland and is also a source of wild animals that engage

in frequent encounters with the farmers. Most farmers I talked with mentioned significant damage to their commercial and subsistence crops from these animals – wild boars and porcupines targeted the root vegetables, monkeys targeted beans, lentils and fruits and there was even the occasional predation by leopards of livestock. Due to a host of reasons, there are quite a few non-governmental organizations (NGO) around the village. The oldest among them has been around for almost 35 years. These organizations run various projects in and around the village. These include training programs focused on livelihood and food security, a farmer co-operative, a school, a hospital, women's empowerment initiatives and a two small handloom and agro-commodity production units that hire locals. Additionally, this village is only seven hours by road from New Delhi and a famous temple town nearby is touted as 'the closest place to see winter snow from the Indian capital'. This brings in a significant number of tourists throughout the year and has helped create many fledgling adventure, eco and religious tourism initiatives.

Despite the relative success in commercial fruit farming, land is a hot commodity in the village, and many 'outsiders' – from cities in the plains and foreign countries – have bought/are buying land for residential and commercial purposes. Land prices range from US\$90,000/acre for land away from the motor road and views of the mountains to over US\$500,000/acre for the prime properties. While not entirely similar to the situation Kumar (2016) describes in western UP, a region quite close to Uttarakhand, it does represent a restructuring of some social and political process within the village and a questioning of its boundaries. Most of these outsiders are affluent *maidanis*, who are often retirees and have relocated from metropolitan centers driven by, as one explained, "The pollution, population and expensive life of the cities (to) a beautiful, peaceful, and simple life in the mountains". Others simply maintain a second home in the mountains and intermittently visit it, especially during the summer months. These outsiders often employ local youth from the village as construction workers, caretakers, janitors, maids, gardeners, drivers, security and cooks. In the village there were

different opinions about these outsiders. Some claimed that they were withholding wages from villagers who had worked for them, others claimed that they had a ‘civilizing’ effect on the village, bringing the ‘light of development into their dark village’, still others voiced a sense of ambivalence, unsure how their presence would ultimately transform their community.

Relatively functional roads connect the village to big towns in the plains and people frequently travel to these places, making day trips for employment or leisure. These roads which in recent years have split the village into many segments are also critical for the movement of building materials and subsidized governmental sanctioned food rations into the village and the removal of ‘natural resources’ – rocks, produce, flowers and livestock out of it. Catalyzed by this ease of access to building materials, most households in the village are in the process of rebuilding or replacing their older stone houses with cement and rebar ones. The current head of the village is a lower caste woman. Her election to this position was mandated through the minority reservation policies of Indian administrative culture. She is illiterate and mostly unaware of the different political networks of influence needed to access development funds, or gain political favors from district legislatures and as such has handed over the functional aspects of her job to her two sons

2) The village of **Mana**, located much further away from the plains, on a ridge between two big watersheds is a more ‘remote’ place. The village consists of an older settlement in the river valley, which was a more permanent base in the past as most families practiced transhumance, moving to the arid, windswept, ridge top ward to access the meadows for livestock during the summer and monsoon months. However, with the building of the motor road through the ridge top, and the slow emergence of a small market square around it and the construction of a high school, health center, livestock breed improvement and extension center, bank, post-office and police post, many families have permanently moved up to the ridge, exchanging land with families that decided to stay down in the river valley. Alternatively, many households have also decided to become more ‘multi-local’ with some members

staying down in the more ‘disconnected’ valley (usually older parents/grandparents) and others (usually parents with children in schools, younger families) have moved to the ridge area.

The ridge area suffers from severe water shortages and is getting bigger and denser every year, with a bustling market place catering to travelers and tourists’ enroute to Munsyari (a popular tourist spot). Till 2013 mobile phone service was intermittent and there were just a handful of public transportation vehicles plying between the district headquarters (HQ) and the village, but currently most households have smart phones, access 3G connectivity and the town square sports a state run liquor store. Agriculture is mostly subsistence, with few commercial opportunities, but a foreign aid driven venture in collaboration with the state government has attempted to offer subsidized polythene greenhouses (polyhouses) to many families, along with training in vegetable production. This project has had mixed success given the problems with harvest storage and the costs of transportation to the wholesale markets in the district capital of Bageshwar.

The village despite its rather ‘ordinary’ credentials has a lot of political affiliations with district representatives and is often ‘selected’ as a place for the unveiling of rural development projects. These include a ‘model government school’ (better funded than regular schools), regular agricultural extension fairs and even helped conduct the Uttarakhand state tourism board’s International Mountain Day celebrations in conjunction with a few nearby villages. The village is surrounded by big tracts of government and community forestland and many families depend on forest products as a fuel source and livestock feed. Many households grow *ganja* (*Cannabis indica*), and in recent years some people have begun to commercially trade in various cannabis products.

3) Finally, the village of **Inari**, which lies on the district border and a few miles from the *Himadri* glaciers, epitomizes the ‘disconnected’ village. There is no telecom service, medical center or police presence and rains wash away the unpaved road every year. There are just two vehicles that leave the small market center every day and most households are involved in herding, with many

practicing transhumance. In the past the herding practiced by many households was done by family members, but currently most families hire one of the few herders in the village, that then spend months with their sheep in the meadows, coming down to the village only during emergencies, to make sales or to replenish their supplies. According to the villagers, after an earthquake in the 1990s and flood events in the past decade, a lot of the topsoil has been eroded and carried down to a major glacial river that demarcates the district border. This has exposed massive glacial moraine in their fields, which makes plowing incredibly challenging and adds to their agrarian distress. Given the high cost of transportation of most industrially produced goods, most families are self-reliant consuming mostly home grown food on a regular basis and meat from their livestock herds and hunting. The northern boundaries of the village extend into the meadows and conifer forests, which according to the village elders, “still resembles their childhood memories”. There are frequent human and wildlife encounters, with some causing fatalities for either or both. Many households in the village grow cannabis for commercial sale and there is a network of middlemen who visit the village over the *bugyals* (high-altitude meadows), avoiding motor roads and human habitation, and exchange the cannabis products for food, woolen goods or cash. The village is also enroute to some famous glacier treks and as such sees a significant number of tourists. But, since most of the tourists travel with outsider travel companies, most people in the village don’t interact with them. There are a number of retired military personnel in the village, who represent a small but powerful minority.

Trying to be a vulnerable observer

This research began many years ago in a small *pahari* village in the foothills of the Himalayas. I was formally associated with a post-development non-profit that was fighting for the sovereignty of marginalized Indian farmers over their agricultural production and distribution systems. On one of our educational trips to a village, hidden inside the ancient deodar and oak forests of the Tons valley,

I came across my moment of dissonance. We were at a forest council meeting, which had been organized by the village's women's Self-Help Group (SHG). The meeting was, in-essence, an anti-green revolution propaganda vehicle aimed at ensuring that the village was maintaining its sacrosanct, 'ecological and organic' agenda. Outside the temple courtyard, where the meeting was being held, a few loud, young men had gathered. As we walked in, I greeted one of them, he asked me, "What are you doing here?" a question that would end up changing the course of my life. His mother was the head of the SHG and ran the food security co-operative that the non-profit had set up. My interlocuter Nayan and I started a conversation which would continue over the next three days. Over bowls of sour rhododendron flowers, we would sit by the furious river – breaking open the glacial heart of the mountains, with boys not much older than me, staring at the water as if it was a prison. Nayan said to me the day I left, "Someday I hope powerful people come to our village and ask me what I want. I will give them a list, we will all give them lists. But, I fear I will be dead before that happens". The nucleus of this project was born on the bus ride down to the plains – as I meditated on Nayan's words and asked my fellow passengers if they had ever attempted to involve aspirations of the local youth into their programs of engagement. Rahulji, an ancient oak of a man and our leader, said to me, dismissively, "All the youth want the same thing – move to the city and never go back again. As if they could survive there". Sitting there I realized, he didn't have a clue about this hidden lifeworld, which somehow existed parallel to all the adult spaces that he engaged with.

I left the organization a few days later and walked into the mountains alone. That was eight years ago – along the way I found young *pahari* 'mobilees' like Ajay, Kundan, Gopal and many others. I use the term mobilee, coined by Skelton (2013) to describe "one who is actively mobile", to conceptually address this group of young men, as I explore in this work, they enacted and embodied a certain regionally unique spatiality. The privileges I carry and the monumental empathy of rural *pahari* families, opened old, wooden doors to me. From harvesting rice in moist river valleys to cleaning

mosaic floors in Dehradun (state capital) suburbs, from shepherding across the rugged *bugyals* to mixing cocktails in south Delhi clubs, from ripping open goat carcasses at *Devi pujas* (goddess festivals) to brokering illegal land deals in Nainital, from stone mining under moonlight to walking their daughters to private schools in the terai, I accompanied these young men and often their families, as they moved through the changing spaces of their homeland(s). And as Nayan had requested, I always asked. These questions became stories. I retell some of these stories here.

Tools of scholarship: methods and analysis

While, my initial forays into rural Himalayan society were unstructured and devoid of a set of guiding questions, the work I present here, utilized past alliances within a focused, rigorous research plan.

Fieldwork consisted of explorations of household scale livelihood practices, debates around social and cultural reproduction and engagements with migration/mobility, along with multiple case studies of migrant male youth that are involved in different forms of movement and strategies on their journeys between the village and the city. Household and village level decisions about land use, political engagement, livelihood practices, gender and caste considerations, were of particular concern as they connected emerging changes in power sharing with lived experiences of mobilees and their families. This research focused on contemporary encounters with different designs of modernity and development, subjective narratives of engagements with changing parameters of mobility, transitioning livelihood and reproductive choices, and ultimately questions of identity and belonging within *pahari* lifeworlds and beyond. Ultimately, the vulnerability of the rural household was explored with particular attention to the role of the mobilees.

The ‘data’ were gathered at three villages and fifteen towns, across five districts in the state of Uttarakhand and at the national capital – New Delhi, over a period of 18 months, from 2013 to 2017.

I used a mixed-methods approach that consisted of:

No.	Method	N
1	Intensive semi-structured interviews	400 individuals (ages 18-85 years)
2	Structured households surveys (administered usually in/near family dwelling or agricultural/pasture land)	270 households (3 villages, 65% of total households)
3	Working participant observations (recorded during various labor sharing practices – harvesting, livestocking, house construction, stone breaking, irrigation etc.)	100 (ages 18-60years)
4	Focus groups/co-operative meetings/village government meetings/ other intra-extended family meetings	50 meetings (total individuals present ~ 1000)
5	Oral history sessions with village elders	10 (60-85 years)
6	Travel ethnographies	8 (over a distance of 3000km)
7	Biographical sketches of youth (made separately by households and youth)	45
8	Video/photo diaries (produced intermittently by the youth)	23 diaries (165 images, 54 videos)
9	Social media activities/profile	120 people

Table 1. Methodological tools

The structured household surveys were a reproduction of ICIMOD’s Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment (PVA) report and relied heavily on indicator based questions about household ‘assets and capitals’ (Gerlitz et al., 2014). This methodology rooted in the sustainable livelihood approach and framework (Morse, McNamara, & Acholo, 2009) provided a rather instrumental chronicling of *pahari* households, akin to a census questionnaire. My usage of the PVA survey was motivated by its ability to gather detailed quantitative information about families, which a) augmented the very partial repository of available national census data b) provide a detailed overview of some very material aspects of *pahari* life (e.g. monthly expenditure, labor costs of planting commercial crops, etc.). Furthermore, while the PVA was employed as a data collection tool, its analytical prescriptions were firmly eschewed. The insight into *pahari* homes gleaned from the survey data served as the empirical representation of a normative materialist understanding of household

vulnerability, whose partiality and discrepancies were dealt with by the usage of more relational ontologies.

The semi-structured interviews and the travel ethnographies proved to be the most challenging due to the constant “navigating of intimacies in and after the field” (Smith, 2016, p.135). I attempted to be cognizant of the situatedness of knowledge, different relationships of power and the co-productive nature of such qualitative research attempts (Haraway, 1991; Nagar et al., 2002). However, the more affective encounters with *pahari* subjects, often due to my broaching of intimate topics around reproduction, debt and death, required an adherence to a strict regime of openness and vulnerability from my end. While this broke down many walls between me and my *pahari* friends, it also allowed for an experiential narrative to emerge, which I knew would never translate into my written work, due to both ethical and epistemic reasons. To begin with, questions of ‘pedigree’ often ensued during many of my interviews, as through these questions many of the interviewees aimed to gauge the assorted privileges I carried. This was often a comparative act, for many of the *paharis*, drawing clear lines between me and them, based on my higher education in institutions of the minority world, my apparent command over the English language but most importantly, my ability to, what they termed, “wander around with them”.

Wandering with the mobilees consisted of an aggregation of different moments of movement and fixity. As an example, the month of post-harvest, late autumn that I spent with Gopal consisted of days that would begin with his management activities in his extensive polyhouse tomato plants, followed by an afternoon in the market square either overseeing/laboring for the demolition of the old family house. The evenings could consist of a short trip to his household forestland to gather tea or the village alcohol store for a beer with his cousins. A couple of times a week we would head down the mountain to the nearest town to purchase supplies for the house rebuilding, polyhouse or irrigation, and after about four weeks of this we headed down to his house in the terai to negotiate the

sale of poplar trees that his wife and mother had cultivated on the ancestral land. During this journey Gopal interacted with the produce sellers at various towns and villages to ask about prices, demands and possible future ‘experiments’. At his terai house the days would be spent visiting local sharecroppers that were renting their land, seed sale shops to check out newly released hybrids, local/state government offices to inquire about upcoming rural extension projects and the evenings would be spent discussing with other youth various fears and aspirations – including investments in cryptocurrencies, the value of formal education, fatherhood and parenting and the changing cultural realities of Uttarakhand. After a month or so, we got back on the road to Mana loaded with home grown grain, dairy products and mosquito bites.

While Gopal’s movements were often restricted to the space between his two homes and a function of the various relationships that lay in between, Ajay from Ghargaon had a far more unpredictable calendar. In late spring when I met him his Mondays were spent painting walls for a *maidani* retiree in the village, his Tuesdays ended up taking him to the nearby district HQ to negotiate stone prices with the powerful building contractor, Wednesdays were spent down in the creek with his posse, hauling rocks with shovels and pikes into the back of a dump truck, Thursdays the truck was driven for delivery along with errands for the retiree, Fridays would be spent at the family tea-shop in the village – running the store while helping orchestrate the illegal sale of government subsidized food grain at the adjacent general store. The weekends consisted of various agricultural duties on the family fields, getting drunk with friends and visiting local tourist spots for leisure and entertainment. However, this ‘labor’ schedule was highly volatile, fluctuating to the whims of the contractor, the *maidani* retiree, the price of stones, Ajay’s disposition, the needs of other mobilees in the village, local festivals, the possibility for other short term contractual work and finally, the predicament of his fledgling land brokering business.

Even though many of the people I talked with accessed a varying range of mobility in their daily life, they usually imagined this in conjunction with what they saw as their deficiencies due to their regional affiliations, embeddedness in certain historical developmental pathways, and finally, their “burden of rurality”. For example, as I interviewed a local youth inside his polyhouse, in the village of Mana, a group of *pahari* women who thought I was out of earshot, harvesting barley, discussed what they saw as my obvious privilege given my mobility and their aspirations about them:

W1: So you are saying he just ‘tours’ around and asks people questions?

W2: Yes. That’s about it. Yesterday he asked me about the price of my sickle and where I bought them.

W3: I hear he is a scientist from England or America. He must have a huge salary.

W2: Yeah, if I was getting paid so much, I would be touring around as well.

W1: Yes, I wish I was getting paid to just travel around (...)

Addressing the different intricacies of scholarship would often be the suffix to questions about my livelihood as a student and scholar. Therefore, often my conversations with *paharis* ended up becoming a comparative evaluation of our respective ‘livelihood duties’. Especially on my travel ethnographies, as I addressed the very mundanity of a movement undertaken by the youth over and over again, the conversations about my livelihood would transition into pleas for ‘power sharing’. These included a constant questioning of the activist potential of my work, particularly in relation to what certain youth saw as their exclusion from the modern Indian development machine.

While the interstices of society where they felt the most comfortable was valorized in many accounts, the aspirations for a life beyond their ‘capabilities’ often occupied youth discussions. In many such discussions, I was asked to be the arbitrator of disputes in matters of legitimacy tied to accounts of privilege that the youth had supposedly witnessed in their sojourns out of the village. On many such occasions my unfamiliarity with the spaces of power they portrayed, led them to question

by accounts of the work I did, my life in the United States and my educational qualifications. These moments allowed for chinks to appear on the armor of these young men, which along with my ineptitude at performing simple agrarian tasks, allowed these youth to question the discourses and mythologies of the ‘natural’ differences they thought existed between *paharis* and *maidanis* and how such differences allowed for certain futures to materialize.

Most of my conversations with people were either in Hindi, English or *pahari* or sometimes in a mix of the three. While *pahari* refers to a group of languages spoken across the Himalayas from Kashmir in the west to Nepal in the east, most of the people I interacted with spoke different dialects of *Kumaoni*, classified by Grierson (1927) as Central *pahari*, which were at times mutually intelligible (Chauhan, 2002; Shah, 2014). The *Kumaoni* dialect (Joshi, 2010) I acquired was the language of the elite, spoken in middle and upper-class homes in the cities of Nainital and Almora. Thus, the further away I travelled from these urban centers, the less effective it was. At such times I depended on my research assistant who being a native *pahari* and having travelled extensively in the region, spoke and understood many different dialects.

Snowball sampling helped me identify quite a few of my subjects, but I also relied on “friendship as a method of inquiry” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p.5). I was drawn to friendship as method, both by its foundational adherence to feminist epistemology – critiquing value-free inquiry and by my own emotional affiliations with a diverse group of youth and families, which challenged my personal ethics. The sustained investment through conversation, daily involvement, compassion and vulnerability, allowed me to negotiate the positions of power and privilege that characterized most of my relational moments in the field. Given my limited time and the infrastructural paucity of the transportation systems in Uttarakhand, it was often impossible for me to physically interact with many of my subjects. This immobility forced me to rely on social media, which turned out to be vital, given the recent regional ubiquitousness of smart phones, and allowed me to collect another form of record,

further enriching the “multi-sensorial and multi-modal experience” (Pink, 2009, pg. 190). Social media platforms, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, were used by *paharis* to communicate with me, a) their daily social encounters: these included selfies from the chai shops, breaking stones for daily wage labor and travels with friends to places of cultural and religious importance, and b) to forward me videos and pictures about *pahari* culture: these included phone made videos of significant cultural events such as weddings and pujas (religious rituals/celebrations), agricultural events – harvesting, plowing, transplanting and more ‘meme’ like media artifacts that celebrated the comparative superiority of *pahari* culture compared to *maidani* culture.

Along with the youth and their families/friends, I interviewed local politicians, *patwaris*, veterinarians, doctors, small business owners, factory superintendents, NGO workers, agricultural commodity wholesalers, university professors, public transport drivers, international and domestic tourists, agricultural extension workers, public and private school teachers and various *thekedars* (n = 65). These conversations were often contentious. This was a function of the topics that I raised, as well as an atmosphere of paranoia, driven by political and territorial anxieties of the state – fomented by alleged aggressive transgressions by neighboring nations in these borderlands. Often, this ‘hidden transcript’ would be made public, through the guise of nervous humor, “People are saying that you are a Pakistani/Chinese spy, and are making maps of our village to report back to your leaders. But, don’t worry I know that no Chinese can speak *pahari* like you”. Despite such fears, especially in the village closest to the Tibetan border, my research assistant and I, felt welcomed almost everywhere, encountering the occasional interrogation only from local ‘gatekeepers’.

Overall, most *pahari*’s saw me as person of privilege given my education in the US and the research stipend that I was given, which after conversion from US\$ to Indian rupees often amounted to half the household’s annual income. Furthermore, many people had had prior experience with public researchers and extension agents and were acutely aware of their political and economic clout.

I was often grouped into such a category and assigned all the general privileges associated with such individuals and was also at the receiving end of the derision and frustration many paharis felt towards their public servants and administrators. However, many older *paharis* saw education as an emancipatory act and a process that led to critical social and cultural development of the individual. My status as a PhD student often evoked respect from such individuals and allowed them to discuss the feelings they had for their children who often refused to follow such a path. Ultimately, my own status as a migrant in the US and presence in Uttarakhand away from my family created a sense of shared familiarity with many of the mobilees. The longing, the messages, the calls to their mothers, girlfriends, brothers and wives all seemed similar to the anxious video calls that I made to my partner and our young child back in the US.

These various discursive and material subjectivities that produce *pahari* places are in flux. In the next chapter I sift through my field data to focus on the foundations of what constitutes vulnerability within *pahari* households? In the process I define the conceptual borders of my analysis and provide an overview of the *pahari* places and people that I encountered.

Chapter 3 - Encountering the mountains of risk

Exploring relational spaces, household vulnerability and discourses of crisis in a changing Himalaya

'You know how difficult and dangerous life is in the mountains, it is not like life in the plains. Here nature is powerful and unreliable. It is a place people live when they don't have a choice.'

Government Scientist, India

'We have everything here – land, water, peace and culture. Compared to the polluted, overcrowded cities of the plains this is paradise. Our biggest problems are corruption and institutional negligence. No one hears our voices'

Shanti Devi, Mana village

Introduction

In the village of Mana where the motor road turns towards the glaciers of the Indian Himalayas, there is a small cluster of stone houses. The villagers call this a 'cursed place' and mostly stay away. The families that occupy these houses are made up of widows who lost their husbands to unfortunate accidents, and their children. On a spring day, a couple of years ago, as I visited with her son, Sitaji - one of these widows, climbed up the steep ridge and sat down heavily beside me. She looked at her son, exhausted and defeated and said, "We didn't get it". She had filled out the paperwork to get a BPL (below poverty line) card that would allow her family to access a variety of governmental aid and resources, which were only available for the most economically marginalized households. Sitaji's household with its four members, no regularly employed adults and a tiny parcel of agricultural land, was well within the standardized range of impoverishment that this metric was based upon. But, the problem was the headman, who as the elected administrative head was a gatekeeper for all state schemes and aid. He wanted a substantial bribe to release the card, unless Sitaji complied with his demand of applying for governmental compensation claiming that her husband had died in a cloud burst induced flood. Sitaji whose husband had died of hepatitis, refused to do so. She said, "He just wants to eat half the money that we will get from the 'natural hazard compensation

fund'. This is how unethical these politicians are, they even profit off our deaths". Her son informed me that claiming a certain number of 'natural hazard deaths' from the village would mobilize a response team from the state government. This team would conduct workshops on 'survival skills' and even provide free advanced 'disaster management training' for some select members of the community. All this would be done in collaboration with the village *panchayat* (government), providing the headman many more opportunities to siphon off funds. "The *pradhan* (headman) always claims to the state officials, that poverty and wild animals are the biggest threats that we face in Mana. It is all lies. I am the fatherless son of an illiterate widow, what can be a bigger problem than that?"

The social vulnerability of *pahari* households like Sitaji's, is overwhelmingly represented as a function of assessments of risk built upon a confluence of mathematical abstractions of social-ecological relationships (Pandey & Jha, 2012; Rajesh et al., 2014). This approach to analysis has created space for reductionist, component based attempts to flourish, that construct the plight of individuals and communities through "quantitative evaluations of objective conditions of life" (Schwanen & Atkinson, 2015, p.98). Such constructions have effectively excluded and silenced the agency of individuals and communities from narratives and discussions about their predicament (Sumner & Mallett, 2013). Furthermore, measurable constituents of vulnerability have been invoked by powerful institutions and agents as undesirable states of being, promoting the saliency of spatio-temporally bounded material components, against the multitude of, individual and communal, aspirations and insecurities emerging out of 'assemblages of materiality' (Little, 2015; Panelli & Tipa, 2007; Taylor, 2013).

Household vulnerability in the Himalayan region has been historically explored in scientific and governance institutions through such reductionist indicator based frameworks, rooted in discourses of exceptional precarity and a state of constant environment and development crisis (Mathur, 2016; Metz, 2010). This colonial articulation has been supported by the neo-Malthusian

meta-narrative of the Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation (THED), the specter of regional climate change, and the inadequacies of state and non-state developmental interventions (Blaikie & Muldavin, 2004; Guthman, 1997; Guneratne, 2010). This has catalyzed several multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder attempts at finding points of interventions, to discover the roots of mountain-specific poverty, resilience and adaptive capacity (Gerlitz et al., 2014). These attempts, akin to the normative assessment epistemology, have disaggregated Himalayan people and places into component based aggregated indexes within adaptive complex systems (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2012). Represented such, Himalayan people and places, like Sitaji's household in Mana, have been reduced to sedentary, discrete, measurable variables. Their fluid, dynamic, emergent relationships, connected to their reproduction and subversion, of material and discursive processes of power, rendered invisible.

Himalayan places are produced through a situated, intersectional web of relationships (Shneiderman, 2015). Critical scholarship has highlighted the transforming modalities of mobility, livelihoods, reproduction and territoriality and the ways they are manifested in the embodied practices of regional subjects, and ultimately inform their contentious negotiations about socionatural reproduction (Govindrajan, 2015a; Murton, 2017; Nightingale, 2016; Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin, 2011; Smith, 2012). However, these insights have failed to inform the component-based literature of vulnerability, that while attempting to address the proximate conditions of poverty, agrarian collapse and land cover change, has failed to assess the deeper structural issues of inequality, subjugation and exclusion (Hewitt & Mehta, 2012; Yeh, 2016).

Assessing the structural assumptions emanating from such multiple, intersecting marginalizations is more than just an epistemic issue, and the recent 'ontological turn' in the social sciences and humanities is uniquely poised to address this (Escobar, 2007; Woolgar & Lezaun, 2013; Holbraad et al., 2014). An ontological approach argues for a plurality of existing worlds and thus

counters the notion that there is one reality, with multiple perspectives about it. Additionally, certain scholars have also posited a more relational understanding of poverty, precarity and vulnerability, questioning both its ‘universal’ nature and its set state, arguing for an emergent processual understanding (Elwood et al., 2017; Stoddard & Cantor, 2017; Turner, 2016). I bring both these insights, in this chapter, in conversation with recent theorizations about power, subjectivity and the connections between bodies and spaces in the work of political ecologists, STS scholars and feminist scholarship (Blaser, 2014; Mollett & Faria, 2013; Nightingale, 2003; Barad, 2003). Informed by this scholarship I call upon the idea of vulnerability as a relational condition. Relational vulnerability echoes recent attempts by scholars to focus on the ‘intimate relationalities’ of interconnecting bodies and spaces as sites of socionatural reproduction. And to acknowledge that, through an entangled ‘intra-action’, spaces and subjectivities are constantly in the state of formation (Atkinson, 2013; Barad, 2007; Calhoun et al., 2014; Smith & Reid, 2017). Such theorizations of vulnerability are notably absent from regional scholarship about analyzing precarity and risk. This substantive approach eschews aggregated components and quantitative indices, and instead imagines the ‘household as a set of relations’ (Korzenewica & Agergaard, 2017). In the process, it addresses the issues of ethnographical thinness (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) in regional narratives of vulnerability, and supports a project of ‘post-colonial solidarity’ (Gergan, 2017) by making visible the usually excluded, embodied practices of the agents that are intimately involved in the production of Himalayan places.

In the sections that follow, I operationalize this idea as an ordering device to reveal the critical relationships at work in rural Uttarakhand, to make them visible to future regional assessment efforts. Through witnessing the lives of Sitaji, her son and others like them, I attempt to broaden the materialism underlying their lives by explicitly addressing the interactions producing the relational vulnerability of the household. Are *pahari* lives as impoverished, precarious and devoid of agency as normative assessments articulate? I address this issue by reimagining an alternative methodology of

understanding household vulnerability that goes beyond the discursive, and highlights an empirically rooted vision of ‘new materiality’. This explores both the unequal lives of power within regional spaces and the assemblages of hope and praxis engaged in the individual and communal quest(s) for safety and security.

Producing knowledges and borders: Vulnerability in the Himalayas

Pahari vulnerability

Vulnerability’s many avatars trace their roots to explorations of inequalities or adversities faced by different populations. While many descriptions of vulnerability retain a vagueness or malleability, the use of the term is at times normative – suggesting a “deviation from usually defined standards of life or behavior” (Brown et al., 2017, p.3), at others, a device of social control through deployment of policy (Harrison and Sanders, 2006), and still others a contentious cultural trope that defines the relationships between the self and the state in contemporary society (Frawley, 2015). Within development studies literature renditions of vulnerability stretch from quantitative metrics to measure key variables of welfare to critiques of such expositions that focus on the relations of power underlying the manifestation of such variables (Gibb, 2018). Despite the historic roots of more constructivist critiques in food security literature which argued for a focus on the social economic relations within which communities and individuals are embedded, current scholarship on social vulnerability often driven by a strong policy intervention focus, has gravitated towards the insights of systems theory, econometric modeling and resilience thinking (Luers et al., 2003; Turner, 2016).

In Uttarakhand regional assessments of vulnerability, while an emergent undertaking, have clustered around the ‘welfarist’ component based indexes attempting to resolve the ‘problems’ of poverty, migration, deforestation and climate change, while trying to explain the absence of significant impacts of the regional economic miracle on the lives of most *paharis*. These attempts have used

remote sensing induced ‘quality of life’ equations (Rao et al., 2012), inferential statistical analysis of census and quantitative survey data (Balodi et al., 2014; Gupta et al., 2014; Kumar & Garg, 2017; Mamgain, 2008), deterministic disaster and risk mapping (Kala, 2014), cost-benefit analysis of agrarian livelihoods (Sati, 2016), World Bank produced socio-economic indicators (World Bank, 2012), component based mathematically modeled vulnerability indices (Rajesh et al., 2014; Shukla et al., 2016), entitlements approach driven sustainable livelihood analysis (Awasthi et al., 2015; Kelkar et al., 2008), land change science tools (Punia & Punia, 2014), and an evaluation of the formal institutions of administration/governance (Bhatt & Pant, 2015; Dhyan et al., 2013; Saha & Bhatt, 2016). While a few recent critical attempts have explored the variegated manifestations of power, marginalization and agency within intersectionally produced *pahari* subjectivities (Bergmann et al., 2011; Bindi, 2012; Dyson, 2015; Goodman, 2017a; Govindrajan, 2015a; Gururani, 2014; Mathur, 2015; Nichols, 2016; O’Reilly et al., 2017), such attempts are rare and they don’t adequately challenge the prevailing epistemologies of assessment. This fact is made obvious when confronted with the THED inspired leviathan of scholarly and popular discourses on the causes of regional precarity and risk. Summed up authoritatively in the determinist state propagated ‘fact’ that ‘Uttarakhand is one of the most disaster prone (regions)’ due to its location in the Himalayas (NIDM, 2015).

The mountains of risk

The Himalayan region is an aggregate of many worlds. However, representations of Himalayan society and populations, fairly varied in the plains areas before the structural prominence of the modern nation states, have morphed into current popular characterizations (and exoticizations) of the region as backward, underdeveloped, anachronistic and peripheral (Joshi, 2013; Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2014; Mathur, 2016). Tropes of remoteness and formidable frontierlands established on colonial imaginations have colluded with hegemonic transnational politics of resource use and

sustainable development, to produce a discourse addressing ecological deterioration, developmental failure and widespread poverty to essentialized regional features (Guthman, 1997; Ives, 2004; Mathur, 2015a). The Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation (THED), a crisis narrative, is the byproduct of such a cultural and political project. It is a 'scientific' discourse, which attempts to simplify and quantify the causes of apparent social-ecological systemic deterioration (and collapse) and find spaces of optimal policy intervention. While this 'metanarrative', created by minority world academics and development planners in the 1970s, has been comprehensively challenged and rejected in most critical scholarly circles, it remains a powerful base of scholarship and development policies in regional nation states (Metz, 1989; Satyal, Shrestha et al., 2017). A detailed exploration into the specific causes of this is beyond the scope of this paper (see Metz, 2010 and Guthman, 1997), but its lingering influence can be attributed to the benefits it provides to the institutional aspirations of territorial control - from local to transnational, and the dominion of an idealized, positivist scientific paradigm that purviews the validity of knowledge and the process of its production. This crisis narrative in recent years has been fortified with the specter of climate change, with reports claiming that the changes could be catastrophic for land use, livelihood security and over-all stability of social-ecological systems (Chaudhary & Bawa, 2011; Hartmann et al., 2013; Schild, 2008; Sharma et al., 2009).

These discourses, while critiqued for their scientific validity⁵, rationalist framing, political and historical neutrality and omission of the processes that produce and reproduce inequalities of power (Ribot, 2010; Singh & Thadani, 2015; Taylor, 2013), have generated a powerful material and affective arsenal to address the many points of probable current and future crises in the region (Agrawal et al.,

⁵ Singh and Thadani (2015) identify a variety of concerns with research in the Himalayan region. The 'controversies' they describe include sampling bias, modeling limitations and alarmist discourses. While focusing generally on more natural and physical science research and avoiding critical methodological issues stemming from coloniality, capitalism and politics of science, they question the current research architecture in the region and the validity of results it can produce. This is a unique moment of subversion and one that is much needed within the current, state and production, of knowledge in (and about) the region.

2014; Blaikie & Muldavin, 2014; Government of Uttarakhand, 2012; Rishikesh Pandey & Bardsley, 2015). However, Gergan (2017), writing about Himalayan communities facing such contingencies, exposes the myriad politics of marginalization that are rooted in powerful narratives of crisis that are wielded by elites. Her appeal is for a ‘post-colonial project of solidarity’ that chooses to support the fluid, place based responses of the regional inhabitants to the multiple threats and anxieties, shaped by colonial histories of knowledge, environmental determinism and hegemonic cultural institutions.

The production of such a post-colonial project is derailed by the tools and frameworks used to assess and reveal the intersections of insecurity and privilege that individuals, households and communities find themselves in. These frameworks, that transcend the Himalayan region, are overwhelmingly rooted in instrumental epistemologies that include systems theory, hazards theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Adger, 2000; Eakin & Bojórquez-Tapia, 2008; O’Brien et al., 2004). As analytical approaches they envision artificial cleavages between biophysical and sociocultural processes while reducing complex processes into measurable quantified units on various statistical indices (Nightingale, 2016). As mentioned before, such indices are often adopted without a critical overview of their developmental history (Ribot, 2014; Turner, 2016). Additionally, questions of scale and power are confined within the causal boundaries of static and de-politicized methodological considerations (Gidwani, 2002; Marston et al., 2005; Taylor, 2013). Ultimately, the different ‘situated knowledges’ (Haraway, 1988), produced by cosmologies and ontologies that differ from developmental aspirations of statist and/or corporate institutions, are overwhelmingly absent from these narratives (Panelli & Tipa, 2009).

In the Himalayan region most assessment efforts suffers from these malaises (Guneratne, 2010). Additionally, certain efforts aimed at ‘holistically’ evaluating the multidimensional vulnerability experienced by households stay rooted in sustainable development driven ‘aggregated’ indicators and attempt to incorporate more insights from explorations of ‘resilience’ (Gerlitz et al., 2015; Pandey et

al., 2015). Others while attempting to probe the underlying processes that create household ‘vulnerability’ and ‘precarity’ have built their analysis around discrete livelihood changes, eschewing a focus on the entangled, dynamic relationships between the various human and non-human entities that produce different experiences of safety and security (Rigg et al., 2016). But, in recent years, a few critical accounts have challenged some of the normative discourses underlying, knowledge production and appropriation (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2012; Yeh et al., 2014), encounters with the Anthropocene (Gergan, 2016; Mathur, 2015b), territorial development aspirations (Rangan, 2004; Guthman, 1997) and the inspirations and limits of communal agency (Chhatre et al., 2017; Nightingale & Ojha, 2012). However, such attempts are rare and akin to such efforts from other parts of the world, fail to transcend the realm of the discursive and provide materially resonant alternatives rooted in the everyday geographies of life in the Himalayas (Brown et al., 2017). This lacunae provides an epistemological silence within which reductionist articulations of the precarities of Himalayan landscapes and people are allowed to flourish and, the alternative imaginations and aspirations of regional inhabitants are rendered invisible (Guneratne, 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin, 2011). This project attempts to address this issue by explicitly dealing with the different ‘embodied engagements’ (Davids & Willemse, 2014) that are actively involved in the production of regional household vulnerability.

Relational vulnerability: A heuristic to envision a ‘new materiality’

My vision of vulnerability that is inclusive of the heterogeneous aspirational atlas of regional populations, and pays heed to the inherent power dynamic underlying the production of regional knowledge is informed by three different strains of scholarship. First, it draws from the material-semiotic approaches from Science and Technology Studies (STS) associated with Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1987; Law and Hassard, 1999) that envision reality as a product of practice

and relations among human and non-human agents along heterogeneous networks, that is constantly made (and re-made). Second, attempts by feminist political ecology scholars, Mollett and Faria (2013) who call for a ‘postcolonial intersectionality’, while addressing similar lacunas. Building on feminist political ecology scholarship (Gibson-Graham, 2014; Nightingale, 2011) that focuses on households and bodies to exemplify the various contexts negotiating the production of gender subjectivities, interrogating the erasure of the hierarchical positionalities that are intimately rooted in the ubiquity of the ‘colonial present’. Acknowledging the bounding of characterizations of gender with those of race and ethnicity within postcolonial spaces, providing a powerful insight into north/south relations while confronting the legacies of colonialism and development within mainstream and privileged management practices. Third, both the above mentioned literatures have contributed to a bigger ‘ontological turn’ in the social sciences and the humanities (Escobar, 2007) that suggests a movement beyond questions of epistemology towards questions of ontology to open up the space for a more plural view of reality. Informed by this idea of multiple ontologies of being and belonging, post-ANT scholarship (Barad, 2007; Mol, 2002) while arguing for ontological multiplicity, that goes beyond networks, have highlighted how different and simultaneously unfolding material practices are enacted relationally through support and conflict and end up performing a particular reality. My engagements with vulnerability uses these discursive propositions to (re)theorize and situate vulnerability within a framework of assessment.

With these considerations in mind I employ the concept relational vulnerability as a framing device. Relational vulnerability is grounded in theoretically informed qualitative and ethnographic methods that focus on the corporeality and sociality of life echoing Butler’s (2009) words that bodies are “constitutively social and interdependent” (p.31). Additionally, it is a product of the categorical blurring between the concepts of inherent vulnerability – the vulnerability intrinsic to the human condition and the situational – the vulnerability that is context specific (Mackenzie et al., 2014). Such

an approach harbors many possibilities to ‘rematerialize and spatialize’ explorations of vulnerability, by advocating for a more complex and uncertain ground for the production of knowledge. Thus, instead of a priori assigning a certain process such as the most significant, such as Marxist political economic theory’s emphasis on capitalist modes of production, relationality opens up space for the other concepts and processes (Stoddard & Cantor, 2017). Furthermore, I proposition not a retreat from ‘objectivity’ in geographic scholarship of vulnerability, but to approach a ‘reworked objectivity’ by addressing the “imbalance in vulnerability studies” (Brown et al., 2017). This imbalance is a result of a majority of research focusing on theoretical debates and discursive critiques and far fewer accounts witnessing the empirical realities of vulnerability from the narratives and experiences of different populations. Ultimately, studies of vulnerability would benefit greatly from a focus on the recent efforts in ‘relational poverty’ studies (Hickey, 2009; Mosse, 2010) that argue for engaging with post-humanism and more-than-representational theory. My efforts are guided by this understanding of bodies and space as a product of (and producing) interconnected, dynamic, power relations, materialized in the embodied practices of both impassive human and non-human bodies and landscapes.

Relational vulnerability functions as a discursive device that is operationalized to reveal the critical relationships producing *pahari* households. As such it offers no indications of vulnerability held as a capacity within certain places or individuals, neither is it spatiotemporally static and it is not an aggregate of the various relationships that constitute it, instead it functions as an epistemically relative framing tool. Furthermore, this is a substantive project and the goal is to identify the relationships that are vital for the safety, security, aspirational fulfillment and re-production of certain communal units. Therefore, no relational hierarchies are created and neither are reductionist attempts made to absolutely, or relatively quantify the ‘value’ of these relationships. In the process, bounded communal units of subjective ordering – household, village – are explored without mooring them to any

representational scalar dimension, allowing bodies and spaces to exercise the needed performative autonomy. Thus the framework roots itself in ‘geographical invocations of relationality’ coalescing around the three critical aspects identified by Elwood et al. (2016):

1) As a socio-spatial ontology: This builds on ideas of space, subject and process production that are always in the throes of being assembled, grounded, transformed and crystallized. Thus the organs of relational vulnerability, its primary ontological units “are not things but phenomena” (Barad, 2003, p.818). Therefore, when exploring the lifeworlds of Himalayan households, their invocations of certain processes, or subjectivities are seen distinctly as enactments that are situated in their engagements with different histories and politics of belonging. Many realities, exist side by side and simultaneously, within these spaces that are drawn from views of the world that don’t fit into any ordered whole (Haraway, 1991).

2) An epistemological stance: By using plural and relational epistemologies, informed by a relational ontology, the goal here is to move beyond an anti-essentialist causality and build upon narratives that are a product of multiple intertwined subjects, situations, knowledges and exercises of power. Therefore, regionally and nationally circulating hegemonic imaginaries about rurality, insecurity, and remoteness are confronted by recognizing them as partial, and instead the move is towards ‘reading for difference’ (Gibson-Graham, 2005) which allows for what is absent to make its presence felt. By focusing on relationships between human and non-human entities that are often performed in-between different measurable units – certain materialist assertions tied to expert notions of existence are confronted and their universalizing explanations exposed (Jasanoff, 1996).

3) a politics of possibility: This builds on Gergan’s (2017) call for a project of post-colonial solidarity for the region, that disrupts the trope of essentialized neo-Malthusian precarity prevalent in developmental discourse and planning, while engaging in boundary crossing and dialogic processes that make visible the aspirations and agency of regional populations.

To operationalize this framework and situate it within relational scholarship about the Himalayan region, I turn to Shneiderman's (2015) considerations on the 'production of regionality' in Himalayan villages. Wielding a perspective that engages with structures of mobility, experiences of belonging and the different articulations of boundaries, she posits an understanding of the 'village as a flexible set of social relations' (pg. 319). While this representation of the village isn't unique (Ferguson, 2011), her situated exploration of Himalayan ethnographic contexts, juxtaposed to the broader scholarship on South Asia, allows certain historical, political, and cultural distinctions to emerge (Shneiderman, 2010). This relational vantage point challenges the place based and institutionally formal 'bounding' of the village as a sedentary administrative communal unit, framed in opposition to mobile, cosmopolitan cities (Bell & Osti, 2010; Gallo, 2015).

Additionally, I inform these ideas about the village with an ontologically similar concept of *householding* – the household as a constantly forming and unfolding process, involving interconnected relationships and actors (Douglass, 2006; Greiner, 2012). Along with addressing the 'absent presence' of the concept of household in relation to family, within geography (Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017), this exploration acknowledges that in the Himalayas, household and the village are weathering different challenges when orienting themselves in relation to each other and the wider world. Their relationship seems especially tenuous when deciding the 'web of rights/duties' that are under the purview of each. Ultimately, this portrayal of the village and the households, allows for a reflexive exploration of the various translocal processes of development, globalization and state building that are transforming the interconnected socionatural relationships which inform regional identity, belonging and ultimately, vulnerability (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2014; Chhatre et al., 2017).

The villages and households discussed within the framework of relational vulnerability were all explored over 18 months of field work during which I (semi-structured) interviewed around 500 *pahari* individuals between the ages of 18-85yrs and administered 200 lengthy 'poverty and

vulnerability’ surveys that were connected to socioculturally constructed ‘household’ units (Gerlitz et al., 2014). Additionally, I attended about twenty formal and informal, ‘meetings/gatherings’ of village level administrative bodies which included – *van panchayats* (forest governance groups), district horticultural/livestock workshops, religious/festival planning committees, youth political groups, water users/irrigation co-operatives, women’s self-help groups, agricultural produce co-operatives, MGNREGA related village development hearings and agricultural extension workshops.

Informed by the component based surveys of poverty and vulnerability, I produce a tabulated list, which situates ‘materialist’ variables addressing household vulnerability, resilience and wellbeing (Fang et al., 2016; Gerlitz et al., 2015; Shukla et al., 2016). This serves as a reminder that while this work attempts to create space within methods of assessment, it does not recommend a rejection of the material. Instead the point is to build on that materiality, by focusing past the measurable, stable, discrete, the Cartesian ontological divisions (Elwood et al., 2017) on the multiple ‘intra-actions’ that subjects and objects are involved in. The dimensional ordering of the table is intentional to incorporate a language that ‘power can understand’. Therefore, their ordering such is highly problematic in some ways and paradoxical to what is being attempted here. However, I employ this ordering heuristically to attempt a boundary crossing between different epistemologies that sets up my ‘more than here and now’ analysis of *pahari* households.

Dimension	Materialist
Gender equity/inclusion	1.Female head of household 2.Literacy and education level 3.Death during childbirth 4.Female employment rates 5.Monthly cash income 6.Labor share with neighbors 7.Birthrate 8.Asset ownership 9.Reported instances of domestic violence
Livelihoods	1. Income/Expenditure 2. Assets

	3. Diversification 4. Remittances 5. Permanent/temporary employment 6. Skilled/unskilled labor
Agriculture and Natural Resource management	1. Land ownership 2. Access to irrigation 3. Labor 4. Livestock ownership 5. Distance from markets 6. Access to industrial inputs and extension centers 7. Co-operatives 8. Crop Diversity and area cultivated 9. Access to natural resources to fulfill nutritional, livestock and energy needs 10. Land characteristics (soil, slope, crop density etc.)
Social Networks/Moral Economy	1. Debt 2. Support during emergencies 3. Membership in formal community institutions 4. Communal conflict over resource sharing 5. Knowledge of government/non-government assistance programs 6. Caste 7. Political inclusion and representation in local, state and national institutions
Basic Facilities	1. Physical accessibility 2. Telecommunications 3. Electricity, drinking water and dwelling 4. Educational facilities 5. Health facilities 6. Food security

Table 2a. Materialist 'indicators'

The table presented here is an aggregation of the various dimensional indicators that I compiled using multi-dimensional poverty surveys (materialist) administered to *pahari* households. However, in analyzing such instrumental indicators evaluations are produced which signify a certain acquisition or reduction in the quality of life of the scrutinized process or population. Does this cleaving of subject and object, subjective and the relational, provide a holistic portrayal of *pahari* spaces and lifeworlds? Or does relational vulnerability act as a framework of emancipation, countering such bounded atomist renditions? This requires a witnessing of the processual elements I have identified.

However, this can only be done through an examination of the *pahari* households that I lived and worked with. In the next section I narrate some of their hopes and fears through a look at certain entangled, emergent phenomena.

The household as relationships: what constitutes relational vulnerability in *pahari* homes?

Pahari places seem to be in-flux, and these transitions further expose the ‘unboundedness’ of their ordering units (Huijsmans, 2014) of village or household. In the section that follows, I delve into the material and affective narratives that emerge from *pahari* engagements about everyday activities of living (Rigg, 2008). In doing so, I identify four key relationships. These relationships are rooted in the ‘vital materialisms’ (Gibson-Graham, 2011) that envisions articulations of people and places beyond nature-society binaries and attempts to present a thicker, ontologically plural insight into the constituents of household vulnerability (Nightingale, 2003).

Encountering the patriarch – Cattle, daughter-in-laws and the culture of agriculture

On a cold spring evening, sitting in her orchard in the village of Ghargaon, surrounded by her children, Durga said to me, “Do you know anyone that wants to buy three cows?” She informed me that she wanted to get rid of all her family’s cows. Her mother-in-law had died a few years ago, leaving behind her taciturn, alcoholic husband. The fields, the orchard and the animals were all registered under his name and after his wife’s death the management of it all fell on him, his son and daughter-in-law. Durga’s husband works as a wedding entertainment planner/videographer and is on the road half the month. While helping occasionally with the orchards, and with the transportation of the produce, he refuses to invest himself further in the household’s agricultural duties. Ultimately, it comes down to Durga and her father-in-law, Dhani Ram, and their colliding visions of communally and culturally

valid household reproduction, and underlying views of the world (Fengbo & Punch, 2014). I encountered this ‘power struggle’ between father-in-law and daughter-in-law(s) in many households (about 70% of the households). Usually, the points of contention revolved around certain labor-intensive activities – caring for livestock, planting/transplanting cereal crops, accessing water/firewood. The women of the household have traditionally performed these highly gendered activities. However, given the different intersections of identity informing the kinship structures and ultimately the hierarchies of power within the household, the daughter-in-law(s) compared to the other women in the family are usually ‘stuck’ with the biggest share (Sidh & Basu, 2011).

Most studies exploring the agency of the patriarch, within the patrilineal sociocultural order of the *pahari* household, comment on its relative omnipotence (Mehta, 1995; Sax, 1990), however various scholars in recent years have explored the everyday marginalization and resistance of *pahari* women (Drew, 2014b; Gururani, 2014; Klenk, 2004; Nicholas, 2014; Polit, 2006). In these narratives, the production of gendered subjectivities and gendered landscapes of work, mobility and reproduction, has highlighted the critical role of women in the creation of the region. Informed by this rich vein of scholarship, I approach these attempts at subversion and argue that they have a significant impact on the production of relational vulnerability. First, in Uttarakhand scholars have noted, akin to other places, a growing ‘feminization of agriculture’ (Bose, 2000; Kandari, 2013; Morarji, 2014)- a situation where the majority of agricultural labor is conducted by women, while men are a lot more ‘mobile’, moving between a varied set of jobs and places. Second, there is a regionally significant trend towards educating ‘daughters and wives’ (Deol, 2012). In most families I interacted with, there was a sharp cleavage between the often high school (and college) educated younger women and semi-literate/illiterate older women (and men). This cleavage has challenged and eroded the intra-household powers of the matriarch. Third, the ubiquitous public distribution system, rising cash incomes, commercial agriculture and access to and consumption of processed foods, has begun to drastically

change the resource management/ownership practices of *pahari* people (Nichols, 2017). Situated at the confluence of these three processes – Durga and Dhani, embody different ‘discourses of development’ (Klenk, 2004). For Ram, agriculture is culture. His son’s income barely covers half the household’s running expenses. And the family fields that had once grown a diverse array of crops have been slowly converted to horticultural crops, to avail of their strong demand in regional markets. Livestock that was traditionally fed with the inedible biomaterial from the diverse household crops now experience a shortage of fodder, leading to the purchase of dairy feed. Additionally, subsidized industrial fertilizer is readily available through state and private agents, making the usage of farmyard manure a choice instead of a labor-intensive necessity.

Dhani expects Durga to care for the cattle as well as tend to the orchards. Durga, who is a high school graduate and more formally educated than Ram, is much more invested in the education of her four children and ‘performs’ her daily labor as a means to that end. Additionally, she engages with the situated ‘tools of development’, to interrogate her absence from both the wider discourses of capitalist development and from the local institutions of household reproduction and control (Klenk, 2004). As an example, she convinced her husband to buy a power tiller (hand tractor) on credit. This allows her to plow the family fields, a strictly male activity, while simultaneously making draught cattle redundant. She notes, “The loan we took out to buy this machine can be paid back within six months if we sell our buffalos. My father-in-law says plowing is a man’s job, but neither he nor any of the wise men of the village have any rules about this machine”. Therefore, while Dhani assigns a certain cultural value to the older livestock-crop system (Tulachan, 2001), he realizes that Durga’s labor time is limited due to the demands of the children’s education, so any activities she uses to ‘maximize’ this time (use the power tiller, apply for a cooking gas connection) is more productive for both the fields and the family. Furthermore, with the change in consumption patterns, his grandchildren want to consume more ‘modern’ foods, instead of traditional dairy products, which are provided by the income from

the orchards and his son's salary. Durga, while still 'made' to fetch firewood, water and weed the orchards, recognizes that she can leverage her education and knowledge of the currently important institutions and processes (agricultural mechanization schemes, bank loans, school education) within the changing culture of consumption, livelihoods and access, to exert her agency, within the household. She says, "The animals are just a burden and the old man (Dhani) knows that. Once manure was gold, but today it's just manure. I have four children and four animals, which do you think I should feed first? Which of them will ensure our future?"

Durga's household in the quantitative component analysis of vulnerability appears to traverse a terrain of both agricultural security and gender equity. Durga is educated, has access to both firewood and feed and belongs to the village woman's cooperative. Furthermore, the household has very little debt, most of which is held locally within the community. However, as the analysis here reveals, that is just one 'reality', of many. Failing to register this, leads to the assumption that the household itself is not a contested notion. Furthermore, the fact that agricultural fecundity and prosperity may reproduce certain power inequalities, while countering aspirations of the most marginalized within households, challenges the project of essentialist aggregation. Ultimately, Durga's aspiration for a government loan financed power-tiller, while appearing to increase the vulnerability of the household through the accumulation of a significant debt, is in fact a moment of intersectional resistance and a rationally sound decision given the labor realities of her household. By bringing the focus back to the reciprocal production of subjects and objects, the passive non-human is breathed with agency. Livestock within Durga's purview represent a material extension of the patriarch and the relic of an ontology that inherently counters her own. Furthermore, it is the access to education and new forms of mobility and assets that offer a glimpse of life beyond what she terms 'the slavery of the fields', her ownership of a degree, or a phone, seems 'a cruel joke', since she is denied 'the right to use them'.

Durga and Dhani, go back and forth, attempting to find a meaningful resolution to these diverging narratives of security and sustenance. Their story highlights a critical relationship informing the material and symbolic meanings of work in *pahari* homes, and through it challenging the ‘aggregative’ tendencies of component based vulnerability, that fail to witness the competing ontologies at work within households that engage differentially with inequalities of power.

Contracted livelihoods: thekedars, social networks and the promise of precarity

The village of Inari has one high school and no telecommunication networks or motor roads. Most of the male youth in the high school fantasize about ‘getting out’ of their ‘disconnected’ village and secure jobs in the armed forces or in public schools. However, all of them have a dependable contingency plan – work as temporary labor for the local *thekedar* (contractor) Sher Singh. Sher Singh grew up in Inari, left to work in the plains, and through a series of fortunate events found himself inserted into certain bureaucratic networks of privilege. Leveraging them, he secured a plethora of Ministry of Defense contracts for supplying the operating/clerical staff for cafeterias, research institutes and hospitals. Akin to other private contractors working on development and construction projects in India, Sher Singh sustained a supply of informal labor by drawing on kinship and caste networks, harnessing the emergent population of rural school educated youth that neither had any agrarian aspirations nor any white collar job prospects (Jeffrey, 2008a; Suresh, 2010). Bhuvan Singh, Sher Singh’s Inari neighbor said, “It feels good to know that one of our ‘own’ is in the city and taking care of our children. I know he doesn’t pay much, but in these modern times when brother doesn’t care about brother, at least he is trying”. *Thekedars* seem to play a major role in most *pahari* households. Along with ensuring a constant supply of employment for youth of all skill levels, they act as arbitrators, mediating the encounters between *paharis* and urban spaces. Furthermore, the places of work and accommodation during these contractual assignments, act as organizational principles for

creating a ‘new web of relations’, stretching the boundaries of the household (Shneiderman, 2015; Brown, 2015). This ‘web of relations’ entails access to the expensive services of private hospitals for household members at subsidized rates, extension of credit lines with wholesale agricultural commodity traders and exposure to computer and financial literacy classes. Furthermore, in the absence of institutionally orchestrated knowledge sharing and ‘capacity building’ events, many households depend on the various ‘informal’ tools garnered from the contractors to participate in the new processes of industrial capitalism.

Chandan’s household in Inari is on the edge of the large community forest, almost 1000 meters above the village square. In this relative seclusion the family grows copious amounts of *ganja* (*Cannabis indica*). Both his sons work for a *thekedar* at an automobile plant in the state’s SEZ. After the cannabis is processed by the household members, it is packed inside various produce bags and sent to the young men who hand it over to the contractor and receive half of the household’s annual income in return. In the past there had been, a fear of law enforcement officials who routinely extorted money for the slightest apparent or actual criminal acts and an inability to find ‘buyers’. But supplying to a ‘powerful’ contractor provides them with impunity, guarantees them a buyer and incentivizes their ‘conservation’ of the community forest. For Chandan this is a moment of reckoning,

Everyone has always exploited us. The kings, the British, the government. Laws are made to keep poor people down, so I don’t mind breaking a few. Am I stealing from anyone? Am I hurting anyone? The whole world is getting rich illegally, so why shouldn’t we do the same? Cannabis is a gift from the Himalayas and lord Shiva.

These relationships between the household and the contractors highlight the contesting polysemic subjectivities that are produced when the unequal processes of development circulate through *pahari* spaces (Klenk, 2004). Furthermore, they also acknowledge the marked ambivalence about the modalities of engagement with the wider world that many *paharis* feel. *Pahari* contractors often act as gatekeepers to this world. And in doing so, they relate the communal discourses of

precarity (from communal religious cosmologies) of a *kalinyug* (dark age) (Gergan, 2017; Yeh, 2015) and the inherent power asymmetries within modern structures of development, to justify both their exploitative culture of labor and their subversion of formal institutions. While component driven approaches of vulnerability deem such employment ‘risky’, ‘precarious’ and comparatively deleterious for the acquisition of material wealth and assets, and to provide a ‘net of security’ for the household (Adhikari & Hobley, 2015; Jain, 2010; Munck, 2013), the encounters of *pahari* youth with such ‘makeshift’ and ‘unprecedented’ work arrangements challenge the very idea of labor, household and the moral economy. In doing so, this account complicates the production of a *pahari* subject and how they encounter vulnerability.

Livelihoods emerge not as a function of the passive, structurally bound social and institutional practice, which primarily serves as an economic activity, but as an emerging form of relations that are enacted differently in different spaces and embodies a plural, contradictory ethos when relating to different processes (Chari & Gidwani, 2005). By adhering to temporalities of labor rooted in essentialist narratives of rural, agrarian *pahari* encounters with the forces of modernity and development, a component based understanding of livelihood fails to account for the transformations to *pahar* and how that catalyzes different notions of security, trust and reproduction. By treating the household as a ‘local’ unit, bounded by the administrative or agrarian calculus, the aspirations for certain livelihoods are seen as deviations from the normative, which are pursued in the absence of choice, not in spite of it, the value ascribed to them a reflection of this determinism. Therefore pursuing temporary labor arrangements, leaving productive agrarian land fallow and intentionally and actively pursuing livelihood activities that are illegal end up registering an increase in the vulnerability of the household on the aggregative component matrix. This betrays not just the epistemic limitations of such calculations, but also highlights the normative definition of vulnerability underlying such analysis (Mackenzie et al., 2014). Additionally, the question of agrarian reproduction, due to its

ontological salience with rurality and rural vulnerability (Jacka, 2013; Winterton et al., 2014), overwhelms the understanding of livelihoods by providing components such as irrigation and labor availability as hierarchically critical, to which a ‘diversification’ is an act of coping with ‘shocks’ and ‘risks’ (Gautam & Andersen, 2016), instead of a product of dynamic negotiations between peoples, places and processes.

Pahari households have historically unveiled their repository of aspirations to a bureaucracy laden institutional apparatus moving their appeals between governmental and non-governmental organizations (Mathur, 2016; Goodman, 2017), the private contractors represent an alternative, albeit with a different system of accountability. And at times the price paid for the alternative is too high. One of Chandan’s neighbors who worked for Sher Singh in a defense personnel training center, was run over by a drunk colonel. Since he had no formal contract and received no social security payments, his family received little more than his mangled remains and a letter of condolence from the contractor.

Developing reproduction: negotiating discourses of education, overpopulation and security

On a spring evening in 2016 I accompanied Mahesh Singh down a steep valley to the eastern ward of Mana village. We were going to attend an infant’s *namkaran* (naming) ceremony. Mahesh, who had two adult children, said, “I don’t understand which age people are living in. This is their fifth child and they only have one acre of land and one job. How will they feed, clothe and educate all of them? Isn’t this irresponsible and ignorant?” On our way down, I saw acres of fields lying fallow, overgrown with Himalayan nettle (*Giardinia diversifolia*) bushes, and houses that looked abandoned, overgrown with creepers and grasses. I pointed these out to Mahesh. He replied, “The young people left in search of jobs and to educate their children and the old ones died. The forest eats more of the village each year, I fear the animals are going to evict us”.

Pahari households articulate a contradictory set of aspirations about reproduction, citing a variety of contingencies. However, according to most people there are three main considerations. First, the specter of overpopulation. Despite having a population density a third of the national average (Mogha et al., 2014) *paharis* are saturated with the discourses of India's demographic burden at schools, hospitals, government offices, on television channels and within homes. Public school walls often have a 'proverb' claiming the 'best' number of children per couple is two. Additionally, the elders recount the past when the village was just a fraction of the size it is today. Often in these accounts the current problems of food security and livelihoods are tied to the increasing number of people. The central problem is often identified as land division. As sons get married and separated from the large joint family, they carve out their patrilineal land inheritance, reducing in size the land available to both the families. This ritual is repeated over and over again creating small, dispersed plots of land, further dis-incentivizing agrarian production. Through this arithmetic demographic progression, the 'limited' arable land becomes commercially unproductive.

Second, the reproductive anxieties emanating from the 'geopolitics of population' (Robbins & Smith, 2016). Uttarakhand, situated in the Himalayas is considered by many *paharis* to be a bulwark against incursions from China and Pakistan. *Paharis* often state, 'we are the first line of defense against an act of war'. These discourses highlight the entangled relationships between the state's fears and aspirations about territorial sovereignty and its instrumentalization of bodies to achieve such goals (Smith, 2012). As one army retired resident of Mana said to me, "If we don't have children and our villages disappear the enemy is just going to march right onto New Delhi."

Finally there are the changing expectations of education and childhood (Morarji, 2014; Dyson, 2015). In the past rural *pahari* homes had depended heavily on the labor provided by children to help both in the fields and at home. While children still perform some of these duties – collecting firewood and leaves, helping with the harvest and tending to the livestock their formal educational demands are

usually prioritized. Furthermore, as Mahesh often notes, having a child in these times is an expensive choice. Families have to account for school fees, uniforms, supplies, tutor fees and if there isn't a decent school in the village, room and board costs, travel costs and the more than financial costs of maintaining multiple 'homes'. While education and its benefits are taken with a grain of salt, almost all households profess a need to educate and support their children, so that they can access non-agrarian livelihoods and futures. These three considerations help produce the stage on which multiple intra-household negotiations are performed, which in turn inform critical relationships. Bahadur's family serves as an illustrative example.

In 2013 Bahadur, his wife and two children, moved from the agriculturally productive river valley to the dry, windswept ridge within Mana village. His old parents, and his younger brother's widow, still live in the ancestral home and tend the lands by the river. Bahadur has a college degree, works with a military contractor in the state capital of Dehradun and visits Mana three times a year, and is contemplating getting a vasectomy. As he explained, "Most of my salary goes to ensure that my children become civilized and don't embody the ignorance of this village". In the fall of 2015 Bahadur, through the contractor, found a hotel owner that wanted to buy half his household's land. Bahadur's parents didn't share in his enthusiasm. They were befuddled at their son's attempts to sell their communal assets. His father said, "But what about the future of your children and your grandchildren?" Bahadur informed them that his private school educated children would never farm that land and furthermore selling this land would ensure their college/university education. This notion of permanent exodus from Mana and severing of all kinship ties clouded household interactions for the next few days, until Bahadur's mother suggested a resolution. Bahadur's younger brother had died in a road accident without fathering any children. His widow was in her twenties and received a small pension from the government. If Bahadur had a couple of children with her, they could raise them down in the valley, supplemented with her pension, without making any financial

demands on him. If he agreed to this demand, he could sell the land. This would appease all parties in the negotiation. Bahadur would get the capital to invest in his children's future, his parents would get to cultivate and ensure their 'agri-cultural' aspirations, and his brother's wife would get a 'family' and the children, due to their upbringing in the river valley without the presence of a mobile father figure or private schools, would be a lot more likely to maintain ties to the village.

In *pahari* homes, the different processes informing reproductive decisions much like the bodies they 'occupy', are engaged in such contentious negotiations. These negotiations and its effects are absent in the component-based imaginings of regional reproduction. While birth rate calculations that are functions of international, national and regional prescribed demographic goals, the incidence of infant mortality and access to different forms of contraceptive measures are cited as proxies to demographic stability of *pahari* households, they fail to trace the trajectories of different reproductive outcomes to the variegated imaginaries producing them. In the component analysis of vulnerability, an increase in access to contraception for women is weighted as the critical proxy of populational stability, it inadvertently assumes the structural hegemony of the state machinery. The choices of childbearing reflect not just the tools of development the state can control, but the much more unruly encounters between the state and subject formation (Drew, 2014a; S. Smith, 2012; Young, 2010). As women's bodies become sites of contestations between many world views, the access to contraception or birth rate itself, serves more than just an instrumental indication of the region's collaborative role in achieving an ontologically particular version of universally applicable aspirations (Indian Institute for Population Sciences, 2016; GOI, 2011). A relational lens reveals how such 'numbers' change intra-household relationships, complicate issues of agricultural reproduction and serve as an evaluative tool granting legitimacy, questioning the modernist credentials of those that would defy such a mandate (Foo et al., 2015). As Bahadur's sister-in-law notes, "I always wanted a lot of children. But look at my fate, I couldn't even have one. Is it so wrong to want to experience the love of your son and

daughter...but, I am illiterate, what do I know, maybe not having any children is a good thing. The nation is overpopulated”. Thus, situated at the confluence of multiple dynamic processes, attempting to formulate them into specific versions of ‘subjects’ and ‘territories’ (Mathur, 2015), *pahari* households envisage novel visions of reproduction to mediate different spatio-temporal adages of vulnerability.

The many lives of death: widows, pensions and unequal afterlives

On the night of Diwali as an intoxicated Mahesh Singh was stumbling down to his ‘outhouse’ toilet to relieve himself he was confronted by his dead nephew’s ghost. The ghost didn’t reveal ‘itself’ corporeally, choosing instead to hover behind his head, whispering angrily in his ear. Mahesh walked up the stone steps of his *pahari* house, deep in dialogue, which continued late into the night. Early next morning he called up his neighbor down the ridge and called off their land rental agreement. He reasoned, “Bhaskar informed me that the field I was about to rent out was the most productive one we had. The renter would have made a fortune off it. He saved me from a bad decision”. Bhaskar, Mahesh’s sister’s only child, had died on a military excursion somewhere near Kashmir, over a decade ago. His military pension substantially supported his wife, mother and two children who lived in the plains. Even in his ‘afterlife’ Bhaskar, both materially and affectively, was a critical part of the household.

Stories of death were a significant presence within my conversations with *paharis*. And while my experience in Mana is the only one involving the ‘sensing of a ghost’ (Sax, 2014), it reveals a vital dynamic of power relations, especially when viewed through the prism of gender. Bhaskar’s death was cataclysmic for his household, embedding it into a web of precariousness, changing it forever. Contrarily, Mahesh’s neighbor who had lost his wife in childbirth years ago remarried a few months later, all evidence of her presence in the household was erased, as if she had never existed. Death in *pahari* households is not equal, and through this inequity informs multiple critical relationships. In

most households the death of the patriarch or that of one of the adult 'sons' entrenches many of the 'asymmetrical entitlements to resources' (Rocheleau et al., 1996), while creating gendered spaces of exclusions and legitimizing new geographies of exploitation (Nagar et al., 2002).

Shanti Devi lost her husband to alcohol related liver cirrhosis in 1990. She was subsequently 'disowned' by her husband's family who claimed his death had been caused by her negligence and lack of care. Shanti herself attributed this rebuke to his father's/brothers' attempts to exclude her children from their share of the consolidated family land, and to extricate themselves from the significant debt amassed by her husband's medical bills. After these events Shanti was treated like a pariah in the village. Her natal family offered solace by sending a small, monthly portion of food grain from their fields. Recounting those days she said, "I wished many times it was me who had died. At least then my children would have escaped all this injustice and poverty. But despair would neither pay off the debt, nor would it provide food for my children." Shanti's husband had worked in a local bank, and as was the local 'culture', the vacant position would be offered to a member of the deceased's family. Shanti approached the bank manager about the job, but was informed that her husband's brothers had also 'applied' for the position, however the manager was open to 'negotiations'. According to Shanti what happened next is that a politically connected man from the village, sympathetic to her plight, stepped in, spoke with the manager and guaranteed her the job. But, multiple sources around the village addressed the 'hidden transcript' (Scott, 1990) that she rightfully concealed. The 'sympathy' had been bought with her sexual compliance. Negotiated through a process of compromise, barter, exploitation and possibly violence – 'embodied practices' catalyzed by her responsibilities towards the vulnerability of the household (Mollett & Faria, 2013).

In 2014 Shanti's son finished his graduate degree in business administration and got a job with a big corporate firm in New Delhi and in 2017 one of her daughter's got married and the other was offered a job with a local NGO. Shanti still works at the bank, has paid off the debt her husband left

her with and also operates a successful polyhouse vegetable business. At the end of our conversation she said to me, “Son, it’s difficult being a widow and surviving in this society. I’ve had to do many things that I didn’t want to do. But, I did what I had to for the wellbeing of my children and my home.”

Shanti Devi’s story emphasizes the ‘spatiality of social discourse’ (Pratt, 1999). Her struggle against the sociocultural forces attempting to make the ‘female subject socially invisible’ in renditions of history, cultural practice and place making (Wright, 2004), situates these ‘inequities of death’ as a valuable tool to reveal the agency of the marginalized. While a component based analysis of vulnerability focuses on gender inclusion proxies that highlight the presence of female household heads, they rarely venture into what that task entails (Tiwari & Joshi, 2016). The structural process looming beside the behavioral and aspirational contingencies attempt to subjugate the agential resistance of women like Shanti – such deviance and its potential aftermaths are often perversely contradictory to instrumental assessments. Managerial hierarchies within households are not simply linear structures, providing a unidimensional movement of power. Their relative importance and value is spatio-temporally dynamic, the symbolic and the material often uncoupled and pursuing separate trajectories. Shanti’s ‘promotion’ to household head registers as an instrumental increment in the reduction of household vulnerability, this in many ways is a logical inequivalence. Since her life as a household head in Mana predicated her incursion into restricted spaces, governed by a socio-political normativity that represented the beginning of her life as a different subject, navigating a whole different world. Two different Shanti’s - two different subjects managing two different households, almost incomparable (Nencel, 2014; Ramamurthy, 2010). Furthermore, the death of a male breadwinner is seen as a ‘shock’, which the household ‘recovers’ from (Jewitt & Baker, 2011). However, a relational exploration, posits that death itself is more than just the absence of a salary, or labor power or access to social networks, it represents a corporeal transformation of the body, while

keeping many of its intersectional agentive properties intact. These properties are seen to circulate, through worlds, exercising their agency in conjunction with other subjects and objects, challenging the narrative of absence, or loss, with one of ‘material transformation’ and its various enactments (Smith and Reid, 2017). Shanti’s insertion into the role of the household head exposed her to exploitations that reimagined her situatedness and questioned the stability of the ethical and communal boundaries salient to her subjectivity.

Widowhood in *pahar* changes the relational modalities structuring interactions between people and landscapes. Components of vulnerability note the lack of asset ownership opportunities, or livelihood options, but often widows are thrust into intra-household positions of power. In such instances, how does vulnerability change? Reducing widowhood to economic and cultural exclusion, often communally imposed, fails to account for how their engagements with certain nodes of power and the performances this requires of them, transforms multiple domains of vulnerability, in essence creating a household, almost incomparable with any other.

Ultimately, for *pahari* households, the unfolding of infrastructure projects – roads, telecommunications, hospitals and schools, has also brought with it the ‘presence of the state’ and akin to other Himalayan locales there is an ongoing project of turning ‘mountain spaces into state places’ (Murton, 2017). Among other things, this has reconfigured the ‘value of death’. As Mohan, a mobilee from Mana explained it to me, ‘your family gets the most money if you die in a ‘natural hazard’ or are killed by a predator. If women die on the public ambulance service during delivery, we claim compensation for medical negligence. Either way, if the ‘appeal’ is successful, a lot of people get their share. Remember last year when Changu died? We took his body in a truck and blocked the main highway down at the district HQ. The MLA⁶, SDM and SP all showed up along with the press, but

⁶ MLA - Member of Legislative Assembly (an elected member (lawmaker) of the lower house of the state legislature), SDM – Sub-divisional Magistrate (an administrative officer working on the ‘sub-district’ level overseeing matters of revenue, elections and certain magisterial affairs), SP – Superintendent of Police

the headman didn't budge, until we reached a consensus on certain development projects for our village and a 'package' for his family". Death exerts a critical agency within *pahari* spaces and its variegated limits exposed the intersections of power occupied by the different subjects in the production of the relational household.

The four relational moments described in this section explore the unevenness in the circulation of power through *pahari* bodies and spaces. Moreover, it reveals the relational vulnerability of *pahari* households contentious negotiations not just between people but also between people and places, material objects and more than material constituents of places including histories, atmosphere and values (Elwood et al., 2017; Mackenzie et al., 2014)

Keeping these in mind, I remake the Table 1a, with the 'new materialist' (Barad, 2007) phenomena.

Dimension	New Materialist
Gender equity/inclusion	1. Widows navigation of household/village society 2. Encounters between the livelihood aspirations of educated young women and their intra-household labor expectations 3. Relationship with spouse and role of each person within a marriage 4. Women's engagements with state and communal ideas of modernity and development
Livelihoods	1. Work as a performance of identity, meant to both subvert and reproduce 2. New forms of mobility driven reconfigurations of the modalities of labor 3. Job security as a function of changing regional moral economies 4. The intersectional encounters with neoliberalization
Agriculture and Natural Resource management	1. The multiple meanings and purposes of the act of farming 2. Livestock as material representations of gendered oppression 3. Changing liquidity of land within contested communal and regional subjectivities 4. Agency of non-human entities in agrarian reproduction 5. Intra-household evaluations of agrarian land based on different aspirations 6. Contestations about consumption and where commercial agriculture features in them
Social Networks/Moral Economy	1. Network building as an act of subversion of communal power inequities

	2. Contested moral economies of the household, echoing intra-household aspirational differences 3. Changing roles of the community vs. the household in mediating individual lifeworlds 4. Intersectional experiences of privilege and precarity, that are space dependent 5. Trust as a co-produced phenomena involving beyond communal encounters, restructuring notions of communal debt
Basic Facilities	1. The paradoxical impacts of formal education 2. The different operationalizations of the material and discursive properties of remoteness 3. The different roles of different deaths within households 4. New mobilities driven by mobile phones and motor roads and the new boundaries of the household

Table 2b. New Materialist phenomena unique to *pahari* people and places

This list is merely a heuristic that serves to encounter the previously presented components.

Furthermore, this in no way is universal and is tethered to the spatio-temporal particularities of my own engagements with *pahari* people and places. It is the researcher being held responsible for the specific materializations that I am a part of (Barad, 2007). However, I would like to reify the idea mentioned before of relational vulnerability being a substantive project and not an aggregate of various processes. Therefore, it serves merely to identify the salient features of an *iterative materiality*. Different hierarchies are not created within the processual elements identified through the narration of the various relational enactments. This speaks also to the emergent nature of such relationships, their constant co-constitution and negotiation (Whatmore, 2006).

Reimagining the ‘mountains of risk’

Empowering vulnerability

Brown et al.’s (2017) article titled *The Many Faces of Vulnerability*, notes that to make sense of vulnerability in current society one is “forced to examine mechanisms which frame and re-frame corporality, adversity, agency, capability, and entitlement” (p.16). Furthermore they note that the two critical problems with research using the concept of vulnerability is (1) Its pejorative implication in

normative moral and ethical projects that essentialize certain situations and ways of being and (2) The lack of empirically grounded expositions of vulnerability that go beyond discursive critiques and theorizations. Echoing their call to examine the emergent nature of corporeality and agency, an exploration of the relational vulnerability of *pahari* households addresses both the identified problems.

First, by refusing to treat components based approaches and processual approaches as oppositional approaches, I argue for an envisioning of both these approaches as different modes of abstraction that offer different strategies to address vulnerability. If vulnerability is linked to ideas of susceptibility to suffering or liability to harm it is vital that we remain “cognizant of the way vulnerability is often associated with victimhood or incapacity” (Mackenzie et al., 2014) leading to discrimination and paternalism. Therefore, while component based approaches may herald a vision of the household, often autonomous in its experiences and sealed spatio-temporally from its constitutive units and the units that it constitutes, such renderings fail to address the utility of conditions of vulnerability for the different agentive realities negotiating the household. This further complicates the different ethical positions and relational responsibilities that are often uncritically attributed to different agents and institutions, within theorizations of safety and security. The deliberate circumvention of state laws to pursue livelihoods within the informal medicinal plant and cannabis economy by families in Inari is not a product of a lack of employment opportunities and neither can this be significantly affected by a strengthening of local institutions. Instead it reveals a reverence for the exercise of autonomy, which contains within it multiple essential symbolic and material aspirations. The vulnerability of the rural *pahari* household dealing with this supposed labor precarity then has to contend with conflicting representations of rurality, *pahari* and household embedded in different moral economies. Thus the concept of relational vulnerability insists that space, discourses, and materiality are co-produced by the various processes of ethnicity, gender, capitalism and the state “without elevating any one as always the primary causal force” (Elwood et al., 2017, p.759).

Second, while critical scholarship about relational vulnerability is burgeoning, attempts to empirically engage with such novel theorizations is fairly limited. Engaging with this ‘connectedness’ of phenomena and acknowledging the “agential enfolding of different scales through one another” (Barad, 2007, p.245), helps identify the elemental adherence to the entitlements approach within vulnerability scholarship that attempts to incorporate more relational methods. This is vital since it exposes the lack of credence given to particular ontologies that decenter more western worldviews. Therefore, in contrast to the cleavages of subjective, material and relational (White, 2017; Sumner and Mallet, 2011) when envisioning the categorical demarcations between, or groupings of, predetermined properties of definite objects or processes, *pahari* households seem to be engaged in a permeable, entanglement that defies such attempts at definitely identifying the different affiliations of its contents. Mahesh Singh’s nephew is deeply connected to the intimate spatialities of his homestead, even in his afterlife. He contests its reproduction through affective transmissions, that embody an *iterative materiality* – at times he is a ghost reprimanding his uncle, at other times he is the agricultural land itself, embodying the resolute, generational aspirational atlas within throes of regional transformation. Seen through this device, notions of vulnerability, make space for diverse behaviors and aspirations and in the process rearticulate the boundaries between the material and the discursive.

Ultimately, the recent movement of concepts of social vulnerability away from its roots in theorizations of “power-laden social relations”(Turner, 2016; Watts and Bohle, 1993) towards resilience understandings (Adger, 2006) to perform social-ecological systems analysis has deviated the focus from the intimate politics between the many institutions and agents that occupy certain spatio-temporal units. A conception of vulnerability as inherently relational challenges this theoretical trajectory and by employing new explorations in feminist and non-representational studies of vulnerability (Gilson, 2014; Davids, 2014; Mackenzie et al., 2014) further develops historical political economy approaches. This envisions different vulnerabilities for members of groups and the group

itself, challenging more essentialist and scale biased attempts. Thus, Durga, Dhani and their livestock are not ‘preformed sealed bodies’ connected through relational bridges, instead they are constantly in the process of becoming. The entanglements and relationalities that extend between these three agents and their material and affective world, constantly rework their ‘predetermined properties’. Therefore, Dhani’s reactions to Durga’s changing labor profile, signals not just a transformation within a certain body, but a restructuring of the relational space that they inhabit. This vision doesn’t argue for an eschewing of materiality when comprehending vulnerability, but instead reveals the reductionism inherent in assigning materiality only to knowledge that is measurable through certain epistemologies and associated with certain subjectivities.

Witnessing relational people and places in the Himalayas

In 2014 ICIMOD, arguably the premier policy and aid driven research institute for the Himalayan region, published the results of field-testing their ‘complex’ Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment instrument (Gerlitz et al., 2014). The goal of the undertaking had been to ‘identify vulnerable communities, understand the complex characteristics of mountain poverty and livelihood vulnerability, and assess the adaptive capacity of mountain people’ (pg.4). An aggregate of dozens of ‘components’ and ‘indicators’ the instrument claimed to test both the multidimensional livelihood vulnerability and the multidimensional poverty within Himalayan households. At the time of publication, the instrument had been administered to 13,000 households in four countries and represented the single largest ‘regional scale’ assessment effort. The final conclusions of the report were succinct, ‘initial findings support the findings of previous studies, namely, that there are mountain-specific aspects to the poverty, vulnerability and adaptive capacity of mountain people’ (pg.75). While critiquing ICIMOD’s PVA is essentially going after a ‘low hanging fruit’, its goals and design, serve as an analytical mooring device. It allows for both a restating of the deterministic and exclusionary epistemic normativity that inspired this work and helps situate the assemblage that

emerges from the framework of relational vulnerability as a justified counterweight to such evaluations.

The relational dynamics co-producing *pahari* spaces reveal some interesting facets of Himalayan life. First, Himalayan societies are in transition. These conditions of flux are catalyzing reflexivity about collective and communal rules and ‘borders’. Making normative a constant negotiating of subjectivities in the emerging novel cultural economies (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2014). This conclusion follows from the understanding of relationality as a ‘socio-spatial ontology’ (Massey, 2005) and is corroborated by the many negotiations that produce *pahari* homes. Subject positions of ‘Father-in-law’ or ‘daughter-in-law’ and ‘dead’ or ‘alive’ are emergent and co-produced rather than distinct categories. Furthermore, the ‘household’ turns out to be more than just an agglomeration of discrete individuals and sites, its inherent spatiality extending beyond the boundaries of specific places and bodies.

Second, the unequal mobility within Himalayan households is reproducing certain entrenched mechanisms of exclusion, while providing moments of resistance (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2011). Embedded within this constellation of moving contingencies, the precariousness of daily life seems rooted in finding the limits of subjective agency within a ‘flattened field of relations’ (Hinkson, 2017). Engaging with the politically malleable tools of the state, or rethinking reproductive aspirations is deeply affected by the transforming material and discursive relations between human and more than human worlds. These relations are not abandoned with the corporeal absence of bodies from territorial and administrative spaces, instead they are reconfigured to adequately address the novel modalities of such mobile householding, and through it place making (Shneiderman, 2015). Inari households that depend on their cannabis harvest have become volunteer protectors of the community forest. Intentionally producing a space on the fringes of both the state and the community, a region of ‘in-betweenness’ that they can control and manage.

Third, the relational epistemological stance reveals the multiple situated knowledges sharing space within Himalayan households. This anti-essentialism is critical, as it recognizes the intersectional causes marginalizing certain ‘voices’ (Gregory, 2004). Therefore, while *the kedars* embody the degraded ethics managing labor and livelihoods in modern times to many of the older generation, for the youth they are the gatekeepers to certain cultures of consumption and labor (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, 2003) that allow them to subvert class, caste and ethnic categories and escape certain oppressive communal structures (Shneiderman, 2015). Additionally, the ‘provisional agency’ - the transcending and altering of moral boundaries and positional power within spaces marked by inequity and instability (Jauregui, 2014), of *pahari* women reveals an invisible ‘politics of the self’, usually hidden by a focus on ‘structure’ (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011). While *pahari* households remain deeply patriarchal, this patriarchy is often contested. With the changing moral and material economies of villages, *pahari* women often harness hegemonic discourses of ‘education as development’ (Morarji, 2014) and ‘the burden of overpopulation’ to renegotiate their autonomy over their bodies and labor.

Fourth, the relationships highlight the fallacy of adhering to homogenizing discourses of domination or opportunity when describing regional trysts with structures of development and modernity (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003). The different genealogies of power represented by different actors within the households, subvert notions of ‘fully developed’ subjects and places. This challenges the epistemic legitimacy of discrete component driven indices like the PVA. Instead what emerges are households and subjects that are constantly in the process of formation, but nonetheless exercising their agency. This further reifies the notion that relational vulnerability is not a metric describing a ‘self-organizing system’. Instead it is constituted by this vital micropolitics of processes, which is contingent on a constant definition and redefinition of the relationships between human and more than human worlds. Ultimately this excursion into relational vulnerability empowers an alternative ‘politics of possibility’ (Elwood, 2017). By encountering the tyranny of indicators, it

critiques the modes of knowledge production that reproduce situated inequalities. Furthermore, the inherent dialectical process of (re)making selves and worlds together, reveals how these inequalities are supported through normative categories that depoliticize privilege and obscure the root causes of marginalization.

The differential engagements with power within *pahari* homes, actively encounters visions of an ‘exceptional Himalayan precarity’ (Ives, 2004). The performative testimonies of *pahari* subjects create generative openings, through which the intersectional oppressions and privileges producing their lifeworlds are illuminated (Sangtin Writers, 2009; Smith, 2012). Witnessed in this form, the particular embodied practices defy the proximate and determinist historical renditions of ‘risk’. In doing so, they provide fertile ground for a careful theorization of the ‘colonial present’ (Gregory, 2004) and its articulation within universal discourses of vulnerability. By moving the marginalized and understudied, mutual entanglements of various identify forming processes to the fore, I address the call for a ‘post-colonial solidarity’ that speaks to the anxieties experienced by regional communities. Anxieties rooted in threats to their lifeworlds, by a politics of crisis and urgency, which reduces Himalayan places and people to particular tropes (Gergan, 2017).

Relational vulnerability acts as a critical interlocutor of this marginalization, by positing an ethnographically thick representation of Himalayan lifeworlds. The relational framework brings into focus the ambivalence of households when engaging with new forms of mobility, changing generational and community negotiations and the varied thrusts of modern-nation building. Questions of identity, belonging and ethics are intrinsically tied to this constant movement of people and ideas, both across and beyond administrative and political borders (Shneiderman, 2015; Smith, 2012). Additionally populations, such as women and migrants, that are traditionally ‘invisible’ or represented within household assessments only in terms of discrete econometric indicators of value, are revealed to be critically involved in the decisions involving household security and reproduction. Especially,

the relationships between the young, mostly male migrant population, their spouses and their parents in ancestral homes emerges as one of critical significance and one that has not been adequately explored by scholars (Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017). Therefore, along with revealing the dynamic relationships informing Himalayan spaces, the framework also identifies new points of research and enquiry. Ultimately, by moving beyond components and predominantly quantified research variables, empowers ‘the provisional and performative gatherings of bodies at various interwoven scales’ (Smith and Reid, 2017), and challenges the hegemonic ontological visions of a discrete, impermeable materiality.

Conclusion

The Himalayan region is constructed as an exceptionally risky space in many popular and scholarly narratives (Guneratne, 2010). This discourse of risk is sustained and reproduced by a plethora of factors, among which are the epistemic tools and methodological frameworks used to assess the impoverishment and vulnerability of Himalayan places and people. These evaluative frameworks are overwhelmingly rooted in discrete component based approaches that attempt to envision the complex regional relationships as adaptive systems that are deliberate and self-organizing. This analytical approach depoliticizes complex structural process, while confining fluid, dynamic subjects inside discrete, static spatio-temporal positions. Furthermore, the focus of such analysis remains the bounded subject or process, rather than the relationships in between, and as such the goal always remains the ‘acquisition of some value’ through an evaluation of where it exists and where it doesn’t (Atkinson, 2013). I propose the framework of relational vulnerability to encounter such quantitative, measurement driven efforts, which legitimize an instrumental, atomist frame of knowledge production. Relational vulnerability builds on the notion of relational ontologies that begins with the premise that knowledge is always situated, partial and produced through relations of power.

Furthermore, contrary to more generalizable, aggregative risk focused on categorizations, it focuses on the relationships that produce Himalayan places (Shneiderman, 2015) and attempts to reveal the intersectional subjectivities that are involved in this process.

The framework is operationalized in Uttarakhand state (*pahar*) in the Indian Himalayan region. *Pahari* homes and villages when visualized through a relational prism reveal complex Deleuzian assemblages. They allude to the unequal yet contested distribution of power within *pahari* spaces. Intersectional processes grounding specific subjects are acknowledged in critical moments of negotiation that span the cleavages of gender, generation, class and even life. The precariousness witnessed is not a furnace churning out fully formed victimized denizens of a ruthless landscape. Instead, the places and people seem to exercising a provisional agency, which is constantly challenged by the fairly non-exceptional processes of industrial development, patriarchy, modernity and state building (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2014; Smith, 2012). Therefore, the key relationships involve contestations over the transitional moral economies of death, the cultures of agriculture, the politics of reproduction and the ambivalences around precarious livelihoods.

While the relational assessments of household vulnerability provide a ‘thick’ alternative to the normative instruments of evaluation and knowledge production, they also support a vision of ‘post-colonial solidarity’ (Gergan, 2017). By empowering the marginalized discourses of populations that are usually excluded from the practice of history making, questions of identity and belonging, experienced through changing modalities of mobility and representation, are found to be critically involved in co-producing the region. Additionally, such a focus on the entangled production of subjectivities traces forward the trajectory of ‘new feminist political ecologies’ by bringing to the foreground the ways in which gender does not act alone in symbolic and material oppressions.

Ultimately, this method also makes visible some important relational ‘arrangements’, which have not been explored through interpretive scholarship. This includes the relationships between

young migrants and their rural homes and the paradoxical engagements of formally educated women with the novel tools of modernity. While this chapter identifies an alternate prism through which to view *pahari* households, it also reveals the agency of different populations in the production of the household. Within these revelations, mobile, male youth emerge as significant subjects, seemingly connecting the different intra-household aspirational worlds, while acting as arbitrators of household encounters with the tools of development and modernity. However their actual praxis remains unexplored. In the next chapter I witness the lives of many such youth who circulate through the changing relational spaces of the region.

Chapter 4 - “The future is in-between”

Novel youth mobilities and transitioning structures of gender, work and community in the Himalayas

“They belong nowhere, they are like the washerman’s dog – neither of the home nor the river bank”
Public High School Teacher (Ghargaon)

“I tell people my home is in the mountains, but I do so much work in the city. Most of my time is spent between the two. So where is my home, really? ...I am not sure, but I know where I live – in-between. Isn’t that the future?”
Ajay Rawat

Introduction

I met Ajay, inside a dry riverbed, on the 5th night of Kumaoni Holi⁷. He was moving hunks of dusty limestone from the stream to a dump truck. Helping him were a rag-tag army of boys aged 9 to 21. “Isn’t this illegal?” I asked. Ajay looked at me bemused and said, “Drinking and dancing won’t pay for my sister’s marriage. A cousin taught me the ropes, he buys all that I can bring. I am just a messenger for others, I fulfill their needs, both in the village and the city.” As dusk swept over the festive Himalayan community, people gathered around wood fires in boisterous musical circles, Ajay turned on his mobile phone and checked the truck bed one last time. He was taking the stones to his ‘connected’ cousin in the plains, on the new paved highway that ran through the hamlet, armed with enough cash to bribe the police check posts. The night would be spent weighing the loot and haggling over the decided price. In the morning he had another job – driving back an old urban retiree that had hired him as a man Friday for her cottage in the mountains. The truck would come later, laden with subsidized government food rations for the village. Ajay said before he jumped into the driver’s seat, “I don’t like being stuck in one place. The middle is where the action is. That’s where you find all the wise men in this new time.” As the taillights of the truck disappeared around the bend, the intoxicated,

⁷ Important Hindu spring festival heralding the end of winter

local public school teacher said to me, “What an immature generation. They can’t sit still long enough to keep a job. Always restless, always on the move, always unemployed.”

The response of youth in the majority world and specifically in South Asia, to increasing threats to their security, respect and livelihoods, has recently become a topic of much interest. The particularity of youth agency is being studied relative to the agency of older adults, in an attempt to apprehend how young people are navigating and acting within plural, intersecting structures of power (Jeffrey, 2010b; Jeffrey & Dyson, 2014, 2016; Langevang & Gough, 2009; Mains, 2007; Rodgers, 2009; Smith & Gergan, 2015). While most research has situated young people within bounded categories of class, caste and region, some scholars have ventured into the transitional spaces and experiences that characterize the lives of many young people. Critical to this analysis has been the idea of being “in-between”, not just different locations but also different stages of life and different feelings (Young & Jeffrey, 2012). Thus, the process of movement itself, through space and time, with its paradoxes, constraints and opportunities has become foundational to the youth imaginary. It is seen as a solution to interrelated temporal problems, relative social positioning in a changing society and a mediator of instability.

Mobile, educated, youth like Ajay, embedded within transforming Himalayan locales, occupy multiple intersections of ‘in-betweenness’. Along with being between childhood and adulthood, village and city, they are also situated within debates around regional and national identity and embody the partially realized attempts of converting ‘mountain places into state spaces’ (Murton, 2017). Additionally, the structures governing mobility – of both bodies and ideas – are on the move (Bergmann et al., 2011). Even as some political borders become more impermeable, industrial, educational and market services are opening up new personal and professional frontiers (Smith, 2012; Smith and Gergan, 2015; Gellner, 2013). However, the space ‘in-between’, the small towns and the big villages, and the movement from the growing urban conglomeration to the transitioning rural

homestead, is where the youth see prospect. Contrary to popular ideas of belonging, that tie individuals to culturally and materially bounded communal formations, Ajay and his peers intentionally strive to become denizens of the dynamic interstitial.

I explore these ‘precarious lives’ (Munck, 2013) by calling upon the (not so new) mobilities paradigm (Cresswell, 2010, 2012, 2014). This flow - the circulation of various bodies, behaviors, ideas and artifacts, articulated as mobilities, has been presented as a new framework with which to transform more static approaches to social science research, and as a very real transformative process, that through various technologies, socialities and objects produces the dynamic places we inhabit today (Cresswell, 2002; Hannam et al., 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006). A mobilities lens, by examining the “places of in-between-ness” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, pg. 219), can direct our focus back to the interstitial spaces and the movement of bodies through these ‘transfer points’, to witness the critical performances that such a journey requires. Additionally, it further challenges the binary constructions of places and subjects. Critiquing the acute contradictions of rooted scalar thinking about both processes and institutions, it argues for a relational lens with which to view the actions and aspirations of disparate networks, people and social entities.

Youth - Mobile and In-Between

The interstitiality of youth praxis has recently been imagined in conjunction with research on informal economies (Young et al., 2017). A growing number of scholars have revealed the resourceful economic and social practices of young people occupying varying spaces and cultures of work (Mains, 2007; Rodgers, 2009; Thieme, 2010). These different cultures of work encountered in the various inhabited spaces provide crucial insights into the changing contours of what Johnson-Hanks (2002) terms as the ‘vital conjunctures’ of young lives (Panelli et al., 2007; Jeffrey 2010; Langevang, 2008). Work done by youth within the interdependent moral economy of the household, is often recognized

only as filial duties for ensuring the social and material reproduction of the family (Punch, 2007; Porter et al., 2010). However, with transitioning structural factors – neo-liberal economies, agrarian dysfunction, accessible primary and secondary education- there is a shift towards a far greater emphasis on paid labor (Jeffrey, 2010; Punch, 2007; Crivello, 2011). This emphasis while echoing corporeal material necessities is pursued within an acute “mismatch between ambitions and outcomes” (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2013, pg.1). Confronted by this precarity, many young people are turning to a dizzying gamut of informal entrepreneurship, attempting to discern the way ahead amidst the changing structural rules of socio-economic engagement (Munck, 2013; Gough et al., 2015; Naafs, 2013).

In South Asia the movements of disparate non-elite actors constitutes an assemblage of complex cultural and political negotiations, that is acutely aware of varied notions of structural boundaries tied to gender, caste, place and community and is a significant factor in identity formation (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, 2003). This ‘translocal’ movement leads to unique social constellations of aspirations, which defy hegemonic imaginaries. Embodying this, certain South Asian youth find provenance in utilizing provincial networks and strengthening their control over cultural resources instead of imitating metropolitan populations (Jeffrey, 2010), others perform global identities to compete against newcomers threatening their mobility (Brown, 2015), and still others engage in contentious intergenerational negotiations to gain control over their mobility (Patel, 2017). Additionally, the insecure temporality and anxiety about the praxis of building and sustaining roots is driving youth aspirations towards a superficiality, which is centered in a constant and often uncontrollable movement (Ramakrishnan, 2014). Parallel to this is the project of nation building, burdening youth with the task of national development at the cost of “plural conceptions of youth and citizenship” (Jha, 2013, pg.14). Situated between this untethering of sociocultural reproduction from communal stability and the hegemonic overtures of political-industrial state institutions, youth are gravitating towards discourses and organizations that offer spaces to address their feelings about

their novel relationships with mobilities and precarities. While some of these spaces are orchestrated by powerful agents looking to further their cause, by recruiting ‘lost’ youth (Kumar, 2016), in others, youth frequently confront the fluid, shifting borders of these new formations, harnessing this informality into profitable practice, accepting “improvisation as a type of identity” (Jeffrey and Young, 2010, pg.192).

In this chapter I steer clear of attributing South Asian youth praxis to simplistic descriptions of capitalism, state building or caste dynamics. I also don’t engage with the recent succession of work on young people’s involvement in protest politics (Palshikhar, 2013; Shukla 2013; Singh 2013). My focus instead is on the emerging relational dialogue between liminal mobile youth and liminal mobile places, to understand the everyday ways in which marginalized youth respond to a dynamic assemblage of precarity (Paret & Gleeson, 2016; Standing, 2014). I consider Young and Jeffrey’s (2012) question, “What other liminal places and populations have yet to be fully explored in the Indian context?”(pg.50), and move the lens away from South Asian megacities and a “relatively privileged kinetic elite” (Cresswell et al., 2016, pg.1083), to the vast provincial hinterland that exists in varying forms of urban-rural symbiosis. This provides an insight into the, usually ignored, intermediate places along the dense arterial network of cultural and capital flows. The mobility that mediates these flows is “caught up in the power geometries of everyday life” (Hannam et al., 2006, pg.3) and reflects the differential privileges of gender, race, age and class across a variety of scales. Non-elite South Asian youth embody this intransitivity, producing and consuming mobilities very differently from adults, while constituting the subalterns in the accelerating informalization of labor (Gooptu, 2013). Additionally as Cresswell (2016) notes, mobilities research from or about Asia is “relatively infrequent” (pg. 1083). This work builds upon the former by evaluating the various contentious formations around access to and control over mobility and in doing so complicates the relationship that mobility has to elite subjectivities (Skeggs, 2004). In doing so, I address the poverty of non-elite mobilities research

and support a movement towards its decolonization (Kwan & Schwanen, 2016), by exploring the lives of young men from a politically and culturally marginalized region of South Asia. Who, unlike the long “moments of stuckness” (Cresswell, 2012) that Jeffrey (2010) describes in lower middle class, educated, unemployed youth of Meerut – embrace the precarity of this limbo. They celebrate a vision of a regional terrain that is explicitly transitional in nature, revealing an aspirational self that valorizes a ‘predictable unruliness’.

This chapter explores emergent forms of mobility and its relationships with youth agency by analyzing the praxis of young men like Ajay, who navigate an assemblage of precarity by ‘aspiring for interstitiality’. My overall argument is that marginalized male youth from Uttarakhand, contrary to expectations, mediate the empowerment and the constraints posed by underlying regional structural processes, by participating in what they see as the ‘spread of betweenness’. Thus their ‘in-betweenness’ is not a period of waiting for a better option, it is the preferred choice. Furthermore, their relationships with similarly ‘in-between’ places are critical. These encounters produce material and aspirational responses that reflect their tryst with the newfound mobility, and have some very real consequences for their families, communities and the region, which remain unexplored.

Pahari youth: New lives in an old place

Pahari livelihoods, since colonial times, have been highly gendered, with women undertaking primary agricultural responsibilities, as men leave the fields to look for wage labor elsewhere (Mamgain, 2004). The removal of men in large numbers, under the practice of *begar* (bonded labor - see Gururani, 2015 and Pathak, 1997), and even after its abolishment, has had a transformative effect on the meaning of work “as a symbolic and material activity” (Gidwani, 2000). Similar to other Himalayan regions, “mobility has pervaded the life” of most rural *pahari* homes for years (Toffin & Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2014). However, access to this mobility is gendered, betraying the historically rooted

cultures of patriarchy controlling the bodies and affect of *pahari* women (Goodman, 2017; Klenk, 2004). Currently, male youth constitute the major percentage of migrants – working in the armed forces, industrial manufacturing units and the service industry (Jain, 2010; Mamgain & Reddy, 2016). And massive migration from the mountainous districts of the state is the major driver of debates around electoral politics, cultural preservation and rural development (Dabral, 2017; Joshi, 2017). Most representations of migrants follow simplistic trajectories of circulation – reducing migration to a linear and material event, underwritten by classical economic philosophies of livelihood risk, marginal benefits and remittances, performed without much agency (Grunawalt, 2012; R. Mamgain, 2008; Negi, 2015). Others utilize enduring tropes of Himalayan precarity, in an ahistorical and apolitical attempt to claim deterministic aspirational goals of regional inhabitants (Punia & Punia, 2014; Tiwari and Joshi, 2012).

A few scholars have recently addressed this poverty of critical research on *pahari* youth masculinities. These include Joshi's (2015) account of regional 'socio-spatial transformations' tied to accessing new forms of mobility through taxi driving, Deuchar's (2014) study of the 'contradictory, dynamic and gendered struggle over the meaning of education' for middle class youth in the state capital of Dehradun, Jeffrey and Dyson's (2014) description of youth prefigurative politics in a remote *pahari* village and, Koskimaki's (2017) nuanced encounter with masculine agency at political rallies, revealing how the aspirations of young men have 'contributed to the cultural mapping of the region'. While such accounts help critique the 'absent presence' (Skelton & Gough, 2013) of youth voices in historical and current imaginaries of Uttarakhand, they don't directly explore the 'everyday relationality' of these young people as they corporeally move between and through the 'in-between' spaces of their lifeworlds. Furthermore, we know relatively little about their interactions with various forms of interstitiality, and how that changes with their changing 'moorings' (Skelton, 2013).

Pahari youth find themselves between not just the exploding regional cities and their ancestral villages, but also ideas of remoteness and connectivity. Their allegiances are stretched between their duties as a modern national subject while remaining the native son. These engagements with interstitiality produce certain unique subjectivities that remain unexamined. Ultimately, the negotiations between multiple regional mobilities, catalyzed by contesting political and cultural projects, have an effect on both *pahari* people and places (Bergmann et al., 2008; Bergmann et al., 2011). How do these negotiations manifest themselves in the lives of marginalized *pahari* men that don't grow up in important regional cities? The next sections address these critical questions, by delving into the lives of certain young, *pahari* 'mobilees' (Skelton, 2013).

The data informing this chapter was gathered over a period of two years (2015-2017) in three villages and fifteen towns, across five districts of Uttarakhand and New Delhi. I used a mixed-methods approach and interviewed around 50 'mobile' *pahari* male youth (mobilees), between the ages of 18-30yrs and administered lengthy 'poverty and vulnerability' surveys to their families. All the men I talked with had been raised in highland rural spaces attended village public schools and rarely ventured out of the community before dropping out or completing their high-school degrees. The group consisted of both GC (upper caste) and SC/ST (lower caste) respondents and was class homogenous. I also interviewed a smaller sample of relatively 'immobile' people from the communities, to better articulate the unique set of privileges and circumstances that characterized the mobilees. Furthermore, I 'moved' frequently with the youth, accompanying them on their journeys, creating 'travel ethnographies'. Ultimately, I followed these young people on social media and kept in frequent contact through instant messaging platforms. Most of the conversations were either in Hindi, English or *pahari*. In the sections that follow I explore some of these exchanges.

Moving Mountains: Novel mobilities in a transitioning pahar

Uttarakhand, unquestionably, was on the move, and these structural changes were catalyzing new forms of mobility. Certain youth, predominantly male, usually without access to government jobs and often lacking significant social connections in large north Indian urban centers, embodied these novel performances of movement. Ajay epitomized this new *pahari* mobilee. He was from an impoverished agrarian family and had finished his intermediate degree in the local government school in Ghargaon village and then promptly moved to the SIDCUL, to work as a temporary laborer in an auto-parts manufacturing factory. He reasoned:

I know these places are dangerous and dirty, but I need to leave the village and see the world. Most people don't last a year, so I am not really moving towards anything permanent. But, the thought of staying at home and plowing ancestral fields with my father makes me sad and frustrated.

Ajay's stint in the hot, crowded town of Rudrapur ended five months after it began. He often referred to it as his 'real education'. Cramped together with seven other young men in a tiny room, Ajay worked eight to fourteen hour days, checking the integrity of ball bearings. Four months into his sojourn he contracted Hepatitis after drinking contaminated water. He returned home broke – financially, physically and emotionally, to the chagrin of his alcoholic father, who questioned both his son's resolve and constitution. Despite, this tension at home, he never went back to SIDCUL and instead embarked upon an exploration of the livelihood options that neither his elders and nor his peers in the plains had mentioned.

In the months following his unceremonious return to the village, a serendipitous encounter at the highway construction site led to his employment with a local farmer sovereignty Non-governmental organization (NGO). This immersion in the world of agriculture, which was culturally omnipresent, but starkly absent from the aspirational designs of most local families, was a moment of awakening for Ajay. He saw commercial agriculture as a promising and meaningful pursuit and left

the low paying *samaj seva* (social work) job, to take out a business loan and strike out on his own. However, his naiveté about the politics of the wholesale markets in the plains, led to a spectacular failure and one that left him with a hefty loan to repay on his transport truck. It was around this time that the land market exploded in and around his village. Ghargaon located just seven hours from New Delhi, now that the new highway was built, was sufficiently modern, while being remote. Added to that the recently installed splendid telecommunication network, fairly reliable electricity from state hydropower and a sylvan landscape mostly untouched by industry, made the place a favorite among rich and upper middle class urban Indians looking to invest in personal and commercial ventures. Ajay saw land prices double over a period of 12 months in his village, and decided to cash in. He stated:

I don't understand some people in this village. They would rather wash dishes and work as a servant at someone's factory in the plains, rather than stay at home and make a living being their own master. It's because we leave these mountains, that today all the land brokers are from the plains.

Ajay and a couple of his friends joined forces and started marketing their land brokerage services, using the vast social media web that now connected most families. In time they came on the radar of the ex-*pradhan* (headman) of the village that had started a successful construction company, on the burgeoning aspirations for *pucca*⁸ (cement and steel) houses in the region. He needed a contractor that would supply him cheap limestone. Ajay and his posse were up for the task. Using the truck he was still paying installments on, they began moving tons of stone from the dying streams within village land. The work was illegal and dangerous, required constant bribing of law enforcement officials and incentivized child labor in the village. But Ajay summed it up by saying:

I am not talking about what is right and wrong in the book, I am talking about what is right and wrong in reality...I don't want to be a politician or a leader, I just don't want to feel left out of all the coming development. I would be a moron to not avail of all the *zariya* (sources) of making money I have access to. Being successful means no one can hustle you, because you are already hustling them. But, it also means to work for more than money. One has to fit the time one lives in.

⁸ *Pucca* literally means solid, or something that is relatively unbreakable. However, ironically, the older stone houses of *pabar*, made with local stones, with various bio-glues as mortar are far more seismologically sound than the newer construction with cement, rebar and imported sand (See PSI report on Aseismicity of Traditional Western Himalayan Architecture: Das, 2002)

Ajay's story is representative of many of the other youth that I interviewed. Of the fifty young men that I spent time with in the three villages, close to forty of them (about 80 percent) had had dissatisfying, or disastrous encounters with the city, were unsure about their prospects within traditional livelihood options, and were pursuing unprecedented ventures, driven by transitioning local and regional spaces. While these men were not the majority within the overall youth population, they weren't a minority either. In contrast to the previous generation, male youth in many *pahari* spaces were in the process of formalizing their trysts with adulthood and maturity. This process created a heterogeneous mix of subjectivities, with no clear majority, but many vying minorities. The group of mobilees I mention were an intelligent, outspoken and powerful minority, which mediated many of the material and affective channels between the village and the city and often served as role models for their peers. Accessing new forms of mobility, especially around the changing parameters and meanings of travel and telecommunications, the youth were architects of novel 'socio-spatial transformations' (Joshi, 2015; Koskimaki, 2017).

In the majority world, narratives of young people's recent experiences with mobile livelihoods is not new and has been overwhelmingly portrayed in contrast to the relatively sedentary livelihoods of their elders and in conjunction with their experience and use of major cities (Porter, et al., 2010). However, marginalized *pahari* youth challenge and complicate this narrative by their ambivalence towards the accelerated globalized mobilities, that Jat politicians dabbled with in Meerut (Jeffrey, 2010) and their disinterest in making any claims for a 'right to the (metropolitan) city' (Thieme, 2010). The *pahari* mobilees, lacking both the privilege of culture and education, seek to pursue ventures rooted in the post-independence 'reterritorialization' (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) of *pahar* as a place. This is driven by the changing physical and cultural boundaries of Uttarakhand, as well as the transitioning aspirations within rural homes.

In the village of Inari, close to the *Himadri*, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), historical male livelihoods have been significantly mobile. In the past Men used to spend months each year following huge herds of sheep and goats across high-altitude bugyals (meadows), trading wool and spices for salt and tea with merchants from Tibet. These journeys often extended past the perforated political borders, which are highly securitized today (Bergmann, 2011). This mobility, driven by seasonal pastoral and food security needs, has post-state formation, been replaced by a phenomenon that is regulated by multiple forces. These include, among others, demands of the service industry in the plains, intergenerational reproductive negotiations, the adventure tourism industry and the aspirational atlas of educated youth. The youth of Inari described their village as, the edge of the world, where “phone signals and patwaris disappear”. The village has no phone connectivity, pucca motor roads, health services or law-enforcement presence. Most young men after finishing high school or intermediate go to work for a local thekedar, who over the past decade, has frequently managed to secure the service contracts for Ministry of Defense canteens in regional towns. However, these jobs pay abysmally and afford little security or career advancement options. And unlike the youth of Ghargaon, a frequent circulation between different places is arduous.

While this lack of road and telecom infrastructure presents certain constraints on the mobility of Inari youth, it also presents them with certain opportunities. Being a ‘remote’ place means fewer visits from state administrators and law-enforcement officials, therefore the rule of the state is subservient to local communal institutions. This unruliness results in a plethora of ‘illegal’ livelihoods. Most youth help their families grow copious amounts of *ganja* (*Cannabis indica*), which is ‘processed’ in homes and sold to clandestine traders. Furthermore, while the number of livestock per family has dwindled, sheep and goats are still grazed and during these trips to the high altitude bugyals, a variety

of medicinal plants of significant commercial value are gathered, usually without a valid license⁹. Escalating demand in the plains and the rise of a commercial medicinal plant industry means that there are always buyers. Youth are critical in these enterprises and often spent significant periods of time, ‘on leave’ from their service industry jobs in the plains. Furthermore, they keep in constant contact with the traders through social media, having physically mapped out the local landscape to find certain ‘zones of connection’ where their mobile phones work. Traders prefer to contact them through their various social media accounts, which are constructed with ‘borrowed facts’ and often contain no actual information about the person. The mobilees idolize certain ‘time-space specificities’, which allows them to most profitably wield their ‘multiple work related (im) mobilities across scales’ (Cresswell, et al., 2016). Kundan, who had grown up in the lower caste *tok* (ward), articulated it to me:

I like working for my current boss because he lets me come home whenever I want. I like this project based work. It allows me the freedom to come home and take care of ‘business’. It’s been 10 months since I came home, but I am still not done and my phone doesn’t work here so I can’t really contact anyone. But, I am not worried. The thekedars need us, just like we need them. And if he fires me, I’ll get another job.

Inari mobiles, unlike their fathers, never spent months in the meadows with sheep, or begged for work on public road construction crews. Instead, they mediated the precarity of increasingly neoliberal regimes of labor security, by negotiating spatio-temporal arrangements that reflected their nuanced understanding of both shifting communal aspirations and their relative bargaining power within industrial workspaces.

While the *pahari* mobilees are enabled to enact novel livelihood arrangements by the different structures and discourses of regional mobility, other populations remain in stasis, their comparative

⁹ The collection included the famous Keeda (*Cordyceps sinensis*) along with, Shilajit (*Asphaltum punjabianum*), Kutki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), Jimbu (*Allium hirsutum*), Hatjari (*Dactylorhiza hatagirea*) and Masi (*Nardostachys grandiflora*). Among them the Keeda was the most valuable, selling between US\$2000-US\$5000/kg in the regional illegal medicinal plant trade hub of Munyari. The medicinal plant market was very erratic, with fluctuating prices and intermittent contact with the ‘traders’. In contrast, the Cannabis market was fairly unchanging. The hashish (resin) usually sold for US\$100-200/kg and the seeds (used to make a famous regional chutney) sold for US\$1/kg (See Pauls and Franz, 2010).

immobility a product of the unequal power relationships within *pahari* spaces (Chopra & Ghosh, 2000; Gururani, 2002; Mehta, 2014). Everyday *pahari* mobilities, akin to other places in the majority world (Murray et al., 2016), remain gendered and generational. Even as the young men of Ghargaon discuss switching thekedars, applying for business loans, or investing in cryptocurrencies, the young women, often more formally educated, feel their aspirations are severely constrained by the different moral rules policing their movement past certain communal boundaries (See Goodman, 2017 and Deol, 2012). Local NGOs that run livelihood generation programs, focus on hiring and retaining these women, knowing the ‘trope of corruption’ (Chari and Gidwani, 2005) regulating their mobility as well as the paucity of their employment options. Seema works as a women’s Self Help Group (SHG) administrator, in one such NGO. She appreciates her job, but feels powerless when making important life decisions:

I didn’t want to get married. I wanted to work and become somebody. *Shaadi matlab barbadi* (marriage equals ruin). But, my family forced me and now I am managing both home and office. My father-in-law expects me to get fodder for our buffalos, who has time for that? I just buy the feed now from my own salary. I am working night and day to feed these dumb animals.

Her husband works as a mobile electrician, servicing dozens of villages in the area on his motorcycle. He said he was saving up money to move out of the ancestral home to hopefully improve relations between his parents and his wife.

Along with the women, there is a group of young men who have relatively sedentary aspirations. These include low caste youth that labor on a variety of local MGNREGA projects that many higher caste youth felt too ashamed to perform, a chosen few that have managed to enter the police, military or para-military forces and another select group with affiliations within the government cadre, that they are certain will land them jobs. While some of these youth have participated in more mobile livelihoods in the past, they are tired of the uncertainty and are often more assured about their moorings in their communities. Ganesh, a worker at a local handloom workshop put it:

What's the point of getting kicked around by different places? I know I don't have the education or connections to get a decent job. But, at least here my community surrounds me. There is work here for anyone that has hands and feet.

Exploring Routes to Roots: Youth praxis from the 'in-between'

On a winter morning in 2016 Gopal and I were heading down the mountain in a private SUV encumbered with agricultural produce, milk and people. The car made intermittent stops delivering the commodities to various merchants along the way. Gopal knew most of them and exchanged more than pleasantries with quite a few. When we finally stopped for lunch he said, "My father calls this a waste of time. Tell me, was I wrong last night, when I asked him to stop spending time with and lending money to his nephews?" The night before, in the hamlet of Mana, Gopal and his father had a drunken argument that turned into an altercation. The old man owned a large building in the booming village market and had rented out rooms to his extended family that ran convenience stores. The rent for the rooms had not been paid in three years. While a fairly common feature of local exchanges, the situation seemed ludicrous to Gopal. Mobilees like him were involved in the restructuring of intergenerational relationships that challenged the limits of moral economies, exploring new forms of communal interdependency (Punch, 2002). And so after nightfall, wanting to address this "exploitative deal", he showed up with a bunch of heavy-duty locks and hung them from the shop fronts of the debtors, effectively locking them out of their stores. Word of this deed spread around the village and soon reached Mahesh - Gopal's father. That night, over a dying fire, father and son exchanged insults, each proclaiming the other's complete ineptitude at managing critical social networks. To Mahesh, the debt that was owed, bound the community together like an omnipresent web, creating an invisible and trustworthy assemblage of security, but to Gopal these intersections of family and commerce were disastrous for the health of both, a shroud that stifled anyone that wanted to challenge the inabilities of either. The verbal rampage lasted till sunrise, at which point, Gopal video called his younger brother

and informed him about the situation. On his recommendation we packed our bags and left the village, getting the first vehicle down to the Terai, where his wife, mother and brother farmed his grandfather's ancestral land. The trip would allow Gopal to 'check-in' with his informal network of business satellites along the way and also find emotional support for his decision from the other members of his immediate family. Gopal's home in the plains, located in a peri-urban village on the outskirts of Rudrapur, is an anti-thesis of Mana. Tanakpur features mechanized irrigated agriculture, managed by business savvy immigrants, celebrating entrepreneurism and cashing in on the neoliberal ethos of the neighboring SEZ. However, a week after unpacking, Gopal asked me if I wanted to go back to Mana. He was exasperated with the boisterous crowds at the wholesale produce markets and his futile attempts at trying to secure a cooking gas connection for the house. As we got tickets for our trip back to Mana he said:

Nothing moves here for regular people like me. At least in the *pabar* if I bribe someone they actually do the work. Here they take your money and your dignity. I can't stand this. I am not saying *paharis* are like Gandhi, but even thieves in *pabar* have ethics

Gopal's praxis, situated between, changing generational aspirations and different renditions of moral and amoral economies, mirrors the contentious negotiations between the masculinities founded in elders' wisdom and the ones rooted in migration and economic success, in a Zapotec community in Oaxaca, Mexico (Aguirre-Sulem, 2015). In Oaxaca as in Uttarakhand, a nuanced exploration of migrant and mobile young men is useful in complicating the simplistic and essentialist tropes of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, while village elders like Mahesh, lament on the declining birth rates and 'ghost village' spaces, the mobilees challenge traditional gender roles, exploring subversive relationships with contraception and fatherhood. In Inari, Kundan and his peers question the point of "breeding like animals" and get vasectomies at state medical camps, with or without parental approval. They express trepidations surrounding the physical and emotional toll of pregnancy on their wives and often take 'paternity leave' to stay at home and help with the raising of their children. And

away from the prying ears of the village they even criticize their elders for prizing sons over daughters. As Kundan's cousin Arjun put it, "In today's world, daughter and son are equal, actually sometimes daughters are a lot more responsible. Sons often end up becoming *awara*¹⁰." In Ghargaon, after the establishment of rural BPO units, mobilees negotiated jobs for their sisters and wives, often against the wishes of elders in the household, paying their training fees with 'digital cash transfers', to ensure their discretion. Additionally they are increasingly responsible for arranging marriages that reflected the aspirations of both men and women. As Suraj explains:

Everyone wants to get married to a girl with a college degree. That's great, but then you can't expect her to carry manure and cut grass. My sister knows how to do digital accounts and tutors children in Math and English. Why should she give all that up after marriage?

While the youth do challenge certain gendered power inequalities, they reinforce others. They laugh at women that want to join the armed forces or start their own business. Entrepreneurship is a strictly masculine prerogative. As Ajay notes, "My sister is very good with bookish knowledge, but knows nothing about the world. The spaces where business happens are unpredictable and dangerous, it's beyond a woman's capabilities." The interstitial places which the mobilees see as their nodes of opportunity are never populated by women, and if they are present, are in the form of 'fast city girls' not 'sheltered *pahari*' ones. This notion of traditional *pahari* culture and its proponents, being innocent and compassionate even at the cost of personal wellbeing, is often the preamble to mobilee stories of *maidani* (often a synonym to urban) investments with exploitative and civilizing motives. Some mobilees from Mana work as program officers for international livestock development aid projects in their village. They lament the disappearance of local breeds of livestock, while implementing 'breed improvement' programs with more commercially viable, 'superior' foreign animals. Others like Suraj

¹⁰ This is a complex word that literally translates to 'aimless wanderer', but in is often used to connote the moral corruption of a person. Often, it signifies the deviation of someone from their socio-culturally ordained path of ethical life. A common lament of many senior *paharis* was that, exposure to the modern city had turned their sons *awara*.

in Ghargaon are incensed at *maidani* landowners in the village that hadn't paid wages to their workers in months, but tempered it with the thought that MGNREGA labor also faces a similar predicament. In Inari, fueled by revivalist Hindu groups, some mobilees question the validity of animal sacrifice during religious events. They cite their *maidani* encounters with "vegetarian north Indian Hinduism" that represented a more civilized way of life (See Govindrajan, 2015). But others champion the *pahari* way, regularly hunting and consuming game, describing it as an act that connected them to their ancestors.

These 'ambivalences about encounters with modernity' (Rodgers, 2009) is stark in mobilee ideas about education. Most of the young men see very little value in pursuing university education, constantly questioning the outcome of getting a degree, listing all the unemployed educated friends they have. But, they also stress the value of a good education for their kids, not in a rural public school, but in a "modern private school". While some of the older mobilees rent out rooms in regional towns that have private schools, they are unsure if ultimately their children would be competitive in the national or state level standardized exams for engineering or medical schools. A few youth, who have prepared for some of these exams, experiment with running coaching centers in regional cities. They complain about the meager profit they make, compared to how hard they have to work. Uday ran a coaching center for half a year, before switching to a fast food stall outside another center. He said, "Teaching these kids is hard work, but feeding them is fairly easy. Especially when I can get most of the ingredients delivered in bulk from the village." Uday sees education as an expanding and robust commercial venture, one that allows him to profit from the aspirations of others. Aspirations, which as he understands, are usually out of reach for most village youth, keeping them locked into expensive cycles. He noted:

I know the more these kids flock to the coaching classes the more samosas I can sell them, but sometimes I feel bad for their families. I mean realistically, how many will become doctors or

engineers? That life is for upper-class people from Dehradun and Almora¹¹. I topped my intermediate class and look at me now. For the work I do, my phone is much more important than my degree.

Along with their relationship with education, it is their tryst with the service industry through temporary contractual work that truly reveals the mobilee faith in interstitiality. In Inari and Mana the youth that move between military canteens, private security firms and private hotels, find the jobs digestible only in small doses. As most of them stated that their, “self-respect isn’t for sale”. Kundan often talked about his fellow *maidani* workers that were ready to do anything that the “boss” asked them to do. But, the management deeply mistrusts these workers, finding the *pahari* workers relatively more trustworthy and genial. Kundan left his first job after his employer hurled verbal curses at him when he broke a bottle of liquor. Remembering the experience he said:

I don’t really need a job that reduces me to an animal. I would rather just come back home and herd sheep. My father always bowed his head to the ‘big people’. I don’t mind bowing my head if I am treated with respect, but if I am not, I can’t stay silent.

Akin to Kundan, Gopal and his friends constantly change jobs, using both communal and social media networks to identify new vacancies. They mentioned how hard it was to be hired as permanent labor, but also questioned if having a permanent job was worth it. Ramesh, who worked in the canteen of a private hospital in Haldwani, noted the increased time commitment and “added *zimedari* (responsibility)” of being made permanent, and calculated that it would leave him no time to invest in his mobile phone repair shop, that he ran with a friend. He said, “The hospital job is lousy, but it comes with free room and board. This is why I could save money and start my little business. But, who knows if that shop is going to work, so I can’t just do that full time.” This lack of trust in their different entrepreneurial ventures is also a result of the encounters that the youth have with local

¹¹ Dehradun and Almora are two of the biggest and historically most prominent cities of Uttarakhand. While Dehradun was made the state capital and has seen the same haphazard growth in industry, commerce and in-migration as other north Indian ‘intermediate cities’, Almora has seen more moderated ‘development’ while retaining its position as the cultural and intellectual epicenter of *pahari* culture.

contractors and contractual work. Contractors often ‘betray’ them after initially signing them on, replacing them with more malleable and less demanding Nepali workers (see Bruslé, 2008). Furthermore, a lot of contractors are limited by project based funds that are given for a certain amount of time, with no real guarantee of extension. Arjun from Inari learned bamboo weaving under the auspices of one such program, and over the period of two years intermittently travelled 6-10 hours, to sell his products to the government employed contractor. But, the man was never there and finally after his tenth unfruitful visit, he learned that post-training the project had folded and the funding to implement the follow-up of this project had dried up. Arjun, despite this setback, wasn’t daunted since he had suspected as much and had used the trips to make connections with tourism agents at the town, and on his most recent trip managed to sell them some of his stuff for a commission. He said reminiscing about the whole incident:

You can’t trust anyone in this time. My father thought this contractor was our savior. But, I knew better. Why would he help us, are we paying him or related to him? The travel agents that bought my stuff keep 20%. They have an incentive to help me.

The praxis of the mobilees reflected both their precarity and their agency. While they preferred the flexibility of temporary wage labor that allowed them to pursue other livelihood options, they found themselves unable to trust almost anyone. As Gopal put it, “Our fathers don’t understand and our employers don’t care.” This is similar to the fears expressed by liminal youth from Africa when evaluating their chances of success as agriculturalists (White, 2012) or their intergenerational negotiations and their contested aftermaths (Porter et al., 2015). They also echo the confusing journeys that young Peruvian *altenos* embark on to realize ‘authentic’ versions of themselves, exploring relationships that allow them to secure a sense of belonging (Calestani, 2012). Thus, the mobilees along with building new networks to access livelihood and cultural aspirations are also engaged in the complex task of retrofitting the traditional moral economy of *pahari* spaces.

Borderland lives: Producing and living with ‘betweenness’

In *Daayen ya Baayen*, Bela Negi’s (2010) satirical cinematic exploration of rural *pahari* life, Ramesh – a *pahari* youth, leaves his apparently successful job in Mumbai and comes back to teach in his ancestral village in Uttarakhand. His aspirations and actions befuddle all in the remote hamlet. The series of (un)fortunate events that accompany Ramesh’s re-insertion into the village lifeworld, echo his internal struggle to negotiate the multiple subjectivities he must acknowledge. As the movie progresses, still unsure about his seemingly contentious aspirations, he strays further away from a possible reconciliation, and questions both the adoration of his peers and the admonishment of his elders. His poetic rant, laying bare the loneliness of the ‘vital conjuncture’ he finds himself at:

Where have these paths brought me?
This isn’t the home, the sky, the stars,
That I saw in my dreams...
Are they waiting or going somewhere?
Near the road, standing awkwardly,
These houses feel alien,
Despite being familiar¹².

Ramesh’s anguish, captured without any attempted narrative recourse, offers a rare, but much needed insight into the lifeworlds of young mobilees in Uttarakhand. It echoes the stories presented in the previous sections and reiterates the questions I began with: how do liminal *pahari* youth deal with their transitioning lifeworlds, and what role does new forms of mobilities play in their responses? In this section, utilizing the extensive primary empirical data, I situate *pahari* youth praxis in the broader literature on youth agency and mobility in the majority world, focusing in particular on youth encounters with interstitiality and in-betweenness. In the process, addressing the set of social and spatial practices, that transforms “their sense of being interstitial into a virtue” (Young & Jeffrey, 2012, pg. 50) while highlighting, their daily struggle to hold “at bay the connotations of deviance, isolation and

¹² Translated from the original Hindi

failure embedded in prevailing discursive constructions” (Leyshon, 2008, pg.21) of their homes and their lives.

Waiting for the prodigal son

In the winter of 2015 snow and ice shut down the precipitous unpaved road to Inari. Kundan’s father, Digar, spent many sleepless nights furtively scanning the horizon for his son. The cannabis harvest had been processed and he even had offers from a couple of buyers, but Digar didn’t understand the market or know which buyers to trust, and turned them away. It was a critical transaction for the household, accounting for half of the annual income, and impossible to conduct without Kundan. So Digar waited, in an anxious limbo, as neighbors sold their stocks, knowing full well that time was running out. He said, “I feel so stuck in this new time without Kundan. All I do is pass time with my friends and stare at the road.”

‘Waithood’ and ‘stuckness’ have been explored by many scholars studying young and marginal lives in the majority world (Jeffrey, 2010; Honwana, 2014; Gough et al., 2015). While I did encounter youth that were “engaged in forms of waiting characterized by aimlessness and ennui”(Jeffrey, 2010; pg.4), in mobilee homes it is often the relatively immobile fathers that represent ‘a waiting population’, struggling with the transitioning economic and cultural responsibilities, embodying, along with their sons, a ‘certain crisis of masculinity’ (Koskimaki, 2017). The fathers, having experienced a significant loss of socio-economic autonomy, often complain about their inability to complete or even comprehend the evolving social responsibilities of adulthood. In the post state formation decade, due to a plethora of reasons, agrarian livelihoods have rapidly declined (Awasthi et al., 2015), increasing the precarity of small farmers all over Uttarakhand, forcing male adults of many families to look for alternatives. These usually center on working on MGNREGA projects and applying for public cash-assistance and subsidy programs, followed by waiting for months and even years for the bureaucratic

promises to bear fruit (Mathur, 2015). Contrarily, the mobilees command over complex ‘mobility systems’ and constant subversion of various spatial and cultural boundaries (Hannam et al., 2006) allow them to bypass the wait for development (Fernandes, 2006) and focus instead on becoming ‘alternatively modern’ (Jeffrey, 2007). Ultimately, there is a restructuring of relational power dynamics within these parent-child ‘negotiated interdependencies’, with sons increasingly becoming the final arbitrators of vital household decisions (Punch, 2002). A critical component of this reimagining of development and maturity is their departure from older ideas of the value of education.

While mobilee actions are often in conflict with their fathers’ goals for their sons’ futures, the mismatch is most severe, when comparing the “expectations and the outcomes of education”. Kundan often made a point, reiterated by other scholars, that his schooling while necessary would never grant him access to the cultural capital and the middle class respectability that his father so desired (Morarji, 2014). The mobilees live in this interstitial space produced by intergenerational negotiations about their many possible current and future selves (Patel, 2017). Akin to other rural regions of the majority world (Morrow, 2013), agrarian livelihoods that were historically critical in social reproduction are seen antithetical to the lives of educated people by most youth and families. Within the changing village milieu, farming and farmers are seen as pejorative epithets and an affiliation to such affects the social and biological reproductive success of the youth (Majumder, 2012; Kumar, 2016). While the fathers realize this emerging change, they remain believers of the omnipotence of personal destiny, waiting for it to decide the futures of their sons (Polit, 2006). The sons unlike their fathers are less likely to assign fixed ‘use-values’ to labor, given the varied set of ethical and communal networks they are embedded within (Rigg, 1998). They believe in fate, but see it function in tandem with their efforts to utilize and access “different kinds of knowledge and places”, in the process, navigating parental worries that their “social positions were out of sync with the culturally expected rhythm of life” (Snellinger, 2016, p.33). And, contrary to Deuchar’s (2014) account of the middle class young men

from the state capital of Dehradun, that internalized a vision of ‘hope’ despite their negative experiences with formal education, the mobilees overwhelmingly eschewed higher education and ascribed their future success to their social networks and ability to navigate between the village and the city.

Mobilees see themselves as people that have missed the educational train by studying in rural public schools, which “constructed weak foundations”. While some believe in the broader national rhetoric about education’s emancipatory potential, they are fairly cautious and conservative about any real benefits, echoing similar emerging accounts of youth aspirations from North India (Young et al., 2017). In some ways, these acerbic feelings about education are also a product of their failed attempts at successfully passing competitive exams, acquiring respectable white collar jobs and fulfilling certain communal aspirations which in retrospect seemed irrational. These cleavages between generational aspirations can be better understood by situating them within the notion of differential and relational mobilities and the interrelationships between them (Skelton, 2013). For most mobilees, the lack of formal institutional moorings is foundational to their aspirational atlas. However, for the village elders, who adhere to a more incremental vision of change – the path to respectability and success is merely a patient and ‘educated’ attempt, building on their own socio-economic aspirations. Mobilees move between service industry jobs and entrepreneurial ventures, consume the products of industrial capitalism with impunity and slip in and out of different spaces both within and beyond the borders of the ancestral village, incorporating a multitude of identities and places, embodying Jeffrey and MacFarlane’s (2008) *bahurupiya* (shape changer). Kundan’s ‘immobile’ father, an ironsmith who has lived through virulent casteism, is both confounded and envious of his son’s livelihood and reproductive choices:

The confidence that Kundan has is something else. At his age, I couldn’t even look into the eyes of a higher caste person, let alone talk to them. I settled down and had five kids, because that’s what you

did. But, Kundan has just one daughter. She is wonderful, but you know she isn't a son, but he gets angry if I ask him about having more kids.

The anxiety that most fathers feel is also founded in the shifting gender and reproductive dynamics within *pahari* places. While an institutional and cultural patriarchy still permeates most *pahari* spaces (Deol, 2012; Nichols, 2016), the encounters of certain women with exploitative capitalist structures has empowered them to challenge culturally ascribed labor burdens (see Wolf, 1992). Mobilees, often in opposition to their fathers, are usually supportive of many of these reorganizations. Smith (2012) alludes to similar contentious encounters in her accounts of the 'unruly' youth of Ladakh. Describing a "generational vertigo" and the "remaking (of) territory through the body" – exposing apprehensions about a precarious future, which is visible only in bewildering snippets from the experiences of young lives and the parental attempts to manage this precarity through control. The generationally prevalent narrative of dangerous liaisons between bodies of the women and the volatile and corrupting spaces beyond communally controlled territory (Jones, 2004; McEvoy et al., 2012), is omnipresent in *pahari* homes (Goodman, 2017), with the immobile fathers and father-in-laws leading the charge. However, mobilees discursively critique the 'dangers of mobility' (Porter et al., 2010) by alluding to the 'anti-modern' and temporally regressive notions they are rooted in. But, this is not driven by a feminist desire for equity and instead mirrors the strategic mobilization of bodies to harness emerging neo-liberal socio-economic regimes and to participate in projects of modernity. Mobilees appeal for an investment in the 'development of women' (Klenk, 2004) to ensure both overall household economic security and the proper nurturing of the next generation of *paharis*. These deviant aspirations exhibited by the mobilees are met with selective condemnation. Within the emerging structures of the moral economy, a mastery over neoliberal production networks is a symbol of success and garners respect from the elders (see Van der Geest, 1997). Therefore, while Kundan's 'love marriage' and subsequent vasectomy without "producing a son", raised some eyebrows in Inari,

the common consensus seemed to be one of support, given his significant material acquisitions and progressively increasing salary.

While usually unacknowledged by the mobilees, their deviant mobile lives are enabled by the “generative friction” (Cresswell, 2014) underlying their intergenerational interactions. This friction acts, as much needed temperance to their corralling of a process that while appearing to be ‘value free’ has destabilized historical identities of *pahari* people and places. On this quest for a regional identity, the sons seemed to be situated between the fathers’, frustrated but patient, and with faith in the developmental state (Mathur, 2016) and the recent unleashing of neoliberal capitalism that novel mobilities allows them to experience (World Bank, 2012). Even as the fathers rue the risks associated with informality, they aspire for an inclusion in the “drama of Western social progress” (Jeffrey, 2010, pg. 8), that the sons find both ignorant and disruptive. As Ajay puts it, “My father’s biggest dream was to buy a car and that’s why he wanted to sell a piece of our land. As if I would waste money on a car. I am glad we sold the land after he died, I put that money down on a new dump truck.”

Moving between a mountain and a hard place

The latest edition of the *India Youth Development Index and Report* (2017) has placed Uttarakhand 4th among all the states in India, classifying it as a ‘high’ category on the development index. A companion piece to the youth report is the *Uttarakhand on Expressway to Growth* report by a national think tank, which calculates that the state has clocked the “highest compounded annual growth rate” among all the major states of India in the past decade (ASSOCHAM, 2016). A critical variable in this ‘growth and development miracle’ has been the ‘surplus supply of minimally skilled labor’, that is projected to increase significantly in the coming years (National Skill Development Corporation, 2013). Additionally, contrary to the development index findings, studies have highlighted the lack of economic dynamism and aversion to entrepreneurship among *pahari* youth (Sharma & Madan, 2014)

and questioned their ability to act as effective recipients of political decentralization (Joshi, 2013). These discourses expose the two worlds that the mobilees are caught between. Similar to Lepcha youth of Sikkim, who are seen as an amalgamation of ‘the lazy native with the apathetic youth’ (Gergan, 2014), mobilees are characterized as ‘lazy and unenterprising’ by their *maidani* employers and as ‘apathetic and uprooted’ by their elders. Their labor reduced to ‘aimless wandering’ (Porter et al., 2010) performed with little concern about their future security.

Most of the mobilees I encountered would probably be included in this unruly, restless mass of minimally skilled laborers. While mobilees are participants of a regional ‘politics of becoming’ (Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin, 2011) their praxis attempts to subvert both communal and neoliberal processes that subjugate their philosophies of work. But, what constituted the mobilee philosophy of work?

Ajay once said, “Work for my father meant sweat, but for me it means knowledge.” Mobilees are sensitive to the “unequal distribution of choice around mobility” (Cresswell et al., 2016, p.45), understanding their own mobile labor decisions in relation to the rural household’s fixity (Skelton, 2013). This inequity is amplified through their constitution of aspirations “in and through particular spaces” (Crivello, 2015, pg. 44). These spaces, which the mobilees ‘zig-zagged’ (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013) through, are often nodes within a proliferating culture of ‘informality’ (Munck, 2013). When constrained by the absence of material infrastructure, such as roads, they turn to their mobile phones, using them both as ‘transporters’ and devices for ‘space-time compression’ (Rogaly & Thieme, 2012), to try and bridge the ‘corporeal disconnect’ (Skelton & Gough, 2013) they feel from the other worlds they belong to, marooned on the ‘Himalayan Island’ (M Mehta, 1990). While both politicians and village elders, draw parallels between the mobilee praxis and the spread of informal livelihoods, “stigmatizing (them) as transient states” (Thieme, 2017, pg. 8), the youth are more assured about the permanence of this ‘mode of practice’ (Roy, 2004). Especially since, the mobilees are not a

manifestation of Standing's (2011) 'precariat' – temporary part-time workers that were victims of structural exploitation living with little or no agency. Instead, they frequently seek out spaces, both material and virtual, produced by new regimes of mobility, which gives them a relative advantage over their more seemingly 'skilled' peers (Brown, 2015). Kundan intentionally works for contractors that want workers who don't mind living in 'remote and hazardous' places and pay a premium for it. Furthermore, while they imagine a spread of "in-betweenness" in the coming time, they don't create a value hierarchy of labor, situating informality over all else. Their work trajectories "intertwine different forms of economic practice" (Rodgers, 2009, pg. 25) hinting to the broader transformations of *pahari* society.

Ultimately, mobilees support a diversifying moral economy, which is not regulated by the laws of the state or of the village, but is subservient to the intersections of privilege and precarity that people occupy. According to Ajay his illegal stone mining operation is sustained both by his *majboori* (helplessness) and by his *yogyata* (ability), and cannot be understood through black and white ideas of right and wrong.

Whether it is Ajay's stone mining or Kundan's sale of homegrown narcotics, mobilee lives are increasingly lived between new articulations of the historically unequal encounters between *paharis* and outsiders. These encounters have been overwhelmingly held responsible for amplifying the precarity of the marginalized *pahari* lifeworld (Govindrajan, 2015; Fiol, 2013). However, the mobilees challenge this hegemonic narrative by appropriating the regional practices and languages of modernity and development in emancipatory ways (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003). The experiences of youth with 'exclusionary urbanism' in the cities of *maidani* India complicate the rural narrative of 'cities being the only place for dreams' (Grunawalt, 2012). This produces a desire for regional mobility, often imagining the "village not in opposition to mobility but rather as a central tenet to its formulation" (Schneiderman, 2015, pg.333). Furthermore, responding to a "demographic landscape marked by flux

and friction” (Joshi, 2015, pg.6) mobilees construct an orbital space that allows them to distribute their trust, in multiple places and people. They gravitate away from big cities, where they have experienced a dilution of their agency, and ‘return to the region’, moving towards interstitial places and practices that allow them to build upon their unique hybrid subjectivities (Young and Jeffrey, 2012). However, the limits of their agency is clear – mobilees “grasped at worlds within their actual reach” (Koskimaki, 2017, pg. 149). Gopal sells his tomatoes in regional towns and villages, keeping a safe distance from the pervasive reach of the powerful *maidani* wholesalers, filling the seasonal gaps in their supply instead of directly competing with them. Furthermore, the mobilees also internalize certain ‘hustler’ practices (Thieme, 2017), as a method to overcome both their systemic obstacles and to reframe *paharis* as more than just innocent adolescents (Mathur, 2012), while engaging in personal or commercial transactions with *maidanis*. But, the results of such dubious improvisations are contentious. While Ajay successfully competes in land brokering with *maidani* agents, he often laments that he is “cutting the branch he is sitting on”.

The praxis of *pahari* mobilees like Ajay underlays the same ambivalence that characterizes *pahari* places. While these formations are both ‘relational and territorial’ (Murray et al., 2016), each reinforcing the other, the foundational anxiety seems to be centered on the articulation of borders. Borders, both as boundaries delineating the contours of the new identities being forged and as ‘moments of immobility’ (Cresswell, 2014) bringing into sharp focus the limits of agency. The *pahari* mobilee prophecy against the ‘transience of interstitiality’, is a product of their awakening sense of regional marginalization within neo-liberal South Asia and their rejection of both *pahari* and *maidani* tropes of adulthood and masculinity, that fail to engage with their new mobile subjectivities.

Conclusion

Much of the work associated with the “new mobilities paradigm” (Cresswell, 2010) suffers from metrocentricity –focus on a few megacities (Scrase et al., 2015) and eurocentricity – focus on the minority world (Cresswell, 2016). Additionally, much of the burgeoning research on youth agency and mobility has been ‘stuck’ within bounded categories of class, place and region, ignoring the social and spatial practices of young lives that are part of the “emerging circuits of enterprise that connect rural areas with...intermediate urban areas” (Young & Jeffrey, 2012, pg.50). By contrast, I have examined the praxis of liminal youth that move within liminal places, creating unique articulations of respectable livelihoods, intergenerational relationships and cultures of masculinity, while exploring the limits of their agency.

My central argument is that the social and spatial practice of these mobilees betrays their feelings about the ‘permanence of the in-betweeness’ that they are embedded within. Eschewing lives in South Asian megacities, they choose to inhabit the intermediate spaces, choosing a regional mobility over promises of joining the hegemonic “global middle class”. Their exploitative experiences in modern, urban *maidani* places, serving both as a cautionary tale and a demonstration of the limits of their agency. Their praxis, supported by novel mobilities emanating from expanding networks of roads and telecommunication, challenges the mythologies of *pahari* adulthood and masculinity. While they subvert popular notions about the emancipatory potential of education, they do so within the spatio-temporal context of the unique intersections of privilege and precarity that they occupy. Furthermore, even though they support certain restructuring of gender and reproductive dynamics, their motivation is usually the optimization of cultural and economic capital and they envision the in-betweeness as an exclusively masculine space and sense of being. Situated on the borders of adulthood/childhood, *maidani/pahari*, mobility/immobility, their lives offer a unique and much needed insight into the agency

of liminal youth and their trysts with new forms of mobility, and in the process ‘decenter mobilities research’ (Cresswell, 2016) by adding a much needed narrative from the margins.

This chapter makes a case for further research on the ‘affect of in-betweenness’ (Young & Jeffrey, 2012), in the lives of people living between such transitioning worlds. While, this chapter has explored the opinions of young *pahari* mobilees about the changing contours of labor or reproduction, the voices of young *pahari* women and their encounters with these new mobilities remains unexplored. Has the nexus of neoliberalism and developmental discourses amplified their marginalization or has it granted them new ‘weapons of the weak’?

Another question of importance concerns the emerging reconfigurations of the mobile, rural household in South Asia. Some studies have recently highlighted the cross dimensional relations of power that are being negotiated in ‘multilocal’ house holding (Korzenevica & Agergaard, 2017), others point to the probable creation of new solidarities through movement among rural migrants (Ramakrishnan, 2014). Exploring these emerging formations of family, labor and place are the necessary corollary to understanding the foundations of the in-betweenness that certain marginalized populations seemingly aspire for.

In the following chapter I situate this praxis of *pahari* mobilees within the relationships that emerge when *pahari* households are viewed through the prism of relational vulnerability. In doing so, I answer the central question of this dissertation.

Chapter 5 - “I carry my home with me. Not just memories of it, but also where it needs to go”

Pahari youth, household vulnerability and place making in Uttarakhand

Migrancy provides a particularly compelling window into the spatial dynamics of modernity as the promise of improvement or advancement in various senses, and as the sense of never reaching or realizing its content despite its symbolic authority
Chari and Gidwani, 2005

“Where is my home? Is it where I live or is it where I have relationships? These days I feel as if I carry my home with me. Not just memories of it, but also where it needs to go”
Chanchal Singh, Inari village

Introduction

On a dark starless night in November 2016, a packed news media vehicle raced up the circuitous highway NH309A. It was enroute to Munsyari, a city bordering the formidable glaciers of the Kumaon Himalayas. On board, along with assorted newspapers, mail and packages, sat crammed six young ‘migrant’ men. They were headed to the village of Inari, a journey they made intermittently from their short-term contract based jobs in factories, offices and hotels in the plains. Chanchal, who had just quit his job in a recording studio in Mumbai’s film industry, was the most pensive. His grandfather had died last week, setting into motion a variety of negotiations about property, inheritance and filial responsibilities, within his extended village kinship network. Chanchal’s father, Sadhu Singh, was the middle son and had lived separately from his father and two brothers, who were now denying the ownership of his share of the land, by forging a fake death certificate for him. Chanchal said, “My uncles tell me I am a big *saeth* (businessman) in Mumbai and send loads of money back to my father, so he has no use for this land. But, while I may not have any money, I am not ‘simple’ like my father. I got the SDM to write a letter to the local police inspector, mentioning my

father's army pension card number, BPL card number and voter registration card number. Let's see what happens once the police shows up." A scanned copy of this letter had reached the village before Chanchal. His wife Neetu had printed it out at her computer training class at a local town, and slipped it under the front door of the police station with a typed note 'signed' by Chanchal. Near dawn as the vehicle stopped for a *chai* (tea) break, Chanchal said, "My uncles' think that my father is alone and they can exploit him. But, what they forget is that I am here as well. I know more about my home, than the people that live in it"

In recent years there has been a focus on the migration processes of youth in the majority world (Crivello, 2011; Punch, 2015; Thorsen, 2013). Drawing on new critical and feminist approaches to understanding the agency of young people as well as the social construction of childhood and youth, scholars have revealed the variegated experiences and stories emerging from this movement (Ansell, 2009; Jeffrey, 2008; Skelton et al., 2013). Despite such efforts, the complex interplay between youth transitions, migration and relationships (Punch, 2015) remains mostly unexplored. Furthermore, discourses surrounding the movement of youth between rural and urban spaces in the majority world suffer from acute essentialization due to the use of popular compartmentalized approaches favored by developmental institutions (Huijsmans, 2015). To address this, there is a need to focus on the relational networks of these young people as well as understand their critical negotiations with older people, and the ways in which these produce and reproduce the practices of migration and the people and places that they are embedded within (Huijsmans, 2014; Punch, 2015). Young migrant men like Chanchal experience geographies and spatialities differently from adults (Skelton, 2013), are critical actors in the dynamic moral and material economies of the rural household (Morrow, 2013), but are usually invisible in explorations of the relationships foundational to the relational vulnerability of households (Langevang, 2008).

In the Himalayan region the historical and changing modalities of human mobility have been well documented (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2011). While migration has been overwhelmingly represented and interrogated through financial remittances, their determinants and their impact assessments on families ‘left behind’ (Hoermann & Kollmair, 2009), certain recent attempts have challenged such reductionist, developmental indicator driven analysis with a more emergent and relational epistemology (Shneiderman, 2015; Harris, 2013). However, the specific experiences and narratives of youth migrants, akin to other majority world spaces, are still conspicuously absent¹³, especially their importance within the various power relations operating in the intimate space of the home. This chapter addresses this lacuna by building on the revelations of relational vulnerability from Chapter 3 and the praxis of mobile, male youth from Chapter 4.

In the sections that follow, I position the often invisible migrants like Chanchal, within the web of relationships, critical for the material and affective reproduction of *pahari* homes, and explore their role in the relational vulnerability of certain changing Himalayan households. In doing so, I utilize both scholarship on youth mobilities as well as feminist and post-structuralist perspectives on migration that highlights the ‘mobility and fixity’ of homes, labor(s) and identities (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Mobile, migrant, modern youth

Internal youth migrants in South Asia and the Himalayan region are marginalized in the mostly livelihood focused and developmental indicator driven migration scholarship (Coffey et al., 2015; Deshingkar, 2006; Keshri & Bhagat, 2010; Piotrowski et al., 2013). This is surprising given the documented prevalence of many forms of migration in most rural households, which are undertaken by youth (Whitehead et al., 2007). But recently, informed by novel studies on youth agency and politics

¹³ For some notable exceptions see Huijsmans, 2014 and Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017.

(Jeffrey, 2010; Snellinger, 2016; Morrow, 2013), ethnographies of work and labor (Chari & Gidwani, 2005; Lord, 2016; Ramamurthy, 2010) and analysis through the ‘new’ mobilities paradigm (Brown, 2015; Korzenevica, 2016), certain scholars have articulated South Asian and Himalayan ‘feminist geographies of youth migration’. These accounts have highlighted the production of particular diasporic subjectivities of migrant Himalayan youth within *maidani* Indian cities (Smith, 2015), provisional youth agency at the intersections of structures promoting racial/ethnic subjugation, state development and generational anxieties (Gergan, 2014), the role of familial relations in the formation of probable migrant youth identities (Patel, 2017) and the encounters of youth with different interventions of the state to manage the act of migration itself (Snellinger, 2018). While these efforts are laudable, they are still in a nascent state and as Snellinger (2013) notes these “have begun to scratch the surface in analyzing the subjectivities of young migrants, but more is needed to get a nuanced understanding...” (p. 94).

Snellinger’s comments ring especially true in Uttarakhand (*pahar*), where despite significant populations of migrant and mobile youth, very little is known about their lifeworlds. Regional migration scholarship has been rooted firmly in quantitative statistical models, empirically ‘calibrated’ with reductionist survey tools (Joshi, 2013; Mamgain & Reddy, 2016; Sood et al., 2017). Additionally, fears of rampant outmigration, creation of ‘ghost villages’ through de-peopling places, and youth disenchantment and refusal to partake in historical agrarian livelihoods, has created essentialized, monolithic renditions of *pahari* migrant youth aspirations and subjectivities (Chauhan et al., 2001; Poonam, 2017). These characterizations further the notion of exceptional Himalayan precarity, connected to legacies of THED, that visualize the migration of young people as a structural outcome of regional processes (Tiwari and Joshi, 2016; Shukla et al., 2016). But, Jeffrey and Dyson (2014, 2016) in an exploration of ‘prefigurative politics’ and youth politicking offer a rare insight into the praxis of certain mobile youth in a *pahari* village. Their account highlights the spectrum of ‘social frustrations’

faced by local youth and their actions in the face of such constraints, which both subvert and reify cultures of oppression. Addressing similar notions of identity formation, place building and mobility, Koskimaki (2017) highlights the regional assertion of youth masculinities. Her unveiling of a particular form of masculine youth agency emphasizes the aspirations and experiences of mobile young men, who form the major population of the region's migrants and embody the gendered spatialities of labor and mobility. Young *pahari* migrant men, emerge as a category, which akin to other such subjectivities, are imagined through tropes of migration as a masculine rite of passage and equal beneficiaries of the 'patriarchal dividend' (Charsley & Wray, 2015), their various intersectional power struggles consumed by dominant models of manhood. Similar to the educated, unemployed men of the plains of north India (Jeffrey, 2008b; Jeffrey & Young, 2014) and the Nepali migrant men in Indian cities (Bruslé, 2008; Valentin, 2012), mobile *pahari* youth are an embodiment of the 'in-between' (Young and Jeffrey, 2012), but their subjectivities remain an "insufficiently analyzed dimension" (Koskimaki, 2017, p.139). Additionally, similar to other accounts of youth mobility and migration from the majority world, these analyses neglect the "field of the household as a key relational space in which migration dynamics unfold and that itself is reworked through migration" (Huijsmans, 2015, p.8).

This chapter, by using a relational approach and focusing on the 'more than remittances' connections between youth migrants and their households, addresses both these issues. Additionally it speaks to the concerns of 'dying' rural households and concerns in the face of youth outmigration by focusing on the probable socio-spatial transformation of the household, due to contentious negotiations between differently mobile members (Huijsmans, 2016). Second, it supports the vision of households that, much like the migrant, are constantly 'becoming' (Cresswell, 2004). And understanding this process requires a more situated analysis of the cross-dimensional relations of power. Ultimately, by exploring the position of youth within the social fabric of intra-household relations in tandem with their engagements with the social networks engendering the limits of their

mobility, it challenges dualist articulations of migrant/stayer, mobile/immobile, villager/outsider and allows for a reimagining of the youth migrant within critical processes of household reproduction and wellbeing (Korzenevica & Agergaard, 2017; Thieme & Ghimire, 2014).

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan's (2003) vision of the migrant as a "creature of modest aspirations, prescience, and agency" (p.205), speaks seamlessly to this exploration of young migrants within questions of intra-household relations of power and negotiations for the future. As the analysis of the relationships informing relational vulnerability revealed in Chapter 3, mobile young *pahari* men are important agents in the vital relationships producing *pahari* households. However, their material and affective roles within these relationships remains unexplored. Informed by this, in the following sections, I draw on the conclusions from Chapter 3 that posit a post-indicator assessment of vulnerability within *pahari* households and relate it to the praxis of the 'in-between' *pahari* mobilees that I ethnographically explore in Chapter 4. And in doing so, I finally explore how *pahari* mobilees effect the relational vulnerability of their rural households. How does this inform our understanding of place making and migrant youth agency in the majority world?

Producing relational *pahari* places

The walls of Digar Ram's house in Inari are covered with posters and photographs. They represent the household's encounters with different processes of modernity and development. An alpine railway line surrounded by pictures of European skiers framed by the Alps hangs next to a portrait of the Indian freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. Accompanying them is a sun-bleached photograph of Digar's father with his army regiment. However, amidst all these, over the newly acquired television, sandwiched between portraits of a Bollywood actress and the infant deity Krishna (Hindu god), is an innocuous black and white parchment, inside a protective glass frame. Digar, like other SC (lower caste) *pahari* men his age, is illiterate and on one of our meetings, asked me to fetch

the document and read it out loud. It was a computer literacy certification that his daughter-in-law Rupa had received. I asked him how he felt about this and Digar said thoughtfully,

My wife couldn't even sign her name, but times are different now. My son Kundan pushed Rupa to get this. He keeps telling me that computers are the future. So now Rupa has a job with a NGO, she runs an after-school computer literacy program for school children. The pay isn't great, but it takes care of my grandchildren's school costs. But, now there is no one to get grass for the cows. Kundan says I should sell them...I am not sure what to do

A few weeks later when I was at the regional railway station, I met Kundan, who was on his way back home.

He said, I am between contracts, so I figured I would go back to the village and check on things. Also, Rupa keeps complaining that without a computer at home she is forgetting things. So, I bought a laptop on installments. It'll help with the children's education as well. Hopefully, I can convince the old man to sell the bullocks to help pay for this. Those animals are completely unnecessary, our neighbor can plow our fields for Rs.500/day, and it takes three days to plow, twice a year. What is the need of holding onto those animals?

As highlighted throughout the various chapters of this work, *pahari* spaces underlie certain particular encounters between processes and agents (Hewitt and Mehta, 2012). The rural *pahari* household, akin to other majority world accounts, is often the place and site of the various negotiations of home, family and locatedness (Tan and Yeoh, 2011). However, mobile young migrants like Kundan, usually 'invisible', play a critical role in these negotiations by mediating their complex relationships across space and time (see Punch, 2015). In the lines below I explore these relationships through a few different stories. While these stories are about individual households they reflect the broader situations that I encountered. Furthermore, by presenting these detailed accounts, I hope to use stories as an illustrative and framing device to reveal the various subject positions expressed (Lawson, 2000; Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) within emerging *pahari* households.

I situate these stories within the four key relationships identified in Chapter 3 as being foundational to relational vulnerability in rural Uttarakhand.

Encountering the patriarch: Subverting tropes of corruption

In *pahari* homes there is a constant negotiating of power between the father-in-law and the daughter-in-law. These contentions are catalyzed by the changing culture of livelihoods, formal education and consumption. The daughter-in-laws often mobilize discourses of modernity and development to counter their subjugated labor positions, in the process, transforming the household.

While *pahari* homes remain deeply patriarchal, there are certain mutinous rumblings within the old stone walls. Ekta says, “We are not our mothers, but we are not our brothers either”. I agree with her, since her younger brother goes to a private school in a local town, all his educational, boarding and lodging expenses paid by his family, including Ekta, from Ghargaon village. Ekta attends the local public school and works at an NGO, three days a week, making toys. In early 2016, as her marriage was being arranged, she seemed apprehensive, “I hope I can keep up my education after the marriage. That was my only condition when I said yes to this. I don’t want to spend my time only taking care of buffaloes, I am not an illiterate country bumpkin”. While Ekta, akin to many other *pahari* women (Deol, 2012; Dhyani et al., 2013), echoed justified fears she was comforted by her sister-in-law’s experiences. Her sister-in-law, Ruhi’s complex negotiation of her labor duties, provides a critical insight into the cultural politics of labor and her mobilee husband’s role in subverting the tropes of corruption (Chari and Gidwani, 2005, p.), that constrained her aspirations and mobility through gendered fears of moral ruin and social vilification.

Ruhi and Suraj were married in the spring of 2014. At the time, Suraj worked as an apprentice to a building *thekedar* in the terai, helping draft and construct cheap brick houses, getting paid in room and board. Ruhi had a bachelor’s degree in history and wanted to pursue a teaching profession. But a few months into her marriage, she realized that her in-laws found such livelihood aspirations quaint and fanciful. Ruhi said recalling those days, “I cried and I cried. I had wanted so much from my life, wanted things to be different than it was for my mother...but, I felt I was headed towards exactly her

fate...” Suraj, who in those days had no income to speak of, was confounded by the *maidani* work world and often professionally exploited by the contractor. He was an educated, unemployed young man, a denizen of the north Indian population of ‘Generation Nowhere’ (Jeffrey, 2008). After a year with the contractor Suraj quit and moved back home, but homecoming wasn’t without its own challenges – “I felt as if I came back to a warzone. Ruhi and my parents could not find any common ground. And I was caught in the middle. A husband and wife should be ‘frank’ with each other and partners...we had none of that”.

Suraj’s homecoming coincided with the opening of a rural business processing unit (BPO) in a nearby town. The BPO, which dealt with outsourced ‘back-office’ analytical and accounting work, needed an ‘architect’ to construct future extensions to their center. Suraj applied and got the job and along with it was confronted with the structures underlying the “emergence of a new rurality” (Kumar, 2016, p.61). The BPO was hiring local youth and Suraj knew Ruhi could make the cut – “I came back home that day and told her about it. This wasn’t her dream, but it was better than nothing and it paid better than any private teaching job”. Suraj’s parents were a lot less excited. His father in particular voiced concerns about the family’s chronic agrarian labor shortage and detailed all the dangers to Ruhi’s ‘dignity’ and through her the ‘family honor’. The patriarch was reiterating communal gendered moral constraints over women’s bodies and mobilities (Goodman, 2017). But, Suraj had an answer:

I told my father, if you had wanted someone to take care of the buffaloes, then you should have gotten me married to an illiterate girl. You can’t expect her to have a BA and cut grass all day. Furthermore, I lied to him that they had hired me as their permanent building contractor, which wasn’t true, but I knew that once Ruhi started earning money, and other women in the village also worked there, it would stop mattering to them.

In the summer of 2015, as Ruhi started working at the center, Suraj’s small construction business took off. And like Suraj had predicted, as her monthly salary started rolling in the parental dissent became feeble. The money allowed the family to pay for a cooking gas connection, which greatly reduced the firewood gathering burden on the three women in the house. Empowered by her

sister-in-law that had changed certain ‘intra-household’ cultural modalities, Ekta got a job at an NGO in late 2015. I met Ruhi and Suraj in the *pahari* city of Nainital where they often came to visit relatives and friends. Ruhi had recently been promoted and bought us coffees – she said:

I had never thought this was what my life would be like. Suraj is on the road all the time, buying bricks in the plains, or building houses in some random village but I don’t feel afraid doing things alone anymore. More than education, it is having a say in the household that has given me self-confidence. Everybody says, ‘*beti padhao*’ (educate daughters), but education without opportunity is *bekar* (useless).

Suraj added:

Bhaiyya (older brother), we are very small people, we live very limited lives. I feel, instead of worrying too much constantly about what is right and wrong, we should be working to better our lives. I don’t have time to think about all these rules about who should do what, based on their caste, age or gender, and honestly these don’t matter as much in these modern times. That’s what I tell Ruhi, just worry about your work, and don’t get involved in anything else, because the village society is like the soap operas on TV.

Back in Ghargaon Ruhi still milks the lone cow the household owns, her father-in-law has sold the rest, rented out their family fields, built polyhouses to grow commercial vegetables to reduce the labor need and now buys fertilizer to use in the fields and orchards. He reflected, “I don’t agree with everything these ‘kids’ do, but it is the age of money. Ruhi’s salary helps pay for my younger son’s schooling and has made our lives more comfortable. I do miss the cattle sometimes, but one must live according to the times”.

Contracted livelihoods: Embracing the precarious life

Thekedars have emerged as a major source of livelihood for many *pahari* youth. Along with providing employment, these contractors spatially extend caste and community based social networks, allowing households access to urban and industrial spaces. However, they also subvert systems of accountability by their informal and dubious labor and managerial practices, embedding the youth in new forms of precarity.

Migrancy as an experience is seen especially susceptible to the specter of precarity – the uncertain, unpredictable, economically insecure culture accompanying the changing political and economic relationships between individuals/communities and the neo-liberal, market-oriented globalized statist world order (Lee & Kofman, 2012; Paret & Gleeson, 2016). In Inari, even as the old men sitting at tea-shops aspire for secure, pension paying, public jobs for their children, mobilees like Sunil counter them, “In this new time, we have to be *lachila* ¹⁴(flexible but graceful, like the movements of a dancer). We have to get our way without *mar-peat* (direct confrontation) and anger. I don’t trust anyone. Even when I have a job, I am trying to find something better. A job isn’t just about the work I have to do, I also have to evaluate the other benefits”. Sunil exercises his agency without direct contestation, embracing the informality of his work life as the only ‘mode of practice’ (Roy, 2004), but as he says, the ‘other benefits’ – the ‘possibilities’ (Thieme, 2017) within such makeshift arrangements and accessing them, usually pervades his alternative interpretations of work. Sunil’s negotiations of the various contingencies of working for different contractors in the *maidani* cities vs. his father’s disastrous encounters, provides a critical insight into the role of mobilees in sustaining pluri-active *pahari* households amidst agrarian transformation and emergence of new ruralities (Kumar, 2016).

Chandan Singh, Sunil’s father, is a man of few words. He is an active member of the *van panchayat* and spends a few months every year herding sheep in the high altitude bugyals. He knows how to survive in the ‘wild’, defying both exposure and predators. A bear encounter has left him with deep scar across his back, but this ‘accident’ he claims was far less ‘dangerous’ than his experiences as a young laborer in New Delhi. Chandan was eighteen when he dropped out of his final year of high

¹⁴ A hard term to translate, *lachila*, literally means flexible. But, it is a lot more than that. It is also a word that refers to the body of a dancer and the way it moves through space – with the cadence, strength and grace which allows the aesthetic and the utilitarian to merge, without arguing for the significance of one or the other. For a lot of *pahari* youth, an open revolt against the institutions they are a part of, is out of the question. And in fact they see such a confrontation as a tear in the fabric they are trying to weave between the different worlds they occupy. A successful mediation between these seeming divergences is similar to the movements of a skill full dancer moving through a heterogenous space, the movement of the body tying together various expectations without seeming strained or forced.

school and hitchhiked with a friend to the Indian capital. They had a friend from the village who lived in the busy industrial city of Ghaziabad, part of the national capital region, and had spoken about the unending supply of jobs in the post liberalization boom of late 1990s India. Ghaziabad was a hub of heavy industrial manufacturing units, which attracted migrant labor from across north India. Staying in makeshift dwellings, often five or more to a room, as was Chandan's case. This vast work force was overworked, underpaid and exploited in a variety of ways. Chandan says remembering those days:

I worked for a contractor from Meerut, he also rented me the room I shared with the other workers, he would take the rent out of my monthly salary. I would often work fourteen hour shifts, and then be asked to work longer if I wanted overtime. At night when I walked home, the streets were full of *thekas* (liquor shops) and brothels. There would be fights all the time, and no one ever got offered a permanent job

After six months at an arms manufacturing factory, the contractor fired him, replacing him with cheaper and more willing to do overtime laborers from Bihar. His low wage rate and high costs of living in Ghaziabad had left him with no savings, and Chandan was given a week to pay the rent that he was already behind on, or risk being beaten up by the contractor's goons. He says,

I was desperate. I couldn't go back home, after running away against my father's wishes and not even completing my high school. But, I didn't know anyone in Ghaziabad, my Inari friend had moved to a different city by this time and back then there were no mobile phones like we have today. The contractor had suggested that I try selling blood and so that's what I did.

But one day while leaving the blood bank, he was approached by one of the contractor's 'aides' with a proposition. If he agreed to it, they would harvest one of his kidneys and give him about five lakhs (\$10,000). Chandan was scared, but he was also down to his last straw, it was either this or returning home to Inari, with no money, no job and no education. He decided to agree and showed up at the blood bank at the agreed time, but the man stood him up. Next morning he was woken up by loud knocks on the door, it was the police. They threw him in the back of a van along with about ten other men and drove them to the station. At the station, the police interrogated Chandan for three hours – "The *thekedar* was a *daaku* (dacoit). The police had raided his 'fake' medical clinic and found

half dozen severely infected men just like me. He had taken their kidneys and left them to die. The police wanted to know what he had said to me, so that they could catch him...but I was too afraid to speak, so they slapped me a few times and let me go”. Chandan says, he returned home that same night, packed his few belongings and went back to Inari and never left the village again. Ghaziabad, akin to other such spaces, was a “legal twilight zone” (Chauhan et al., 2018), offering these liminal, usually rural youth, no legal or political protection. Sunil grew up hearing various embellished versions of this story. In some his father was rescued by the cops from the fake clinic, in others, he was the one who tipped the authorities about the racket. Despite the formidable presence of this cautionary tale in the household, Sunil decided to get a job with the local *thekeedar* Sher Singh, right after his high school graduation. Justifying his decision he said:

My father knows the differences between the hundreds of medicinal herbs growing in the meadows, but he can't tell the difference between a man and a bear in the city. These old people are jungle (primitive, literally from the jungle) anyone can make a fool out of them. I am not surprised about what happened to him in the city, I mean he still believes the *baniya* (wholesale produce seller) when he claims that our potato harvest got plundered by termites as it lay in his warehouse. I may not know about the soil, but I know how to read people. I watch the news, I've been to local towns many times, and I have friends everywhere. No one can hustle me

Sunil, while working for Sher Singh at an auto-parts factory in the state SEZ in the terai, started an informal apprenticeship with an electrician. Sher Singh's propensity for hiring his caste and community members, ensured that Sunil's co-workers were often youth from Inari or neighboring villages that he knew from fairs, “They would punch me in if I was late, and have my back if the foreman questioned by absence. I got them back by dealing with all their electrical problems, free of charge”. Sunil and his friends would often spend their evenings in the shopping malls that were mushrooming all over the city (see Gooptu, 2009). One evening, as he hung out outside one of them with his friends and smoked a little cannabis that he had brought from Inari, he was approached by some students from the local college. Recounting that night he said, “I realized then that I could make more money per week, than I made at the factory a month, selling cannabis to these college kids”.

Sunil went home immediately and told his father about the plan. Chandan was worried, afraid about both the law enforcement and the probable negative ramifications of becoming a commercial drug dealer. But, Sunil had a plan in mind. He approached Sher Singh with the idea, “You know how it is, if you want to swim in the lake, you’ve got to inform the big fish”. With Sher Singh’s blessings and promise to buy most of the ‘product’ Sunil rolled out his business, “The police stopped me once in Bageshwar (a big regional town), but it took one phone call to the *thekedar*, and now they leave me alone”. Seeing the cash roll in, and his son do something with purpose that involved significant material return, Chandan asked his son to quit all his other activities and focus on being a full time lackey to Sher Singh. But, Sunil was a lot more taciturn,

‘This isn’t what I want to do forever. What the old man doesn’t know is that I’ve been saving money to start my own thekedari operation. Plus, this cannabis trade is a low profit enterprise, with significant risks, the real money is in medicinal plants. I am already in talks with some traders from Munsyari that want *keeda ghas* (*Cordyceps sinensis*), they say that there is a big market for it in China. And father is up in the bugyals where they grow with the sheep all the time. We can set it up right here in Inari, away from all the police and surveillance. He can sell it from home, while I do my *thekedari* business.

Unlike his father, who saw Sher Singh as a benevolent, though unconventional, ‘caretaker’ of his household, Sunil, kept the *thekedar* at arm’s length. Using him for his position within certain ‘webs of influence’, while simultaneously looking for a better ‘deal’ for his household and future aspirations. Furthermore, the spatialities of his livelihoods were not confined to one particular place (Cresswell et al., 2016). Unlike Chandan, he didn’t feel the need to choose between the *pahar* and the *maidani*.

By 2016 Sunil had managed to get his brother into the hospital clerical staff that Sher Singh provided in the plains, and through it, the family got access to inhalers at wholesale prices for Chandan, who was an asthmatic. Sunil said comparing his experiences with the ‘city’ to his father’s:

I think of it as a chess game. You have to advance different pieces at different times, while constantly protecting your ‘home’. Father’s generation left the village, with fear and honesty. They were afraid of many things and they would always tell people how they really felt. That was the problem. That may work in the village, with your family, but it doesn’t work in New Delhi. Not even my own brother

knows what I am about to do next. I don't reveal my plans to anyone, because that trust is what people use to stab you in the back.

Developing reproduction: Performing fatherhood

Pahari households articulate a contradictory set of aspirations about reproduction, citing a variety of contingencies. The geopolitical burdens of belonging to a border region intersect with the neo-Malthusian discourses of overpopulation from state developmental agencies to create a conflicting set of responsibilities and reproductive subjectivities for *pahari* families. These considerations are played out against the transforming modalities of childhood and education in rural *pahari* spaces.

In recent years, the national and regional news media of India has focused on a third narrative about Uttarakhand, adding to the usual discourses of ecological/religious tourism and natural disaster and hazards (Mathur, 2015). This is the growing number of functionally empty or 'ghost villages' (Trivedi, 2012; Pankaj and Pant, 2016). The argument is simple, developmental failure, lack of employment and the hardships associated with Himalayan agriculture and life in general, has catalyzed an unprecedented migration towards greener pastures in the plains. Politicians and planners have suggested multiple strategies to regulate this apparent de-peopling of *pahar*, but none seemed to have worked. Even as *pahari* places are facing this 'crisis', the national Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in a recent policy brief has stated that a "reduction in fertility and population growth rates remain a challenge for policymakers and planners in Uttarakhand" (Indian Institute for Population Sciences, 2016, p.2). The report also adds that most of the population and fertility 'successes' achieved in Uttarakhand has been through female sterilization, but in order to meet the nationally decided demographic goals, the government needs to focus on women's education, women's access to contraception and support activities to increase women's age at marriage. At Mahesh Singh's house in the village of Mana, these changing demographic and reproductive realities are often hotly debated.

Mahesh's son, Gopal, is a mobilee enmeshed in complex processes of householding and is often an agent in such negotiations with his father. His trepidations and aspirations about fatherhood, education and identity highlight the "various individual practices migration engenders and the ways that those understandings are integrated into wider identity projects" (Osella & Osella, 2000, p.130), that reproduce and contest certain intra-household power hierarchies.

Gopal acts like the prince of Mana. He spends all morning working with his tomato plants, or fixing the drip irrigation system or checking the vermicompost pit for discrepancies, embodying the best of both worlds – a 'modern' farmer. In the afternoon he makes his rounds in the marketplace, usually engaging in political or cultural debate with much older men. In many ways he is a 'social man'— he helps out in various community 'problems'. Furthermore he is from a relatively prosperous family (by rural standards), is GC, high school educated and likes to keep abreast of many communal political matters (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2016). However, as Bharat Singh, his cousin and local business owner informed me, in the past things were a lot more tumultuous.

Mahesh years ago built a house in the terai to start cultivating the land his father had left him. This necessitated a reconfiguration of the household. The livestock and grain farming were consigned to his wife and younger son, who moved down to the *maidani* home, while Gopal and Mahesh stayed back to tend to their lands in Mana. Mahesh who personally had worked with civil society organizations had high hopes for his older son, who he sent to a private college in Nainital. But, Gopal had no interest in becoming what he called a *buddhijeevi samaj sevak* (intellectual social worker). He drank, partied and after his first year dropped out of college and came back home. Mahesh was furious and tried both carrot and stick, to get his son 'back on track'. But, Gopal would have none of it. He opened a small grain mill business in the town center which quickly bellied up, undeterred he next tried his hand at commercial farming, which wasn't very profitable either. At this juncture, Mahesh gave him an ultimatum – if he didn't find employment soon he would get him married and he would

put him to work on a civil society project. Gopal remained unemployed and so Mahesh made him in charge of an after school children's education center. But, finding a woman to marry him proved to be much harder. As Gopal says it, "No one wanted their daughter to marry a boy who farmed and stayed in the village" (see Majumder, 2012). Finally, a distant relative from a different district agreed to the match and Gopal was married. However, the damage was done to his ego – "All I heard during those days was what a failure I was and how I had brought shame to my family and was such a loser that I couldn't even get married. That is when I decided that I would make everyone eat their words". Through it all Mahesh emerged as one of Gopal's main antagonizers, constantly chiding him for wasting both time and money. Gopal would fight back, claiming that the village society was not ready to accept men that didn't want to be servants to *maidanis* in the plains, and instead wanted to make it work in *pahari* places.

After his marriage, to avoid these daily altercations with Mahesh, Gopal accompanied his wife to their house in the terai and started spending more time down there helping his mother and wife with agricultural duties. Left alone in the house in Mana, Mahesh would drink a lot, visit relatives in other villages and neglect the house and the fields. After one long trip to the house in Tanakpur, Gopal returned to Mana to find his polyhouses ripped by a bear, dirt and leaves piled high outside the house door, and his father passed out amidst scattered whisky bottles next to the hearth. Gopal says remembering that day, "I knew that this was not going to work. I didn't want my wife to be up here, away from good hospitals, schools and 'facilities', but if the old man was left up here alone, we would lose our land and animals would move into our house". Gopal's brother, who had lived in the plains since his primary school days, had no interest in coming back to Mana. So, Gopal took a decision, he would revitalize his polyhouses, take care of the house in *pahar* and 'keep an eye over his ageing father'. His wife Reena stayed behind in Tanakpur, taking care of their infant daughter and helping with the livestock, while attending weekly classes at the local college. But moving back to Mana meant

encountering the community that had snubbed him, however Gopal, with a lot more experience under his belt, had a plan. In the past he had kept his views to himself, reacting only when provoked, but now he became the instigator. And as his polyhouse vegetable production took off, he leveraged his financial success to address his past grievances against his father and the older men in the community:

Now that they can't poke fun at my joblessness they needle me about not having a son. I asked the village headman yesterday, how having a son had made his life better? His son had migrated to New Delhi leaving him alone in his crumbling house. But the point isn't really about 'having' children, it is about raising them. My father always tells me what a failure I am. Well who raised me? So, who is the failure then?

Even as Gopal worked with his vegetable production up in Mana, Reena started her own pre-primary tutoring operation in their Tanakpur home. Her income allowed their daughter to go to a private school. When I asked Reena if she was thinking about having another child, she said,

Look *bhaiyya* (older brother), at how many people there are in the towns around here and how many of them are actually successful and satisfied? All these children working at construction sites and tea shops are doing it out of desperation, their families cannot take care of them. What's the point of bearing a bunch of children if we can't provide them with the facilities and education needed to succeed in today's world? I want my daughter to have all the options that I never had, she should be able to choose her life.

Gopal supported Reena's decision to not have any more children. He was contemplating getting a vasectomy and added:

One child is all we can afford. Why take on a responsibility that one cannot fulfil? And, look at the Chinese. Look at how far they have come. They own the world, even the *angrez* (Europeans/Americans) have to listen to them. I think one of the ways they accomplished this is by limiting everyone to one child. Because when you have just one, you can focus on quality

Gopal's world fluctuated between these two places: Mana and Tanakpur. An ageing, sparsely populated mountainous borderland and a densely populated, industrially and commercially vibrant *maidani* 'new rurality'. While Mahesh and the other seniors of the village were ambivalent about modern ideas of contraception and reproduction, for Gopal they were a necessity unless one wanted

pahari places to mirror the stressful, chaotic and overpopulated *maidani* places. Furthermore, he believed the solution to the outmigration of youth from the villages was simple:

No one should have to stay in a place where their heart isn't. Let these youth go to the cities and let them get kicked in the face, robbed, their health and dignity exploited. They will all come back. And when they return, if they want to be successful, they will have to become entrepreneurs. We can't farm like our ancestors.

The people of Mana often made fun of Gopal by saying he did a 'woman's work' by farming (see Kandari, 2013; Nichols, 2014; Sidh and Basu, 2011) , this further exacerbated his feelings of inadequacy as a man and often made him question the contradictory expectations that he found himself between:

The government says don't have a lot of children, the villagers say 'youth don't preserve the *pahari* culture'. The NGOs are campaigning against domestic abuse and women's rights. So, if I choose to not have a son and become a farmer and a businessman and support my wife's education aspirations, who am I offending and who am I supporting? Seems like no matter what I do, I am always the bad guy. My father will admonish me for running after money, the village seniors will question my decision to not have a son and the social activists will say I am the lazy, young man that should do more work around the house and treat my wife as equals. Not everything in *pahari* culture is good, the government is corrupt and I've worked with enough NGOs to know that they all have an agenda. Who do I listen to, who do I try to please?

Ultimately, Gopal's frustrations seemed to be rooted in the changing modalities of regional masculinity and fatherhood (Koskimaki, 2017). Mahesh and the village elders were ineffective exemplars and *maidani* archetypes failed to adequately address the *pahari* particularities that youth like Gopal embodied.

The many lives of death: The undertaker

The deaths of different family members have different impacts on *pahari* households. The death of male family members, especially the patriarch or the oldest son, usually reconfigures the various relationships sustaining the household. Although there are exceptions to this, the death of female member is just a temporary inconvenience to the household that is often overcome through

remarriage or burden sharing by other female members in the extended family. Furthermore, given the different compensation schemes set up by the state, the cause of death often determines the overall benefits households continue to receive even after a person's death.

Changu, a middle aged farmer, had passed out drunk on the newly repaved highway to Munsyari that ran like an artery through the hamlet of Mana. A pickup truck operated by a PWD¹⁵ contractor returning from Danpur saw his grey kurta too late. He was already dead when locals dragged him from under the wheels. While the truck driver was being violently admonished at the town square, a series of phone calls were made by various people in the village: the headman called the SDM, asking if he could come over and write this off as a 'natural disaster death' making the deceased's family eligible for significant government remuneration, of which he would get a cut, the neighbor that was having an affair with Changu's wife called his cousin, borrowed a motorbike and quietly slipped away, a village politico who owned the public food assistance store, called up a state newspaper reporter he knew and narrated a 'colorful' version of the event with the understanding that he would be noted as the person who stopped the 'criminal' from getting away, the leader of the local group of road construction workers called up the PWD contractor who was eating dinner in New Delhi and demanded a 'ransom' for the vehicle that was now a homicide artifact and would probably get impounded by the police without some quick negotiations. As this 'intimate web of relations' unfolded, Changu's nephew Mohan, a *pahari* mobilee, who had just quit his job in the SEZ and was contemplating starting a wedding photography/videography/DJ business, sat with his now widowed aunt, Kaveri. Changu and Kaveri had two daughters and Mohan, Kaveri's sister's son, since his mother's death years ago, had looked up to Kaveri as a mother figure. While the house filled up with neighbors and the sound of women's wailing filled the night, Mohan quietly reassured his aunt, picked

¹⁵ Public Works Department

up his phone and disappeared into the night. I saw him much later as he emerged from the village police outpost, looking exhausted but satisfied. He asked me if I wanted to go to Bageshwar, to the district administrative HQ, the next day, when I agreed he said:

I just talked to my cousin (policeman) and he said that if we can produce a post-mortem report that shows he wasn't intoxicated at the time of death, then we can probably sue the contractor and file for government compensation under the natural disaster death scheme. I know the headman is trying to get the same deal sanctioned, but if we go through him, we have to give him a cut. We don't need him, I can prepare and take the paperwork myself. But, the most important thing now is the post-mortem report. So, tomorrow I am taking the body to the mortician the cops suggested in Bageshwar. He needs just Rs.10,000 to make the report we need, but we have to go early, before his helpers get there.

Even though Mohan had thwarted the headman's attempts by going straight to his cousin, he knew that the headman still 'controlled' his aunt's widow pension, so they would have to negotiate. The negotiations lasted till sunrise. At which point it was decided that Changu's body would be wrapped up in a sheet and carted to Bageshwar with the headman and some village politicians in tow, who would then block the busy highway by the bridge, roll out a mat and sit with the body, claiming government negligence since they had hired the 'murderous' contractor. The goal was to squeeze out some development project promises from the district bureaucracy, which on paper would address infrastructural issues in the village, but would mobilize moneys that the headman and politicians would siphon off. With this plan in motion, we left Mana in the early hours of a spring morning. At Bageshwar, while the politicians created a spectacle at the intersection, drawing crowds, journalists and eventually the police, Mohan and I paid a visit to the mortician. The man took Mohan to a room behind the front office, accepted his 'remuneration', asked questions about the deceased and about an hour later, without examining the deceased, gave him a post-mortem report which claimed that Changu had drowned. Armed with this document, Mohan and I went back to the body, where a large crowd had gathered. The headman was on the phone with some district administrators who invited him to visit them at their office to discuss his demands. His job accomplished the headman headed

over to talk about developmental funds. On the way he dropped off Mohan and a couple of other people at the crematorium. That evening as we returned back to Mana after cremating Changu, Mohan was on the phone with Changu's daughter who was preparing for her law enforcement training exams.

He said:

My cousin is in the police, but we will still have to pay at least Rs. 5 lakhs (\$8000) if she wants to get in. I have to try and arrange these funds somehow, because we have to think about the future of that household. The government compensation may take years to come, even if it is sanctioned, and my aunt's pension is not going to be enough to take care of her and her younger daughter. If her older daughter can get into the police then things will be a lot better, you know how tough life can be for widows. But, I don't know if it is going to happen. I mean there is only so much that I can do

Changu's death, and his 'body', had been utilized by different actors in different ways. And without Mohan, Kaveri and her children, would probably have been excluded from the benefits of her husband's death, accessible only through a knowledge both of the 'organs of the state' (Perrault et al., 2015) as well as the social networks needed to circumvent the circuitous trails to government compensation schemes in Uttarakhand (Ogra & Badola, 2008). Back in Mana after attending the various religious rituals for Changu's afterlife, Mohan and a few of the village youth joined me for a hike up to the meadows where the sheep grazed for the springtime. Sitting there amongst the animals, Gopal said:

I know he just died, but Changu was an irresponsible alcoholic. He would regularly pass out on the highway, it's a wonder he lived as long as he did. His family was sustained by gifts from the neighbors, and basically the grace of god. I feel, thanks to Mohan *bhai* (brother), if *chachi* (aunt) gets the money, it will be the best thing to happen to the family in a long time

To this Mohan added a sarcastic elegy to Changu:

Dear uncle, you spent your time on earth drinking rum and breaking rocks. Your parting gift to me was a widow, thanks a lot for this burden. I am glad to be your donkey (beast of burden).

I asked the youth if it was worse to lose a father or a mother. They all looked uncomfortably at their feet until Mohan, almost reluctantly answered:

My father got married within three months of my mother's death. But, look at that cluster of huts (pointing to some houses in the distance) so many widows live in those houses, people stay away from them. Being a widow is the worst curse in this village. When you lose your father or your husband, you lose your connection to your community and your ancestors. The world still dances for men. Maybe this is wrong, who knows... but this is how it is

Beyond mobilees

While *pahari* households with male mobilees represented a significant group within the community, there were other types of migrants/migrations within the community. While exploring them and their role in household vulnerability in detail, is beyond the scope of this project, I briefly mention the three most important ones.

1) *Adult migrants*: Adult migrant men (30yrs+) were involved in the production of many *pahari* households. However, their roles in the relational assemblage differed in some key ways from the youth.

First, the adult men were minimally impacted by parental sensibilities of a “generational vertigo” – apprehensions and anticipations about an unknowable future driven by the transforming modalities of labor, family and region (Smith, 2012, p.573). While youth mobilees were caught in intergenerational negotiations with parents whose aspirations for them, jostled with their own, the adult migrants seemed to be much more empowered in these exchanges, their desires seemingly unregulated by parental experiences. The sentiments often expressed by other household members about these migrants was that, “They are adults now, they understand right from wrong. We can't control what they do anymore”. Furthermore, contrary to the youth, economic remittances were a much bigger presence in adult migrant relationships with home. These were primarily in terms of cash transfers, material goods, healthcare services and payments towards religious services and marriages.

Second, adult migrants usually moved around less. Their relative immobility was a product of their more permanent labor arrangements, responsibilities towards their own children and different expectations from their rural households. As Shyam (in his late 40s) noted, “My mother is in her 60s and expects me to either take care of all the farming and household duties, or hire someone who can. I work as a security guard in Delhi and have two adolescent children. I can barely pay for their upbringing”. The youth mobilees were often seen by their adult household members as subjects in the process of formation (Leyshon, 2008), and reflecting the *pahari* ideas of gendered maturity, the young men were talked of as “wayward, lay about and easily influenced” (Dyson, 2015, p.53).

Third, many of the adult *pahari* migrants had come of age before the separation of Uttarakhand state from UP and before, the spread of new forms of mobility, education, livelihood and political affiliations (see Koskimaki, 2017). They saw themselves having more in common with their fathers and uncles, and less with their younger brothers and sons. Their presence within social networks, unlike the youth, was often limited to caste and kin allegiances and this was often reflected in their relationships with institutions, community members and outsiders (Goodman, 2017). Therefore, adult migrants often exercised more tested routes to contest moments of injustice, resorting to discourses and rituals of divine intervention and fate to supplement their agency. In Inari when Heera Singh’s household lost two cows to leopard attacks, he went through the prescribed motions of simultaneously filling out paperwork and paying bribes to the block development officer (BDO). However, when the compensation was delayed due to incorrect filing of the paperwork, he resorted to performing religious rituals at the village temple and intermittently visiting the block office. His younger brother who lived separately in the same village noted sardonically, “I tried to tell *bhaiyya* (older brother) about the corrupt BDO and his empty promises, but he wouldn’t listen. He should have just gone directly to the state HQ in Dehradun, I even have friends there, but he wouldn’t. He trusts the BDO more because he

belongs to our ‘community’. As if such relationships matter in these times. But, these old people are stuck in the past and anyway they don’t like taking advice from immature boys like me”.

2) *Female youth migrants*: Female *pahari* youth have their mobility and livelihood aspirations severely regulated by the deeply patriarchal regional culture (Goodman, 2017; Sax, 2011). The young *pahari* women I encountered were often well educated, with many working on or in possession of college degrees (through distance learning programs), and similar to what Jeffrey and Dyson (2016) found in Bemni, they strongly supported the vision that the benefits of education were beginning to spread across the region and the generational changes they embodied was due to their ‘emergence from ignorance’. NGO and government programs in recent years have attempted to empower such women by reifying gendered spatialities of labor within the household, nominating women as critical actors in maintaining food and livelihood security. However, such programs due to their reproduction of practices of gendered spatialized labor embed women within “untenable gendered work burdens” (Nichols, 2016, p.1417). While such processes marginalized the ability of young *pahari* women to aspire for or materialize more mobile futures, I did find certain examples that aimed to subvert such realities.

The presence and expansion of rural BPOs has restructured the modalities of mobility for many young women. These spaces that often exist in small *pahari* towns or large village centers, usually have young workforce. While the management hires both men and women, the men have a much higher dropout rate creating a mostly female workforce overtime. These centers have salaries that match the national labor guarantee program wages (MGNREGA), however, unlike such programs, they require no manual labor. Additionally, as higher salary (and responsibility) positions open up in centers across the state, qualified workers are given the option to transfer, for a higher wage. In Ghargaon, Ruhi’s sister Reena, who has worked with the local BPO center for two years, was given the option to take the second in command position at a new center in a different district of the state. Additionally, if she said yes, the company was going to pay for a ‘management course’ for her in New

Delhi and also send her on an all-expense paid capacity building trip to their international offices in Mexico City. After much negotiation and debate with household members, Reena was allowed to accept the offer, with the caveat that she would come home one weekend every month. The week before she was to leave for Mexico I found Reena and Ruhi, excitedly cleaning out the old luggage that she would take on the trip. Reena said, “Not even in my wildest dreams had I thought that I would get to travel abroad. I grew up chasing cows and cutting grass on this mountain”, to which Ruhi replied, “I keep telling you, you don’t dream big enough. Plus, look at how much money you have saved, if you ever want to get married, mother and father won’t have to pay a rupee”.

While Reena’s story is exceptional, it highlights an interesting phenomenon. Driven by the globalization and neoliberalization of labor and industry, a multitude of service industry jobs have materialized in the region. Simultaneously, the presence of formal school education in rural Uttarakhand has created a large educated youth workforce. While the male youth, for the variety of reasons discussed in this project, move around from job to job, and prefer lives that are ‘in-between’ the village and the city, the educated female youth, that are often limited to the spaces around the household have started to avail of the labor positions being created in such spaces. Businesses, like the rural BPOs that moved to such areas to cut operating costs (Sarkar, 2013) are cognizant of this population and have begun targeting them in their recruitment drives in local high schools and political associations/institutions (women’s self-help groups). This is still in a nascent state and the impacts of this on the rural household are still emerging and mostly unexplored. However, an initial observation is the changing roles of young women in agrarian livelihood management. As Ruhi notes:

In the beginning my in-laws expected me to take care of the livestock’s needs, fetch fuelwood and cook and clean, but ever since I started working, these expectations changed. Now we have a cooking gas connection, fewer cows and can afford more food from the market. Instead of spending time chasing buffaloes I can spend it educating myself so that when I have children, I can teach them myself. I don’t want them to think of me as their ‘ignorant’ mother, the way I sometimes thought of mine.

Stories of rural female mobilees like Ruhi and Reena, are marginalized within regional scholarship on migration and mobility. This echoes broader trends in the majority world (Huijsmans, 2016). While the lives of *pahari* women have been examined through a plethora of theoretical prisms, the recent encounters of young educated *pahari* women with neoliberal livelihoods and translocal householding is missing from this literature.

3) *Relatively immobile youth*: The final group of people I wish to address are the relatively immobile young men I encountered in Uttarakhand. This was a small minority. Many of these youth had ventured out of the village, lived and worked in regional towns and *maidani* metropolises, but had returned and since then cultivated relationships and livelihoods that were relatively ‘immobile’. The reasons for this ‘fixity’ were varied. Many SC(lower caste) youth were relatively constrained in accessing social networks beyond the village and also came from households with less agricultural land, political connections and resources to spend on higher education (see Polit, 2005 and Sax, 2009). While the caste based inequities were nowhere comparable to the plains of north India (Jeffrey, 2001), they were present and catalyzed certain performances. Many of the SC youth worked as daily wage labor on village infrastructural projects funded by the MGNREGA scheme (see Mathur, 2015). This scheme, aimed at poverty alleviation through wage labor generation while simultaneously building up village infrastructure in rural India, has apparently also aided in stemming the outmigration of *pahari* youth (Saha & Bhatt, 2016). In Ghargaon, during the spring, summer and fall months, a group of SC youth are involved in various MGNREGA activities. However, the state regulated daily wage rate is half of the actual daily wage rate commanded by laborers in the area. Finding people to work on the projects at the state rate is practically impossible, so the village headman (who is also SC) has found a creative method of meeting the demanded wage, while adhering to state bureaucratic guidelines – “We put on paper that two people are working, but pay one. The person working has to find a friend who is willing to accept half the fund transfer into their bank account and then forward the money. The

wages are directly deposited in individual accounts, so each worker can only get the prescribed amount”. While this system extends the project completion times, it ensures that MGNREGA money keeps flowing into the village development budget. But, by creating a significant ‘interdependency’ between workers, it leads to the strengthening of social networks that were weakening. For the SC youth this is an empowering moment. As Jeevan Ram, an SC youth, explains it:

Our community isn’t as close as it once was. Everyone is only interested in their own affairs and I don’t blame them either. But, this working in the village with people of my *biradri* (caste community), has brought us all together. It has created a connection, where we each need the other to be successful. If someone that I trust doesn’t give me the money deposited in his account for my work, I can pay in kind. It has allowed us to become a much more involved in each other’s households and lives. Most of us have been kicked around in *maidani* cities and finally, we’ve found the wisdom to work and live at home.

Other reasons for fixity stemmed from family responsibilities. Deepak’s father had an undiagnosed mental illness and his mother had damaged her spine after a fall from a tree. After finishing high school, Deepak took over the reins of the household in the river valley of Mana. He supplemented the family’s meagre agricultural income by plowing fields for other households and managing the farms of many families that had abandoned transhumance and moved to market ridge ward, near the school, hospital and road. During Diwali¹⁶ when I visited his family to deliver sweets he asked me, “Bhaiyya, do you have any jobs that I can do? I mean they would have to be in Mana, since I can’t travel far, my parents need constant care. But, I feel so stuck here in this *fucking* jungle. Can you help me out?”

¹⁶ Important Hindu festival celebrated post-harvest in late autumn

Vulnerability, migrancy and place making

Reimagining pahari youth in pahari homes

Since the devastating floods of 2013, *pahar* and *pahari* lives, have seemingly contested their peripherality in the emerging narratives of modern India. Filmmakers, civil society organizations, think tanks, journalists have attempted to witness the confluence of processes producing *pahari* places. In most of these renditions, a hegemonic narrative of crushing structural forces has reduced *pahari* people to mere governmentalized victims, whose agency while admirable is ultimately ineffective in the production of *pahari* places and subjectivities (Lakhera, 2017; Video Volunteers, 2016; Paskaljevic, 2016). Furthermore, in all accounts, while the migrant, migration and youth are identified as critical actors in the transformation of *pahari* households, their voices and praxis is either imagined through the lives of others, or presented as tropes. One winter evening as Ajay and I sat at his tea stall in Ghargaon, watching political debates during the lead up to the state elections, he said:

Do you notice how the politicians, the businessmen, the NGOs all disagree on everything, but one. They all agree that *pahari ladkay* (boys) want to leave their villages and migrate to the city. It seems they have decided my future for me, without even asking me. Isn't this great, all that is left for me, is to walk on the path that they have decided for me. But, what if I don't want to? Is anyone interested in listening to what I want?

Ajay's frustrations were fairly common among the *pahari* mobilees, who resented their representations within village panchayats and media outlets alike. But, given the unprecedentedness of their 'in-betweenness', were often unable to counter such narratives. The mobilee role in the relational production of vulnerability in *pahari* homes empirically counters such narratives by highlighting their intimate and contested connections to households and through them helps complicate the politics of place making in Uttarakhand.

To begin with, mobilee entanglements with the vital processes of household reproduction critiques the notion of a sedentary, anachronistic *pahari* household that is an antithesis to the mobile,

fluid, spatially evolving culture of urban *maidani* places (Hidenori, 2014). Furthermore, the critical role played by migrants, counters the dominant imaginaries of rural Himalayan life, which remain subservient to “notions of stability, rootedness, attachment to place and localism” (Millbourne and Kitchen, 2014, p.328) emanating from ‘neo-traditionalist’ accounts of Himalayan people and places, mobilized by certain forces of populism and nationalism (Emma Mawdsley, 2010). In these accounts *pahari* households are conceived as ‘closed systems’ existing in harmonious balance, by reproducing historical cultural relationships.

This view couples seamlessly with notions of exceptional Himalayan precarity that articulate the multiple burdens associated with household reproduction catalyzed by unequal encounters with external, exploitative cultures. Within this narrative, the migrant is rendered invisible, due to their vestigial role in the vulnerability experienced by the households, beyond the transmission of financial remittances (Jain, 2010). *Pahari* mobilees, whose overall financial remittances are negligible, are marginalized by such constructions of home. By using a relational framework and witnessing the performance of the migrants within the vital processes of household vulnerability posited by such relationality, the agency of the mobilees is revealed. The mobility of these young lives is transformed from a deterministic strategy catalyzed by lack of opportunities (Mamgain and Reddy, 2016) and aspirations of modern life (Negi & Manhas, 2015), to a strategic choice driven by their responsibilities towards others in the home, a journey undertaken to “positively transform place-based identities and relations of subjugation” (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, 2003, p.205) and ultimately a normative feature of the relational household (Punch, 2015; Langevang, 2008). Therefore, instead of embodying the symptoms of a “mountain in decay” (Special Correspondent, 1983), mobilee praxis highlights the complex assemblage of relationships that are being constantly negotiated in emergent *pahari* places (Shneiderman, 2015).

Furthermore, their ‘provisional agency’ (Jauregui, 2104) reveals the emerging contested moral economies of *pahari* spaces. Their subversion of certain structural power inequalities –scamming state compensation programs or bribing officials, and reproduction of others – patriarchal visions of remarriage, challenges the essentialized place-based tropes of victimized, simple minded *pahari* aspirations (Pathak, 1997) that are guided by an indelible ethics governing cultural and ecological reproduction. Ultimately, the explorations of mobilee insertion in the dynamic power relations within households, brings a much needed focus on the “webs of interdependencies” (Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017, p.4) at work during intergenerational and intra-household negotiations. These negotiations, especially in ‘translocal’ majority world homes, remain unstudied (Brickell, 2012; Crivello, 2015), despite their critical role in the production of the household.

Mobilees also represent a particular ‘regional modern’ subjectivity(ies) (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003). Subjects whose encounters with the partially realized attempts of developmental incursions into the *pahari* lifeworlds occurs between the essentialized discourses of outmigration and the changing role of mobility in the region (Koskimaki, 2017). Mobilee insecurities about *pahar* and *pahari* lives being peripheral to the modern nation (Mathur, 2015a) both informs their exploration of a certain version of *pahari* modernity, while bounding their aspirational atlas to the region. Mobilee praxis in the relational assemblages of *pahari* household, gravitates between the vision of modernity as an emancipatory state of being which challenges historic subjugations of *pahari* people and places, and modernity as an impossible dream, whose pursuit distorts the underlying moralities of human exchange and cultural reproduction (Chari and Gidwani, 2005). Even though Gopal reveres the intentional edicts of state sponsored demographic control his adherence to such informed reproduction, against the communal wisdom of his father, while limiting the biological size of his family, provides him with no tangible recourse to his trepidations about fatherhood. Neither does it answer the question he asked me once during a visit to Tanakpur, “Look at this neighborhood. There

is a *bengali*¹⁷ family, a *punjabi* family and a *pahari* family. What makes us different down here?” For mobilees like Gopal this exploration of certain essential qualities that make him and his household *pahari*, underlies a struggle between different members of the household that are engaged in place-making. In this struggle the mobilee voice often represents the limits of agency for *pahari* households. This empowerment of mobilee praxis is a result of their intimate understanding of the new ‘places of power’ (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) and how to access the hierarchy of such places. Mohan’s knowledge and utilization of the bureaucracies of death, is not an attempt to encounter the instrumental objectification of *pahari* bodies by the state or corporations, but a strategic maneuver to retain the autonomy over accessing the apparent ‘use-value’ of such bodies. While, this inadvertently reconfigures the moral economy of the community, it allows *pahari* households to embody the multiple subjectivities that are critical when navigating the “cultural politics of development” (Morarji, 2014, p.186).

It is important to reiterate here that the subjectivities emergent from mobilee praxis echoes a migration and mobility narrative very different from their elders. The spatial behaviors of their fathers and uncles were often rooted in the fulfillment of food security, transpired within a lack of employment within the village and aspirationally were confined to the communal boundaries of the household and the village. The village and the clan social network represented the most salient unit of their lives, which they returned to after their sojourn, however for the mobilees things are very different. PDS grain and MGNREGA jobs have addressed issues of food and livelihood security in many villages, however along with this transition the village and the household itself as also changed. The culture of production, distribution and ownership are in throes of novel formation. The mobilees though unaware of the birds eye view of such reconstruction are acutely aware of the limits of various

¹⁷ Bengalis and Punjabis are two other ‘ethno-cultural’ groups that have migrated in large numbers to the terai. Many *pahari* families live in cross proximity with these immigrants and have a complicated relationship based on their many apparent differences and similarities in terms of food, religion, language and political power.

kinship based moral economies in present day Uttarakhand. Their search for kinship and networks extends far beyond the boundaries of the village and in many ways represents a search for identity that can belong in a society that is dynamic, both ethically and politically. Leaving either the village or the city is not an option they consider.

Ultimately, mobilee praxis counters the essentialized narrative of the absent *pahari* migrant man (Bose, 2000; Joshi, 2013), making him ‘visible’ (Thieme & Ghimire, 2014). In the process, supporting a “return to the subject” (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003, p.44). Especially one in the process of formation and one that doesn’t identify prominently with formal politicking, popular social movements or ethnic activism for or against a hegemonic modernity. Instead, by occupying multiple subject positions and through the everyday navigation of shifting modalities of belonging in the region (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2011), the mobilees provide a microethnographic, microhistorical and micropolitical counterweight to the discourses of structural domination producing regional futures. *Pahari* spaces have been overwhelmingly imagined and characterized, in scholarship, through the prism of the ‘power-resistance’ dialectic (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) with accounts of the politics of ecology and development (Guha, 2000; Linkenbach, 2006), gender and labor (Drew, 2014, Gururani, 2014) religious affiliation and practice (Sax, 2009; Govindrajan, 2015) and territoriality and state building (Mathur, 2015) focusing on the various voices of resistance against the forces of patriarchy, modernity, development and populism. Mobilee stories defy such dialectical resolution of subject positions and in doing so address the “insufficiently analyzed dimension...of youth masculinities” (Koskimaki, 2017; p.139), while critiquing a monolithic discourse of development and vulnerability in the Himalayan region.

Addressing youth studies and feminist migration research

Discussing the need for studies exploring a nuanced understanding of youth migration and mobility in the Himalayas, Snellinger (2013) states a list of critical questions for further study, among them she asks: how is this subjective flow of coming and going changing the rural and urban economic and social political landscape?

While studies of young migrants in the majority world have delved into their engagements with emerging forms of mobility, changing modalities of work and novel assemblages of sociality, the focus has often been solely on the migrant (Thieme, 2017; Punch, 2002; Peou & Zinn, 2015). However, the role played by these migrants in the production of households, communities and regions remains understudied in the majority world (Huijsmans, 2016). Mobilee relationships with household vulnerability addresses this lacunae and joins a small, but growing field of scholarship that explores the intergenerational negotiations, intra-household power relations and familial inter-dependencies that migrant youth play an active role in, and the transformative effects of such praxis (Punch, 2015; Huijsmans, 2014; Azaola, 2012; Punch & Sugden, 2013; Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017).

While mobile migrant youth play a role in the production of the household, they are also important actors in asserting certain regional imaginaries that complicate more normative visions. In South Asia, the focus on mobile, migrant youth suffers from a ‘metrocentricity’ (Brown et al., 2017). This bias leads to the ignoring of the vast provincial hinterland that extends in-between the metropolises. Small towns, large towns, small cities along with the many formations of rurality that make up this space aid in the production of very particular subjectivities, that offer unique insights into the myriad manifestations of mobility, labor, class and culture (Brown et al., 2016).

Pahari mobilees circulate through these places and are contrary to popular representations of South Asian youth aspirations for a global mobility, or to belong to a global middle class, “they instead desire a regional mobility” (Koskimaki, 2017, p.145). By focusing on the relational entanglements of

mobilees with their households, and their movements across a transforming socio-spatial landscape (Joshi, 2015), this study highlights experiences from the geographical and political margins, that are often absent in normative discourses. Future work should trace this forward, by building off the focus on regional towns (Scrase et al., 2015) and explorations of ‘new ruralities’ (Kumar, 2016), to address the transforming lifeworlds of mobile young people and equally mobile and relational rural places.

Conclusion

In the majority world mobile, migrant youth are conspicuously absent in explorations of household reproduction and vulnerability (Huijsmans, 2016). Remittance driven narratives of migrant-household relationships are still invoked when discussing the specter of outmigration from rural to urban areas and the role played by migrants in households and communities (McHugh, 2000; Sawyer, 2014). In South Asia and the Himalayan region while recent relational explorations of households and communities have challenged the boundedness of rural homes and places (Schneiderman, 2015; Jeffrey, 2010), the role of young migrants in these various relationships remain unexplored. In this chapter I build on the conclusions of Chapter 3, which envision a post-indicator understanding of household vulnerability in *pahar* and Chapter 4, in which I explore the praxis of certain *pahari* mobilees, and highlight the role that ‘invisible migrant men’ play in the relationships informing the relational vulnerability of *pahari* households. In doing so, I address both the hegemonic discourses of regional encounters with modernity and development and advocate for a focus past the metropolis to witness the particular socio-spatial negotiations, both intra-household and intergenerational, that are critical in place making and subject formation.

Mobilees emerge intimately connected to the wellbeing and vulnerability of the *pahari* household. However, their engagements with the critical elements of householding (Chea & Huijsmans, 2018; Moskal, 2015) reveal the contestations around place making that underlie the

reproduction of the *pahari* household. Therefore, the tropes of neo-traditionalism (Mawdsley, 2006) and environmental determinism (Guneratne, 2010) that bound *pahari* aspirations to inherently unequal relationships of power seem differently encountered by different intra-household subjectivities. This is a vital insight since it questions the legitimacy of constructs of absence or presence when imagining the production of certain spaces. Furthermore, through their engagement *pahari* mobilees reveal the changing moral economy of *pahari* communities and the different roles that migrants play in this renegotiation. Ultimately, the mobilees embody a certain ‘regional modernity’ (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003) which highlight the particular situated encounters with the tools of development. This challenges essentialist visions of a crushing, hegemonic unravelling of structural elements in the state, and urges for a focus on the subject and their stories that provide a counterweight to the ethnographically thin accounts of place making and identity formation.

While this account complicates the existing discourses about migration in Uttarakhand it does so at the cost of excluding the stories of populations that often provide the corporeal ballast to the mobilee praxis. These subjects who embody a relative fixity are often additionally marginalized in accounts that use the prism of mobility. Future work should focus on these interstitial populations – young women in particular, to address the inherently differential responsibilities and burdens of modernity that they have to bear.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Every ten years a rag-tag band of intrepid explorers consisting of activists, educators, students, civil society workers, public administrators and other members of the general public undertake the *Askot-Arakot Abhiyaan*. This is an 1100 km journey by foot across Uttarakhand. Traversing a circuitous path through villages, valleys and passes, the travelers walk from Askot, a town in the state's eastern edge bordering Nepal, to Arakot, a town on its western border near the Indian state of Himachal. Started by some elite, inquisitive *paharis* in 1974 to witness the transforming realities of rural *pahari* people and places, usually marginalized in broader conversations about the region and unrepresented in popular renditions, it has grown into a massive undertaking generating significant longitudinal perspectives about the *pahari* lifeworld. Carrying no money, depending on the goodwill of rural communities and institutions and exchanging labor when asked for food and shelter, the travelers over a period of 45 days, visit dozens of villages, festivals and places of communal religious, cultural and political value. Writing about the 1974 event, Shekhar Pathak (2008), one of the founding members and a well-known public intellectual from Uttarakhand, notes, "The black and white rivers flow in Askot, and the Tons and Pabbar rivers flow in Arakot – life between these rivers is rife with poverty, insecurity and pain"¹⁸.

About forty years later, when I started engaging with *pahari* spaces, I was informed by accounts akin to this, which lamented the precarities of life in rural *pahari* villages. However, as I encountered *paharis* from all over the state, this narrative seemed essentialist and exclusionary, and in some ways tethered to a vision of the region in spatio-temporal stasis. As another prominent public intellectual and civil society heavyweight from Uttarakhand informed me, quite dismissively, discussing the probable exploits and findings of the latest *Askot Arakot Abhiyaan* (2014),

¹⁸ Translated from the original Hindi text

They talk about all these changes and transformations in *pahar* in recent years, but has any of it improved the lives of the *paharis*? I don't think so. It has just exposed them to all the 'bad habits' of modernity and development. You want to know what the modern *pahari* youth want? They want easy money and they want the *pahar* to look like the plains. While their old parents slave away in dying ancestral villages

Such narratives of *pahar* and *pahari* youth are consistently reproduced in popular media, state/non-state development interventions and scholarly work about the region (Chopra and Passi, 2009; Paskaljevic, 2016; Kalirajan and Singh, 2012; Mehta, 2018). However, such renditions effectively envision monolithic encounters between processes of structural transformation and *pahari* people and places. Furthermore, given the ontological particularities bounding most attempts at analyzing *pahari* spaces, there is often an inherent bias towards fixity and stasis. Fluid, emergent subjectivities and territorial formations are rendered invisible or evaluated through prisms that obfuscate such states of being as transient stages enroute to stability (Millbourne and Kitchen, 2014). The *pahari* mobilees I met in Uttarakhand challenge such characterizations. Additionally, with their praxis they reveal the interstitial spaces through which they exercise their agency, in the process encountering the dominant narratives of household vulnerability and ultimately the production of the region (Koskimaki, 2017).

Kundan, Ajay, Gopal, Sunil and Mohan emerge not as heroic subjects engaged in open resistance against different oppressions, but neither are they devoid of subjective agency, bystanders in the ongoing transformations of the *pahari* lifeworlds. However, their aspirations and praxis, akin to the relationships producing their rural households are confiscated by epistemic elements that reduce "embodied material practices" (Nightingale, 2011, p.155) to one bounded by fixed measurements of 'quality and quantity'. Moving beyond welfarist indicators of vulnerability and explicitly addressing it within constructions of household relationships, challenges this marginalization. But, as this work shows, this search for alternatives does not remain solely discursive and engages with both the symbolic and material elements of *pahari* life. This is achieved through a focus on relational ontologies that trace forward a confluence of critical insights from feminist studies, political ecology, actor

network theory and science and technology studies. Viewed through this prism, *pahari* households reveal their ‘agentive realism’ (Barad, 2007), complicating essentializing portrayals of the varied intersectional subjectivities with contentious, dynamic aspirations and anxieties.

While quantitative component based analysis advocate for certain proxies when evaluating the insecurities faced by the households, in the stories that emerge, these variables appear confounding when addressing the daily concerns of *paharis*. Therefore, while a multitude of rural development initiatives focus on improved livestocking, the gendered politics of labor often represent the management of these animals as a material extension of patriarchy. Instead as Klenk (2004) noted in her discussions on women and development in Uttarakhand, many young women “brought critical perspectives of their own” (p.75) when discussing their labor aspirations and ideas about marginalization and emancipation. They seemed to prefer an arrangement that reflected both their relationships with education and that with their role in the development of their children.

Similarly, ideas of reproduction represent political battlegrounds. Contradictory expectations from discursive and material processes of state building, national security and communal anxieties coalesce together in novel ways. As Ruhi and Suraj voiced it, “Everyone has an opinion about how many children we should have, when we should have them, and how we should raise them. But, the moment we listen to one, everyone else will chastise us”. The ideas of parenting espoused by young *pahari* couples seemed to echo their own experiences with the mobility and informality that was gradually breaching the moralities of childbearing. Such choices, critical for the reproduction of the household, remain misrepresented by indicators that focus on access to contraceptives and infant mortality rates. While mortality and the demographics of population control remain of central concern to state agents, the relational unfolding of death within the community, its variegated and unequal manifestations and finally, its political wielding by different agents emerged as a vital site of negotiation. Ultimately, this tethering of household vulnerability to materialities formed of subjects,

objects, processes and affects, generated an insight into mobilee praxis that loosened their bondage to certain scales and spaces.

Mobilees, contrary to accounts of the waithood of ‘timepass’ from northern India (Jeffrey, 2008) appear to aspire for interstitiality. Furthermore, their relationship with education differs from the middle class college goers in the *pahari* capital of Dehradun (Deuchar, 2014), who despite their ambivalent encounters still had hope in the potential benefits of formal education. Rural *pahari* men, due to their constant engagement with *maidani* people and places, are constantly made aware of their liminality both due to their spatial roots in the borderlands of the nation state (Mathur, 2015) and their access to marginal networks of power due to their rural upbringing. Their aspiration for the ‘in-between’ echoes their reflexive knowledge of the limits of their agency.

Additionally, it also reveals their engagements with the new cultures of work propagated by the regions insertion into different processes of neoliberal development (Gidwani, 2014; Tomozawa, 2014). The precarious labor arrangements that mobilees aspire for, is both a product of the multiple responsibilities they feel their emerging subject positions require and their cautious attempts at imagining new moral economies, beyond their ancestral spheres of kinship and community. Therefore, mobilee aspirations teeters between attempts at subverting the different oppressions they face and reproducing them. While strengthening informal economies of natural resource extraction centered around the selective commodification of certain plants and animals, allows them to circumvent bureaucratic controls over their ‘mountains’, it also allows them to challenge their ‘innocent country bumpkin’ portrayal by their *maidani* counterparts. But, due to their affective and material entanglements with the spaces that supply such practices, mobilees self-regulate such choices, stewing in the stark ethical conundrums they represent. For Kundan the harvest of caterpillar fungus, while a lucrative livelihood option is nevertheless tempered by the possible exploitative relationships

that he is privy too. As he puts it, “We can’t be irresponsible with the harvest, if I get too greedy this year, maybe next year there will be nothing”.

Similarly, their relationships with their fathers highlights both their anxious exploration of the new modalities of masculinity and their unguided attempts at being differently modern. Thus, Gopal believes that his father’s idolization of *pahari* revolutionaries and intellectuals is hypocritical. They appear anachronistic and ideologically impermeable. But the alternatives he argues for are often straw men, since his own definitions of masculine responsibility lack any coherent examples. While entrepreneurship features strongly in his designs, he often laments the unfair advantage that *maidani* commercial farmers have. As he notes, “I have to do something different. I am just not sure what that looks like”. Akin to his livelihood, Gopal also wants to raise his daughter differently. But, yet again, the blueprints for such parenting are mired in constant debates with his wife and parents. Ultimately, mobilees embody the culture of their interstitial spatial encounters (Young and Jeffrey, 2012). And in many ways offer an important juxtaposition to dialectical visions of modernity and development. They represent an emergent, autonomous, ‘regional modern’ subject (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal, 2003), who is intimately entangled in the production of the relational rural household.

The mobilee presence in the *pahari* household is critical. Contrary to the linear narratives of regional youth migration (Grunawalt, 2012) and remittance based relational exchanges (Jain, 2010), mobilees emerge as active subjects in vital household relationships. Engaging with the novel forms of regional mobility, they negotiate the reproduction of the household. A key element of their engagement is an avoidance of formal politicking. As Ajay notes, “Us small people have to be like water. Flowing around the rocks, finding our way ahead without confronting them too much”. The *pahari* household seen as a relational assemblage echoes a similar fluidity – reconfiguring in ways that challenge the paucity of freedoms that formal accounts posit (Tiwari and Joshi, 2016). Critical to this revelation is a focus on intra-household negotiations. The various aspirations and anxieties that wrestle

each other, echoing situational and intersectional precarities and privileges. Within them the mobilee role is often to mediate the limits of the household's agency in its variegated encounters with the instruments of development. Therefore, Mohan's knowledge and utilization of the bureaucracies of death, is not an attempt to encounter the instrumental objectification of *pahari* bodies by the state or corporations, but a strategic maneuver to retain the autonomy over accessing the apparent 'use-value' of such bodies. While this inadvertently reconfigures the moral economy of the community, it allows *pahari* households to embody the multiple subjectivities that are critical when navigating the "cultural politics of development" (Morarji, 2014, p.186).

In making the mountain men visible this dissertation makes three specific interventions. First, it challenges the normative portrayal of household vulnerability in most accounts of regional risk and precarity (Guneratne, 2010). By envisioning a relational framing, the vulnerability of *pahari* places is decoupled from the overtly reductive assessment approaches that echo the neo-Malthusian and environmentally deterministic assumptions of the THED and undermine the agency of regional populations. Uttarakhand's location in the Himalayas and the various tropes that accompany such a positioning (Linkenbach, 2007) are challenged by a focus on the symbolic and material practices and aspirations of *paharis*. The anxieties that *paharis* feel echo historically unequal relationships of power that still belie the exploitative engagements with and descriptions of, the region. Encountering them requires a 'politics of possibility' (Elwood, 2017) which can only be envisioned when the aspirational atlas of the regional population is empowered through a witnessing of their intersectional, provisional agency. The vulnerability of *pahari* households when seen as contingent on a plethora of emergent relationships addresses both the limits of welfarist assumptions of universal aspirations, complicates assessments of scale biased vulnerabilities and reveals vital intra-household negotiations that challenges the discourses of boundedness and fixity of rural *pahari* people and places.

Second, it addresses the critiques of metrocentricity and eurocentricity levelled at mobilities research (Scrase et al., 2015; Cresswell, 2016). By focusing on the praxis of a marginal population, that is interstitial and navigates through and aids in the production of equally interstitial places, mobilities research is decentered and repopulated. Contrary to aspirations of joining a ‘global middle class’, *pahari* mobilees represent a return to the region (Koskimaki, 2017), in an effort to become active participants in the production of a space where they feel relatively relevant and empowered. Furthermore, this focus heeds Young & Jeffrey’s (2012) call for further research on the ‘affect of in-betweenness’ that explores the lives of people living in such transitioning worlds. In the majority world such research remains rare.

Finally, it delves into an exploration of the rural household, which is neglected in most accounts of youth migration and mobility (Huijsmans, 2014; Punch, 2015; Korzenevica and Agergaard, 2017). By focusing on intra-household negotiations, especially focusing on inter-generational aspirations, and situating the youth within such relational dynamics, the migrant and their mobility is seen critical in the reproduction of the household and in place-making. Accounts of feminization of agrarian labor and the ‘ageing’ of the rural household when witnessed through this prism emerge as processual ‘snapshots’ of the emerging household and not a new normativity. The changing subject positions in terms of natural resource management or communal responsibilities or household mobility are elements of a transforming rurality, which if viewed in isolation fail to address the unfolding politics of belonging to Uttarakhand (Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna Toffin, 2011; Mathur, 2013; Koskimaki, 2017).

The movement of *pahari* mobilees cannot be substantiated simply through a generational anxiety (Smith, 2013) or their evaluation through structurally salient notions of labor and security (Brown et al., 2016). As young men of what they see as a ‘modern era’, their aspirations for themselves and their households is often an exploration of the material and symbolic modalities of such a

modernity. This is performed through trial and error, navigating multiple discourses and scales, since there is a lack of precedent and an overwhelming need to find ways of belonging. In the process their relationships with the household are not severed, but re-negotiated based on both intra-household politics and the changing boundaries and responsibilities of households within new avatars of the community and the region. Even though this work strives to reveal the invisible *pahari* men, their invisibility in certain spaces is often one of choice and critical in the interstitial lives they live. It is this invisibility that allows them to circumvent laws and retain a modicum of agency, when confronted with the many different powerful agents and processes.

While this dissertation delves into the lifeworlds of mobile male youth, it fails to address another, even more marginalized population: young mobile women. Despite the ubiquitous patriarchy in most *pahari* homes, there are certain breaches in the moral economies attempting to mediate the bodies and affects of young women. While focused developmental interventions have produced contradictory effects for young women (Nichols, 2016; Goodman, 2017; Jeffrey and Dyson, 2016), the rise of translocal householding and the spread of the service industry on the heels of improving infrastructure pose novel labor realities for them. For Reena, Gopal's wife, life on the edge of a growing town came with expectations and opportunities that she didn't have in Mana. Tutoring elementary school children or filling out paperwork for families applying for state subsidized amenities allowed her to 'enter the modern world'. Similarly, for Ruhi her attachment to the rural BPO has freed her from the intense physical labor of livestocking. But both of them, while extolling their life choices, lamented the exclusion they felt within social networks. The lives of such mobile young women remains unexplored in regional scholarship and in accounts emerging from the majority world (Jones, 2004; Naafs, 2013), which are still overwhelmingly focused on non-interstitial modalities of labor and mobility (Chopra and Ghosh, 2000; Sidh and Basu, 2011; Kelkar, 2007).

In the winter of 2016 as I was about to leave Uttarakhand, I got a call from Nayan after almost two years, with an invitation to visit his village. As the bus laden with people, goats, potato chips and newspapers entered the village market, I realized that a lot had changed. Along with a shiny new hotel for tourists, there were also new shops retailing an odd mix of products from the plains. Nayan hugged me and handed me a card, “What do you think? A couple of us boys from the village and a friend from Bangalore have started an adventure tourism company”. Nayan who had kicked around in Bangalore and New Delhi, earning Rs. 8000/month (\$120) had come back to the village about twelve months ago and joined forces with some of the local youth and started to work on this venture. As I walked with him through the forest I noticed a group of tourists being led by his brother on a hike, similar to Nayan, they looked exhausted but excited. Over dinner he pointed at all the electric orbs of light in the village and said,

Remember when we used to eat in the dark? Those days are gone. All the newspapers write about corruption, floods and road accidents. But what about things that are changing for the better. I agree that there are big problems with migration and unemployment in *pahar*, but look at my life – I used to wash dishes in a hotel, share a filthy room and eat leftovers like a dog. Today I am no one’s slave and have my own house and my own land. Maybe this company will fail, but at least I am trying to imagine a better future, both for me and other young *paharis* like me. Isn’t this a story of hope?

As I looked out over the village, the moonlight reflected the massive heap of plastic waste that had now materialized by the river. Following the broken, unused irrigation gullies up from the river, I noticed barren fields that had once been ripe with apple trees. A prominent *maidani* businessman had bought much of the horticultural land and many of Nayan’s friends now worked as caretakers and security guards on the fields that had been passed down for generations. The tourism boom in the village had been catalyzed by a *maidani* travel company, which was currently involved with many aspects of local life – from afterschool programs to funding religious events. Boys much younger than Nayan worked for them, dropping out of school and carrying pots and pans in knee-deep snow for the promise of easy cash and flashy hiking shoes. Nayan was ambivalent about all this but saw this

involvement of outsiders in his community as inevitable and lived off the opportunities they had created. The mountains were moving. But where and how, were questions that *pahari* youth like Nayan, found hard to answer.

Work Cited

- Abu-Lughod, J. (1975). The end of the age of innocence in migration theory. In Brian M Du Toit & Helen I Safa, *Migration and Urbanization: Models and Adaptive Strategies*. The Hague : Mouton ; Chicago: International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences.
- Adger, W. N. (2000). Social and ecological resilience: are they related? *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(3), 347–364. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200701540465>
- Adhikari, J., & Hobley, M. (2015). “Everyone is leaving who will sow our fields?” the livelihood effects on women of male migration from khotang and udaypur districts, Nepal, to the gulf countries and Malaysia. *Himalaya*, 35(1), 11–23.
- Agrawal, N. K., Solgard, A., Leikanger, I., Choudhury, D., Maden, U., Sellmyer, A., & Maharajan, D. R. (2014). *Himalayan Climate Change Adaptation Programme (HICAP): Emerging Evidence of Change for Policy and Action*. Kathmandu, Nepal. Retrieved from <http://lib.icimod.org/record/27760>
- Aguirre-Sulem, E. P. (2015). From Elders’ Wisdom to Brave Migrants: Transformation and Conflict in the Performance of Indigenous Mexican Masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 18(1), 30–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X14555278>
- Ahlborg, H., & Nightingale, A. J. (2012). Mismatch between scales of knowledge in Nepalese forestry: Epistemology, power, and policy implications. *Ecology and Society*, 17(4). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05171-170416>
- Ansell, N. (2009). Childhood and the politics of scale: Descaling children’s geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(2), 190–209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090980>
- Ansell, N., van Blerk, L., Robson, E., & Hajdu, F. (2012). The spatial construction of young people’s livelihoods in rural southern Africa. *Geography*, 97(3), 135–140.
- Atkinson, S. (2013). Beyond Components of Wellbeing: The Effects of Relational and Situated Assemblage. *Topoi*, 32(2), 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-013-9164-0>
- Awasthi, I. C., Nathan, D., & Sector, O. (2015). Poverty and Gender Analysis of Uttarakhand : Some Insights from the Field Giri Institute of Development Studies Poverty and Gender Analysis of Uttarakhand : Some Insights from the Field Giri Institute of Development Studies Sector O , Aliganj , Lucknow-22, (September).
- Azaola, M. C. (2012). Becoming a migrant: Aspirations of youths during their transition to adulthood in rural Mexico. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(7), 875–889. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.677813>
- Bahukhandi, V., & Shukla, O. P. (2015). UTTARAKHAND STATE : AN ECONOMICAL PARADOX OF POVERTY AMIDST SOCIO- ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF. *International Research Journal of Marketing and Economics*, 2(12), 1–14.
- Balodi, K. N., Naithani, S., Kaur, J., Singh, A., & Chauhan, A. S. (2014). Eco-tourism A Sustainable Livelihood Option for Mountainous Communities in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, India. *Journal of Studies in Dynamics and Change Journal of Studies in Dynamics and Change Journal of Studies in Dynamics and Change*, 1(4), 2348–7038. Retrieved from <http://www.jsdc.lokkatha.com>
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2nd ed.). Durham: Duke University Press.

- Barker, J., Kraftl, P., Horton, J., & Tucker, F. (2009). The road less travelled - New directions in children's and young people's mobility. *Mobilities*, 4(1), 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100802657939>
- Barnett, J., Lambert, S., & Fry, I. (2008). The hazards of indicators: Insights from the environmental vulnerability index. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 98(1), 102–119.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00045600701734315>
- Bastia, T. (2014). Intersectionality, migration and development, 3, 237–248.
- Bell, M. M., Lloyd, S. E., & Vatopec, C. (2010). Activating the countryside: Rural power, the power of the rural and the making of rural politics. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50(3), 205–224.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2010.00512.x>
- Bell, M. M., & Osti, G. (2010). Mobilities and ruralities: An introduction. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50(3), 199–204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2010.00518.x>
- Bergmann, C., Gerwin, M., Nüsser, M., & Sax, W. S. (2008). Living in a high mountain border region: The case of the “Bhotiyas” of the Indo-Chinese border region. *Journal of Mountain Science*, 5(3), 209–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11629-008-0178-9>
- Bergmann, C., Gerwin, M., & Sax, W. S. (2011). Politics of scale in a high mountain border region: Mobility among the Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand, India. Author (s): Christoph Bergmann, Martin Gerwin, William S. Sax and Marcus Nüsser Published by: White Horse Press Stable URL: [http://w, 15\(2\), 104–129](http://w, 15(2), 104–129).
- Bergmann, C., Gerwin, M., Sax, W. S., & Nüsser, M. (2011). Politics of scale in a high mountain border region: Being mobile among the Bhotiyas of the Kumaon Himalaya, India. *Nomadic Peoples*, 15(2), 104–129. <https://doi.org/10.3167/np.2011.150207>
- Berremen, G. (1963). Peoples and Cultures of the Himalayas. *Asian Survey*, 3(6), 289–304.
- Bhatt, M. R., Pandya, M., Chi Goh, H., Gupta, K., Ariyabandhu, M., Verhagen, J., ... Raj Benny, A. (2013). *Floods in Uttarakhand: A New Relief Deal*.
- Bhatt, R., & Pant, C. (2015). Fostering Inclusiveness in Uttarakhand: A Focus on Government. *Economic Affairs*, 60(4).
- Bindi, S. (2012). When there were only gods, then there was no disease, no need for doctors: Forsaken deities and weakened bodies in the Indian Himalayas. *Anthropology and Medicine*, 19(1), 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2012.660467>
- Blaikie, P., & Muldavin, J. (2004). *Policy as Warrant: Environment and Development in the Himalayan Region. Environmental Change, vulnerability, and Governance Series* (Vol. 59).
- Blaikie, P., & Muldavin, J. (2014). Environmental justice? The story of two projects. *Geoforum*, 54, 226–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.12.011>
- Blaser, M. (2014). Ontology and indigeneity: On the political ontology of heterogeneous assemblages. *Cultural Geographies*, 21(1), 49–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474012462534>
- Blokland, T. (2012). Blaming Neither the Undeserving Poor Nor the Revanchist Middle Classes: A Relational Approach to Marginalization. *Urban Geography*, 33(4), 488–507.
<https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.33.4.488>
- Boccagni, P., & Brighenti, A. M. (2017). Immigrants and home in the making: thresholds of domesticity, commonality and publicness. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 32(1), 1–

11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-015-9487-9>
- Bose, A. (2000). Ecology, Economy and Society in Himalayan Villages. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(31), 2707–2709. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4409555>
- Brickell, K. (2012). “Mapping” and “doing” critical geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2), 225–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511418708>
- Brown, K., Ecclestone, K., & Emmel, N. (2017). The Many Faces of Vulnerability. *Social Policy and Society*, 16(3), 497–510.
- Brown, T. (2015). Youth Mobilities and Rural-Urban Tensions in Darjeeling, India. *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 38(2), 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1031086>
- Brown, T., Ganguly-Scrase, R., & Scrase, T. J. (2016). Urbanization, Rural Mobility, and New Class Relations in Darjeeling, India. *Critical Asian Studies*, 48(2), 235–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2016.1164392>
- Brown, T., Scrase, T. J., & Ganguly-Scrase, R. (2017). Globalised dreams, local constraints: migration and youth aspirations in an Indian regional town. *Children's Geographies*, 15(5), 531–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2016.1274948>
- Bruslé, T. (2008). Choosing a Destination and Work. *Mountain Research and Development*, 28(3/4), 240–247. <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.0934>
- Burnham, M., Ma, Z., & Zhang, B. (2016). Making sense of climate change: Hybrid epistemologies, socio-natural assemblages and smallholder knowledge. *Area*, 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12150>
- Calestani, M. (2012). Being “an authentic alteño”: Young people in a Bolivian Andean city. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(4), 541–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.663888>
- Castree, N. (2003). Environmental issues: Relational ontologies and hybrid politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(2), 203–211. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132503ph422pr>
- Chari, S., & Gidwani, V. (2005). Introduction. *Ethnography*, 6(3), 267–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138105060758>
- Charsley, K., & Wray, H. (2015). Introduction: The Invisible (Migrant) Man. *Men and Masculinities*, 18(4), 403–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X15575109>
- Chaudhary, P., & Bawa, K. S. (2011). Local perceptions of climate change validated by scientific evidence in the Himalayas. *Biology Letters*, 7(5), 767–770. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2011.0269>
- Chauhan, T. S., Gopalakrishnan, S., & Selvaraj, M. S. (2001). A Class of Two Classes : Migrant Workers in Industrial Hubs of Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.
- Chea, L., & Huijsmans, R. (2018). Rural youth and urban-based vocational training: gender, space and aspiring to “become someone.” *Children's Geographies*, 16(1), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2017.1300234>
- Chernela, J., & Zanotti, L. (2014). Limits to Knowledge: Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, and the Moral Economy in the Eastern Amazon of Brazil. *Conservation and Society*, 12(3), 306. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-4923.145149>
- Chhatre, A., Lakhanpal, S., & Prasanna, S. (2017). Heritage as Weapon: Contested Geographies of Conservation and Culture in the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, India.

- Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(2), 456–464.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1243040>
- Chopra, R., & Ghosh, D. (2000). Work patterns of rural women in Central Himalayas. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 35(December 30), 4701–4705.
- Coffey, D., Papp, J., & Spears, D. (2015). Short-Term Labor Migration from Rural North India: Evidence from New Survey Data. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 34(3), 361–380.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-014-9349-2>
- Cote, M., & Nightingale, A. J. (2012). Resilience thinking meets social theory. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(4), 475–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511425708>
- Cresswell, T. (2002). Bourdieu's Geographies: In Memorium. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20(4), 379–382. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d2004t>
- Cresswell, T. (2010). Towards a politics of mobility. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(1), 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d11407>
- Cresswell, T. (2012). Mobilities II: Still. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(5), 645–653.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511423349>
- Cresswell, T. (2014). Mobilities III: Moving on. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(5), 712–721.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132514530316>
- Cresswell, T., Dorow, S., & Roseman, S. (2016). Putting mobility theory to work: Conceptualizing employment-related geographical mobility. *Environment and Planning A*, 48(9), 1787–1803.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X16649184>
- Crivello, G. (2011). “Becoming somebody”: Youth transitions through education and migration in Peru. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(4), 395–411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2010.538043>
- Crivello, G. (2015). “There’s no future here’: The time and place of children’s migration aspirations in Peru. *Geoforum*, 62, 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.03.016>
- da Costa, D. (2010). Introduction: Relocating culture in development and development in culture. *Third World Quarterly*, 31(4), 501–522. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436591003701059>
- Dash, D., Kumar, B., & Mahra, G. S. (2017). Mass Media Usage by Rural Youth in Agriculture in Udham Singh Nagar District of Uttarakhand. *Indian Research Journal of Extension Education*, 17(2), 9–13.
- Davids, T. (2014). Trying to be a vulnerable observer: Matters of agency, solidarity and hospitality in feminist ethnography. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 43, 50–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.02.006>
- Davids, T., & Willemse, K. (2014). Embodied engagements: Feminist ethnography at the crossing of knowledge production and representation - An introduction. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 43, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.02.001>
- DeLyser, D., & Sui, D. (2014). Crossing the qualitative-quantitative chasm III: Enduring methods, open geography, participatory research, and the fourth paradigm. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(2), 294–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513479291>
- Demeritt, D. (2006). Science studies, climate change and the prospects for constructivist critique. *Economy and Society*, 35(3), 453–479. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140600845024>
- Deshingkar, P. (2006). Internal Migration , Poverty and Development in Asia. *ODI Briefing Paper No.*

11, 37(March 2006).

- Deuchar, A. (2014). Ambivalence and optimism: The contradictory meanings of education for lower middle class young men in Dehradun, India. *Geoforum*, 55, 143–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.06.005>
- Dhyani, S., Maikhuri, R. K., & Dhyani, D. (2013). Utility of fodder banks for reducing women drudgery and anthropogenic pressure from forests of Western Himalaya. *National Academy Science Letters*, 36(4), 453–460. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40009-013-0143-1>
- Directorate of Economics and Statistics Uttarakhand. (2014). Uttarakhand at a Glance, 1.
- Donovan, K. P. (2014). “Development” as if we have never been modern: Fragments of a Latourian development studies. *Development and Change*, 45(5), 869–894. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12117>
- Douglass, M. (2006). Global householding in Pacific Asia, 28(4), 421–446.
- Dr Shalini Gupta. (2014). Modeling district level economic disparities across Uttarakhand, \nIndia\n. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(2), 84–90. Retrieved from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol19-issue2/Version-5/L019258490.pdf>
- Drew, G. (2014a). Mountain Women, Dams, and the Gendered Dimensions of Environmental Protest in the Garhwal Himalaya. *Mountain Research and Development*, 34(3), 235–242. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-13-00075.1>
- Drew, G. (2014b). Transformation and resistance on the upper ganga: The ongoing legacy of British canal irrigation. *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 37(4), 670–683. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2014.966896>
- Dyson, J. (2015). Life on the hoof: Gender, youth, and the environment in the Indian Himalayas. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 21(1), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12147>
- Eakin, H., & Bojórquez-Tapia, L. A. (2008). Insights into the composition of household vulnerability from multicriteria decision analysis. *Global Environmental Change*, 18(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2007.09.001>
- Eakin, H., & Luers, A. L. (2006). Assessing the Vulnerability of Social-Environmental Systems. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 31(1), 365–394. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.30.050504.144352>
- Eakin, H., Winkels, A., & Sendzimir, J. (2009). Nested vulnerability: exploring cross-scale linkages and vulnerability teleconnections in Mexican and Vietnamese coffee systems. *Environmental Science and Policy*, 12(4), 398–412. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2008.09.003>
- Elwood, S., Lawson, V., & Sheppard, E. (2017). Geographical relational poverty studies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 745–765. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516659706>
- Escobar, A. (2007). The “ontological turn” in social theory. A Commentary on “Human geography without scale.” *Trans Inst Br Geogr NS*, 32(1), 106–111. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2007.00243.x>
- Fang, Y., Zhao, C., Rasul, G., & Wahid, S. M. (2016). Rural household vulnerability and strategies for improvement: An empirical analysis based on time series. *Habitat International*, 53, 254–264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.11.035>

- Farrugia, D., Smyth, J., & Harrison, T. (2014). Rural young people in late modernity: Place, globalisation and the spatial contours of identity. *Current Sociology*, 62(7), 1036–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114538959>
- Fengbo, C., & Punch, S. (2014). Moving from boats to housing on land Intergenerational transformations of fisher households in southern China. In R. M. Vanderbeck & N. Worth (Eds.), *Intergenerational Space* (pp. 242–256). Routledge.
- Fiol, S. (2013). International Council for Traditional Music Of Lack and Loss : Assessing Cultural and Musical Poverty in Uttarakhand. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 45(2013), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.5921/yeartradmusi.45.2013.0083>
- Foo, K., Martin, D., Polsky, C., Wool, C., & Ziemer, M. (2015). Social well-being and environmental governance in urban neighbourhoods in Boston, MA. *Geographical Journal*, 181(2), 138–146. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12108>
- Gabriel, M. (2006). Youth migration and social advancement: How young people manage emerging differences between themselves and their Hometown. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(1), 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260500523622>
- Gallo, E. (2015). Village ethnography and kinship studies: Perspectives from India and beyond. *Critique of Anthropology*, 35(3), 248–262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X15588614>
- Gautam, Y., & Andersen, P. (2016). Rural livelihood diversification and household well-being: Insights from Humla, Nepal. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44, 239–249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.02.001>
- Gergan, M. D. (2014). Precarity and possibility: On being young and indigenous in sikkim, India. *Himalaya*, 34(2), 67–80.
- Gergan, M. D. (2016). *Precarity and Possibility at the Margins : Hazards, Infrastructure and Indigenous Politics in Sikkim, India*. Dissertation
- Gergan, M. D. (2017). Living with Earthquakes and Angry Deities at the Himalayan Borderlands. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(2), 490–498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1209103>
- Gerlitz, J.-Y., Apablaza, M., Hoermann, B., Hunzai, K., & Bennett, L. (2015). A Multidimensional Poverty Measure for the Hindu Kush–Himalayas, Applied to Selected Districts in Nepal. *Mountain Research and Development*, 35(3), 278–288. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-14-00027.1>
- Gerlitz, J.-Y., Banerjee, S., Hoermann, B., Hunzai, K., Macchi, M., & Tuladhar, S. (2014). Poverty and vulnerability assessment – A survey instrument for the Hindu Kush Himalayas, vii+102. Retrieved from <http://lib.icimod.org/record/29972>
- Gibb, C. (2018). A critical analysis of vulnerability. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 28(August 2017), 327–334. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2017.11.007>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2005). Surplus Possibilities: Postdevelopment and Community Economies. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(1), 4–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0129-7619.2005.00198.x>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: Performative practices for “other worlds.” *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), 613–632. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090821>

- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2011). A feminist project of belonging for the anthropocene. *Green Utopianism: Perspectives, Politics and Micro-Practices*, 524(April), 38–56.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203067215>
- Gidwani, Vinay. Capital, Interrupted : Agrarian Development and the Politics of Work in India. Minneapolis, US: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 29 April 2017. Copyright © 2008. University of Minnesota Press. All rights reserved. (2017), (April).
- Gidwani, V. (2002). The unbearable modernity of “development”? Canal irrigation and development planning in Western India. *Progress in Planning*, 58(1), 1–80. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-9006\(02\)00017-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-9006(02)00017-X)
- Gidwani, V., & Sivaramakrishnan, K. (2003). Circular migration and the spaces of cultural assertion. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(1), 186–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8306.93112>
- Goodman, R. (2017a). Borrowing Money, Exchanging Relationships: Making Microfinance Fit into Local Lives in Kumaon, India. *World Development*, 93, 362–373.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.12.033>
- Goodman, R. (2017b). Sociality , Survival , and Secrets : Making Life “ Good Enough ” Through NGO Projects in Kumaon , India By Rachael G . Goodman A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Anthropology) At t.
- Gooptu, N. (2013). Servile Sentinels of the City: Private Security Guards, Organized Informality, and Labour in Interactive Services in Globalized India. *International Review of Social History*, 58(1), 9–38. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859012000788>
- Gough, K. V., Chigunta, F., & Langevang, T. (2016). Expanding the scales and domains of (in)security: Youth employment in urban Zambia. *Environment and Planning A*, 48(2), 348–366.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15613793>
- Government of Uttarakhand. (2012). State Action Plan on Climate Change: Transforming Crisis into Opportunity, (June), 1–197.
- Govindrajan, R. (2015a). Monkey Business. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 35(2), 246–262. <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201x-3139024>
- Govindrajan, R. (2015b). “The goat that died for family”: Animal sacrifice and interspecies kinship in India’s Central Himalayas. *American Ethnologist*, 42(3), 504–519.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12144>
- Gregory, D. (2004). The colonial present. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan. Palestine. Iraq*, (c), 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1145/2505515.2507827>
- Greiner, C. (2012). Can Households be Multilocal? Conceptual and Methodological Considerations based on a Namibian Case Study. *Erde*, 143(3), 195–212.
- Grierson George, A. (1927). *Linguistic Survey of India*. vol. i, part i, Introductory (1927); Calcutta: central publication Branch, Government of india.
- Group, W. B. (2012). India Uttarakhand Economic Assessment, (62493).
- Grunawalt, P. (2012). Why are Cities the Only Place for Dreams? Outmigration of Youths From Rural Uttarakhand. *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. Paper 1297*, 49.
- Gururani, S. (2002). Construction of Third World women’s knowledge in the development

- discourse. *International Social Science Journal*, 54(173), 313–323. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2451.00384>
- Gururani, S. (2014). “Geographies that make resistance”: Remapping the politics of gender and place in Uttarakhand, India. *Himalaya*, 34(1), 68–79.
- Guthman, J. (1997). Representing Crisis: The Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation and the Project of Development in Post-Rana Nepal. *Development and Change*, 28(1), 45–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00034>
- Hannam, K., Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). Editorial: Mobilities, immobilities and moorings. *Mobilities*, 1(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100500489189>
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge (Vol. 21). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2076334>
- Harris, T. (2013). Trading places: New economic geographies across Himalayan borderlands. *Political Geography*, 35, 60–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2012.12.002>
- Harrison, E., & Chiroro, C. (2017). Differentiated legitimacy, differentiated resilience: beyond the natural in “natural disasters.” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44(5), 1022–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1193011>
- Hartmann, D. L., Tank, A. M. G. K., & Rusticucci, M. (2013). IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. *Ipc, AR5*(January 2014), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Head, L., & Gibson, C. (2012). Becoming differently modern: Geographic contributions to a generative climate politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(6), 699–714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132512438162>
- Hewitt, K., & Mehta, M. (2012). Rethinking risk and disasters in mountain areas. *Revue de Géographie Alpine*, (100–1), 0–13. <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.1653>
- Hidenori, O. (2014). Transformation of India ’ s Underdeveloped Regions during Economic Growth Period Focusing on Uttarakhand, 13–23.
- Hinkson, M. (2017). Precarious Placemaking. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol*, 46, 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102116>
- Hoermann, B., & Kollmair, M. (2009). Labour Migration and Remittances in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region.
- Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems. *Annu.Rev.Ecol.Syst.*, 4, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.es.04.110173.000245>
- Hopkins, P and Tarrant, a. (2012). Geographies of age, 39(3), 287–294.
- Hoque, S. F., Quinn, C. H., & Sallu, S. M. (2017). Resilience, political ecology, and well-being: An interdisciplinary approach to understanding social-ecological change in coastal Bangladesh. *Ecology and Society*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-09422-220245>
- Howard, C. A. (2016). Touring the consumption of the Other: Imaginaries of authenticity in the Himalayas and beyond. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16(2), 354–373. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540516635400>

- Huijsmans, R. (2014). Becoming a young migrant or stayer seen through the lens of “householding”: Households “in flux” and the intersection of relations of gender and seniority. *Geoforum*, 51(July), 294–304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.007>
- Huijsmans, R. (2016). Movement, Mobilities, and Journeys. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4585-93-4>
- India, G. of. (2017). *India Youth Development Index and Report 2017*. Retrieved from www.rgniyd.gov.in
- Indian Institute for Population Sciences. (2016). National Family Health Survey 4: State Fact Sheet, Uttarakhand, 1–6.
- Ives, J. D. (2004). The Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation : Its Validity and Application Challenged by Recent Research Author (s): Jack D . Ives Conference : The Himalaya-Ganges Problem (Aug ., 1987), pp . 189-199 Published by : International Mountain Society, 7(3), 189–199.
- Jacka, T. (2013). Chinese discourses on rurality, gender and development: a feminist critique. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40(6), 983–1007. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.855723>
- Jain, A. (2010). Labour Migration and Remittances in Uttarakhand. *Icimod*.
- Jasanoff, S. (1996). Beyond Epistemology : Relativism and Engagement. *Social Studies of Science*, 26(2), 393–418.
- Jauregui, B. (2014). Provisional agency in India: Jugaad and legitimation of corruption. *American Ethnologist*, 41(1), 76–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12061>
- Jayal, N. (2000). Same New Wine , Same Bottle ., *Economic & Political Weekly*, 35(49), 4311–4314.
- Jeffrey, 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. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00016>
- Jeffrey, C. (2008a). “Generation nowhere”: Rethinking youth through the lens of unemployed young men. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(6), 739–758. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132507088119>
- Jeffrey, C. (2008b). Kicking away the ladder: Student politics and the making of an Indian middle class. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26(3), 517–536. <https://doi.org/10.1068/dcos4>
- Jeffrey, C. (2010a). Geographies of children and youth I: eroding maps of life. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(4), 496–505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509348533>
- Jeffrey, C. (2010b). Timepass: Youth, class, and time among unemployed young men in India. *American Ethnologist*, 37(3), 465–481. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01266.x>
- Jeffrey, C. (2011). Youth and development. *European Journal of Development Research*, 23(5), 792–796. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2011.38>
- Jeffrey, C., & Dyson, J. (2013). Zigzag capitalism: Youth entrepreneurship in the contemporary global South. *Geoforum*, 49, 3–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.01.001>
- Jeffrey, C., & Dyson, J. (2014). “I serve therefore I am”: Youth and generative politics in India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56(4), 967–994. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417514000462>
- Jeffrey, C., & Dyson, J. (2016). Now: prefigurative politics through a north Indian lens. *Economy and*

- Society*, 45(1), 77–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2016.1143725>
- Jeffrey, C., & McFarlane, C. (2008). Performing cosmopolitanism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26(3), 420–427. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d2603ed>
- Jeffrey, C., & Young, S. (2014). Jugād: Youth and Enterprise in India. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(1), 182–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2013.847757>
- Jewitt, S., & Baker, K. (2011). Risk, wealth and agrarian change in India. Household-level hazards vs. late-modern global risks at different points along the risk transition. *Global Environmental Change*, 22(2), 547–557. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.11.010>
- Jha, A. K. (2013). Retracted: Internal Migration, Mobility, and Exclusion in Urban India: An Examination: Internal Migration, Mobility, and Exclusion in Urban India. *Poverty & Public Policy*, 5(4), 354–369. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pop4.48>
- Jones, G. W. (2004). A risky business: Experiences of leaving home among young rural women. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 7(2), 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1367626042000238721>
- Joshi, D. U. (2013). Decentralisation of public service delivery in the Central Himalayas: The myth of community participation. *Policy and Society*, 32(1), 23–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2013.01.001>
- Joshi, M. P. (2010). On the origin of the neo Indo-Aryan Pahāḍī Language of Uttarakhand and Western Nepal Himalaya 1, (2). <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10122-010-0013-y>
- Kala, C. P. (2014). The degraded and disaster-prone Himalayan ecosystem calls for management interventions. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 10(PA), 399–401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2014.09.015>
- Kandari, P. (2013). Migration Pattern and the increasing Participation of Females in the Economy of Hill Rural Areas: A Study of Pauri district in Uttarakhand. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 17(5), 27–33. Retrieved from www.iosrjournals.org
- Karar, A. (2010). Impact of Pilgrim tourism at Haridwar. *Anthropologist*, 12(2), 99–105.
- Kelkar, G. (2007). the Feminization of Agriculture in Asia : Implications for Women ' S Agency and Productivity, 1–16.
- Kelkar, U., Narula, K. K., Sharma, V. P., & Chandna, U. (2008). Vulnerability and adaptation to climate variability and water stress in Uttarakhand State, India. *Global Environmental Change*, 18(4), 564–574. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2008.09.003>
- Kent, K., John Sinclair, A., & Diduck, A. (2012). Stakeholder engagement in sustainable adventure tourism development in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, India. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, 19(1), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2011.595544>
- Keshri, K., & Bhagat, R. B. (2010). Temporary and seasonal migration in India. *Genus*, 66(3), 25–45. <https://doi.org/10.4402/genus-207>
- Klenk, R. M. (2004). “Who is the developed woman?”: Women as a category of development discourse, Kumaon, India. *Development and Change*, 35(1), 57–78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2004.00342.x>
- Korzenevica, M. (2016). Young people navigating political engagement through post-war instability and mobility: A case from rural Nepal. *Geoforum*, 74, 19–28.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.05.006>

- Korzenevica, M., & Agergaard, J. (2017). "The house cannot stay empty": a case of young rural Nepalis negotiating multilocal householding. *Asian Population Studies*, 13(2), 124–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2017.1303110>
- Koskimaki, L. (2017). Youth Futures and a Masculine Development Ethos in the Regional Story of Uttarakhand. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 12(2), 136–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973174117711339>
- Kumar, J., & Garg, A. (2017). The Impact of Risk Perception and Factors on Tourists Decision Making for Choosing the Destination Uttarakhand/India. *Ottoman Journal of Tourism and Management Research*, 2(2), 144–160. <https://doi.org/10.26465/ojtmr.2017229490>
- Kumar, S. (2016). Agrarian Transformation and the New Rurality in Western Uttar Pradesh. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 11, 61–71.
- Kumar, V., Chopra, A. K., Srivastava, S., & Maheshwari, R. K. (2013). Uttarakhand: Most Disaster Prone State of India, Need for Effective Management. *The Science Observer Society of Education*, 1(1).
- Kumar Joshi, A., Joshi, C., Singh, M., & Singh, V. (2014). Road traffic accidents in hilly regions of northern India: What has to be done? *World J Emerg Med*, 55(22), 112–115. <https://doi.org/10.5847/>
- Kwan, M. P., & Schwanen, T. (2016). Geographies of mobility. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 106(2), 243–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2015.1123067>
- Langevang, T. (2008). "We are managing!" Uncertain paths to respectable adulthoods in Accra, Ghana. *Geoforum*, 39(6), 2039–2047. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.09.003>
- Langevang, T., & Gough, K. V. (2009). Surviving through movement: The mobility of urban youth in Ghana. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 10(7), 741–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360903205116>
- Lawson, V. (2000). Arguments within geographies of movement: the theoretical potential of migrants' stories. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(2), 173–189. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200672491184>
- Lee, C. K., & Kofman, Y. (2012). The Politics of Precarity: Views Beyond the United States. *Work and Occupations*, 39(4), 388–408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888412446710>
- Leyshon, M. (2008). The betweenness of being a rural youth: Inclusive and exclusive lifestyles. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 9(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360701789535>
- Little, J. (2015). Nature, wellbeing and the transformational self. *Geographical Journal*, 181(2), 121–128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12083>
- Lord, A. (2016). Citizens of a hydropower nation: Territory and agency at the frontiers of hydropower development in Nepal. *Economic Anthropology*, 3(1), 145–160. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12051>
- Luers, A. L., Lobell, D. B., Sklar, L. S., Addams, C. L., & Matson, P. A. (2003). A method for quantifying vulnerability, applied to the agricultural system of the Yaqui Valley, Mexico. *Global Environmental Change*, 13(4), 255–267. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-3780\(03\)00054-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-3780(03)00054-2)
- Mackenzie, C., Rogers, W., & Dodds, S. (2014). *Vulnerability: New essays in ethics and feminist philosophy*.

- (C. Mackenzie, W. Rogers, & S. Dodds, Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from http://eltalondeaquiles.pucp.edu.pe/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Studies-in-Feminist-Philosophy-Catrina-Mackenzie-Wendy-Rogers-Susan-Dodds-Vulnerability_-New-Essays-in-Ethics-and-Feminist-Philosophy-Oxford-University-Press-2013.pdf#page=101
- Mains, D. (2007). Neoliberal Times: Progress, Boredom, and Shame among Young Men in Urban Ethiopia. *American Ethnologist*, 34(4), 659–673. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2007.34.4.659>. American
- Majumder, S. (2012). “Who wants to marry a farmer?” Neoliberal industrialization and the politics of land and work in rural West Bengal. *Focaal*, 2012(64). <https://doi.org/10.3167/fcl.2012.640108>
- Mamgain, R. (2008). Growth, Poverty and Employment in Uttarakhand. *Journal of Labour and Development*, (39). Retrieved from [http://www.ihdindia.org/%5C/Working Ppaers/2010-2005/pdf files/39- RP Mamgain.pdf](http://www.ihdindia.org/%5C/Working%20Papers/2010-2005/pdf%20files/39-RP%20Mamgain.pdf)
- Mamgain, R. P. (2004). *Employment, migration and livelihoods in the hill economy of Uttaranchal*. Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- Mamgain, R. P., & Reddy, D. N. (2016). OUTMIGRATION FROM HILL REGION OF UTTARAKHAND: Magnitude, Challenges and Policy Options, 1–27. Retrieved from www.nird.org.in
- Marston, S. A., Jones III, J. P., & Woodward, K. (2005). Human Geography Without Scale Human geography without scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30, 416–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00180.x>
- Massey, D. (2005). For Space. *America*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2009.04.019>
- Mathur, N. (2015a). A “Remote” town in the Indian Himalaya. *Modern Asian Studies*, 49(2), 365–392. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X1300053X>
- Mathur, N. (2015b). “It ’ s a conspiracy theory and climate change ” Of beastly encounters and cervine dissapearances in Himalayan India. *HAAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 5(1), 87–111.
- Mawdsley, E. (1996). Uttarakhand Agitation and Other Backward Classes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(4), 205–210.
- Mawdsley, E. (1997). Nonsecessionist regionalism in India: The Uttarakhand separate State movement. *Environment and Planning A*, 29(12), 2217–2235. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a292217>
- Mawdsley, E. (1999). A New Himalayan State in India: Popular Perceptions of Regionalism, Politics and Development. *Mountain Research and Development*, 19(2), 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3674251>
- Mawdsley, E. (2006). Hindu nationalism, neo-traditionalism and environmental discourses in India. *Geoforum*, 37(3), 380–390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.06.004>
- Mawdsley, E. (2010). The abuse of religion and ecology: The Vishva Hindu Parishad and Tehri Dam. *Culture and the Environment in the Himalaya*, (2), 151–165. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203864364>
- McEvoy, J., Petrzalka, P., Radcliff, C., & Schmook, B. (2012). Gendered Mobility and Morality in a South-Eastern Mexican Community: Impacts of Male Labour Migration on the Women Left Behind. *Mobilities*, 7(3), 369–388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2012.655977>

- McGuirk, P., & O'Neill, P. (2012). Critical geographies with the state: The problem of social vulnerability and the politics of engaged research. *Antipode*, 44(4), 1374–1394. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00976.x>
- McHugh, K. E. (2000). Inside, outside, upside down, backward, forward, round and round: a case for ethnographic studies in migration. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(1), 71–89. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200674985472>
- Mehta, M. (1990). Hill development and commercial agriculture: evidence from the Indian Himalaya. *South Asia Bulletin*, 10(1), 44–53. Retrieved from <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-0025553587&partnerID=40&md5=6088809b1093c092cff5210ec112b9d4>
- Mehta, M. (1995). *Cultural diversity in the mountains: Issues of integration and marginality in sustainable development*. Boston University.
- Metz, J. J. (1989). Himalayan Political Economy : More Myths in the Closet ? *Mountain Research and Development*, 9(2), 175–181. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3673480>
- Milbourne, P., & Kitchen, L. (2014). Rural mobilities: Connecting movement and fixity in rural places. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 34, 326–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.01.004>
- Minten, B., Vandeplas, A., & Swinnen, J. F. M. (2011). The Broken Broker System? Transacting on Agricultural Wholesale Markets in India (Uttarakhand). *International Food Policy Research Institute, Dec 2011, vi+29 Pp.*, (September). Retrieved from <http://library.tufts.edu:4550/resserv?genre=book&Cnissn=&Cnitle=The+Broken+Broker+System%3F+Transacting+on+Agricultural+Wholesale+Markets+in+India+%28Uttarakhand%29&Cnvolume=&Cnissue=&Cndate=2011-12-01&Cnatitle=&Cnspage>
- Mogha, S. K., Yadav, S. P., & Singh, S. P. (2014). New slack model based efficiency assessment of public sector hospitals of Uttarakhand: State of India. *International Journal of Systems Assurance Engineering and Management*, 5(1), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13198-013-0207-0>
- Mohan, K., & Joshi, A. (2013). Simulation of strong ground motion due to great earthquake in the central seismic gap region of Uttarakhand Himalaya. *Natural Hazards*, 69(3), 1733–1749. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-013-0773-0>
- Mollett, S., & Faria, C. (2013). Messing with gender in feminist political ecology. *Geoforum*, 45, 116–125. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.10.009>
- Morarji, K. (2014). Subjects of development: Teachers, parents and youth negotiating education in Rural North India. *European Journal of Development Research*, 26(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2013.55>
- Morrow, V. (2013). Troubling transitions? Young people's experiences of growing up in poverty in rural Andhra Pradesh, India. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(1), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.704986>
- Morse, S., McNamara, N., & Acholo, M. (2009). Sustainable Livelihood Approach: A critical analysis of theory and practice. *Geographical Paper*, (189), 67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6268-8>
- Moskal, M. (2015). “When I think home I think family here and there”: Translocal and social ideas of home in narratives of migrant children and young people. *Geoforum*, 58, 143–152.

- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.11.011>
- Mosse, D. (2010). A relational approach to durable poverty, inequality and power. *Journal of Development Studies*, 46(7), 1156–1178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2010.487095>
- Munck, R. (2013). The precariat: A view from the South. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5), 747–762. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800751>
- Murray, L., Sawchuk, K., & Jirón, P. (2016). Comparative mobilities in an unequal world: researching intersections of gender and generation. *Mobilities*, 11(4), 542–552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2016.1211822>
- Murton, G. (2017). Making Mountain Places into State Spaces: Infrastructure, Consumption, and Territorial Practice in a Himalayan Borderland. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(2), 536–545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1232616>
- Naafs, S. (2013). Youth, Gender, and the Workplace: Shifting Opportunities and Aspirations in an Indonesian Industrial Town. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 646(1), 233–250. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716212469927>
- Nagar, R., Lawson, V., McDowell, L., & Hanson, S. (2002). Locating Globalization: Feminist (Re)readings of the Subjects and Spaces of Globalization. *Economic Geography*, 78(3), 257. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4140810>
- Nagar, R., Lawson, V., McDowell, L., Hanson, S., Geography, E., & Jul, N. (2002). Locating Globalization : Feminist (Re) readings of the Subjects and Spaces of Globalization Locating Globalization : Feminist (Re) readings of the Subjects and Spaces of Globalization *. *Economic Geography*, 78(3), 257–284.
- National Skill Development Corporation. (2013). *District wise skill gap study for the State of Madhya Pradesh*. Nsdc.
- Negi, C. S. (2007). Declining Transhumance and Subtle Changes in Livelihood Patterns and Biodiversity in the Kumaon Himalaya. *Mountain Research and Development*, 27(2), 114–118. <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.0818>
- Negi, R. S., & Manhas, D. (2015). Hill Rural Out- Migrant ' s kinship with their native place : A study of District Garhwal (Uttarakhand), India. *International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies*, I(V), 19–25.
- Nencel, L. (2014). Situating reflexivity: Voices, positionalities and representations in feminist ethnographic texts. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 43, 75–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.07.018>
- Nicholas, C. (2014). Hidden Hunger: A Political Ecology of Food and Nutrition in the Kumaon Hills, (September), 150.
- Nichols, C. (2017). Millets, milk and maggi: contested processes of the nutrition transition in rural India. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 34(4), 871–885. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-017-9781-0>
- Nichols, C. E. (2015). Shifting production/shifting consumption: A political ecology of health perceptions in Kumaon, India. *Geoforum*, 64, 182–191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.06.018>
- Nichols, C. E. (2016). Time Ni Hota Hai: time poverty and food security in the Kumaon hills, India.

- Gender, Place & Culture*, 23(10), 1404–1419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2016.1160871>
- Nickow, A. (2015). Growing in value: NGOs, social movements and the cultivation of developmental value chains in Uttarakhand, India. *Global Networks*, 15(s1), S45–S64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12087>
- NIDM. (2015). *Uttarakhand Disaster 2013*.
- Nightingale, A. (2003). A feminist in the forest: Situated knowledges and mixing methods in natural resource management. *Acme*, 2(1), 77–90. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185\(99\)00025-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(99)00025-1)
- Nightingale, A. (2012). Power , Authority and Deliberative Politics : Explaining the Stalemate of Nepal ’ s Terai Forest Governance Power , Authority and Deliberative Politics : Explaining the Stalemate of Nepal ’ s Terai Forest Governance.
- Nightingale, A. J. (2011). Bounding difference: Intersectionality and the material production of gender, caste, class and environment in Nepal. *Geoforum*, 42(2), 153–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.03.004>
- Nightingale, A. J. (2016). Adaptive scholarship and situated knowledges? Hybrid methodologies and plural epistemologies in climate change adaptation research. *Area*, 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12195>
- Nisha, & Punia, M. (2014). Socio-economic vulnerability and sustainable development in context of development vs. conservation debate: A study of bhagirathi basin, uttarakhand, India. *International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences - ISPRS Archives*, XL-8(1), 77–84. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprsarchives-XL-8-77-2014>
- O’Brien, K., Leichenko, R., Kelkar, U., Venema, H., Aandahl, G., Tompkins, H., ... West, J. (2004). Mapping vulnerability to multiple stressors: Climate change and globalization in India. *Global Environmental Change*, 14(4), 303–313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2004.01.001>
- O’Reilly, K., Dhanju, R., & Goel, A. (2017). Exploring “The Remote” and “The Rural”: Open Defecation and Latrine Use in Uttarakhand, India. *World Development*, 93, 193–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.12.022>
- Ogra, M., & Badola, R. (2008). Compensating human-wildlife conflict in protected area communities: Ground-Level perspectives from Uttarakhand, India. *Human Ecology*, 36(5), 717–729. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-008-9189-y>
- Olson, E. (2015). Geography and ethics I: Waiting and urgency. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(4), 517–526. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515595758>
- Olwig, K. R. (2009). *Landscape, Culture and Regional Studies: Connecting the Dots. A Companion to Environmental Geography*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444305722.ch15>
- Olwig, M. F., & Gough, K. V. (2013). Basket weaving and social weaving: Young Ghanaian artisans’ mobilization of resources through mobility in times of climate change. *Geoforum*, 45, 168–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.001>
- Osella, F., & Osella, C. (2000). Migration, Money and Masculinity in Kerala. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6(1), 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.t01-1-00007>
- Pandey, R., & Bardsley, D. K. (2015). Social-ecological vulnerability to climate change in the Nepali Himalaya. *Applied Geography*, 64, 74–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2015.09.008>
- Pandey, R., & Council, I. (2015). Children’s Contributions and Entitlement Destitution among

- Jaunsar Households of Uttarakhand, (September).
- Pandey, R., & Jha, S. K. (2012). Climate vulnerability index - measure of climate change vulnerability to communities: A case of rural Lower Himalaya, India. *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*, 17(5), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-011-9338-2>
- Panelli, R., Kraack, A., & Little, J. (2005). Claiming space and community: Rural women's strategies for living with, and beyond, fear. *Geoforum*, 36(4), 495–508. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.08.002>
- Panelli, R., & Tipa, G. (2007). Placing well-being: A maori case study of cultural and environmental specificity. *EcoHealth*, 4(4), 445–460. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10393-007-0133-1>
- Panelli, R., & Tipa, G. (2009). Beyond foodscapes: Considering geographies of Indigenous well-being. *Health and Place*, 15(2), 455–465. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2008.08.005>
- Pant, A. (2016). Rural Tourism a Solution for Ghost Villages of Uttarakhand, (6), 52–60.
- Pant, P. (2012). Dream turning into a nightmare in Uttarakhand. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(14), 18–21. Retrieved from <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84860488867&partnerID=40&md5=0564329191fa8cc8685c76be20b2b3f8>
- Paret, M., & Gleeson, S. (2016). Precarity and agency through a migration lens. *Citizenship Studies*, 20(3–4), 277–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2016.1158356>
- Patel, V. (2017). Parents, permission, and possibility: Young women, college, and imagined futures in Gujarat, India. *Geoforum*, 80, 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.01.008>
- Pathak, S. (1997). State, Society and Natural Resources in Himalaya: Dynamics of Change in Colonial and Post-Colonial Uttarakhand. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32(17), 908–912. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4405344>
- Peou, C., & Zinn, J. (2015). Cambodian youth managing expectations and uncertainties of the life course – a typology of biographical management. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(6), 726–742. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2014.992328>
- Perrault, T., Bridge, G., & McCarthy, J. (2015). *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*. *Annals of Tourism Research* (Vol. 50). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jannals.2014.11.004>
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna Toffin, G. (2011). *The Politics of Belonging in the Himalayas: Local Attachments and Boundary Dynamics*. (J. Pfaff-Czarnecka & G. Toffin, Eds.), Sage. New Delhi: Sage.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, J., & Toffin, G. (2011). Introduction: Belonging and multiple attachments in contemporary Himalayan societies. *The Politics of Belonging in the Himalayas: Local Attachments and Boundary Dynamics*, xi–xxxviii. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132107729>
- PHD chamber of commerce. (2015). *Vision 2025: Uttarakhand*. Retrieved from <http://www.yesinstitute.in/reports/statereport/PHD - VISION 2025 UTTARAKHAND report.pdf>
- Pink, S. (2009). Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum : Qualitative Mobilising Visual Ethnography : Making Routes , Making Place and Making Images. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 9(3), 1–14.
- Piotrowski, M., Ghimire, D., & Rindfuss, R. (2013). Farming Systems and Rural Out-Migration in Nang Rong, Thailand, and Chitwan Valley, Nepal. *Rural Sociology*, 78(1), 75–108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12000>

- Polit, K. M. (2006). Keep My Share of Rice in the Cupboard, 1–369.
- Polzer Ngwato, T. (2012). Together apart: Migration, integration and spatialised identities in South African border villages. *Geoforum*, 43(3), 561–572. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.11.003>
- Poonam, S. (2017). Uttarakhand elections: Migration a key poll issue in villages drained of villagers. *Hindustan Times*.
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Munthali, A., Robson, E., Bango, A., ... Milner, J. (2015). Durham Research Online Version of attached le : , 44(August).
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Munthali, A., Robson, E., Mashiri, M., & Maponya, G. (2010). Where dogs, ghosts and lions roam: Learning from mobile ethnographies on the journey from school. *Children's Geographies*, 8(2), 91–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733281003691343>
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Robson, E., Munthali, A., Mashiri, M., & Tanle, A. (2010). Moving young lives: Mobility, immobility and inter-generational tensions in urban Africa. *Geoforum*, 41(5), 796–804. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.05.001>
- Prashant Kandari. (2013). Migration Pattern and the increasing Participation of Females in the Economy of Hill Rural Areas: A Study of Pauri district in Uttarakhand \n. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 17(5), 27–33. Retrieved from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol17-issue5/E01752733.pdf?fid=7363>
- Pratt, G. (1999). From Registered Nurse to Registered Nanny : Discursive Geographies of Filipina Domestic Workers in Vancouver , B . C . *Economic Geography*, 75(3), 215–236.
- Punch, S. (2002). Youth transitions and interdependent adult-child relations in rural Bolivia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18(2), 123–133. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(01\)00034-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(01)00034-1)
- Punch, S. (2007). Negotiating Migrant Identities : Young People in Bolivia and Argentina, 5(May), 95–112.
- Punch, S. (2015). Youth transitions and migration: negotiated and constrained interdependencies within and across generations. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(2), 262–276. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2014.944118>
- Punch, S., & Sugden, F. (2013). Work, education and out-migration among children and youth in upland Asia: changing patterns of labour and ecological knowledge in an era of globalisation. *Local Environment*, 18(3), 255–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2012.716410>
- Rajesh, S., Jain, S., Sharma, P., & Bhahuguna, R. (2014). Assessment of inherent vulnerability of rural communities to environmental hazards in kimsar region of Uttarakhand, India. *Environmental Development*, 12, 16–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2014.06.003>
- Ralph, D., & Staeheli, L. A. (2011). Home and migration: Mobilities, belongings and identities. *Geography Compass*, 5(7), 517–530. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2011.00434.x>
- Ramakrishnan, K. (2014). Cosmopolitan imaginaries on the margins: negotiating difference and belonging in a Delhi resettlement colony. *Contemporary South Asia*, 22(1), 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2013.870976>
- Ramamurthy, P. (2010). Why Are Men Doing Floral Sex Work? Gender, Cultural Reproduction, and the Feminization of Agriculture. *Chicago Journals*, 35(2), 397–424. <https://doi.org/10.1086/605899>

- Rao, K. R. M., Kant, Y., Gahlaut, N., & Roy, P. S. (2012). Assessment of Quality of Life in Uttarakhand, India using geospatial techniques. *Geocarto International*, 27(4), 315–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10106049.2011.627470>
- Rawat, P. (2017). Population exodus in Pauri Garhwal : Out-migration raising questions on existence of hilly state Uttarakhand, 2(5), 654–664.
- Ribot, J. (2010). Vulnerability does not fall from the sky: Towards multi-scale, pro-poor climate policy. *Social Dimensions of Climate Change: Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World*, 319. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1307/6/34/342040>
- Ribot, J. (2014). Cause and response: vulnerability and climate in the Anthropocene. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(5), 667–705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.894911>
- Rigg, J. (1998). Rural–urban interactions, agriculture and wealth: a southeast Asian perspective. *Progress in Human Geography*, 22(4), 497–522. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913298667432980>
- Rigg, J., Oven, K. J., Basyal, G. K., & Lamichhane, R. (2016). Between a rock and a hard place: Vulnerability and precarity in rural Nepal. *Geoforum*, 76, 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.08.014>
- Robbins, P. (2009). The Practical Politics of Knowing: State Environmental Knowledge and Local Political Economy*. *Economic Geography*, 76(2), 126–144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-8287.2000.tb00137.x>
- Robbins, P., & Smith, S. H. (2016). Baby bust: Towards political demography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(2), 199–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516633321>
- Robinson, J. (2001). Regionalising India: Uttarakhand and the politics of creating states. *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 24(2), 189–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856400108723457>
- Rodgers, D. (2009). From Gang Member to Drug Dealer to Legal Entrepreneur February 2009 BWPI Working Paper 82. *Journal of Political Economy*, (February), 1–26.
- Rogaly, B., & Thieme, S. (2012). Experiencing space-time: The stretched lifeworlds of migrant workers in India. *Environment and Planning A*, 44(9), 2086–2100. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a44493>
- Roy, D. (2008). Hydropower in Uttarakhand: Is “development” the real objective? *Economic And Political Weekly*, 43(October 11), 19–22.
- Ruhi, D. (2012). The Women “Behind” the Men Women ’ s Empowerment in Agriculture in the Indian Himalayas, (September), 1–67.
- Saha, A. R., & Bhatt, P. (2016). MGNREGA as an Environmental Policy : A Case Study of Pithoragarh , Uttarakhand, 1(1).
- Sati, V. P. (2016). Livestock farming in the Uttarakhand Himalaya, India: Use pattern and potentiality. *Current Science*, 111(12), 1955–1960. <https://doi.org/10.18520/cs/v111/i12/1955-1960>
- Sati, V. P., & Singh, R. B. (2010). Prospects of sustainable livestock farming in the Uttarakhand Himalaya, India. *Journal of Livestock Science*, 1(September), 9–16. Retrieved from <http://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/20133294985.html>
- Satyam, P., Shrestha, K., Ojha, H., Vira, B., & Adhikari, J. (2017). A new Himalayan crisis? Exploring transformative resilience pathways. *Environmental Development*, 23(November 2016), 47–56.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2017.02.010>

- Sawyer, A. (2014). Is Money Enough?: The Effect of Migrant Remittances on Parental Aspirations and Youth Educational Attainment in Rural Mexico. *International Migration Review*, 50(1), 231–266. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12103>
- Schild, A. (2008). ICIMOD's Position on Climate Change and Mountain Systems. *Mountain Research and Development*, 28(3/4), 328–331. <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.mp009>
- Schwanen, T., & Atkinson, S. (2015). Geographies of wellbeing: An introduction. *Geographical Journal*, 181(2), 98–101. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12132>
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Ann Arbor: Yale University Press.
- Shah, N. C. (2014). Ethnobiological Lores from the Kumaon Culture of India. *The Scitech Journal*, 1(3), 28–36.
- Sharma, E., Chettri, N., Tse-ring, K., Shrestha, A. B., Jing, F., Mool, P., & Eriksson, M. (2009). Climate Change Impacts and Vulnerability in the Eastern Himalayas. *Icimod*, 32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-88246-6>
- Sharma, L., & Madan, P. (2014). Effect of individual factors on youth entrepreneurship – a study of Uttarakhand state, India. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 2(3), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2251-7316-2-3>
- Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(2), 207–226. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a37268>
- Shneiderman, S. (2010). Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some scholarly and political considerations across time and space. *Journal of Global History*, 5(2), 289–312. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022810000094>
- Shneiderman, S. (2015). Regionalism, mobility, and “the village” as a set of social relations: Himalayan reflections on a South Asian theme. *Critique of Anthropology*, 35(3), 318–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X15588962>
- Shukla, R., Sachdeva, K., & Joshi, P. K. (2016). Inherent vulnerability of agricultural communities in Himalaya: A village-level hotspot analysis in the Uttarakhand state of India. *Applied Geography*, 74, 182–198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2016.07.013>
- Sidh, S. N., & Basu, S. (2011). Women 's Contribution to Household Food and Economic Security : A Study in the Garhwal. *Mountain Research and Development*, 31(2), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-10-00010.1>
- Silvey, R., & Lawson, V. (1999). Placing the migrant. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 89(1), 121–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0004-5608.00134>
- Singh, S. P., & Thadani, R. (2015). Complexities and Controversies in Himalayan Research: A Call for Collaboration and Rigor for Better Data. *Mountain Research and Development*, 35(4), 401–409. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00045>
- Sinha, S., Gururani, S., & Greenberg, B. (1997). The “new traditionalist” discourse of Indian environmentalism. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 24(3), 65–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066159708438643>
- Skelton, T. (2012). Geographies of children, young people and families in Asia. *Children's Geographies*,

- 10(4), 473–479. Retrieved from <http://hinari-gw.who.int/whalecomwww.scopus.com/whalecom0/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84867848508&partnerID=40&md5=6114e98c35bc630f154753b11390c16a>
- Skelton, T. (2013). Young People's Urban Im/Mobilities: Relationality and Identity Formation. *Urban Studies*, 50(3), 467–483. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098012468893>
- Skelton, T., & Gough, K. V. (2013). Introduction: Young People's Im/Mobile Urban Geographies. *Urban Studies*, 50(3), 455–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098012468900>
- Smith, S. (2012). Intimate Geopolitics: Religion, Marriage, and Reproductive Bodies in Leh, Ladakh. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102(6), 1511–1528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.660391>
- Smith, S. (2016). Intimacy and angst in the field. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 23(1), 134–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.958067>
- Smith, S. H., & Gergan, M. (2015). The diaspora within: Himalayan youth, education-driven migration, and future aspirations in India. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 33(1), 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d13152p>
- Smith, S., & Vasudevan, P. (2017). Race, biopolitics, and the future: Introduction to the special section. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(2), 210–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817699494>
- Smith, T. S. J., & Reid, L. (2017). Which “being” in wellbeing? Ontology, wellness and the geographies of happiness. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30913251771710. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517717100>
- Snellinger, A. (2013). Shaping a Livable Present and Future: A review of youth studies in Nepal. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 42, 75–103.
- Snellinger, A. (2016). “Let's See What Happens”: Hope, Contingency, and Speculation in Nepali Student Activism. *Critical Asian Studies*, 48(1), 27–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2015.1126140>
- Snellinger, A. (2018). “Every household will be a micro-enterprise”: a youth micro-loan scheme's role in restructuring Nepal. *Children's Geographies*, 16(1), 66–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2017.1399581>
- Sood, K., Mukherjee, S., Narayanan, S., Dhanaraj, S., Dhanaraj, M. S., Gopalaswamy, A. K., ... Shatrunjay, A. (2017). MSE Working Papers Recent Issues Triggers And Barriers for “Exclusion” to “Inclusion” in the Financial Sector: A Country-Wise Scrutiny Child Work and Schooling in Rural North India What Does Time Use Data Say About Tradeoffs and Drivers of Human Capital I, (July).
- Standing, G. (2014). The Precariat. *Contexts*, 13(4), 10–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214558209>
- Stoddard, E. A., & Cantor, A. (2017). A Relational Network Vulnerability Assessment of the North Carolina Hog Industry. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(3), 682–699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1261679>
- Sullivan, S. (2016). What's ontology got to do with it?: On the knowledge of nature and the nature of knowledge in environmental anthropology. *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Anthropology*, (10103), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315768946>

- Sumner, A., & Mallett, R. (2013). Capturing Multidimensionality: What does a Human Wellbeing Conceptual Framework Add to the Analysis of Vulnerability? *Social Indicators Research*, 113(2), 671–690. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0295-x>
- Suresh, T. G. (2010). Contract labour in urban constructions: The making of new labour regimes in India and China. *China Report*, 46(4), 431–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000944551104600406>
- Taylor, M. (2013). Climate change, relational vulnerability and human security: rethinking sustainable adaptation in agrarian environments. *Climate and Development*, 5(4), 318–327. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.g2216>
- Thieme, S., & Ghimire, A. (2014). Making migrants visible in post-MDG debates. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 6(1), 399–415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su6010399>
- Thieme, T. (2010). Youth, waste and work in Mathare: Whose business and whose politics? *Environment and Urbanization*, 22(2), 333–352. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247810379946>
- Thieme, T. A. (2017). The hustle economy. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30913251769003. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517690039>
- Thorsen, D. (2013). Weaving in and out of employment and self-employment: young rural migrants in the informal economy of Ouagadougou. *International Development Planning Review*, 35(2), 203–218. <https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2013.13>
- Tillin, L. (2011). Statehood and the Politics of Intent. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(20), 34–38.
- Tillmann-Healy, L. M. (2003). Friendship as Method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(5), 729–749. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403254894>
- Tiwari, P. C., & Joshi, B. (2016). Gender processes in rural out-migration and socio-economic development in the Himalaya. *Migration and Development*, 5(2), 330–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2015.1022970>
- Tolia, R. S. (1967). Great Tribal Diversity of Uttarakhand. *Population (English Edition)*.
- Tulachan, P. M. (2001). Mountain Agriculture in the Hindu Kush–Himalaya. *Mountain Research and Development*, 21(3), 260–267. [https://doi.org/10.1659/0276-4741\(2001\)021\[0260:MAITHK\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1659/0276-4741(2001)021[0260:MAITHK]2.0.CO;2)
- Turner, M. D. (2016). Climate vulnerability as a relational concept. *Geoforum*, 68, 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.11.006>
- Valentin, K. (2012). The Role of Education in Mobile Livelihoods: Social and Geographical Routes of Young Nepalese Migrants in India. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 43(4), 429–442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1492.2012.01195.x>
- van Blerk, L., & Ansell, N. (2006). Imagining migration: Placing children’s understanding of “moving house” in Malawi and Lesotho. *Geoforum*, 37(2), 256–272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.02.004>
- Vital Statistics Division, & Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, I. (2011). Uttarakhand Annual Health Survey 2011–12 Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/AHSBulletins/AHS_Factsheets_2011_12/Uttarakhand_Factsheet_2011-12.pdf
- Ward, N., & Brown, D. L. (2009). Placing the rural in regional development. *Regional Studies*, 43(10), 1237–1244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400903234696>

- Watts, M. J., Bohle, H. J., May, M., & Action, P. (1993). The space of vulnerability: the causal structure of hunger. *Progress in Human Geography*, 17(1), 291–305.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X06005280>
- Welsh, M. (2014). Resilience and responsibility: Governing uncertainty in a complex world. *Geographical Journal*, 180(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12012>
- Whatmore, S. (2006). Materialist returns : practising cultural geography in and for a more-than-human world, 600–609.
- Whatmore, S. J. (2009). Mapping knowledge controversies: Science, democracy and the redistribution of expertise. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(5), 587–598.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509339841>
- Whitehead, A. N. N., Hashim, I. M., & Iversen, V. (2007). Child Migration , Child Agency and Inter-generational Relations in Africa and South Asia 1. *South Asia*, (July 2005), 1–46.
- William, S. (1990). Village Daughter, Village Goddess: Residence, Gender, and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage. *American Ethnologist*, 17(3), 491–512.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1990.17.3.02a00050>
- Winterton, R., Chambers, A. H., Farmer, J., & Munoz, S. A. (2014). Considering the implications of place-based approaches for improving rural community wellbeing: The value of a relational lens. *Rural Society*, 20(3), 283–295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10371656.2014.11082071>
- Wisener, B., & Blaikie, P. M. (2003). At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability, and Disasters. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.2202/1547-7355.1131>
- Witsoe, J. (2011). Corruption as power: Caste and the political imagination of the postcolonial state. *American Ethnologist*, 38(1), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01293.x>
- Woolgar, S., & Lezaun, J. (2013). The wrong bin bag: A turn to ontology in science and technology studies? *Social Studies of Science*, 43(3), 321–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312713488820>
- World Bank. (2017). *Uttarakhand Uttarakhand*.
- Wright, M. W. (2004). From protests to Politics: Sex Work, Women’s Work and Ciudad Juarez Modernity. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94(2), 369–386.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2004.09402013.x>
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2004.09402013.x>
- Yadav, R. (2010). On Being Madhesi. *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 29(1), 65–68.
- Yeh, E. T. (2016). “How can experience of local residents be ‘knowledge?’” Challenges in interdisciplinary climate change research. *Area*, 34–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12189>
- Yeh, E. T., Nyima, Y., Hopping, K. A., & Klein, J. A. (2014). Tibetan Pastoralists’ Vulnerability to Climate Change: A Political Ecology Analysis of Snowstorm Coping Capacity. *Human Ecology*, 42(1), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-013-9625-5>
- Young, S. (2010). Gender, mobility and the financialisation of development. *Geopolitics*, 15(3), 606–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040903501104>
- Young, S., & Jeffrey, C. (2012). Making Ends Meet: Youth Enterprise at the Rural-Urban Intersections. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 47(30), 45–51.

Young, S., Kumar, S., & Jeffrey, C. (2017). Beyond improvisation? The rise and rise of youth entrepreneurs in north India. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(1), 98–109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12151>