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# Everyday Life in Kashmir: The Maintenance of Normalcy Amidst Political Violence

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# Everyday Life in Kashmir: The Maintenance of Normalcy Amidst Political Violence

**Disciplines**  
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Everyday Life in Kashmir:  
The Maintenance of Normalcy amidst Political Violence

By

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In

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**Abstract:**

The Kashmir region has been characterized in both academic and popular literature as a place of violent conflict and separatism since the late 1980s. Although civilian deaths and encounters between militants and the Indian army continue to be unsurprising events in Kashmir, both Indian bureaucrats and Kashmiri citizens claim everyday life in Kashmir is carried on with considerable normalcy. This study explores how the interplay between Kashmiris' present day relationships with the Indian government and their memories of the insurgency in the early 1990s contribute to the maintenance of everyday normalcy despite current political violence. Drawing on ethnographic data from Indian administered Kashmir that was collected during the summer and winter of 2012, the study identifies three factors that contribute to the maintenance of everyday peace which are 1) the way memories of past violence allow violence in the present to be absorbed into everyday normalcy 2) the material and psychic ties Kashmiris have to the Indian government, 3) and the place of "the conflict" in social welfare discourse. The structured nature of the normalcy in Kashmir renders the region unable to separate from the Indian state, despite widespread separatist sentiments.

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## **Introduction**

Wars, insurgencies, and other kinds of armed political conflict bring to mind violent disruptions of everyday life. However, such a conception of political conflict takes for granted the normalcy of everyday life that is being disrupted by violence. While everyday activities are indeed interrupted during times of conflict, their normalcy is not entirely obliterated; it exists alongside and in between the spurts of violence. It is my aim in this study to problematize the existence of normalcy in the context of Kashmir, the disputed territory on the northern border between India and Pakistan, where political violence has been the norm for decades.

I had initially gone to Kashmir to study the violence associated with its political conflict, a relic of the separatist insurgency that began in 1989, but what quickly caught my interest was the ease with which locals could move about public spaces despite the threat of violence. There were, during my time there in 2012, at least three incidents of civilian deaths at the hands of the Indian security forces and one incident of crossfire between militants and the army, but neither I nor any of the Kashmiri families I lived with felt endangered by these events. Locals often paused to condemn the rule of the Indian state, which they saw as an oppressive occupying power, but daily activities, such as going to the market, school or work, carried on as usual<sup>1</sup>. The persistence of this normalcy in spite of violence quickly became the object of my study. Normalcy, as I use the word, does not refer to the normalization or routinization of violence itself, but to the ability to carry out the activities of everyday life and move through public places without notable disruption or fear.

The only way this normalcy could be maintained appeared to be contingent on Kashmiris' cooperation with the Indian government<sup>2</sup>. The majority of Kashmiris I worked with complied with the orders of Indian security forces and did not obstruct the projects of the state. However, the few towns and neighborhoods where people were not compliant were known to be particularly prone to violence. For instance, it was common knowledge among Kashmiris that the town of Sopur was one of the few places that still harbored foreign militants and did not participate in municipal elections out of spite towards the government<sup>3</sup>. The neighborhood of Maisuma in the capital city of Srinagar, part of the infamous belt of neighborhoods called "Little Pakistan" was said to always be ready to pick a fight with Indian security forces. However, the vast majority of Kashmiris I met were not from these select towns, and they agreed that "things were much better now"; people were no longer afraid to leave their homes and go about their business, tourism was picking up, and militants—though supposedly still around—were quiet, "heard of but not seen," as one Srinagar resident told me.

Given the popularly held view of the Indian state as an oppressor in Kashmir, I was curious as to why most Kashmiris were not seriously invested in the idea of rebelling against the Indian state. "Everyone wants peace," a Kashmiri schoolteacher had told me, when I expressed my confusion. Yet, the shootings and militant encounters that occurred during my fieldwork, as well as Kashmiris' widespread antagonism towards the state, left me unconvinced that cooperating with the state brought Kashmiris any closer to peace. Why wasn't this antagonism



mobilized? Why did so many Kashmiris tolerate, however angrily, incidents of state-perpetrated violence rather than try to expel the occupying power? To answer these questions, I explore the social and structural factors that contribute to the maintenance of normalcy in everyday life in Kashmir.

### **The conflict in Kashmir**

Since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, Kashmir has been a site of conflict. Two months after the partition, the then-independent princely state of Kashmir joined the Republic of India in exchange for protection from invading tribesmen from Pakistan (Tremblay, 2009)<sup>4</sup>. The Indian government sent its armed forces to Kashmir, making it the site for the first war between the two fledgling nations (Tremblay, 2009). Kashmir was subsequently declared a disputed territory by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) and has been the site of two more wars between the neighboring states, in 1965 and 1999. Currently, the territory is divided between India and Pakistan by Line of Control (LOC), established by the UNCIP in 1973 (Tremblay, 2009). While the LOC is not a national border, it serves as a de facto border, guarded by standing armies on both sides.

The focus of my research is the part of Kashmir that is governed by India. Indian-administered Kashmir is part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian-administered Kashmir was the site of a militant separatist movement that began in 1989 and lasted through the mid-1990s, as well as the violent counter-insurgency

effort put forth by the Indian state (Duschinski, 2010; Tremblay, 2009; Evans, 2000). The 1990s were therefore a period of chaotic violence that is collectively referred to by locals as the time of the militancy. The region has also been the site of several popular uprisings against the Indian state, the last of which was in 2010-11 (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011).

Remnants of the violence from the time of the militancy remain in Kashmir today. The Indian government claims that there are currently 200-700 militants in Kashmir, allegedly foreign, justifying its maintenance of a large military presence in the region<sup>5</sup>. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), so heavily armed that locals rarely differentiate them from the army, are posted at every street corner in Kashmir's neighborhoods and market places, while army bases are set up on the outskirts of towns. A report prepared by the Organization for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR, 2003) states that between the CRPF, Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Force, and Indian army, 200,000 non-Kashmiri security personnel were deployed in the region, amounting to about one armed officer for every 27 Kashmiris. Special security provisions that were enacted during the height of the militancy, such as the infamous Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and Disturbed Areas Act (DDA) are also still in place. These provisions grant sweeping powers to Indian security forces in the region, allowing them to "fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law" without facing repercussions (AFSPA, 1958).

Provisions such as AFSPA have received considerable criticism from human rights proponents for facilitating violence against Kashmiri citizens. Indian security forces have been condemned for holding civilians in detention without trial, shooting at civilians in retaliation for militants' attacks<sup>6</sup>, as well as for other unprovoked atrocities against civilians (Noorani, 2000; Puri; 1999). While the rape and murder of two Kashmiri women in 2010 became a rallying point during a popular uprising (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011), civilian deaths at the hands of security forces are too common for most of them to be widely publicized. Near Srinagar's Dal Lake, a baker's son was shot from a CRPF outpost across the street as he was closing up his father's shop in 2011, allegedly because he reprimanded the officers for not paying his father for the bread they ate. The neighbors quietly renamed the street in his honor, but the boy's story is not known beyond the immediate area.<sup>7</sup> In the summer of 2012, two boys were killed by an army officer in a vegetable market in Kupwara, but this news, too, did not circulate much further than the town in which the event took place.<sup>8</sup>

### **The maintenance of normalcy**

In contexts in which violence is the norm, Laura Ring (2006) conceptualizes peace as something that must be actively maintained and negotiated. In a similar manner, I look at everyday normalcy as something that needs to be maintained. However, unlike Ring (2006), who examines the maintenance of peace in more private, residential spaces, I am interested in a normalcy that characterizes public

spaces. Consequently, I focus on social and structural factors that contribute to the maintenance of normalcy at the societal level. The three factors I explore are Kashmiris' memories of the violence of the militancy, their reliance on the Indian government for material security, and both local and international efforts to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict.

I will first examine how memories of the extreme violence from the time of the militancy work to preserve normalcy in the face of current violence. Fassin (2007) and Das (2007) show that the way in which victims' memories of violence are talked about—or not talked about—accomplishes different things in the present. Fassin (2007), in post apartheid South Africa, notes that autobiographical narratives are mobilized as a political weapon for fighting AIDS. Accordingly, an AIDS victim tells him her life history packaged neatly into a personal narrative, told from beginning to end in nearly one breath. By contrast, Das (2007), in her writing about the violence that erupted during the partition of modern day India and Pakistan, says memories of the partition are not discussed at all, but left unsaid to maintain normalcy in everyday relationships. The way in which memories of violence are talked about in Kashmir falls into neither of these categories; instead, the violence of the past is remembered implicitly as a commonly experienced environment, unremarkable in itself.

The memory of past violence, collectively experienced, is manifest in the present, so that there is no clear distinction between the normalcy of the present

and the violence of the past. Fassin (2007) says that memories of past facts are inscribed into the objective realities of the present. Writing of the AIDS crises in post-apartheid South Africa, Fassin (2007) shows that the memories of life during the conditions of the apartheid are manifested in the present in the form of the lack of access to AIDS therapies among the black poor. Memory is also inscribed into the present as the subjective experiences of the present. Fassin (2007) illustrates this with President Thabo Mbeki's accusations of racism with regards to the AIDS crisis. He also says that memory informs the conduct and feelings of the body. Like Bourdieu's (2000) concept of habitus, this last point refers to a certain embodied knowledge—certain kinds of bodily conduct and feelings—that arise from corresponding conditions of existence, or what Bourdieu calls a field. The current conditions of conflict in Kashmir are likewise manifestations of the violence of the past, particularly of the violence of the militancy. The institutional and social structures that shaped the violence of the past—such as the dense presence of Indian security officials and the insecurity created by legal provisions such as AFSPA (Duschinski, 2010), as well as schools and legal systems—are the same structures that shape the normalcy of the present and can be described as the objective realities that are inscribed with the memory of past violence. The subjective knowledge through which Kashmiris make sense of present-day violence, and the embodied knowledge with which they interact with the structures of the conflict, too, are shaped by collective memories of past violence. The inscription of collective memories into the present creates what Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992) calls a backdrop of violence. "Violence doesn't show up well against a backdrop of

violence,” she writes in her ethnography of a Brazilian shantytown (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). Since the normalcy of the present in Kashmir is colored by a backdrop of violence, an individual instance of violence—such as the killing of a civilian—does not appear to be a disruption of order and does not typically become a rallying point against the Indian state.

The second factor I explore is the effect that Kashmiris’ reliance on the Indian government for their material security has on their ability to mobilize against the state. The conflict in Kashmir has substantially curtailed the development of the private sector, making the government the main source of economic security (Habibullah, 2004). The Indian state actively deploys welfare and development programs to benefit the lives of its poor and rural residents (Gupta, 2012). These programs are products of “top down” state planning, and they encompass the community they benefit into the larger nation-state (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). By encompassing local communities from “somewhere above”, these welfare programs help secure the state’s legitimacy and naturalize its authority in the spaces they operate in (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). The state’s various departments are also the primary source of employment in Kashmir, as steady private sector employment is scarce. The structural violence of unemployment, Bourdieu (1998) says, “isolates, atomizes, and demobilizes, and strips away solidarity” among desperate workers. In the context of widespread unemployment, the employer wields the ability to grant individual economic security at the expense of collective security (Bourdieu, 1998). The possibility of this individual security, he posits, coupled with whatever welfare

support is available from the state and the family, works to prevent an uprising of workers against the system that oppresses them. In Kashmir, the proliferation of state-sponsored welfare and development programs in even the most remote areas of the region symbolically encompasses Kashmir, spatially, into the Indian state, increasing the legitimacy of the state in the region and preventing it from breaking away. Kashmiris' reliance on the government for employment further strips away any solidarity among them that could have been created by their shared antagonism towards the Indian state, diminishing the possibility of collective action against the state.

Kashmiris' reliance on the state for their material needs also requires them expend significant amounts of time and energy interacting with the state. This, I argue, creates a sort of banal attachment to the state, a neutral attachment that can coexist with the widespread antagonism towards the Indian state. This investment in the state constantly underlies many routine, everyday activities. Michael Billig (1995) argues that routine, everyday practices that pertain to an individual's relationship with the nation-state come to constitute what he calls "banal nationalism", a nationalism so mundane that it is routinely forgotten, except during "moments of national unity" (Forgacs, 2012). Billig's (1995) work looks at banal nationalism in the United States, where routine acts like pledging allegiance to the flag foster banal nationalism among Americans. Although Kashmiris as a whole do not want to be part of the Indian state, and therefore I do not claim that they harbor any sentiments of Indian nationalism, they do, as I will show, have a particular

attachment to the state. This attachment is analogous to Billig's (1995) banal nationalism in that it arises from continuous, long-term interactions with the Indian state for mundane reasons, and it becomes visible during emotionally intense events that bring Indian citizens together.

The third factor I examine is the way efforts to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict in fact reify it as a feature of the Indian state. Duschinski and Hoffman (2011) write that Kashmiris' suffering at the hands of the Indian government has alienated them from the state. However, I argue that it is precisely the suffering and victimhood produced by the conflict that ties them to the state. Due to Kashmir's status as a region in conflict, international NGOs have funneled support and funding to the region. Feldman and Ticktin (2010) write that NGOs that claim to protect members of humanity from the excesses of improper government are themselves dependent on broader governing structures to function. In her discussions of moral dilemmas faced by the Medicines Sans Frontiers, Fiona Terry (2002) says that, when the humanitarian organization intervenes to care for victims of a violent regime, it often finds itself complying with the demands of the oppressive government in order to have access to the populations who have suffered. Similarly, the conflict in Kashmir attracts international funding and institutional intervention from organizations that are interested in helping victims, such as Medicines Sans Frontiers, Handicap International, and Save the Children, among others. However, these organizations can only do work in Kashmir if they comply with the regulations of the Indian government. By doing so, they reinforce



the Indian state's hold over Kashmir and make the conflict—and the many separatist elements that fuel it—merely a part of the Indian state. Kashmiris, too, experience the conflict as a thing that is entrenched within the framework of the Indian state. In his ethnography of marginalized AIDS victims in Brazil, Biehl (2007) shows that grassroots organizations that attempt to fill in the gaps left by the state's rollout of ARVs can only find stability by relying on the state for funding and support. As they do so, despite their criticisms of the shortcomings of the state, the organizations become embedded in the structures and rationale of the state. Likewise, local NGOs in Kashmir, founded and run by Kashmiris, have to rely on services provided by the state to best care for their beneficiaries. They thus become embedded in the state in their very attempt to alleviate the suffering caused by the state.

The conflict in Kashmir also carries currency within the Indian state, tying Kashmiris who suffered most dramatically due to the conflict to the state. India is engaged in the art of government as Foucault described it, working to improve the condition of its citizens (Gupta, 2012). Hannah Arendt (cited in Feldman and Ticktin, 2010) points out that the benefits of citizenship are not conferred on a person simply because they are human. Kashmiri Muslims, who comprise about 98% of the population in Kashmir (Tremblay, 2009), are broadly excluded from the securities provided to citizens due to anti-Islamic prejudices in the nation (Pandey, 2006) and the infamous image of the Kashmiri terrorist that entered the Indian imaginary during the insurgency (see Peer, 2010; Chopra, 2000; Kurshid, 1994).

However, Kashmiris who can demonstrate that they are direct victims of the violence of the conflict can use their victimhood to form a new kind of citizenship. Writing about Ukraine's management of the Chernobyl disaster, Petryna (2002) shows that radiation sufferers used their disease to forge a new kind of relationship with the state. Biological citizenship, as she defines it, is the "massive demand for but selective access to a form of social welfare based on medical, scientific, and legal criteria that both acknowledge biological injury and compensate for it". The radiation sufferer's disease and its connection with the disaster therefore became the basis on which the benefits of citizenship were conferred. In a parallel manner, a Kashmiri's status as a victim of the conflict affords him or her preferential access to social welfare benefits. The state, however, only confers benefits on an ideal, non-violent victim of violence—presumably victims who are innocent. Liisa Malkki (2010) points out that the absolutely innocent victims whom aid programs find worthy of assistance are, in reality, rare to come by. Accordingly, while many if not the majority of Kashmiris can claim to have suffered in some way due to the conflict, only a seemingly arbitrary group of them are given access to aid from the state. Thus while the state does not redress the grievances brought about by the conflict in any comprehensive way, it opens up a space for Kashmiris to potentially use their victimhood to gain access to resources. Victimhood, and not recovery, then becomes valuable in the context of the Indian state, and the conflict is maintained as an ongoing state of affairs, tying Kashmiris to the state rather than separating them from it.

## Research Methods

The methods I used to gather my data consist largely of ethnographic fieldwork done during the summer and winter of 2012, as well as in January of 2013. Most of my data comes from the village of Kalanpora, in the district of Kupwara. Kupwara is a predominantly rural district in Kashmir that borders the LOC. It is one of the areas most affected by the militancy, as it was flooded with militants returning from arms training camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, commonly referred to as Azad Kashmir.<sup>9</sup> Kalanpora is the second village from the LOC on the Indian side of Kashmir, a mere five hour trek from the border. The first village is the site of an army base, so Kalanpora is the first safe haven for militants returning from Azad Kashmir. During the time I did my fieldwork, I lived in the house of the daughter of the village *sarpanch* (political head). The data that I present come from open-ended interviews with and observations of the lives of her neighbors and relatives. I also interviewed members of the local government in Kupwara and shadowed the fieldwork of two NGOs in the district. Both NGOs provided aid to rural women, and one of them explicitly focused on helping widows and orphans. One of these NGOs was funded by the Central Indian government and the other by the Save the Children Foundation.

I also draw on fieldwork from the capital city of Srinagar, where I stayed with a family who works in the tourism industry and traveled to the headquarters of the locally based NGO, Hope Disability, in the neighboring district of Gandarbal during

the day. The data I present comes from interviews with staff members and beneficiaries of Hope Disability, as well from the experiences of families who work in the tourism industry. The data I collected in Kashmir is supplemented by interviews with the Joint Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K. Skandan, who describes himself as the bridge between the state government of Jammu and Kashmir and the central government of India.

The chapters that follow address the three social and structural factors identified earlier that contribute to the maintenance of everyday normalcy in Kashmir. The first chapter addresses the effect that memories of the violence of the militancy have on the experience of violent events in the present. Here, I show that the violence of the militancy is remembered as a commonly experienced condition of existence. I then link the way residents of Kalanpora experience present events of violence to their memories of the militancy to show that, although the intensity of the violence may have decreased since the early 90s, there has never been a clean break between the violence of the past and the violence that characterizes present. This section is in part a response to Indian government officials' claim that the region is currently in a period of recovery<sup>10</sup>, and its aim is to show how, instead of sparking outrage, present incidents of violence are absorbed into the everyday normalcy.

The second chapter examines the effect that Kashmiris' material reliance on the government has on the possibility of popular resistance against the state. It

draws on Kalanpora's residents' engagement with the government via social welfare programs and employment in the public sector. The chapter argues that reliance on the Indian government for material security diminishes Kashmiris' ability to mobilize against the state. The chapter also presents locals' responses to the December 16 gang rape incident in New Delhi to demonstrate that the solidarity Kashmiris showed with Indians elsewhere, as if they did indeed consider themselves a part of the same nation.

The third chapter examines how interventions designed to appease the suffering caused by the conflict in fact reinforce Kashmir's position as part of the Indian state. The data here comes from two NGOs that I worked with, the Hope Disability Center in Gandarbal and the Srinagar and Kupwara offices of a Kashmiri NGO that provides assistance to widows. The interviews of Hope Disability's staff members and beneficiaries show that the conflict has become a resource within the state that selectively confers benefits on those who can fit the given requirements of a true victim. The second part of the chapter draws on the successes and failures of widows' efforts to acquire access to state benefits. These experiences are of widows who lost their husbands to conflict related violence, and they show the arbitrariness that characterizes the way in which compensation is distributed among conflict victims.

The three factors I explore examine how everyday normalcy is something that is structurally produced, rather than the result of a conscious choice that people

make. This perspective of normalcy accommodates the apparent paradox between Kashmiris' widespread antagonism—often laden with separatist sentiments—and their apparent cooperation with the state, explaining how normalcy can exist alongside continuing spurts of political violence.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Memories of violence**

## **Introduction**

In an interview taken in December of 2012, the Joint Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K. Skandan, said with reference to the political situation in Kashmir, “Right now, we are in a state of recovery.” He spoke of the conflict in past tense, using the phrase “even when there was conflict”. How, I asked him, does one draw the line between the period of conflict and the period of recovery? “As long as there is a comfort level in the number of flights coming in,” Skandan responded, “in the number of foreigners coming in—on a continuous basis, not only one or two years—then, it is a state of recovery.”

The division that Secretary Skandan drew between Kashmir’s period of conflict and period of recovery was based on external factors—the number of external flights coming into Kashmir, and the number of foreigners coming into Kashmir. He did not address factors internal to Kashmir in his criteria for the division. In this chapter, I argue that, from the point of view of Kashmiris who have lived through the violence of the last two decades, there is no division between the conflict and the period of recovery. Though many Kashmiris say, with reference to the current normalcy in everyday affairs, “Things are better now,” they still see themselves as living in a state of conflict. Things are simply better within the context of the conflict; there is no period of recovery and no break between the present normalcy and the violence of the past. Since Kashmiris still see themselves as living in a state of conflict, monthly incidents of political violence do not appear to



be disruptions in the ordinary state of affairs.

In order to demonstrate that Kashmiris still see themselves as living in a state of conflict I will show how their present is colored by and understood through the collective memories of the violence of the past. I will first provide an account of how and when the violence of the militancy was spoken of in the village of Kalanpora, near the LOC in the district Kupwara. The data presented comes from some of my earliest interactions with the residents of the village, in the summer of 2012. The different types of data I gathered show that the violence of the conflict is in the common background of the Kashmiris' memories, not considered remarkable enough in itself to be the focal point of a life history. I will then present the Kalanpora residents' recollections of the time of the militancy in the early 1990s, which show that the institutional structures that shape the normalcy of the present are the same as those that shaped the violent period of the militancy. This structural continuity implies that the framework of what Skandan called the "state of conflict" is still in place today. Finally, I present the experiences of Rubina, the daughter of Kalanpora's *sarpanch* (political head) to show that people's interactions with their present environment are informed by the embodied knowledge of the conditions of the militancy.

### **Memories of the militancy**

During the summer of 2012, the primary aim of my fieldwork was to develop

an understanding of what the residents of Kalanpora had witnessed during the time of the militancy. I first heard of the violent events that Kashmiris had experienced from Javed, an American law student who was born and raised in Kalanpora, who recounted some of his memories of the militancy to me in casual conversation.

“This is where I saw someone get killed for the first time,” said Javed while driving me from Srinagar to Kupwara. We were passing through the town of Sopur. “I was sixth grade, maybe seventh. It was my first time traveling alone on a bus. The driver received news that there was gunfire up ahead, but before he could turn the bus around, we saw gunfire start up behind us as well. We were right in front of the medical center, so we all got out to go wait there for safety, but firing started around us. I remember, I was lying flat against the ground, and there were people dropping to the floor around me. A woman fell, dead, and her baby was crying.” I asked him if he had seen people be killed after that incident. “Of course,” he replied, as if I should have taken that for granted.

However, when I began formally interviewing residents of Kalanpora about their experiences, they responded to my questions by reciting the trajectory of political events in Kashmir—beginning with the controversial elections of 1987, the insurgency in 1989, the assassination of the separatist leader Abdul Gani Lone, the prominence of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, ending with the human rights violations by the Indian army—rather than the violence they had personally experienced. This is exemplified by my interview with Taleeb.

Taleeb was a practicing lawyer in Kupwara and Javed's brother-in-law. When Javed told him that I was in Kashmir to research people's experiences of the conflict, Taleeb said emphatically, "I used to be a militant, interview me." Taleeb soon invited me to a formal dinner along with three other lawyers who had been part of the militancy in the early 90s. He started his narrative with "So in '87, the elections were rigged<sup>1</sup>. All Kashmiris voted for the Muslim United Front, so when they lost, we knew it was injustice." His narrative continued with a series of political events loosely mapped onto a chronicle of his life, replete with years and dates. "I went to Pakistan [to be trained as a militant] in 1991, right after I finished my law degree in Srinagar. The militants were good back then, we didn't attack civilians, only the army. But in 1994, the army became harsher, and these low class laborers joined the militancy. They corrupted it, started spying for the army, so I left." Nowhere in Taleeb's narrative were there experiences of the sort Javed recollected, despite the fact that, as an ex-militant, he was likely to have witnessed considerable violence. I attempted to push the narrative towards his personal experiences by asking him what had made him decide to join the militancy. "Well, they [the Indian security forces] were killing Kashmiris," Taleeb responded, as if stating the obvious. He then carried on with his timeline of sociopolitical developments. Taleeb's narrative was similar to those of the other ex-militants he had invited, as well as to those of several other residents of Kalanpora whom I interviewed.

Experiences of violence were, however, common in anecdotes in casual conversations, in the way Javed had shared a memory evoked by the place we had been in. The daughter of the village *sarpanch*, Rubina, with whom I shared a room, told me that she and all the women and children in the neighborhood used to sleep on the floor of that very room during the militancy. “All the men except Wajid Sahib went into hiding at night.” Wajid Sahib was her father-in-law and owner of the house. “So all of us girls used to spend the night at his house. All the women and their little kids. We didn’t want to stay alone in our own homes.”

“I was too old to run and hide,” remarked Wajid Sahib, who was listening. “I used to sleep downstairs with my children and answer the door when the army knocked, and the girls slept upstairs.”

“Wajid Sahib is the only man in the village who was never beaten by the army,” said his son Niyaz.

“No,” said Wajid Sahib vaguely, as if remembering something very distant. “I think they beat me once. A little bit.”

### **Structural continuity**

The memories recounted by Niyaz, who had been in grade school during the

time of the militancy, demonstrate that the violence of the militancy did not bring about a total breakdown of institutional structures. Though there were disruptions, government owned institutions continued to function. The examples below show that, despite debilitating incidents of violence, schools and legal offices were operating and in use by Kashmiris even at the height of the militancy. Institutions were not demolished by the violence, and consequently, they were not rebuilt anew in the present state normalcy.

“Once,” Niyaz began, “I was in studying in eighth standard at the time--the army came here, right down this road. Straight to brother Aftab’s house. The school was nearby, and we used to come home for lunch. So that day, we came home, had our lunch, me and a friend of mine. We were classmates, the two of us and Aftab. On our way back to school, we saw the army coming into the village, saw them taking the road to the next neighborhood, right to brother Aftab’s house. So as we hurried on our way, we saw that there were beatings happening at Aftab’s<sup>2</sup>.”

“They beat him, too,” Niyaz continued. “They let him go quickly though. He joined us in school that day.

“But there was so much beating that day--you know what they beat one of the men with? His own hammer. An iron hammer. He was a mason. The poor man, he died one, two months later, because of that beating. And we students really suffered too. Once, school was cancelled for four months so we could take our end-

of-year exams until the following year. We were all a year behind because of that.

“Then there was that time when the army stayed here seven days, continuously, for a crackdown,” Niyaz continued. When the security forces in Kashmir call a crackdown, they gather the men, women and children, and elderly people in the neighborhood or village in separate spaces, so that they cannot communicate with each other. Crackdowns usually involve the search for militants, and are associated with torture for questioning. “Nothing had happened--militants came back from Pakistan, they stayed in our neighborhood for a while, and left. Then the army called a crackdown, came to beat (*pitayi ki*) us civilians. What could we have done? We could not stop the militants from staying here.

“The army stayed here for seven days. Then, some of the women escaped. They took the back roads to the main town, to the district commissioner’s office. They found a lawyer in the town, and he took their case to court. He was brave. That night, the army finally left.

“In those days,” he went on, “we men were never at home. We would usually hear news, somehow, when a crackdown was about to happen in our village, so we would go to a different village. The army was always looking for men. ‘Where is your husband, where are the militants,’ they would ask the women. We knew, if they found us, they would beat us. They might beat the women, too, but they would let them go. If they got us, then they would shoot us, kill us, straight away.”

The only men who didn't run away at night, as I had already been told, were Wajid Sahib and his next door neighbor. They were elderly and well educated, a school principal and a headmaster of the women's college, respectively, and it was said that they were typically treated with some amount of dignity, even by the security forces.

### **Bodily knowledge**

The violence that characterized the time of the militancy and the behaviors it necessitated continue to inform the way Kashmiris interact with their environment in the present. This is demonstrated by Rubina's reaction to a search of her home by the army in December of 2011. I was, at the time, alarmed to hear this; I had assumed that the army's forays into private spaces was a thing of the past, limited to the time of the militancy.

"They were looking for militants," she said in a matter-of-fact tone. "The army came while I was out on the veranda with my sons. They asked me who is at home, and I told them, 'There is no one here, there are no men here.' 'Come get down from there,' they said, and so my kids and I went and sat in the park. My brother came over and went with them as they searched the house--they searched upstairs, downstairs, everywhere, and then left. They had heard that a *track* had gathered at a Wajid Sahib's home, so they were searching the house of every man

named Wajid Sahib.” The term *track* in this village refers to a group of young men that cross the LOC together to acquire arms training in Azad Kashmir<sup>3</sup>.

I was struck by how cooperative Rubina had been to the military’s demands, and how she didn’t seem even slightly indignant about the search. In the stories of the insurgencies I had been told, family members told me they had had no choice but to let militants and military alike enter their homes because it was dangerous to refuse a man with a gun. However, the nonchalant tone with which Rubina relayed this story to me suggested that she did not comply with the order to leave her own house because she thought she was in danger, but because it was the natural thing to do. The following two incidents illustrate how her behavior during the search in the past December was shaped by her memories of the conditions of existence during the time of the militancy.

During India’s counter-insurgency efforts, the Indian army regularly entered the houses of Kalanpora, searching for the men—the potential militants. These searches were routine, and the men used to therefore leave the neighborhood after their evening meal and go into hiding. The women remained in the village, telling the military officers that the men were not at home, while their houses were searched for weapons.

“I remember,” said Rubina, “I was taking a bath once—it was about three o’clock and I had just come back from school. I had just stepped into the bathroom,



and my sister was making tea. She said, hurry up and bathe, the army might be here at any moment. The army usually came [searching for her brother, a militant] in the afternoons. I had just started to wash my hair when the army showed up. I came out of the bathroom, just like that, with shampoo all over my face, and I sat down here at this table with a scarf over my head. The army officer said, 'Go get a bucket of water and wash your face. Don't fret, take your time.' Then I got my bucket and washed the shampoo off my face. I couldn't go finish my bath until they had finished their search. There was so much tension.

“The army used to come to my house three or four times a day, for about three years. After I cooked dinner, my sisters and I used to go to my father-in-law's house, where we [she and I] stay now. We stayed there every night and came home in the morning around ten. One time, we came back and saw that our door had been broken down and our animals let out. My sister said, 'Stay here, I'm going to take a look first and make sure the army isn't there.' She climbed to the veranda and looked into the window of that bedroom over there. When she looked, she saw that the soldiers were sleeping on the bed. She came down quietly, slowly and silently, and we ran back to Wajid Sahib's house, saying, 'We can't go back, the army is in our house.' So we stayed at Wajid Sahib's house, had our afternoon tea there, and then went' back in the evening. The windows and doors were all thrown wide open, but the army was no longer there.”

## **Discussion**

As my initial attempts to learn about the local experiences of the conflict revealed, the violence of the conflict did not necessarily play a central role in life histories. When I asked Kalanpura residents like Taleeb about their experiences of the militancy, they recounted a string of dates and years corresponding to political developments and their personal trajectories. These narratives largely bypassed the explicit experience of violence—Taleeb, as an ex-militant eager to be interviewed, did not mention a single event of violence that he either saw or experienced. I might have thought that this was because the villagers were unwilling to disclose their experiences of violence, but Taleeb's omission of direct violence despite eagerness to share his story suggests otherwise. Memories of violence were, however, apparent in anecdotes that Kalanpura residents brought up in conversation. The violence of the conflict served as the setting for the anecdotes, even when the anecdote in question was not explicitly about violence. That Rubina and the other girls used to sleep in Wajid Sahib's house at night, and that Wajid Sahib was the only man who did not go into hiding at night, are not in themselves memories of direct violence. They are past facts that are couched in the memory of widespread violence, and fear of it, which is implicit in the Kalanpura residents' conversations. The fact that Wajid Sahib was not entirely sure if he had ever been beaten by the army shows that, even when an individual incidence of violence may not be remembered, the general conditions of the violence still are.

The role of violence as the setting for these anecdotal memories indicates

that it was considered too commonplace to require an explanation. This point is illustrated by Taleeb's assumption that his reasons for joining the militancy were obvious. Everyone in the village had been through the crackdowns, the beatings, the nightly hiding, so an explanation of this violence was not deemed necessary. The violence of the conflict was therefore remembered collectively, not as a particular event but as an environment. This remembered environment contained memories of discreet events within it; Rubina whom I never asked for an interview, told me stories of her childhood— anecdotes, in exchange for which I told stories of my own childhood—and it was these stories and the conversations in which they were embedded that carried evidence of the violence of the conflict. The conditions of the conflict were remembered as a shared understanding so deeply engrained that memories of them were implicitly shown rather than explicitly told.

Niyaz's memories of his childhood indicate that, despite widespread violence in Kalanpora, some institutional and social structures persisted throughout the pervasive violence of the militancy. Schools were still in session, for the most part, and Aftab joined his classmates in school after he was beaten by the army, while others were still being beaten at his home. The court system was also functioning, and the residents of Kalanpora made use of the legal system and a lawyer's services to force the army to leave their village. Social structures, such as gender roles, remained relatively stable during the time of the militancy and saved many women from the fatal violence that the men feared; women were not typically suspected of being militants, whereas Niyaz and Rubina's memories reveal that the army equated

men with militants. Education and age retained the ability to earn Kashmiri men a certain amount of regard and amnesty throughout the militancy, even from the Indian army.

These institutional and social structures are the same as those that govern the present. Government-owned schools and the legal system are still in place, as are the sweeping powers granted by AFSPA to the Indian forces, which enabled the crackdowns and beatings, as well as the search of Rubina's house as recently as December of 2011. These present structures are then inscribed with the memories of the environment of the violent 1990s. That institutional structures were never destroyed and rebuilt undermines the break between a state of conflict and a state of recovery that Skandan suggested.

Rubina's interactions with the Indian security forces during the time of the militancy left her accustomed to stepping aside when they entered her home. During the militancy, she left her home every night to stay out of their way. When she found them sleeping in her own home, she could not enter. Instead, she had to wait for them to leave. They could come and go as they pleased, but she and her sister had to adjust to their will. Rubina even planned her baths around the army's searches of her home. They could demand that she step out of the shower, but she did not even dare to wash her face without their permission in their presence. The embodied knowledge that the conditions of existence during the time of the militancy created inform Rubina's interactions with her environment

today. When her house was searched in 2011, she did not question the army officers' demands to enter her house. Whereas I was startled to learn that security forces could still enter people's homes at will, for Rubina, it was not a particularly remarkable event.

That the violence of the conflict is remembered as a collectively experienced environment among the residents of Kalanpora, that the structures that shaped that violence continue to shape the present normalcy, and that Kashmiris interact with their current environment with the same embodied knowledge shows that, for them, the present is still a part of the conflict. The frequency of violence may have tapered off, and people like Rubina are now able to sleep in their own homes at night, but the framework of the conflict persists and people interact with it much in the same way they did during the time of the militancy. Therefore, while the decreased frequency of violence triggered external changes that Skandan uses to define the current state of affairs in Kashmir as a period of recovery, for people who live in Kashmir, even the everyday normalcy is inscribed with collective memories of the violence, forming a backdrop of violence (Scheper-Hughes, 1992) that makes individual incidents of violence unremarkable. This backdrop of violence allows for individual incidents of political violence to be absorbed into the everyday normalcy, as they are only to be expected in a state of conflict.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Attachment to the state**

## Introduction

The separatist insurgency began in Kashmir in 1989 and was at its height in 1991, when India liberalized the nation's economy. Kashmir has been in conflict ever since, and as a result, few private companies have invested in the region (Habibullah, 2004). Consequently, while the middle class in many parts of India satisfies most of its needs from the private sector (Fernandes, 2004), Kashmiris as a whole remain largely dependent on the Indian government for both essential services and employment (Habibullah, 2004). In this section, I argue that Kashmiris' dependence on the government creates an attachment—albeit a contested one—to the Indian state, thereby diminishing the possibility of unified action against the state.

In an interview with the Joint Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K. Skandan, in December of 2012, I asked him what his thoughts about the government's role as a major employer in Kashmir were. "Government is by far the largest [employer], in terms of ratio to the population," Skandan responded. "There is a peculiar thing—Kashmir has a small population, but it is big state, in terms of land. Vast areas, you know, from Ladakh to Jammu, although the population is sparse<sup>1</sup>...so you have a lot of places where the government has to be. And so, we're with most people actually. Second thing is, government is the only avenue for employment for the youth."

Secretary Skandan outlines two distinct functions that the government performs as a source of employment in Kashmir. First, by “being with most people”, the government encompasses the territory of Kashmir<sup>2</sup>. Second, as the only (or the major) avenue of employment for Kashmiri youth, it provides economic security to certain individuals. In this chapter, I explore the consequences of these two functions on the anti-India sentiments that are so prevalent in Kashmir<sup>3</sup>. I argue that these two functions of the government as a source of employment work together to disunite Kashmiris’ antagonism towards India, holding them to the Indian state and dividing them from one another. Kashmiris’ extensive interactions with the state, via its offices and projects, create an attachment to the state that becomes visible during “moments of national unity” (Forgacs, 2012) within the Indian state.

This section draws on data from open-ended interviews collected in December 2012, and January 2013. The interviews deliberately did not directly address the topic of the conflict, as that would have likely resulted in polarized responses. Instead, they were focused on Kashmiris’ relationship to the government. Both the central and state governments in Kashmir are recognized as the “Indian government”. Although Kashmiris’ attitudes towards the Indian government were colored by the history of conflict, the government was notably seen as distinct from the “army” (which often encompassed other kinds of Indian security forces, such as the Central Reserve Police Force), which was seen as responsible for most of the atrocities of the conflict. This distinction, and subsequent focus of my interviews on the Indian government rather than the army,



exposed a complicated relationship between Kashmiris and the Indian state that remains obscured in many studies of the violence of the conflict.

The following ethnographic data were collected from the village of Kalanpora, in the border district of Kupwara, where the bulk of my research is based, as well as NGO offices in the district of Gandarbal and in the summer capital of Srinagar. I first present a brief illustration of Kalanpora residents' dependence on the government for social services and employment to demonstrate the emulsifying effect this dependence has on antagonism towards the state. I then describe two incidents that show how Kashmiris' dependency on the government compels them to expend an extensive amount of time and energy communicating with the state. Following that, I give an account of Kashmiris' response towards the highly publicized rape incident in New Dehli to show that their extensive involvement with the Indian state has created a sort of attachment to the state.

### **Dependence on the government**

The state's function of territorially encompassing Kashmir resonated with the prevalence of state services and institutions in the village of Kalanpora. As the second village from the LOC on the Indian side of Kashmir, Kalanpora was one of the most remote villages in the remote, largely rural district of Kupwara. Within the village grounds, there was a health center, an anganwadi center<sup>4</sup>, and four government-owned schools. Some of these institutions were not operational during

the time of my fieldwork<sup>5</sup>, but they nonetheless carried the name of the government, “J & K GOVT”, on their signboards.

Despite their stated dislike for the Indian government, the residents of Kalanpora depended on the services provided by state institutions. Salma, a student at the local girls’ high school, said with regards to the village anganwadi center, “In some respects, India has done so much for us.” In years when the harvest was poor, Salma recounted, mothers relied on the food supplements provided at the anganwadi center to feed their children. “Most people don’t need it now,” she said. “Maybe some people still use it for food, I don’t know—but there was a drought here a few years ago, and many of us would not have gotten through that year without the center.”

In accordance with Secretary Skandan’s statement, these state institutions in Kalanpora were also the main source of employment for the residents of the village. The health center employed a local nurse, and the anganwadi center employed an anganwadi and her assistants. Many more villagers were employed as teachers and administrators in the government schools, which were attended by the vast majority of the village’s children. Those who did not have government jobs were either waiting for the state government to announce new job openings or had given up on the idea of steady employment and worked odd jobs.

The financial situations of Niyaz and his family members, all of whom are residents of Kalanpora, aptly illustrate Kashmiris' dependence on the government for economic security. Niyaz had finished his master's degree in math in 2005 and had since then been hoping to be appointed to a teaching position at a government school. In 2011, Niyaz's name appeared on the list of new appointments that the state publically releases when they fill open positions, indicating that he had been appointed a teaching position. However, the state revoked that list of appointments due to an alleged shortage of funds and announced that new positions would not be available for another two years. Niyaz was waiting for the state to announce new teaching positions while tutoring math to make ends meet in the meantime.

Niyaz's father had been a principal at one of the government schools in the village before his retirement, and Niyaz's sister and sister-in-law were both teachers at government schools. Two of his cousins, however, had not been so fortunate. One of them had a degree in engineering but lost his job when a major telecommunications company discontinued its services in Kashmir. He had since then been driving a taxi. Another cousin, who was also educated as an engineer, had been unable to find work and was dependent on his parents' pensions.

### **Preoccupation with the Indian state**

Kashmiris' dependence on the government and the contingencies that characterize the Indian bureaucracy<sup>6</sup> necessitates substantial interaction with the

state. Personal projects, such as the undertaking of construction work in one's village or repairing malfunctions in state provided services, such as electricity, are two of the many mundane activities that keep Kashmiris constantly engaged with the state, as the events described below demonstrate.

Afsal was the son of the village *sarpanch* (political head) and village headman of Kalanpora. He was working with some other villagers to build a protection wall around a plot of land to prevent erosion. He had received 80,000 rupees from the state to build the wall and pay the villagers who worked on it. In order to receive the money, Afsal needed to have the progress of the protection wall evaluated by the Junior Engineer from the Department of Rural Development. Afsal and I set out from Kalanpora in the morning for the Rural Development office to fetch the Junior Engineer and make sure he came to check the protection wall<sup>7</sup>. The engineer had other errands to attend to in villages that were on the way to Kalanpora, so Afsal drove behind him and waited for him to finish. It was nightfall by the time we reached Kalanpora, where it took the engineer 10 minutes to measure the dimensions of the wall and sign off on a set of papers Afsal had for him. "I know him," Afsal commented after the engineer left, "so he agreed to do this for me. Otherwise, I don't know long I'd have to wait for him to come check [the wall]."

For those Kashmiris who do not personally know the state employees whose services they need, getting the government's attention is even more time consuming. In the district of Gandarbal, there was a block of villages that had not

received power in over a month. A transformer had broken, the villagers said, and they needed someone from Power Development Department to replace it. In order to get the department's attention, the villagers staged a *darna*—a protest—in which they blocked traffic on the main road for a couple hours every morning at 9:30 am. Vehicles came to a standstill for a distance of up to ten kilometers. Everyday for two weeks, the strike continued until the J & K police, armed with their batons, forcibly cleared the villagers from the road.

*Darnas* were very common events in Kashmir<sup>7</sup>. One of the NGO staff members who was stuck in the company's jeep with me during the *darna*, remarked, "It's about time these villagers are doing something about this [power outage]. I've been telling them for weeks that they need to get the government's attention, although I wish they would've waited until after I reached my office." I asked him if *darnas* were the normal thing to do when facilities weren't working. "Oh yes," he said. "My neighborhood was out of power for two weeks one winter and we staged *darna* right in front of the Power Development Department's office."

### **Attachment to the state**

In the weeks following the highly publicized gang rape in New Dehli on December 16, 2012, news of the victim's health and the case against the perpetrators was a topic of fervent discussion in Kashmir. In both Kupwara and Srinagar, the rape case was brought up almost invariably by Kashmiris whom I

interviewed, despite the fact that topic of the interview was Kashmiris' relationship to the Indian government. While a small minority of Kashmiris—mostly men—was disdainful of the attention the rape victim received, the vast majority was sympathetic towards the victim.

“It’s all that’s on the news,” complained Niyaz. Zee News, one of the most popular news broadcasts in India, had indeed been showing the investigation of the case in a series called *Daughter of the Nation*. “No one paid attention when the [Indian] army raped two hundred Kashmiri women in Konanposhpura<sup>8</sup>. Why should we [Kashmiris] care about this one Indian girl?”

“He doesn’t let me watch the news,” Niyaz’s mother interjected. “But I watch it anyway. I watch it and pray for the poor girl everyday.”

Naima, a staff member of a government funded NGO in Kupwara, said, “The conflict has instilled this regionalism in Kashmiris’ heads. Just look at what some people say about this rape case—instead of sympathizing with the girl, they say that we shouldn’t show concern because she’s not Kashmiri! This is not about who is Kashmiri or not, this is about all women in India.” The staff members who were present voiced their agreement.

Shanno, a resident of Srinagar, followed news of the incident every morning on Zee News, repeatedly muttering “Poor girl, poor girl”. She couldn’t read the Hindi

script on the screen, as the Urdu script is much more prevalent in Kashmir, so she asked me to read the headlines to her. Of the accused rapists, whose faces were hidden from the camera, she exclaimed, “Why are they [the media] hiding them? They should be hung in front of everyone.”

Shanno’s son, who watched the news with her every morning, shook his head and said the women’s rights demonstrators in Delhi should be allowed to stone the accused to death<sup>9</sup>. “People want to do something,” he said, referring to the protestors, “but this government won’t let them.”

## **Discussion**

The reach of the Indian state extends to even very remote areas of Kashmir, such as the village of Kalanpora. The state encompassed Kalanpora by permeating it with offices and social welfare projects. Even when offices were not in operation, such as the anganwadi center, they carried the sign of the J & K government, symbolizing the presence of the government in the village. Almost everyone in the village was in some way enmeshed with the government’s social welfare programs, from working adults who were employed by the programs, to young children who attended government schools and retired persons who relied on state funded pensions. The residents of Kalanpora recognized that these social welfare programs were beneficial, as Salma’s appreciation for the anganwadi center demonstrates. As the presence of the state in these fringe areas of Kashmir is felt through such social

welfare programs, the same state whose security forces perpetrate atrocities against Kashmiri civilians is able to portray itself as a benefactor. In addition, by employing Kashmiris within government offices, the state permeated communities with individuals who embodied the state. Unlike the Indian security forces, who, as non-Kashmiris were disconnected from local attitudes and experiences and embodied the state as a foreign entity, the Kashmiris who worked for the state— as teachers, nurses, and others—were themselves part of the local community. They shared the same experiences of torture and loss from the early '90s as the rest of their fellow Kashmiri citizens and resented the Indian state. Yet, as its employees, they furthered its goals and found purpose in its projects. By permeating the village with various offices and employees, the government is with the people in places that seem almost too far to reach, holding them, despite geographical distance, close to the Indian state.

As the state is the primary source of employment available to Kashmiris, the latter become tied to it for individual economic security. Niyaz's family is typical in that, despite their experience of violence at the hands of the Indian state (see chapter 1), they are all either employed or hoping to be employed by the state. Niyaz's two cousins who could not find employment have experiences that are common among the majority of Kashmiris who are not fortunate enough to be employed by the state. Like the engineer-turned-cab driver, many Kashmiris who invest in a college education, whether in Kashmir or elsewhere in India, are left to make ends meet in whatever way they can. The cousin who was without work, as



one of Kashmir's many unemployed adult males, is dependent on his parents' pension for economic security, which, again comes from the state.

This dependence on the state for individual economic security precludes the possibility of any substantial unified action against the Indian state. Although Kashmiris often say that they need to gain independence from India, or that India is the cause of all of Kashmir's suffering, such sentiments remain superficial, as individual security lies in staying with the Indian government (in fact, the demand for more government jobs implies a demand for greater government presence). Parallel to the way in which unemployment "isolates, atomizes, and demobilizes, and strips away solidarity" in a capitalist system (Bourdieu, 1998), while at the same time dispelling discontent by functioning as the source of potential economic security, unemployment and the government's ability to grant employment isolates individuals, fracturing the political solidarity that Kashmiris' collective suffering at the hands of Indian forces could have potentially created.

Due to their dependence on the Indian state, Kashmiris expend an extensive amount of time and energy communicating with the government. Afsal spent an entire day's worth of time in order to get a state employee—a fellow Kashmiri—to do ten minutes worth of work. Surprisingly, he did not complain but instead commented that it was only due to his connections with the government that the Junior Engineer had even agreed to come that day in the first place. I had found Afsal's patience and the effort he put into communicating with the government quite

remarkable. However, the villagers in Gandarbal staging the *darna* put forth an even greater effort to communicate their needs to the government. They determinedly blocked traffic for hours every morning, putting up with possible beatings from the police.

While these time and energy intensive modes of interaction with the government are not unique to Kashmir<sup>10</sup>, I argue that the preoccupation with the state they engender creates a sort of attachment to the state. While such attachment is not necessarily notable on a day-to-day basis, in times of national unity (Forgacs, 2012), like the rape incident, the attachment becomes more visible. It was the Indian national news that Kashmiris followed so closely everyday, sympathizing with the girl nicknamed “Daughter of the nation”—the very nation that they claimed they were not really a part of. Indeed, the sheer amount of interest Kashmiris had in this event in the Indian capital, I believe, demonstrates an amount of attachment to the Indian state. Naima said that Kashmiris should sympathize with the girl, because this rape incident was a matter of concern for all women in India, implying that Kashmiri women are just as much a part of India as the rape victim in New Delhi. Shanno’s son criticized “this government” for holding women’s rights protestors at bay in New Delhi, identifying with the protestors as a subject of the same government. Their sympathy for the victim may have stemmed from gender solidarity, but the way talked of both Kashmiri women and protestors in New Delhi in relation to the Indian state show that they associate themselves with Indian citizens elsewhere.

While sympathy towards the victim or the women's rights protesters was by no means universal among Kashmiris, it is precisely this fragmented nature of attachment that I wish to draw attention to. This fragmented attachment to the state does not make Kashmiris actually support the Indian state; it simply prevents many Kashmiris from thinking of themselves as separate from the state. The fragmented prevalence of this sentiment leaves room for violence to occur, but at the same time it diminishes many Kashmiris' investment in the idea of Kashmiri independence, limiting their enthusiasm for violence against the state. Thus, this fragmented attachment to the state contributes to the persistence of normalcy in everyday life in spite of incidents of political violence.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The conflict as a feature of the state**

## **Introduction**

The conflict in Kashmir has its roots in a separatist struggle, and autonomy and independence from India continue to be the end goal for many politically active Kashmiris. However, in this chapter, I aim to show that the way the grievances of Kashmir's conflict are addressed, both nationally and internationally, have established the conflict as a fixed feature of the Indian state. In other words, instead of separating Kashmiris from the Indian state, the conflict is taken up by the state as a point of reentry into Kashmiris' lives. Similar to the way the aftermath of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl was appropriated by the Ukrainian state in a way that enabled Ukrainians to forge a new kind of citizenship with the state on the basis of their suffering (Petryna, 2001), the responses garnered by the conflict in Kashmir create new kinds of ties between Kashmiris and the Indian state on the basis of certain kinds of victimhood. By tying Kashmiris to the Indian state, the conflict itself contributes to the maintenance of the superficial calm that characterizes Kashmiris' everyday life.

The data I present in this chapter come primarily from my fieldwork at the Hope Disability Center, a local NGO that provides a range of healthcare services for Kashmir's disabled population, free of cost, with the support of predominantly international funding. The organization's headquarters, where I did my fieldwork, is located just outside of the city of Srinagar in the rural district of Gandharbal, where beneficiaries from all districts of Kashmir are housed during their treatment. The

data I use come from interviews with one of Hope Disability's physical therapists, Laila, and her patients. Laila is Kashmiri, but her family had escaped to the neighboring region of Jammu to escape the violence of the '90s. Although she had lived in Kashmir for the last 5 years as a professional, her perspective on events in Kashmir is very much influenced by her time outside Kashmir. The cases of her patients that I present below are represent conditions that commonly affect Kashmiris.

I also present the cases three cases of widows who are or are not eligible for state benefits. The widows' histories come from interviews with the women themselves and with their relatives and neighbors. Their histories are typical and demonstrate the unpredictable relationship between their husbands' political affiliations and their eligibility for state benefits.

### **The conflict as a resource**

"There are three sources of money in Kashmir," said Laila, a physical therapist at the Hope Disability Center. "There's the Indian government, Pakistan, and this conflict."

I asked her what she meant when she said the conflict was a source of money.

“Well, just look at this organization here,” she said, referring to Hope Disability. “European countries support organizations like us because we’re working in a conflict affected area. “There is no doubt that we’re doing good work here, but if you think about it, somehow, the conflict has become a source of money.”

Hope Disability’s primary source of funding was indeed European. Handicap International, which is funded by the European Commission, had partnered with Hope Disability precisely because the local NGO worked in a conflict affected setting<sup>1</sup>. Handicap International provided seventy percent of Hope Disability’s budget, which covered most of the latter’s logistical needs and the salaries of some of its employees. Other international groups funded Hope Disability’s various other operations. A British company provided funding for surgical instruments and operation theatre costs for the NGO’s orthopedic patients, while others provided funding to treat specific conditions.

The conflict was not always an explicitly stated reason for the provision of aid, but very often, it was. While the organization did not collect any official data that differentiated conflict victims from the rest of their beneficiaries, they kept a stack of patients’ files that had the words *conflict beneficiary* handwritten on the top left of their front covers. The organization’s receptionist gave me a stack of these files when I asked about beneficiaries of the NGO who were victims of the conflict during my summer and winter visits. On both occasions, the stack of files was given contained almost exactly the same set of cases.

One woman whose file was labeled *conflict beneficiary* was 27-year-old Amina. In 1995, Amina had been sitting on her front porch with her parents and three siblings when crossfire erupted in close proximity. Her five family members were killed in the crossfire, while she survived with a seriously wounded right leg, for which she was now receiving therapy.

I asked Laila why files like Amina's contained the label *conflict beneficiary* if the organization didn't actually differentiate between conflict victims and other beneficiaries in its work.

"Donors often come in and specifically ask about what we've done for mine victims, or grenade or gunshot victims," Laila responded. "We get students and researchers too, like you, asking about conflict victims, so we have these files set aside."

I mentioned that I remembered most of these cases from my visit in the summer and asked if they were part of a standard set of cases given to people interested in the conflict.

"No, not really," she responded, and then offered to have some more files brought over if I had already seen all of those.



## **The value of victimhood**

In the aftermath of the more violent years of the conflict, the government of Jammu and Kashmir set up a pension scheme called the Rehabilitation of Victims of Militancy (RVM) scheme. Kashmiris who are eligible for this scheme receive 750 rupees a month if they are disabled due to a conflict related incident. In contrast, disabled Kashmiris who cannot relate their disability to the violence of the conflict are eligible for a maximum of 400 rupees per month under the [], depending on the severity of their disability.

“What we do here,” Laila said, referring to the Hope Disability Center, “we help them get benefits. It’s not much [money], but at least it’s something. The kid who was here [a conflict victim], we’ve already talked to the CMO about his case, we’ve written a letter, so he won’t be asked too many questions about who he is and why he should get the pension. The woman whose family was killed in crossfire [Amina] hadn’t received her disability pension for several months. We wrote a letter for her, and she was immediately given her money. The local officers all know us.”

I asked Laila if it was harder for someone without a letter from Hope Disability to get a pension from the RVM program.

“Well, how it works is that the patient’s case is first assessed by the chief medical officer (CMO) who then decides whether or not recommend the patient to the social welfare officer. The social welfare officer is the one who provides the patient with a disability certificate or affidavit. We can’t work around that system, but if we write to the CMO about a particular patient, he or she is given a kind of preference. And you know, around here, it’s not possible to get anything done with the government unless you have some kind of special preference.

Although Laila was invested in helping her patients get access to state benefits in whatever way she could, she was critical of the fact that the government provided benefits for only certain kinds of victims. “There are victims like this one,” she said, referring to a teenaged boy, Hakim, with cerebral palsy who had been in her office all morning. The boy’s father was learning how to care for his son under Laila’s supervision. “His disease isn’t caused by the conflict, but he couldn’t get treatment on time because of the conflict. If he had had access to surgery a few years ago, his condition would be more normal today.

“There are so many cases like this one [Hakim]. People used to be afraid to go to seek treatment. Patients used to be dragged out of ambulances and killed.. There was a break in his treatment because of that. In 1998, their [Hakim’s family’s] medical papers were lost during a crackdown<sup>2</sup>--you know the army doesn’t look at what they destroy during a search. So when they tried to restart his treatment, doctors didn’t know what his [medical] history was, and it created discontinuity.”

“We also lost money, because of the house,” interjected Hakim’s father, who was listening.

“Yes, they suffered financial setbacks, because their house was damaged in the search,” Laila elaborated. “That also contributed to the interruption in his treatment.”

“They don’t get compensation for the house?” I asked.

“No, there’s no compensation for that.”

Hakim’s file did not have the words *conflict beneficiary* written on it. I asked Laila if Hakim was eligible for the 750 rupee pension under the RVM program.

“No, because his disease isn’t caused by the conflict, is it? He gets 400 rupees a month under the regular disability. It’s probably not even a fraction of the cost of caring for him.”

“It takes more than 700 rupees just to cover the cost of gas from Sopur to Srinagar,” interjected Hakim’s father. Srinagar was the only town in all of Kashmir that had a hospital equipped to perform any kind of surgical procedure<sup>3</sup>.

“Hakim can’t travel on public buses [which would reduce the cost of transport to about 20 rupees] because of his disability,” Laila pointed out, “so they have to hire a taxi. So if 700 rupees is the cost of gas, then the cost of renting a taxi is even more.”

The cost of Hakim’s surgery would have been 250,000 rupees, if Hope Disability had not been able to give him access to fully funded surgery. One of the NGO’s outreach workers had found Hakim and recommended him to the center only recently. Prior to that, Hakim’s father said he had tentatively scheduled a surgery for a year from now, as he would need at least that much time to figure out how to pay for the procedure.

“But isn’t that because of the conflict, too?” Laila pointed out. “People can’t afford treatment because they are poor, there’s poverty in Kashmir. There is poverty in Kashmir because of the conflict.”

### **The unpredictability of entitlement**

Widows who lost their husbands at the hands of militants are also eligible for a monthly 750 rupees under the RVM scheme. All other widows receive only 400 rupees a month under the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension program. Widows whose husbands were killed by militants are also entitled to a one time amount of

10,000 rupees under the Marriage Assistance scheme, which, despite its name, is not necessarily used for remarriage<sup>4</sup>.

The RVM pension scheme is applicable only to widows whose husbands were killed specifically by militants. It does not apply to widows whose husbands were militants and were killed by Indian forces. Although the distinction between these two groups seems simple enough, it does not correspond to the realities of Kashmiris' lives, as the cases of the following three widows demonstrates.

Noor is a rural resident of Kupwara who lost her husband in the mid-90s. Noor's husband had been a state police officer who was appalled by violence the Indian army inflicted on Kashmiri civilians. Incensed, he had crossed the LOC and received arms training in Azad Kashmir to fight for Kashmir's independence. He was part of a militant organization for some time, but he became disenchanted by the militancy when he saw that militants, too, perpetrated violence against civilians. He consequently turned in some of the militants he knew to the Indian forces and was killed by a militant who saw him as a traitor. Noor received 10,000 rupees from the Marriage Assistance scheme and currently receives 750 rupees a month under the RVM scheme.

Shogufta, also a rural resident of Kupwara, lost her husband in the early 1990s. He had never gone to Azad Kashmir for arms training and therefore was not technically a militant. He was, however, a local ringleader of militants. He was often

in the company of militants and helped orchestrate their local activities. The Indian army in the area knew about his involvement with militants and regularly searched his home, hoping to capture either him or his weapons. His wife says that he never had any weapons, since he had never gone for arms training. Before the Indian army was able to capture him, he was killed in infighting among militants. Since her husband was killed by a militant, Shogufta received 10,000 rupees after his death and continues to receive 750 rupees a month under the RVM program.

Seerat lives just outside the city of Srinagar. She lost her husband in 2006. Her husband had been an auto-rickshaw driver who had never crossed the LOC for arms training or kept the company of militants. He was killed by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), in what is called a “fake encounter”, in which the Indian forces declare a Kashmiri civilian a militant after causing his death<sup>5</sup>. Seerat is not eligible for the RVM pension or the Marriage Assistance scheme because her husband was not killed by a militant. She had applied for the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension scheme three times since 2007 but never received any sort of response from the social welfare department. She thinks this might be because her husband was declared a militant after his death.

## **Discussion**

The conflict attracts funding from foreign donors and organizations often enough that Hope Disability found it convenient to mark and set aside a set of

patients' files that they labeled *conflict beneficiaries* just for visitors, since they don't need to differentiate conflict beneficiaries from other beneficiaries for their own work. The funds that the conflict attracts are what enable the NGO to function and create jobs for people like Laila who might be hoping for but do not yet have jobs in the public sector. In a setting where there are few avenues for employment other than the public sector, NGOs that receive outside funding create much needed employment opportunities<sup>6</sup>. As Laila recognized, the conflict therefore becomes a valuable resource in Kashmir.

However, the way in which foreign funding is put into effect reinforces the framework of the Indian state in Kashmir, making the conflict a resource within the framework of the Indian state. Feldman and Ticktin (2011) point out that, while NGOs, as practitioners of humanitarianism, claim to function as outside actors to protect humanity from the absence of proper governance, they are dependent on broader forms governing structures to do their work. Handicap International and the European Commission, among others, are outside actors that are interested in Kashmir because the region has suffered from the absence of proper government for the past two conflict-ridden decades. Yet the broader governing structures on which they depend to do their work are the structures of the Indian state. As an international organization, Handicap International first needs permission from the central government of India before it can do any work in Kashmir. The organization's primary function is then to provide support to Hope Disability. Hope Disability's work is very tied to state provided services. The local NGO uses its

connections to facilitate the flow of state benefits to its eligible beneficiaries, which might otherwise not reach the entitled recipient due to the inefficiencies of the Indian bureaucracy<sup>7</sup>. It also relies on government hospitals, which do not charge for the actual surgical procedure, in order to provide its beneficiaries with access to surgeries free of cost using the foreign funding they receive. As such, the organization works with the structures of the Indian state in order to provide its beneficiaries with as much assistance as possible. Therefore, while Handicap International claims to function as an outside actor to provide services for disabled Kashmiris, by funding the work of Hope Disability, the international organization indirectly strengthens and to some degree legitimizes the framework of the Indian state in Kashmir.

The government also entitles Kashmiris who can claim to be victims of the militancy to greater benefits than others under programs such as the RVM and the Marriage Assistance Scheme. While an ordinary disabled person in Kashmir must be diagnosed with 100% disability to even be entitled to 400 rupees a month, a person who can relate his or her disability to the violence of the militancy is entitled to 750 rupees even if they are only marginally disabled. Amina, whose family was killed in crossfire, suffered a financial loss in addition to her emotional loss after the death of her family, as she no longer had her father for economic security. Her disability also limited her ability to work to support herself. While she had a reason to be aggrieved with the state (her file did not specify who fired at her family, but such incidents almost always involve Indian security forces), her current situation



made her reliant on the state for the little economic security that 750 rupees could offer. The conflict therefore becomes a point of entry for the government into victims' lives, so that the loss they suffered ties them to the Indian state rather than pit them against the state. This RVM program, then, makes a claim to victimhood valuable within the structures of the Indian state.

The kind of victimhood the state gives value to is that of an idealized, nonviolent victim of violence. Laila makes use of a much broader category of victims that encompasses Kashmiris who have not been direct victims of violence but are, nonetheless, victims of conflict. She frames the condition of her cerebral palsy patient, Hakim—whose disease is a result of natural causes—as unnatural and unnecessarily exacerbated by the conflict. She cites the property damage and financial losses his family suffered to further frame him as a victim of the conflict and then relates the problem of poverty in Kashmir to the conflict, expanding the category of conflict victims to potentially include any Kashmiri whose suffering is caused by poverty<sup>8</sup>. Neither the government nor Hope Disability's donors recognize this expanded category of conflict victims. Hakim's file was not labeled *conflict beneficiary* for donors to see, and his disability, while exacerbated by the conditions of conflict, did not entitle him to the larger pension offered to conflict victims under the RVM program. The property damage inflicted by Indian soldiers on his home did not warrant any kind of legal compensation, and social welfare and rural development programs treat poverty in Kashmir no differently from poverty elsewhere in India, as if it were not at all, as Laila put it, an effect of the conflict. The

juxtaposition of the narrow category of conflict victims whose grievances are recognized by both the state and the much broader category that Laila identifies makes apparent that the vast majority of grievances caused by the conflict are not made valuable by the state.

The criteria that the state uses to define which kinds of victims are entitled to state benefits does not map onto lived realities in any coherent way. The RVM pension and Marriage Assistance scheme entitle only those widows whose husbands were killed by militants. The logic behind this criterion appears to be that husbands who were killed by militants were civilians, non-violent victims of violence who died at the hands of the enemy of the state. Husbands who were killed by Indian forces, on the other hand, are assumed to have been militants, and their deaths are not allowed to be made monetarily valuable for their widows<sup>9</sup>. However, as the cases of the three widows demonstrates, the theoretical divide between militants and nonviolent civilians that underlies the RVM and Marriage Assistance schemes does not correspond to the complicated relationships people had with the militancy. Noor's husband, for example, was a militant who later turned in other militants to Indian forces. He was killed by another militant, so Noor received the Marriage Assistance money and RVM pensions. Shogufta's husband had not technically been a militant at all, but he had been very involved in assisting militants in his village. The army had been searching for him, and it was only a matter of chance that he was killed by another militant, making Shogufta eligible for state benefits. Seerat's husband, on the other hand, had not been involved in the

militancy at all, but had been killed in a fake encounter, leaving her ineligible for the RVM and Marriage Assistance schemes, and possibly even the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension program. These women's eligibility for the state benefits or lack thereof did not follow the logic by which the government granted victimhood value, as it had very little to do with the actions or political affiliations of their husbands and more with the unpredictable circumstances of the men's untimely deaths.

Taken together, the state's recognition of only a very narrow category of conflict victims, and the dissonance between the logic of the RVM and Marriage Assistance schemes and the realities of Kashmiris' lives, shows that the state's response to conflict related grievances does not, in any way, aim to make reparations to victims. Rather, it merely opens up the possibility for certain Kashmiris to make their ties to the conflict monetarily valuable through the state's benefit scheme. The dissonance between the theory behind benefits for victims and Kashmiris' lived realities gives the state enough space to back away from guaranteeing compensation to any individual victim, while extending benefits to most of the most visible victims so that their ties to the conflict tie them to the state.

Instead of functioning as a point of separation between Kashmiris and the Indian state, the conflict is reified as a feature of the Indian state. Both the funding it attracts from international organizations and the benefits it provides to certain victims of violence inadvertently give it value within the framework of the Indian

state. Though separatism and independence color many Kashmiris' attitudes towards the Indian state, underneath those attitudes, the conflict keeps them tied to the state, decreasing the volatility between Kashmiris and that state and contributing to the superficial calm that characterizes their everyday life.

## **Conclusion**

Everyday normalcy is maintained in Kashmir today by Kashmiris' cooperation with the Indian government. Despite the fact that Kashmiris view India as an oppressor, and that the Indian security forces continue to perpetrate violence against civilians, the majority of Kashmiris are structurally prevented, or at least discouraged, from actively defying the Indian state. The conflict in Kashmir has its roots in a struggle for independence from the Indian state, but interestingly, the effects of that very conflict are what make it difficult for Kashmiris to take a stand against the state. Memories of the violence of the militancy are inscribed into even the normalcy of everyday life, so that current atrocities are understood as part of an ongoing conflict. Consequently, they do not appear to be disruptions in the ordinary state of affairs and do not necessarily spark outrage against the state. The insecurity created by the violence of the conflict prevented the development of a strong private sector, leaving Kashmiris reliant on the government for the sake of their economic security. Their reliance on the government—the government that they wish to be rid of—for their individual security impedes the possibility of their uniting to break away from the state that the government belongs to. The suffering caused by the conflict becomes a point of intervention for Kashmiris, the Indian state, and humanitarian organizations that wish to alleviate it. However, efforts to aid the victims of the conflict are embedded in the framework of the Indian state, thereby reining the conflict itself into the framework of the state and hampering the possibility of Kashmir's separation from the state.

Kashmir is not unique in the fact that it allows for the existence of everyday normalcy despite continuing political conflict. Some degree of everyday normalcy is, logically speaking, a prerequisite to prolonged conflict, interspersed with violence in order to prevent the one or both parties from annihilation. Writing of the wars in Guinea Bissau, Henrik Vigh (2007) shows that conflict can form an everyday environment that is negotiated to maximize one's life chances. Veena Das (2007) shows that the potentiality for violence exists even in ordinary everyday life, in the context of newly independent India, and periodically erupts in the form of communal violence. Both of these studies highlight the interspersion of violence and normalcy, showing how accumulated memories of violence or the conditions of conflict connect violence to the ordinary.

Unlike the studies mentioned above, the situation in Kashmir demonstrates the normalcy is structurally imposed. Just as structural violence constrains individuals into conditions of poverty (Farmer, 1999; Gupta, 2012), the structured normalcy in Kashmir constrains individuals' into compliance with Indian state. The international response to the conflict in Kashmir suggests that this structured normalcy is internationally imposed. The UN's recommendations for the conflict in Kashmir come through the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan, which frames the matter as one between nation-states rather than between Kashmiris and the state that governs them. The legitimacy implicitly granted to the rule of the states by this commission leaves India to govern Kashmiris as it sees fit, allowing it to become the their primary source of economic stability as well as the source of

political insecurity. Any international aid that comes to Kashmir must be in accordance with the government of India and cannot bypass the state to reach Kashmiris. Pogge (2000) says that we now live in a “global institutional order” that involves dividing up the land of our planet into “clearly demarcated national territories and matching up human beings to these territories, so that each person can belong to only one territory”. In other words, we live in an international community of nation-states, in which the nation-state is taken to be the basic unit of government. The framework of this international order impedes Kashmiris’ ability to successfully gain independence from the Indian state through an armed struggle by facilitating an everyday normalcy at the structural level.

The idea of a structurally induced normalcy may be useful in understanding other prolonged conflicts related to separatist movements today. In the late colonial and early post-colonial periods, independence struggles successfully led to the creation of a number of new nations. In South Asia alone, the modern states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh were products of armed struggles for independence. However, many separatist struggles today become long-standing conflicts, and their success in creating a new nation seems unlikely. Separatist conflicts in the northeast of India, in Nagaland and Assam, have been active since 1979 (Prabhakara, 2007); in Balochistan, Pakistan, since 1948 (Ali, 2005); in Indonesia, since 1976 (Aspinall, 2007). The structure of the global institutional order of nations-states, which, while deeply entrenched today was not in place during the



late colonial and early post-colonial periods, and may be contributing to these separatist movements' lack of success, as it did in Kashmir.

In this light, the international community of nation-states can be said to have a much higher tolerance for permanent states of exception within nation-states than for the fracturing of a nation. Agamben (2005) defines a state of exception as a situation in which the law suspends juridical order in order to encompass what would otherwise be outside of it. The suspension of protections afforded to citizens, for example, creates “a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination...of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system. Duschinski (2010) aptly terms the conditions of conflict in Kashmir a state of exception, pointing out that provisions like AFSPA permit Kashmiris to be violated and killed—acts that would ordinarily be illegal—with impunity. Kashmir has been in a state of exception for at least the past twenty-four years, since the separatist insurgency in 1989, but the rule of the Indian nation has not budged, and an everyday normalcy has developed within the conditions of conflict. However, the existence of this very normalcy, as Agamben (2012) says, may very well be considered the true horror of the state of exception.

## Endnotes

### Introduction

1. See Duschinski (2010), Peer (2010) for discussion on Kashmiris' sentiments towards the Indian state.
2. When I use the term Indian government, I am referring both to the Central Government of India and the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir, as the latter, too, is an arm of the Indian state in Kashmir.
3. A social worker in Sopur told me that there were six votes cast in the last election in the entire town.
4. Princely states were independent regional kingdoms in colonial South Asia that were diplomatically influenced but not directly governed by the colonial government.
5. 700 is the number rumored in Kashmir, 200 is what the secretary of border administration from the Department of Home Affairs said over dinner.
6. Organization for the Protection of Democratic Rights (2003), Greater Kashmir (Dec 29, 2012), and Amnesty International (2011) all recount the Indian forces' violations of Kashmiri civilians' rights.
7. This event was recounted to me by families from that neighborhood.
8. This occurred in the town where I was staying while conducting my research, where the locals complained that the shooting wasn't covered by the regional newspaper.
9. It is common knowledge where I worked that relatives and neighbors went to Azad Kashmir for arms training, although this fact is not officially acknowledged by India for political reasons.
10. Secretary Skandan informed me that Kashmir was in a "period of recovery" prior to the beginning of my fieldwork in Kashmir.

### Chapter 1

1. The 1987 legislative assembly elections are considered to be fraudulent and are said to be the event that sparked the insurgency. See Institute of Kashmir Studies. (1994).

2. The word for beatings in Urdu--*pitayi*--is typically used to refer to parents disciplining their children and usually has benign connotations. In Kashmir, however, *pitayi* refers to torture perpetrated by the Indian security forces, encompassing everything from physical beatings to electrocution.
3. Due to its proximity to the LOC, Wajid Sahib said that Kalanpora had hosted tracks of over a hundred men in the early days of the militancy.

## Chapter 2

1. Skandan's response pertained to the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a whole, as Ladakh and Jammu are both outside the Kashmir region that I am concerned with.
2. The state operates with an image of what Ferguson and Gupta (2002) call vertical encompassment; the state encompasses people and communities territorially, while seeming to operate for the betterment of society from a position "'up there' somewhere".
3. Duschinski and Hoffman (2011) discuss Kashmiris' antagonistic sentiments towards the Indian state. This point is also illustrated by Peer (2010).
4. Anganwadi centers provide basic educational and nutritional care for children. See Gupta, (2012), for details.
5. The anganwadi center was had been closed for months when I visited in the winter of 2012, and all of the schools were out of session.
6. Akhil Gupta (2012) discusses the contingencies that characterize the Indian bureaucracy at length.
7. The physical therapist at Hope Disability Center complained that many Kashmiris didn't even bother going to the hospital because it was so common for sick patients to be trapped in a *darna*. Many women ended up giving birth in a their vehicles because they were stuck in a *darna*. In Kalanpora, I missed three interviews because my car was trapped in a *darna*.
8. Konanposhpura is a neighboring village in Kupwara that was the site of an infamous mass rape in 1992, during a crackdown. The number of women raped is sometimes claimed to be 50, sometimes 200, depending on whom you ask.
9. The news coverage showed women's rights demonstrators who were gathered in New Delhi and publically participating in a hunger strike.
10. Gupta (2012) cite similar time and energy expensive methods of communicating with the government.

### Chapter 3

1. Handicap International's homepage says that the organization works in areas of "poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster."
2. Crackdowns are described in chapter 1.
3. While every village had a medical center, many of these were not even staffed with doctors, according to Laila.
4. Where the 10,000 rupees were spent was not usually monitored, and there was at least one woman I interviewed who had put some of that money towards a television set.
5. "Fake encounters" in Kashmir are not an uncommon phenomenon and are discussed in more detail by Duschinski (2010).
6. Joint Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir K. Skandan equated the private sector in Kashmir to NGOs in an interview.
7. Akhil Gupta's *Red Tape* (2011) discusses the contingencies that make up the inefficiencies of local government offices in India.
8. Farmer (1999) and Gupta (2011), use the concept of structural violence to explain how poverty is a source of suffering.
9. Wives of militants who were widowed after 2011 are eligible for RVM benefits, but has little societal effect because there are no longer very many cases for this program to be applied to, since militant activity has dwindled and most militants are said to be foreign. The social welfare officer in Kupwara said that he hasn't seen any cases that could benefit from RVM's new entitlement criteria.

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