Deconstructing Haryana

Dis/order in representations of Gender, Caste and Education

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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Presentation Plan

- Introduction to FCF project in Haryana
  - **Project topic**
  - **Timeline**
  - **Project structure**
  - **Research Philosophy**
- Deconstruction: four stages for empirical application
  - **Critical concept**
  - **Surrounding**
  - **Marking out**
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- Deconstructing Haryana
  - **Haryana: a critical concept**
  - **Surrounding Haryana**
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Topic

Title of the Project: Fair Chance for Education: Gendered Pathways to Educational Success in Haryana

This is a **five-year action research project** that seeks to determine the **gendered factors** that contribute to **educational success** for young people in **Haryana**, India.
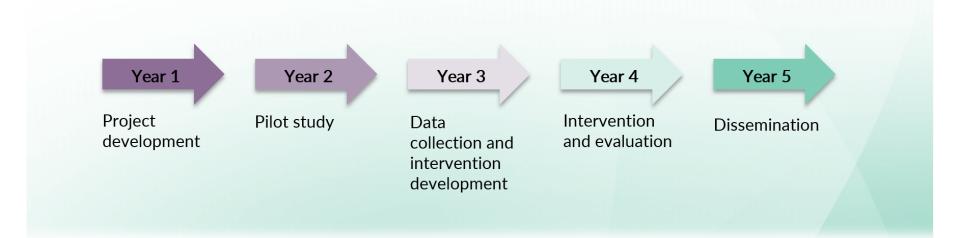
Haryana experiences significant **gender-based practices** that affect the ability of young people to access and remain within the education system, and to progress into **higher education**.

The project therefore focusses on **gendered social relations** and **gender differences** in **choices, obstacles and opportunities** for young people as they progress through the education system, and ultimately intends to devise project actions that can bring about **positive social change**.

We are focusing on **one state** in order to understand the state mechanisms and contextual nuances. BUT What does it mean to research one state? (As opposed to eg a selection of states that are taken to represent 'India'?)

Timeline

Year 1 → Project development

Year 2 → Pilot study

Year 3 → Data collection and intervention development

Year 4 → Intervention and evaluation

Year 5 → Dissemination

Structure of the Project

- Collaborative working groups:
  - **Core project group**
    - Ann Stewart, Emily Henderson, Ian Abbott (University of Warwick)
    - Manish Jain (Ambedkar University Delhi)
    - Nandini Manjrekar (TISS Mumbai)
    - Nidhi Sabharwal (NIEPA)
  - **Research advisory group** comprising experts in the field of gender and education
  - **Consultative group** including scholars working across Education Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Human Rights and Socio-legal Studies, including early career researchers

- Project visits to UK and India to develop collaborations

- Two doctorates for Indian students to gain a PhD from Warwick

Research Philosophy

- Based on principles of action research -> exploratory nature.
  - Each stage of the project influences the design of the next.

- Drawing on notions of collaborative research
  - Rooted in local practice, concepts and epistemologies
  - Requires time for the formation of partnerships and flexibility for ideas to develop.

- The implication of this research philosophy is that a fixed research plan cannot be developed in advance of all stages of research.
  - Instead, each stage of research is developed in relation to the previous stage.
  - This includes our conceptualization of the research site, which is the basis of today's presentation.

Theoretical framework: Deconstruction

- What does deconstruction mean for empirical research?

- A necessary aspect of working with a poststructuralist research approach...but how to apply deconstruction?

- This presentation – deconstructing our research site

- Developing Derrida's quasi-definitions of deconstruction into a *means of enacting* deconstruction.
  - From Henderson's (2016) doctoral work on deconstructing conceptual knowledge of gender at conferences.

- Working with the passages of *De la grammatologie* (1967) /*Of Grammatology* (1976) where Derrida gives some ideas about enacting deconstruction
  - 'Instructions' for deconstructive working.
  - Four stages: 'critical concept', 'surrounding', 'marking out', 'chink/crevice'

i) Critical Concept

We may be troubled by a particular concept, by the way in which a concept constructs its referent.

Although we are troubled by the concept, we cannot 'renounce' it, or discard it: it is this very concept that is 'indispensable' for our work, because we work *with* the concept in order to 'unsettle' its 'heritage'.

We therefore keep hold of the concept, and aim to 'surround' it.

(Henderson, 2016, p. 88)

i) Haryana: A critical concept

Why Haryana is being examined as a 'critical concept'?

- Addresses concerns over a homogenised definition of the state
  - Helps in placing Haryana within its own specific social cultural and economic context.

- Helps to encompass the conundrum of economic development BUT increasing conservatism in Haryana (Ahlawat 2012, Madan and Gill 2011, Yadav 2001).

- Testing the conceptualisation of Haryana under different lenses could provide alternate possibilities and insight that challenge assumptions
  - Haryana is a prominent figure in the Corridors of development; literally and figuratively (Planning Commission 2009, Apex Cluster Development services 2015).
  - It is one of the leading exemplar states (Planning Commission): developments in Haryana have implications on a macro scale for India and the developing world.
  - The disparities between economic and social development could be replicated elsewhere, so it is worthwhile asking critical contextual questions that challenge assumptions.

- A deconstruction of Haryana as a concept involves challenging the conceptualisation of Haryana as a state.
  - This implies questioning the given narratives and representations, and treating narratives and representations as narratives and representations and not as objective truths.
  - This leads us to surrounding and marking out Haryana as a critical concept.

ii) Surrounding

We can only 'surround' a concept from *within* the 'en/closure', the limits of the concept, by 'inhabiting' the structure of the concept.
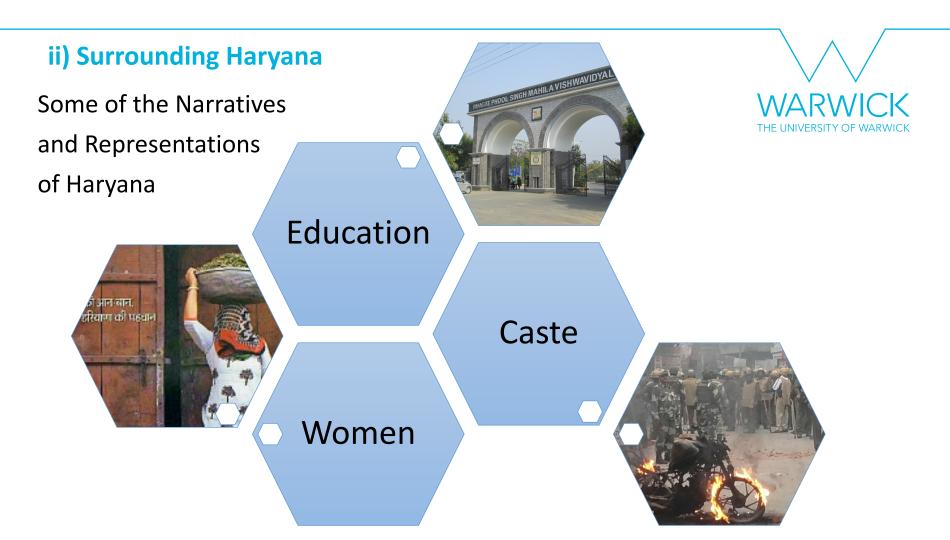
In attempting to occupy a liminal zone of limits, we run the 'constant risk' of 'falling back on this side of that which is being deconstructed': our deconstructive motion can only ever be 'oblique' and 'perilous'.

('Falling back' involves re-inscribing the concept in the very terms which we are seeking to destabilize).

'Surrounding' is a discursive motion, which involves taking great care and paying attention to the detail of what we do with discourse in destabilising – and potentially re-stabilising – the concepts that are troubling us.

(Henderson, 2016, p. 88)

ii) Surrounding Haryana

Some of the Narratives and Representations of Haryana

Education

Caste

Women

Women

- Low Sex ratio, Female Infanticide and Trafficking of brides (Kukreja and Kumar 2013, Mishra 2013, Larsen and Kaur 2013)
- Safety, rape and violence (Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014, Ahlawat 2012, Yadav 2001)
- Early marriage
- Inheritance and Land (Ahlawat 2012, Chowdhry 2010 and 2012)

ii) Surrounding Haryana: Caste

Caste

- Violence
- Harassment, Rape and Murder
- Reservations
- Khaps and Marriage
- Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014, Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2011 and 2009, Ahlawat 2012

ii) Surrounding Haryana: Education

Education

- Higher female GER in schools and colleges
- Caste inequalities
- Inequalities in STEM disciplines, especially engineering
- AISHE 2015-16, ASER 2018

iii) Marking Out

'Marking out' the 'conditions' that establish the concept's 'effectiveness' – what constitutes the (central) 'environment' (*milieu*) for the concept to operate, and where are its 'limits'?

In order to mark out these conditions, we are obliged to 'borrow[] all the strategic and systemic resources from the old structure': we use the conditions of the concept's effectiveness to identify its conditions of effectiveness.

In identifying where the concept is most effective, and where it begins to exceed or fail, we show how the concept 'belong[s] to the very machine that [it] help[s] to take apart'.

The strength and weakness of the concept are thus intertwined and mutually constitutive.

(Henderson, 2016, pp. 88-89)

Gurgaon

Fields near Harvest season

Honda Factory protest 2016

iii) Chink/Crevice

Marking out the concept's sphere of operation, and, in parallel, the limits of the sphere, means that we crack the solidity of the en/closure [of the concept].

However, we seem to be able to 'glimpse' something through the 'chink' or 'crevice' (*faille*): an 'unnameable' 'glow'.

This 'glow' points towards a realm, an era, beyond the en/closure (*l'outre-clôture*), which, because it is outside of spatiotemporalisation, we cannot access.

In imagining the 'glow', we turn back inwards to work on making visible the fixing processes of presence that structure our imagination.

(Henderson, 2016, p. 89)

iv) Chinks/Crevices in the Concept of Haryana

- An ongoing process of striving to **keep the concept of Haryana open and unfixed**, to be continually **surprised and disorientated** rather than slotting ideas into place.

- The risk: Are we simply creating **another coherent narrative** by deconstructing other narratives or conceptualisations of Haryana?

- How to **continually defamiliarise** Haryana as certain narratives become fixed for us?

- How to **conduct change-making empirical research** while working with this concept of Haryana? What can we afford to fix into place while still embracing complexity?

- BUT engaging in **ongoing deconstructive practice** of the research site is essential, particularly in a **context that is defined by contradiction**.

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www.Warwick.ac.uk/haryana

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https://genderedpathwaystoeducation.wordpress.com/

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