

Feeling/making democracy:

Emotions of candidates contesting Dehradun Municipal Elections

ABSTRACT: Emotions and sentiments are central to explanations of how actual living democracies work, that is, the sustaining and reconfiguring of practices, relations and common-senses that constitute them. Elections are moments of heightened emotions, when democracy breathes life into the streets and pulses through people's veins. While studies in anthropology and political science have shed light on the ways that voters are recruited by and experience the passionate and sensuous elements of elections, and democracies more broadly, the emotions of candidates and the politicians they become have largely escaped scrutiny. The value of an emotionally attuned reading of elections is demonstrated through the narratives of women candidates in Dehradun's municipal elections in North India. The ways candidates *feel*, and in the process *make* democracy, illuminate unrecognised factors in the shaping of the political.

Introduction

A day after the 2018 Dehradun Municipal elections, Jaimala was exhausted. The announcement of her win and election as Municipal Councillor (known locally as Parshad) had come late in the night. After travelling from the stadium at the edge of town where the counting took place, Jaimala and her supporters held a raucous rally at two o'clock in the morning, resting only a couple of hours before again taking to the streets again to thank the voters. Celebrations followed three weeks of intense campaigning: going door-to-door twice a day, rallies, community meetings and other party events. More than the relentless activity, the campaign was emotionally gruelling. Jaimala spent the days listening to voter

complaints, overcoming her own insecurities as to her ability to meet their demands, all while performing warmth, confidence, and intimacy. The day after her win, there was exhaustion, a certain numbness, and relief. But she was also afraid. She had much to learn in order not to let voters down.

Barely 200 metres from Jaimala's house, a different post-election assessment was taking place. Bhavani was contemplating her life now that she was no longer Parshad, having failed to be re-elected. Her niece was agitated, angry with Jaimala for rubbing their noses in their defeat by having such loud celebrations just outside their home. Her Aunty soothed her, reminding her that five years ago their celebrations were just as raucous. Less than a month ago Bhavani had showed us photos of that day, garlands layered so thick around her neck she could barely peer over the top of them. She had described that day as the best moment of her time as Parshad, when she felt loved by the people, when she became a new person. Now, she had again transformed, this time into the less happy guise of unsuccessful former Parshad, so disdained that she had come a distance fourth in the race for her seat. She felt betrayed; after so much hard work, helping so many people, the voters in her ward had rejected her.

Jaimala and Bhavani represent the emotional highs and lows of a definitive moment in democratic practice: the election result. Emotions and sentiments are important constituents of democracies (Montoya 2018; Paley 2008), as they are for other aspects of the human condition (Ahmed 2004; Beatty 2019). Enquiring into how and why emotions arise within webs of interconnected histories, relations, meanings and situations deepens our understandings of culture, sociality and power (Beatty 2019; Wetherell 2012). Feelings are

“not merely reactive and or motivating, but orientating and informing” (Beatty 2019: 83); they produce social worlds, not only reflect them. The study of emotional worlds is therefore critical to the anthropology of democracy, with its attention to democracy as lived and practiced in the plural (Paley 2002; 2008), and to the enactments of power through democratic practices (Witsoe 2011). Emotions are critical to the resonance and ongoing salience of past histories in today’s democratic institutions (Paley 2002) and the embedding of normative democratic values within local practices, that is, to processes of vernacularisation of democracies (Michelutti 2007).

Elections do not in themselves make a democracy (Gilbert 2011), but are nonetheless key events in which associated practices, relations, and meanings are at their most manifest. Anthropologists have deployed familiar concepts of rituals, dramas, and rites to understand what elections do, produce, and disrupt. Hauser and Singer (1986) describe elections as “a rite of democracy” through which the “unity of the nation and the investment of power in the rulers and the ruled is reaffirmed” (Hauser and Singer 1986: 942). Herzog (1987) similarly uses ritual to understand elections’ effects, arguing that “election campaigns are an active arena for social construction of political worlds” through the moulding of political cognition in phases of cultural liminality (Herzog 1987: 560). Elections are moments when existing contradictions between imported national structures of democracy and local social relations are given expression and played out (Wouters 2015), and the co-constitution of state and societal groups are framed, negotiated, and reshaped (Scott 2010). Ethnographic accounts of elections have revealed the hidden meanings and symbolic values of election practices (Björkman 2014), the role of kinship (Bowie 2008), and the traditional cultural logics that define a ‘good’ politician (Wouters 2018). Elections expose emergent citizenship

and individuals' relationship with the state (Singer 2007) and the shifting constellations of power across different social groups (Tawa Lama-Rewell 2009). They hence remain a key cultural practice worthy of the anthropologist's attention.

Passionate accounts of elections moves analysis beyond a reading of behaviour as instrumental, to understand the force of embodied and deeply felt affiliations, and their consequences for political subjectivities (Jaffe 2015, see also Montoya 2015, Scott 2004). As ritualistic practices, meanings are embedded and felt. Banerjee and colleaguesⁱ (2014) observe that elections have a festive and sacred feel in India, representing highly significant events when the promise of equal citizenship is manifest. For this reason the poor continue to vote in large numbers despite the failure of democracy to bring change to their lives. Election day, when the state provides both recognition and respect to *all* citizens, can be emotionally moving for voters who receive little of either on any other day (Carswell and de Neve 2014). In India, campaigns are unique times when the powerful must knock on the doors of the most marginal of citizens, a reversal of power relations that contributes to the carnivalesque and liminal feel of election campaigns (Tawa Lama-Rewell 2009). Attention simply to form and/or discourses of elections only gets us so far in understanding the significance of practices such as voting that are pleasurable, joyful, festive, angry, or tense (Gilbert 2011).

The emotions of voters hold particular interest for what they reveal about election outcomes. Political scientists have long been concerned about the effectiveness and desirability of mobilizing emotions for political gain (McLeod 1999). Voters impassioned by candidate messages pour their feelings into the ballot paper, with political strategists weighing up

which emotional trigger—hope, fear, anger—will best serve their candidate (see for example Montoya 2018). But election ‘outcomes’ go beyond who wins at the ballot box, to include the reconfiguring of power relations. Local elections are particularly emotionally charged, with the potential for local disharmony and conflict to arise from hurt feelings and intra-familial tensions (Bowie 2008). Moral values have additional affective force during campaign periods, with strongly *felt* notions of right and wrong shaping perceptions of candidates (Scott 2011). The act of voting can also result in feelings that are sustained long past election day: feelings of entitlement can foment durable reversal of power relations between voters and elected representatives (Jakimow 2019; Witsoe 2011). The emotional significance of elections to Indian citizens is critical to the production of the ‘political’, its social norms, hierarchies and modalities of power (Singer 2007).

While much attention has been placed on the emotions of voters, there is comparatively little research on the feelings of candidates (Auyero 2006). That elections are a rollercoaster of emotions for people who invest financially, socially and emotionally seems self-evident, yet studies on this topic remain sparse. An exception is Mahler’s (2011: 151) political ethnography of election day in the USA, which captures the “the routines and rituals of political life and what it looks like, feels like, and means to those for whom it is their vocation”. The literature on politicians has been otherwise plagued by a tendency to treat these actors as rational-calculative individuals, rather than feeling-thinking beings full of contradictions and often inexplicable attachments. As Mahler (2006) rightly argues, traditional explanations of political action are often weak or partial without attention to its moral and sensual underpinnings. Such a focus allows Mahler (2006) to reveal the logics that inform political life that are missing in the literature on North American politics.

Similarly, I forefront the emotions of candidates in an urban local body election in India in order to demonstrate their revelatory possibilities in studies of democracies. The 'local' nature of the municipal elections is significant, as entailing different citizenship practices compared to the national polity (Stack 2004), and with more immediate and direct clientelistic relations (Montoya 2015). More important for our purposes is that candidates are more likely to belong to the same social milieu as voters in local elections, with a relationship between them that both pre-exists and endures beyond the election itself. This intimacy arguably increases the emotional intensity for candidates (Jakimow 2020, see also Bowie 2008),ⁱⁱ offering a different vantage point to examine how emotions shed light on enduring questions and debates. First, the enormous stakes involved in contesting elections for candidates, and their heightened attunement while campaigning shapes the *political subjectivities* of candidates. In turn, and as a consequence of emotionally charged practices, elections have lingering effects on the *relationality* between constituents and their elected representatives, as well as with unelected brokers and mediators. Candidate emotions also shed light on what are considered 'transactional' (and hence dispassionate) *practices*, such as vote-buying. Being attentive to emotions reveals 'money politics' to be partially on account of the emotionally fraught nature of elections, when there is much to lose. Finally, experiences of loss and acts of recovery respond to, and in the process reinforce the *common sense* that 'politics is dirty', and women are electoral puppets. My overall argument is built from these insights, and is a simple one, namely that ethnographic research attuned to the emotions of candidates is worth doing in the anthropology of politics and democracy.

Before proceeding, a short note on gender is necessary. My focus on female candidates is not to suggest that women are more emotional than men. The few other studies that examine candidate emotions do so from the perspective of entirely or mostly men (Mahler 2006; Shaffir and Kleinknecht 2005). I campaigned with women as I consider them as worthy as male political actors in understanding political systems. Women are not ‘bit’ players in India’s democracy despite male political dominance; they are active as party workers and elected representatives (Bedi 2016; Björkman 2014; Devika 2013; Singer 2007), particularly at the local level where quotas ensure their participation (see below). I do not deny that there are gendered emotional repertoires that shape how women *feel* (see author name 2020, chapter 4), and the ways their emotions are interpreted by voters (Brooks 2011), but neither do I reduce women’s identities to their gender in a context when caste, class and personal biography also play a role. A limitation of this study is a lack of ethnographic material with men to fully disentangle these gendered elements; a general deficiency in the literature on male—read ‘universal’—politicians is a failure to reading their experiences as gendered.

Researching Dehradun’s Municipal Elections

Beatty’s (2019) *Emotional Worlds* provides an excellent roadmap for the anthropologist embarking on emotionally attuned research. He argues for a narrative approach in three senses. First, emotional episodes are themselves narrative *in form*. Emotions arise in response to an incident, they motivate behaviour, they have an afterlife. Analysing this narrative builds *understanding* of the way an emotional episode is connected and implicated in socially constructed worlds, and hence emotions are a pathway to deeper knowledge of these worlds. Emotions are ‘shaped by culture, constrained by subject position, but given

relevance and intensity by individual history' (Beatty 2019: 126), and hence personal biographies are critical. Finally, *reporting* requires sufficient background details (structural and biographical) for the reader to grasp the emotional episode, without simply describing 'how an other is feeling' that over-relies on one's own conceptual baggage. The inability to experience with, and hence truly know how one is feeling is a limit to the anthropology of emotion, yet we can observe and recount the "ingredients of an emotional episode—gesture, expression, voice, words, situation, setting, relationship, and history" (Beatty 2019: 30). Emotional realism achieved through narrative can enhance the validity and verisimilitude of our findings, but an acceptance of uncertainty is also a feature of such writing.

My research approach therefore aimed to generate knowledge of both the social and cultural worlds of participants, as well as their personal histories and idiosyncrasies. Between 2015 and 2017, I followed the experiences of women Parshads (elected for the period 2013-2018), including co-constructing ten in-depth profiles over various formal and informal discussions and observing their work. I returned in April 2018 when their term expired and municipal elections were due, and in October-November 2018 when they were finally held (see below). I, along with my wonderful research assistant Divya Joshi, joined the campaigns of seven women (three were participants in my earlier research, four were first time candidates), which entailed participating in door-to-door canvassing, rallies and other election events. We also interviewed many prospective candidates and eventual winners, and participated in numerous party activities. Working with a research assistant was important; following our daily field research, we reflected on our interpretations, deepening them through discussion (see Jakimow and Yumasdaleni 2016). From the ethnographic material I develop three composite profiles, bringing together shared experiences and biographical details to

develop thematic trends. Composite profiles allow me to achieve an 'economy of scale' that facilitates rich theoretical discussion (Nilan 2009), while also helping to obscure the identity of these public figures. The narratives from these composite profiles allow me to explore how personal biography shapes their responses, and the intersecting influences of caste, class and gender.

Dehradun is the provisional capital of Uttarakhand: a Himalayan region carved out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000. The city has since experienced high population growth with migration from the hills and other parts of North India (Mittal 2014). Once known for its lychee orchards and retirees, it now increasingly resembles other middle-tier Indian cities, with fewer trees, denser housing, informal settlements (*bastis*), and a proliferation of shopping malls and four star hotels. As a state capital, Dehradun has been granted Municipal Corporation status. Its governing body is the Nagar Nigam with one hundred wards, each containing approximately 5000 voters (adults registered to vote) who elect a Parshad (Municipal Councillor). These Parshads are relatively poorly resourced compared to their counterparts in other Municipal Corporations in India, with little by way of discretionary budget, and no Honorarium to help off-set the costs of their daily activities (see Jakimow 2019).

The 2013-2018 term of Parshads ended on 3 May 2018, and elections were due in April. Leading up to this date, the state government underwent a process of delimitation to incorporate areas formerly under the Panchayat (village governance) Act. Delimitation was challenged in the courts, which provided the reason and/or excuse to delay the elections, which were eventually held on November 18, 2018. The delay in the elections created two

periods of heightened tension. In April 2018 party cadre with ambitions of contesting were working hard to increase their visibility. There are two main parties in Dehradun – Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who are currently in power in the state, and the Indian National Congress (INC). As Congress and BJP have large cadre bases, and each party can only nominate one person per ward, competition for tickets is fierce between hopeful candidates. In April, party headquarters were filled with party workers keen to remind leaders of their work and community support. The whole scenario was played out again in October 2018 when election day was finally announced, with tension turning to disappointment, anger, and pockets of joy and anticipation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Who received the party ticket was in part determined by the seats reserved for women under the provisions in the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1993). According to the Act, at least a third of seats in local level governance (urban wards and panchayats) must be reserved for women. Additional seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC a government designation that refers to Dalit), Scheduled Tribes (ST *adivasi*, Indigenous populations) and Other Backward Classes (OBC socio-economically disadvantaged *jati*), with women also reserved a third of these seats (so for example, seats were reserved for SC women).

Speculation as to which seats would be reserved ran rife, and formed part of the narratives of people hoping to contest the election. Women were particularly tense, as they (correctly) projected that their respective parties would nominate very few women in general, that is unreserved seats, tellingly also called ‘gents seats’. Their failure to do so confirmed long running grievances that men did not let women get ahead in politics despite women’s long history of political activism in the state.^{iv} The majority of the women we interacted with in

April chose not to contest the election after being denied the party ticket, while a sizeable minority ran as independents.

Elections as high-stake gambles

Jashwi was thrilled to receive the party ticket, presenting the decision as just reward for her decades of social work; 'I have that *jazbaat* [strong inner compulsion] to help others, and people in this area support me'. Contesting the elections was a further step in her personal progress, as related to us through two stories shortly after having received the nomination. The first story related to veil that she used to wear to show respect to elders, including her parents-in-law. One day the veil caught on fire in the kitchen. Her father-in-law ripped it off her and told her never to wear it again, saying respect was in the eyes, not in wearing a veil. The removal of a veil is a common moment of transformation for women political actors, particularly those from rural backgrounds (see also Jakimow 2020). In her second story she recounted her first speech, which she gave in her village in front of elders. She was nervous, as such actions were unheard of for women, but she spoke without hesitation: 'At the time I was thinking it was now or never. I speak now and enter politics, or I will be forever in the home only. At that moment, I became a *biznor*' [a local word for social worker/independent politician].

Jashwi's ongoing self-making project is fragmentary and complex (Biehl and Locke 2017), but interwoven from early adulthood to post-active motherhood are her political ambitions. I use the term self-making project following Ortnor: a term that captures the way people enact life with purpose and intention within cultural scripts and that "for most people most

of the time, *a great deal is at stake*" (Ortner 1996: 23, emphasis added). Carswell and de Neve (2014) note the importance of elections for the personhood of voters, when they are equal to all other citizens regardless of socio-economic status. Elections "allow ordinary people to experience an individual sense of rights and duties as citizens and producers of democracy itself" (Carswell and de Neve 2014: 1049). Arguably the significance of elections for the political subjectivities of candidates is far greater given their status as key actors of democracy. The election is a time when Jashwi's self-understanding as someone respected in the area for her work and her potential to be a local leader is reaffirmed, realized, or alternatively diminished, if not extinguished. The stakes could not be higher.

We joined Jashwi on the first day of her campaign. Door-to-door canvassing is critical in Indian elections, demonstrating to voters that politicians are willing to come to the people (Bjorkman 2014; Hauser and Singer 1987). Women have a particular advantage in being able to enter the kitchens, and therefore an "ability to penetrate and politicize the home" (Bedi 2016: 100). We started in an area where Jashwi was well-known. After a large intake of breath, she entered the compound and knocked on the front door. The interaction was brief; Jashwi said she was contesting the upcoming election, asked for support, and left by placing one of her stickers on the front post. She was attentive to facial cues and what they suggested for people's opinion about her candidacy. Behind each door was an emotional risk: a potential reaffirmation of her sense of relational self, or potential threat to these self-understandings.

As the campaign wore on, door-to-door canvassing became less affirming. Jaishwi had moved to areas where she was less well known, and voters wearied of the constant stream

of candidates. The encounters were perfunctory, and performative. The voters knew to nod, take the leaflet and make some vague promise of support in order to be able to get back to their day. Jashwi admitted that it was difficult to know what was truly in the people's hearts, as they could say one thing and do another. Doubts started to creep in. By day eighteen, her group of supporters was reduced to her sister, and us. Her face was cast down, and she would not meet our eyes. We crept slowly around a small area for the remainder of the day, painfully approaching each door to be turned away, ignored on the porch, or given the bare minimum in words of support.

When we returned to her home with fried noodles for comfort, Jaishwi diagnosed what was going wrong. Other candidates were giving money and alcohol, she alleged. She had complained about such tactics before, and the ways that they made it hard for 'honest campaigns' like hers to get votes. She had been confident, however, that voters would take the money but still cast for a candidate who works for them. Now, however, she was desperate. No longer would she simply provide samosas and chai in the *bastis* (slum area), she would give them between 250 and 500 rupees. Further, she understood that her supporters were busy, so she decided to pay them between 2,000 rupees each. She further drew on the bank loan taken for her campaign.

The tendency to de-humanize politicians by voters and scholars alike (Jakimow 2020; Mahler 2006) results in partial understandings of transactional or money politics. A political strategy that involves calculations of how much a vote can be reliably bought for is only part of the explanation for the prevalence of paying for votes (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, Chandra 2004; de Wit 2017). Candidate's fears and anxieties, their desperation as much as

strategic calculation can be the impetus for candidates to give alcohol, saris and money. The objective may not always be to win, but more modestly, and desperately, to safeguard one's dignity. As Jaishwi's lack of support became evident, the social embarrassment of a low vote count became a very real possibility. What was at stake is her very idea of self, and one's standing in the community, leading to significant financial investment in order to safeguard it. While emotional factors may not account for the "*origin* of India's patronage-democracy", I suggest it should be included as a one of the "*factors that account for its persistence*" (Chandra 2004).

Election day came and we found Jaishwi nervous, but also strangely confident. A media outlet had come to her home, offering to cover the last days of the campaign for 30,000 rupees, and rather than see this as a ruse,^v she saw it as further evidence of her victory: "I am 101% sure that I am going to win". Her sister looked more nervous, and her niece said with an unsympathetic smile that Jaishwi's last ditch payments were laughable in amount compared to others. At the counting centre two days later, Jaishwi swaggered in with these doubting supporters behind her, with all the air of someone expecting a massive victory. We lost her as she entered the counting hall (where we were not allowed) and did not see her slip out. She had managed less than fifty votes in a ward of 5000 voters: a public humiliation.

We went to visit Jaiswhi a couple of days later. Her voice remained strong, but tears streamed her cheek as she spoke:

I had not thought about losing in this election because I had not left any loophole and had given 100%....But if I tell you the reality, the people who work hard receive no

respect and lag behind. Those who follow hooliganism flourish....In totality, all this is nothing but a game of fraud and cheating.... These things affect me a lot. We feel bad because we invested so much financially and emotionally. But we also feel bad for the public who trusted us....No, I feel good, despite losing the elections. We see that we have many people connected with us now....It is not that everyone betrayed me....I will definitely work for them after I overcome my trauma....If not now, maybe after 2-3 months, I will do something for them. It is just that I need some time.

Jaishwi was not the only person to lose, or to lose big. Several common themes emerged from our (very painful) post-election interviews. The proclaimed disbelief despite all indications leading up to the election that they would lose. Attributing the reason for their loss to the dirty nature of politics: vote-buying, voter intimidation, discrepancies in the voting booth, women contesting in reserved seats for men. More often candidates were red hot with anger than sad or embarrassed. And then the reaffirmation of the actual levels of support that they have, which may not have translated into votes, but that means they will (can) continue their good work. These are narratives of recovery, told after the event to regain self-authority and relative positioning to others (Jackson 1998). Candidates have risked their self-making project during the election campaign, and found that they are not as loved, appreciated, or supported as they thought they were. It is too painful to lose completely this sense of self, and a sense of injustice enables one to hang on to it.

Jashwi and other candidates in Dehradun's elections are not dissimilar from politicians elsewhere in this regard. Canadian politicians described losing an election as death; "Defeat represents rejection in the extreme" (Shaffir and Kleinknecht 2005: 715). They too gave

accounts that served to deflect responsibility for their loss to others, attributing blame to the party and/or leader, the timing of the election, the media, or their health: accounts that partially helped them preserve their self-image. The differences in the explanations tell us much about the divergent beliefs and feelings towards democracy in both countries. Whereas Canadian politicians mostly focused on deficiencies of the party, Dehradun's politicians focused on deficiencies of India's democracy. Their narratives feeding off and reinforcing a 'common sense' that politics is dirty.

Relationality between voters and elected representatives

Bhavani was looking forward to the upcoming election. It would be her third campaign, after campaigning for her father-in-law who narrowly lost in 2008, and successfully as a candidate in 2013 in a seat reserved for SC women. Much had changed for Bhavani during her term as Parshad. Before, she had simply been a housewife, barely literate, and hesitant in public. In five years she had transformed into someone who regularly interacted with a wide variety of people, visited government offices, and was a senior figure in the party. In rallies and other events leading up to the elections, she would organise the women and lead chants. Compared to other hopefuls eyeing the party ticket, Bhavani had a smug confidence: as a sitting Parshad, she was confident of getting the ticket.^{vi} She was looking forward to going back to the people and talking about her achievements and her plans for the next five years.

Many encounters during the door-to-door campaigning were as she had hoped. Bhavani would drink tea with known supporters, enquire into the health of families, and remind

people of her accomplishments. But her eyes were also drawn to small problems in the ward: malfunctioning street lights, clogged drains, rubbish piles. With little understanding of the tiny discretionary budget of Parshads, voters complained. In the daily six to eight hours of door-to-door canvassing, Bhavani was subject to hundreds of encounters in which her record as Parshad, and her suitability to be elected again were challenged: 'We voted for you, and then you forgot us', 'you have never bothered to come to our area and see our problems', 'we will vote for you only because we are loyal to the party'. Many barbs were softened; complaints were said with a smile or joke. Bhavani tried to mollify the voters, imploring them not to be angry, declaring that she and her husband were on the streets 24/7 to get work completed. She seemed to take these encounters in her stride, but by the end of the day her forehead was tight.

These encounters involve the histories and expectations of voters and candidates—the “past in the present” (Beatty 2019: 176)—intersecting to establish an emotional field of democracy. Koch (2017) shows how citizens’ moral expectations and feelings towards politicians shapes their participation in the electoral process. Residents of the English council estate where she conducted research consider politicians to be uncaring, unknowing, and not belonging, and therefore people without social value. In the wards of Dehradun, similar expectations of citizens that politicians will care and will be ‘one with them’ are manifest in the interactions they have with the candidates during campaigns. Elections are moments in which politicians’ connections with the people are tested and cemented, while unmet expectations are voiced and politicians made answerable. These moral experiences constitute the personhood of voter *and politician* in relation (Zigon and Throop 2014).

One day Bhavani exploded. We were near the end of the morning campaigning, walking on a recently paved lane: an achievement of her previous term. One household was not happy, however, claiming that the road had caused water to pool outside their home. Hearing Bhavani's campaign approach, they both came to the street and started yelling abuse. The husband was drunk, and his words were discriminatory, referring to both her gender and caste. Bhavani's husband tried to usher his wife away, but she could not be cooled. Male and female candidates are prone to emotional outbursts at these late stages of the campaign. Bhavani yelled abuse back at the man and started screaming at the woman, who returned in kind. The altercation was loud, public, and very affecting.

Bhavani was shaking when she was finally pulled into the home of a nearby supporter. She sat on the bed, jaw clenched, silent while her friend made tea. After several minutes she had recovered enough to speak. 'These people do not appreciate that before we started working here, this ally was mud in the rainy season'. She took an intake of breath. 'They cannot treat us in this way. They showed no respect. Had it been any other time, I would have filed a police complaint'. She was silent again, drinking her tea as we made small talk. 'I have helped that lady in so many ways, gotten so many documents signed for her, done so many things. And this is how she has treated me'. We stayed like this for twenty minutes, listening to Bhavani periodically repeat her complaints, while also trying to calm the situation. Finally she had cooled enough to leave. We took her out the back way, and after a little more half-hearted campaigning, went home.

In the encounter we can see the contestation and negotiation of what Piliavsky (2014: 28) describes as relational morality: 'a set of ideas about how those who govern and those they

govern should relate to each other, and conceptions of political community which issue from these ideas'. Elections are times when these modes of relationality are negotiated, with passions and sentiments playing a role in the expectations that emerge and are cemented. The 2009 national elections in El Salvador, for example, ignited the passions and hope for state transformation among a disillusioned populace, transforming citizen's expectations of the state, resulting in new political imaginaries and subjectivities (Montoya 2015). Other examples include the feelings of entitlement in Bihar that arise from the act of voting, contributing to an 'assertive citizenry' who make demands on representatives (Witsoe 2011), and the expectations of post-election favours in Nagaland, producing what Wouters (2018: 4) describes as a democratic 'moral logic of personally-directed generosity'. These ethnographic accounts disrupt the idea that voters simply select the type of candidate from available choices, revealing the processes through which moral relationality between constituents and politicians is negotiated and produced during elections.

In Dehradun, the encounter reflects how voter expectations clash with those of candidates. Bhavani, like the majority of Parshads, would complain bitterly about the expectations of citizens, who make unreasonable demands, offer little by way of gratitude, and are quick to anger if their demands cannot be met. I describe elsewhere the way that constituents position Parshads as 'servants', there to do the menial work of voters for few rewards (Jakimow 2019). Elections are key moments when these expectations are forged, and candidates must come to terms with their diminished status. I was therefore not surprised that Bhavani's main complaint while sitting on the bed was that she had already done so much for the lady, yet she was still treated in such a way. Her 'explosion' is explained not only by the emotional drain of the campaign itself, but the years of working as a Parshad

that have demanded more of Bhavani than she has received in thanks or recognition. During elections angry voters have an enhanced capacity to affect Bhavani who is hyper-sensitive to the failings of her term as she seeks re-election (see also Jakimow 2020).

Bhavani was putting on a brave face on election day. Wearing a smart new salwar kameez, she told us that she had been nervous in the morning, 'but then I made myself feel calm otherwise people will doubt me'. But she lost, badly. Three days after the result was announced, we called on her:

When [the voters] did not choose us, whose mistake do you think it was? Even after doing so much for them, they did not choose us. I feel upset that last time we won by a margin of a thousand votes, but this time we did not finish second, not even third, I finished fourth. Didn't we do any work at all? I don't mind losing the election but what I do not like is that the public kept us in the dark?

She expressed disbelief, and anger, but also apparent was the extreme sense of loss. Bhavani had gone from being no-one five years ago, to Parshad: a tremendous transformation for a Dalit woman. But now, 'now that I am no longer in power it feels as if something is missing from my home. I have felt that void for many days...something is gone'.

Becoming a servant of the people

Vijaya is a high caste woman, confident, educated, and effective as a Parshad. She knew the rituals of door-to-door campaigning well. Holding the hand of an elderly lady in a wheelchair, she bends low to touch her feet before the lady pulls her up, "there is no need *beti* (daughter)". But Vijaya knows that supplication is critical during campaign time, to

downplay one's status and to over-emphasise acts of deference. Similarly Vijaya makes a point of visiting the Valmiki (a Dalit *jati*) colony in her ward, taking drinks and snacks to breakdown any caste hierarchies between them. Such acts are of great significance, and Vijaya credits her willingness to go to the homes of Dalit families as more important than material benefits in guaranteeing their support. Sentiment, not only instrumental calculations, are important for how the poor and marginalised vote (Carswell and de Neve 2014; Priyam 2016). Less remarked upon is the way that candidates such as Vijaya are also affected by acts of affective supplication (from England 1994): the over-emphasis of candidates dependence on voters that prompt them to downplay and potentially inverse social hierarchies (Jakimow 2020).

Affective supplication with voters is a ritualistic element of the election that produces and reaffirms the nature of power, rule, and hierarchies (Hauser and Singer 1986). Each knock on the door entails a repeat of this supplication, producing anew the affective configuration that shapes relations between candidate and voter (see Jakimow 2020). Rather than this being a *temporary* inversion of power between elites and marginal (Banerjee 2014), I suggest that there are more durable effects. Election rituals and performances are, as Jaffe states (2015: 128), "central sites for the negotiation of citizenship relations". As noted above, voters have become increasingly assertive and demanding in their relations with Parshads, who in turn often feel that they have no choice but to meet demands due to the bonds of obligation created during their moment of vulnerability and dependence (the election campaign). A first time Parshad elected in 2018 stated: "After all, it is the voters who have helped you win...That is why one who has won is liable to live up to the expectations of the people". Feelings experienced during campaigns resonate long past election day.

It is not only the relationships with the voters that are forged during the campaign. The support team of candidates—the bodies who walk the streets day after day with a candidate—is critical to success. All the candidates who had won or nearly won, were gushing in gratitude for their support team. Vijaya had a core group of 35 women, with two-thirds accompanying her on any given day. The election is also a time of exception for them, when regular domestic chores take a back seat, and they revel in female comradery. ‘It is tiring and requires hard work’ Vijaya tells us, ‘but it has its own fun as well’. Parties for supporters, fueled by alcohol and non-veg food, are common during election campaigns; candidates began stock-piling bottles of liquor as early as April. But high-caste women-based campaign teams take pride in having simple fare, vegetarian food and chai. There is much joy to be had in sitting around, eating samosas after a hard day campaigning. It is a ritual that builds bonds of solidarity.

The sharing of ‘veg’ food is distinct from that of sharing ‘non-veg’ food or alcohol, which is considered a payment. Vijaya contrasts her campaign to other candidates in her ward:

Some candidates had to pay people to come to rallies. They came and shouted slogans because they were paid. But actually we did not pay anyone...people did this because they supported us....And other candidates also mobilised the youth, paid them, or gave them liquor and held non-veg parties....Not once did we give a non-veg snack, only veg snacks

We saw many rallies attended by mostly male youths, tearing up and down the streets. They were not ineffective, as they generated energy that gave the appearance of support, even inevitability. Yet they had a different emotional resonance after the campaign. A supporter of Vijaya told us,

all other candidates are giving money to get people to come and canvass for them, and to attend rallies. Vijaya is the only candidate not giving money, but people are willing to support her...I do not want to take money. If I did, then the next time I am in need of Vijaya's help, she will say to me, "but you took money to support me".

Money therefore works differently in the context of Dehradun compared to other parts of India. Björkman (2014) followed a candidate in a Mumbai election (coincidentally also a woman) who used money as a way to cement social relations, building ties of obligation and trust. Payments in Dehradun are more similar to Northeast Brazil, where cash payments were a disavowal of future relations or obligations (Ansell 2018). Explanations for these differences may be due to variations in affective ties that make governance 'work' post-election. Unlike in other Municipal Corporations in India (Berenschot 2010; de Wit 2017), Dehradun Parshads have little discretionary funding and power, and hence continue to rely on the mobilization of a crowd to pressurize officials to get things done (Jakimow 2019). Money puts an affective tinge on a relationship, makes it feel transactional rather than one of solidarity, which both Parshads and citizens need in the future.

Of all the seven campaigns I was involved in, Vijaya was the only candidate to win.^{viii} After a sobering night of following results, I was eager to celebrate. We heard the drums as soon as we reached her ward, and found her boisterous and loud post-election rally by following our ears. Curiously it was men who led the chants and dances, with women being rather subdued despite them comprising the core of the support team. Vijaya was squeezed in all sides, with hands no longer in *pranam* (a hand gesture signalling deference), she was freely grabbing and hugging people. When she saw us, we too were given long squeezes. I could

feel the joy in her squeeze, I also felt joyous. I had known Vijaya for four years and considered her a friend, yet it was during her campaign that deeper ties of affection were forged. Likewise, the election campaign would resonate in the relationship between her supporters and their re-elected Parshad.

Feeling/making democracy

Important questions in the anthropology of politics is what emotions do, how they shape electoral processes and democracy as practiced? It is a question that has often been directed at the emotions of voters, but rarely to candidates. Tracing the narrative of an emotional episode, how it arose within a complex of relationships, meanings, values and histories not only adds richness to our accounts of social life, it reveals insights into the intentions, motivations and navigations of social actors (Beatty 2019). As such, emotions produce social worlds; they are not only reactive and responsive, they are directive and mobilizing. Candidate's emotions during elections, the origins of emotional episodes and their consequences, are constitutive features of vernacular democracies (Michelutti 2007).

The above narratives point to four key insights that can be gained through attention to candidate emotions: an indicative, rather than comprehensive list. First, emotions reveal what is really at stake during election campaigns, the selves that candidates wish to become, and what they risk. Research and popular accounts of politicians mostly take for granted the motivations of politicians, assuming they are driven by power and status, with claims to the contrary read cynically (Mahler 2006). An emotional reading of losses point to what truly matters and candidate's desires: reaffirmation of social standing (Jashwi), appreciation by

one's constituents (Bhavani), recognition of one's capacity (Viajaya). Elections are times when candidates' sense of who they are, and who they could become, are tested in a direct, public, and even quantitative manner (Shaffir and Kleinknecht 2005). As such, there is a great deal at stake: no less than their self-making projects. Losses that threaten these projects prompt acts of recovery to deal with at times overwhelming emotions.

The acts of recovery and the strong emotions generated through the fear of loss, have their own consequences for democracy. It was in the heat of elections that accusations and condemnations flowed thick and fast. Bedi (2016: 104) found that during election campaigns, the "realities of political ambition" became apparent, and was a time when party cadre "began to talk privately about the local politics of jealousy and competition". In Dehradun, there was much talk about women contesting on behalf of husbands, particularly when women were not given the party ticket, or experienced narrow losses. Singer (2007) notes how there has been a preoccupation with women's lack of experience and abilities in politics and the presumed influence of male family members in their careers, despite a lack of evidence. Women party cadre, who know better than anyone that women can be astute and effective political actors, in the heat of the moment, disparage women candidates *in general*. Their comments contribute to the stereotype of women in politics, thereby diminishing their own standing and political opportunities.

In this way, emotional journeys produce anew the 'common sense' of democracy. Common sense, in the Gramscian sense, is not only ideology and discourse, but also feeling (Crehan 2016), or more specifically 'mood' (Beatty 2019). People *feel* that politics is a particular way, these feelings orient how they approach democratic practice. It is notable that candidates'

emotional responses to loss was fury, cynicism, resentment and aggrievement: emotions that prevented having to look inward to one's self and one's own campaign (see also Shaffir and Kleinknecht 2005). The 'common sense' of democracy in Dehradun set the conditions for these emotional responses. People are wary, if not cynical of electoral processes, citing the use of money and alcohol, voter irregularities and other underhanded tactics for why politics is 'dirty'. The actions of losing candidates perpetuate this common sense. One candidate, for example, spent the four days following the election announcement going to the police station to complain about the winning candidate, to the State Election Commission to complain about irregularities at the polling station, and held a press conference to complain about both issues. She was furious during this time, anger sustaining and driving these actions, and turning her away from the humiliation she would otherwise feel. In turn, her actions produce anew the 'common sense' that politics is dirty, a game not to be trusted. Elections are moments when the 'common sense' of democracy is given affective force.

Emotions are also important ingredients in the solidifying, negotiation and framing anew relations between elected representatives and citizens (Tawa Lama-Rewell 2007; Scott 2010; Singer 2007). Emotions inflect the moral values and norms that shape these relational modalities and which sediment into concrete expectations and obligations (Piliavsky 2014). Demands made in the heat of elections—and long after in the shadow of the elections—are based on emotional appeals as much as legal entitlements. Elected representatives meet these demands—even if they feel them to be unreasonable and outside their official tasks and duties—due to feeling obliged, indebted, or the affective practices of supplication that resonate long after votes are counted (see also Jakimow 2020). While the emotions of voting,

or being visited by/listened to a politician explain an 'assertive citizenry' (Manor 2016; Witsoe 2011), the emotions of being elected, or professing one's solidarity help explain a compliant, accommodating or hardworking elected representative. The emotions of elected representatives, including those experienced during the election campaign, need to have a larger place in our understanding of relational modalities of the state, democracy, and governance more generally.

Attention to emotions can also proffer alternative explanations for practices that are presumed to be devoid of sentiment. Most explanations as to why transactional politics persist focus on electoral systems, the structure of political parties, and cultural norms (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). While no doubt critical, the recourse to buying votes can be emotional, as much as it is calculative. No amount of money would have enabled Jaishwi to win. Her decision to pay for votes was animated by fear of losing face, desperation, and embarrassment. At the same time, calculations as to whether or not to give or receive money are also based on an understanding of emotions as navigational tools in social worlds (Beatty 2019). Supporters may not take money as they will then have a means to engender feelings of obligation in the elected representative at a later date. Unearthing how emotions work within particular cultural contexts and social worlds can thereby enrich our ethnographies of democracy, providing further evidence as to how money has different meanings, and *emotional resonances* (Björkman 2014; Priyam 2016; Wouters 2018).

Finally, I make the point that elections are moments of heightened emotional experience. Candidates are more attuned towards, and responsive to, the desires and evaluations of voters (Devika 2013). Candidates become a raw nerve, sensitive to the inner thoughts and

feelings of voters, and on occasion, no doubt misinterpreting these. Elections are for this reason emotionally gruelling. Win or lose, following the Dehradun elections candidates had an emotional exhaustion in their eyes. But elections are also a buzz; contesting and winning an election can induce drug like effects. Women party cadre, and women Parshads who bemoaned how difficult their work was, were eager to step into the fray again, to experience the sensation of the gamble, and potentially the highs of winning. Ignoring the emotional dimensions of elections, as in other aspects of experiences, would be to overlook that which gives human lives texture and richness.

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ⁱ I add colleagues even as this is published as a sole-authored monograph in recognition of the larger team who contributed to the generation of empirical material and the production of the text.

ⁱⁱ My recent book, *Susceptibility in Development* further develops this argument and explores the differences between local and elite development actors. I thank a reviewer for prompting me to explore this difference in the current paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ The many women who missed out on party tickets falls beyond the scope of this article. Their anger, disappointment and resignation are examined in Jakimow (2020)

^{iv} Women have been politically active in Uttarakhand, including in the Anti-Alcohol movement, (1956-1965), the iconic Chipko movement (1970s), and the Uttarakhand Andolan movement for statehood (1990s).

^v Online media outlets and independent 'journalists' visited most candidates with such proposals.

^{vi} Not all sitting Parshads were given the ticket by their parties, and indeed sadly the majority of those we knew well did not (see Jakimow 2020). A small percentage of these women ran as independents, some only very narrowly missing out on winning their seats despite the disadvantage of running without party support.

^{vii} The low success rate is not coincidental. I chose to campaign with women that I had known previously, the majority of whom were denied the party ticket, including former Parshads. Many ran

highly successful campaigns as independents overcoming the significant odds of not having party support, but fell just short of winning.