The Language of Contention: The Case of the Post-2008 Kashmiri Youth Narratives

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The Language of Contention: The Case of the Post-2008 Kashmiri Youth Narratives

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

AFSPA: Armed Forces Special Powers Act

AMU: Aligarh Muslim University

APHC: All Parties Hurriyat Conference

BJP: Bhartiya Janata Party

CRPF: Central Reserve Police Force

IAS: Indian Administrative Service

IJK: Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir

INC: Indian National Congress

IPTK: International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-administered Kashmir

JKCCS: Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society

JKLF: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front

JKP: Jammu and Kashmir Police

JKYL: Jammu and Kashmir Youth League

JNU: Jawaharlal Nehru University

KUSU: Kashmir University Students Union

MUF: Muslim United Front

NC: National Conference

NHPC: National Hydro Power Corporation

PDP: Peoples Democratic Party

PF: Plebiscite Front

PUCL: People's Union for Civil Liberties

RSS: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

SASB: Shri Amarnath Shrine Board

SOG: Special Operations Group

UPA: United Progressive Alliance

Abstract

Mohd Tahir Ganie

The Language of Contention: The Case of the Post-2008 Kashmiri Youth Narratives

This thesis investigates the political narratives of Kashmiri youth, offering a sustained exploration of the discursive strategies through which the youth narrators concretise and exemplify the collective action frames of the Kashmiri self-determination movement or Tehreek. Particularly focusing on the samples from 2010 and 2016, this thesis argues that the dominant frames in the Kashmiri youth narratives point to a discursive pattern, which reflects the political culture of contemporary Kashmir, where youth are at the forefront of the resistance movement, and this political culture determines which frames will resonate and be considered legitimate. Thus, analysis of the political discourses of Kashmiri youth can shed light on the political and ideological thought-currents underpinning the recent political mobilisations in Kashmir. The thesis illustrates the varied ways by which the Kashmiri youth narrators communicate their collective political grievances, counter statist narratives, and affirm a sense of separate political community. So, in their particularised framings of significant political events, they express their political subjectivity. As concrete, albeit an unorganised, group of intellectual functionaries within a generation, they reconstruct the language of contention and reproduce the political culture of Tehreek as well as generate new modes of thinking about Kashmiri resistance movement. By inscribing upon the political narratives their unique experiences and memories of the conflict, a generational consciousness informs their writings on Kashmir, endowing their language of contention with a distinct generational and moral force. Their narratives play a vital role in not only foregrounding the indigenous experiences of the conflict but by subverting the assimilationist project of the state they also nurture a culture of resistance and political dissent. In the post-2008 Kashmir, their intervention at the discursive level interacts with the street protests of other youths, and combinedly these two realms of political activism make the youth generation an independent and decisive political force in the Kashmir conflict. Ultimately, a political project reproduces itself when a critical mass of new generation embodies it because it is not only an abstract principle or worldview but also a consistent and relatively coherent social practice which gives political ideas their objective existence. In Kashmiri youth narratives, we can see a unity of purpose and discern their relative cohesiveness, and manifestation of shared political subjectivity in how they reconstruct and reiterate the political ideas of Tehreek.

Introduction

'Revolutions are not only critical political junctures…they are also critical *linguistic* junctures'

Sidney Tarrow, *Language of Contention*, 2013

On 19 April 2009, a gathering of civil society members met at a book release function in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (IJK). "Our youth", said Zaffar Shah, a senior advocate, "should come forward and plead their case themselves in a right perspective rather than being pleaded by a non-local". From journalists to lawyers to academics, all emphasised the same point: that the Kashmiri youth must document the Kashmiri political situation and write about it from a local perspective (Bhat, 20 April 2009). A year later, when 33-year-old Kashmiri journalist Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night* appeared in the US, *The New York Times* described it as "an instructive primer on the conflict mixed with literary reportage on its human toll, written in English by a native Kashmiri" (Najar, 2010). For journalist Ahmed Rashid, "The story of Kashmir [had] never been told before so evocatively and profoundly". The Kashmiri youth had finally arrived on the narrative scene, so to speak. Writing intimate accounts of their experiences of the political situation and expressing their political agency, the Kashmiri youth narrators helped in foregrounding a local perspective on the Kashmir conflict. And, as Kashmir witnessed renewed anti-India protests in the late 2000s, coinciding with the social media boom, a plethora of articles, stories, poems, and essays began to appear which would lead to a sort of narrative revolution in Kashmir. Like the post-2008 civilian uprisings, this discursive revolution, to a large extent, was also a youth-led phenomenon.

Considering the vast importance of narratives in shaping identities and social movements, this thesis examines the published essays, articles and other forms of writings of Kashmiri youth that were written after 2008, a period of great political significance in which three major anti-India civilian uprisings occurred within a span of eight years: 2008, 2010 and 2016. In the post-2008 period, the Kashmiri youth, who comprise over 30% of the population of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (IJK), emerged as a significant political actor in the contemporary phase of the Kashmiri self-determination movement, which is known locally as Tehreek (an Urdu and Kashmiri word for 'Movement'). More generally, Tehreek is understood as the post-1989 period, when the popular armed uprising against Indian rule broke out in the late 1980s, though some people extended the historical trajecto ry of Tehreek to the mid-1950s when the Plebiscite Front movement emerged after the Nehru administration dislodged the Prime Minister of IJK, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Nevertheless, in the contemporary Kashmiri political discourses, Tehreek encapsulates both peaceful contention and armed rebellion against Indian rule. Therefore, Tehreek

is a broad-based social movement in IJK which contests the accession of the region with the Indian union and demands that its people must decide their political status through a referendum.

Frequent references to the Kashmiri youth in policy documents and political discussions, coupled with the number of youth arrested, injured and killed in the last decade, testifies to the claim that this demographic is key actor in Tehreek. In fact, in recent times, Indian state's containment policy in Kashmir is oriented more towards the Kashmiri youth than the established political formations like Hurriyat, because the current youth generation in IJK is a driving force of the resurgent Tehreek. The shift in focus of the state policy reflects in state narratives like 'engagement', which mostly entails an array of policy measures through which to wean away the youth from pro-Tehreek political activism.

Therefore, acknowledging the centrality of the Kashmiri youth in the contemporary phase of Tehreek, this thesis attempts to investigate the youth phenomenon in the context of the Kashmir conflict. Although essential aspects of the question must be explored, not all features can be examined within a single study. For example, the youth phenomenon can be analysed under a theoretical framework which postulates that historically there is a correlation between the existence of a 'youth bulge' and political crisis (Urdal 2012). However, the limitations of this argument are that it relies too much on economic factors (unemployment, poor economy etc.) and does not adequately deal with historical and politico-sociological aspects—though some scholars have tried to address the theoretical lacunae. Another approach could be to explore political narratives by examining how the youth talk and write about political situations or conflicts in which they are embedded. Adopting this latter approach can provide insights about the extent to which the Kashmiri youth generation has internalised politics of Tehreek. By examining the dominant frames in the Kashmiri youth narratives, we can see if the collective action frames of Tehreek have trickled into the political discourses of the contemporary youth generation. Moreover, analysing the transmission of historically-generated collective action frames from a generational perspective are important for understanding the trajectory of Tehreek and its discursive reproduction. Drawing on Karl Mannheim's (1924) ideas of generational consciousness, the political narratives of the Kashmiri youth can be examined in their specific socio-historical context to unravel the relationship between the generational milieu of symbolic production and the Kashmiri self-determination movement (Tehreek).

Specifically, this thesis attempts to address the following questions: how is the political situation of IJK represented in the narratives of the Kashmiri youth. In what ways do these narratives align with the collective action frames of Tehreek or vary from them. What are the different discursive strategies employed by the Kashmiri youth narrators to build their frame of references? Which particular motifs and frames dominate in the narratives. Which political identity is emphasised and

reaffirmed. What aspects of Tehreek discourses are highlighted and which ones are silenced. And, finally, what do these narratives tell us about the recent political mobilisations in IJK or what are the implications of these results for our understanding of the dynamics of youth mobilisation?

Focusing on Kashmiri political narratives, this thesis aims to keep a critical distance from the two dominant perspectives of the Kashmir conflict. The inter-state approach (e.g., Wirsing, 2004; Swami, 2007) tends to marginalise Kashmiri voices and experiences by privileging the nation-state. It mostly delves into historical, geopolitical, and legal complexities of the inter-state (India-Pakistan) contestation over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, while examining the internal dynamics of the conflict in terms of the centre-state relationship and the post-colonial institutional building processes, the institutional perspective tends to fall back on what John Cockell (2000) calls "the precast statist parameters of enquiry", whereby extra-systemic political institutions and processes are not deemed legitimate in their own right—because they do not engage with the state—and articulation of pro-Tehreek position is regarded as a reaction to the closure of institutional avenues by the state and not an expression of an autonomous political agency. Moreover, even though the institutionalist perspective provides a plausible explanation for the eruption of the armed uprising in the late 1980s, it is inadequate in explaining the resurgence of strong pro-Tehreek mobilisations in the post-2008 period. For example, it does not address the question: why despite restoration of electoral politics after 1996 has the anti-India attitude not withered away in IJK, how and why Tehreek continues to hold sway among broader sections of the population in IJK, especially the youth; and, importantly, what explains the outbreak of back-to-back anti-India uprisings since 2008. Problematizing the hegemonic perspectives mentioned above, a critical scholarship on Kashmir has emerged in the past decade that seeks to foreground the indigenous peoples' experiences of the Kashmir conflict and their political subjectivities. It challenges the entrenched epistemologies of Kashmir in terms of reconsidering the categories of 'territory', 'identity', and 'resistance' as a consequence of power differentials structured by governmentality, occupation, and institutionalized denial of justice (e.g., Duschinski 2009, Varma & Anjum 2010, Kak 2011, Chatterji 2012, Mathur 2016, Osuri 2017, and Duschinski et al. 2018). By foregrounding the narratives of Kashmiri youth and illustrating their role in reiterating the language of contention (Tarrow 2013), this thesis seeks to contribute to this new critical scholarship on Kashmir. The new political generation in Kashmir has not only inherited but also modified, consolidated and diffused the language of contention by inscribing upon it their distinct memories and experiences of the Kashmir conflict.

Background of the Study

In the last decade, youth-lead street protests have ushered in a new phase of anti-India political resistance in IJK that some commentators also characterise as the 'second revolution' (Varma and

Anjum, 2010) or *Intifada*.[1] Since 2008, three episodes of *Intifada*-style street uprisings (2008, 2010, and 2016) have effectively marked a shift from three-decade long guerrilla insurgency to a largely peaceful resistance movement or "unarmed insurrection" (Schock, 2005), encompassing different modes of protests and dissent, like stone-throwing, cyber activism, resistance art and narratives.[2] However, despite the important transition from the armed insurgency to a mostly unarmed insurrection, much media and policy focus remains confined to protest events, like stone-throwing, and armed skirmishes. Very little academic research has attempted to investigate how the new generation of Kashmiris frame the Kashmir conflict and related political events, as a means of exploring new modes of thinking and writing on and from the Kashmiri resistance movement. In other words, analyses on armed insurgency and political protests dominate to the neglect of narratives, which play a considerable role in any conflict in terms of preserving resistance cultures and mobilising public opinions, as well as allowing us to understand the thought processes which underlie political mobilisations. This thesis, therefore, attempts to address this lacunae in the Kashmir studies, by, following generational framework and drawing on frame analytical perspective, unravelling different ways and methods through which the new political generation in Kashmir is aligning their narratives with the collective action frames of Tehreek and reconstructing and reinforcing the language of contention against the status quo.

Why the Post-2008 period?

From the perspective of the Indian state, the post-2003 period, which saw a steady decline in insurgency-related incidents, was militarily and politically a favourable environment (*Annual Report 2006*, Ministry of Defence, p. 23). From over 3073 fatalities in 2003, the number of conflict-related casualties had come down to 1964 in 2004 and 1663 in 2005; further declining to 740 in 2007 and staying under 1000 per year since then. By the mid-2000s, the armed insurgency in IJK had largely been suppressed and controlled through armed campaigns (*Annual Report 2008*, Ministry of Defence, p. 4), allowing the state to capitalise on the military gains and work on the non-military aspects of its counter-insurgency operations (Qanungo, 2014). In the 2002 elections, for 87-

[1] For example, journalist Ben Arnoldy (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 July 2010) quotes his interlocutors in India and Kashmir, who employed the term Intifada for 2010 street protests: "Indian analysts are starting to refer to the street violence gripping Kashmir as the "Kashmir intifada," a nod to the earlier uprisings of Palestinian stone-throwing youth against Israeli forces". Emily Wax of Washington Post (July 2010) also mentioned the term in her Kashmir report: "Shah said he admires the Palestinian cause because of its David-vs.-Goliath spirit and thinks of the uprising as a Kashmiri intifada". Also, in his July 2016 *Al Jazeera* article Tom Hussain observes: "…the emergent generation of stone-pelting young Kashmiris identify with their Palestinian counterparts and are calling the new wave of protests an 'Intifada'".

[2] Of course, in the post-2008 period new armed insurgency has gradually evolved, hence complicating the categorization of the period as an unarmed resistance; besides, stone-throwing as part of the popular resistance has also got mixed with the armed militancy since around 2015. Likewise, during the pre-2008 period, peaceful resistance ran parallel to the armed insurgency, though the latter, due to its spectacular characteristics and newsworthiness, attracted more coverage than peaceful protests. Yet, it was on 1 March 1990 that one of the largest peaceful marches was taken out in the Kashmir Valley. Although post-2008 marked a shift to unarmed insurrection, by ending 2010, as per the Government of India annual report (2010-2011, p.6), around 232 armed insurgents, 69 Indian troops and 47 civilians were killed in 488 insurgency related incidents.

member Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, approximately 44 per cent people had voted in IJK (Election Commission of India, 2002, p. 4). Improved voter turn-outs allowed the state to project people's participation in elections as their endorsement of Indian rule over Kashmir (Kak, 2011, p. 39). Many people had also boycotted the polls. For example, in the 2002 elections, the biggest electoral constituency Batamaloo (which has the total strength of 104,213 electors) saw a mere 4% voting (4171 votes). The two largest towns of the Kashmir Valley also boycotted the polls, with Anantnag witnessing only 7% voting, while as Baramulla recording a slightly better 24%. Yet, for the Indian state the modest 32 percent voting outcome in the Kashmir Valley—the epicentre of the political turmoil—was still better than the previous controversial (1996) election, which had remained mired in controversies due to "employment of coercion and malpractices" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 2003, p. 105).

Moreover, initiation of the electoral process allowed the state to deflect criticism against its aggressive military policies in IJK. When the voting percentage increased to over 60 per cent in the 2008 Assembly elections, the outcome was hailed as historic, and the state enthusiastically utilised it for propaganda purposes at international forums. Speaking in Jammu regions R. S Pura, Indian National Congress President, Sonia Gandhi, said, "It was a vote against separatism. I congratulate people of Jammu and Kashmir. Separatists should now respect and bow before the verdict of the people" (*Outlook Magazine*, 21 December 2008). On 29 December 2008, the then Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, hailed the large voter turnout as "a vote for democracy". He went on to say that "[i]t is a vote for national integration" and that 'the people of Jammu and Kashmir have placed their full faith in the democratic system, which is a lesson to be learnt by our neighbour" (Kumar, 29 December 2008). Some commentators believed that the high voting percentage was due to 'non-interference' of the militants, who are supported by Pakistan (Varadarajan 2008). However, according to Sanjay Kak (2011, pp. 39-40), the 2008 elections were micro-managed by the state to engineer a favourable turnout, "to once again demonstrate the validity of Indian democracy in Kashmir". At any rate, the enthusiasm that the 2008 elections had generated was short-lived, as the episodes of mass protests during 2010 (and afterwards) rendered the statist narrative ineffective due to the sheer scale and strength of anti-India demonstrations, which were regularly covered by the international media. Also, news reports, photographs, videos about thousands of Kashmiri young men and women protesting on the streets in IJK and carrying anti-India banners and placards (with words like, 'Go India Go Back' and 'We Want Freedom') began to circulate on popular social media platforms. On 20 July 2010, the largest English daily in the Kashmir, *Greater Kashmir*, published a full-page article entitled "Kashmir Headlines-Far and Wide" summarising global media's coverage of Kashmir. Thus, from the perspective of Tehreek adherents, the mass protests of the post-2008 period was a watershed moment in the contemporary

phase of the Kashmiri self-determination movement. Through these mass protests, Kashmir once again came into global limelight, and large-scale civilian participation in the agitations further undermined India's position on IJK.

The Post-2008 as an 'Event'

The post-2008 uprisings in IJK undermined the hegemonic statist discourses and, cumulatively, these uprisings can be described as an *Event*. The difference between *Event* (with capital E) and event (with a lower-case e) is important in the methodological context. In characterising the post-2008 uprisings as Event, French Philosopher Alain Badiou's concept of *Événement* (Event) is borrowed. An *Event* occurs when an excluded part or invisible entity makes a glaring maximal appearance on the social scene and radically rupture the dominant ideology and appearance of normality which a structure creates. By affecting (and rupturing) the situation, and disturbing the structure or order which is arbitrarily and non-objectively imposed by the state, Event shows reality in its true essence, i.e. the inconsistent multiplicity (Robinson, 2014). Dominant ideology is challenged and exposed to its inherent vulnerabilities and contradictions. However, as Robinson explains, "The destruction of the state of the situation (i.e. the dominant discourse) does not necessarily entail a revolt. It necessarily involves the overcoming of prevalent prejudices and habitual assumptions". Examples of *Events* may include the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the May 1968 student protests, and the Arab Spring. It was in the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, the worker, who was previously minimally visible, appeared as a 'subject' and a political figure (Robinson, 2014).

However, Event is not necessarily political; it can be scientific as well. For Badiou, the naming of zero (by either Aryabhata or Al-Khwarizmi) as a number also count as an Event, because a hitherto unknown or unspoken number makes an appearance and is named; and, in the process, it brings a marked change in the way mathematics is understood or done. Importantly, a Badiouian Event, it must be borne in mind, is an Event by *decision* and *intervention* i.e., taking a 'leap of faith' and aligning with it and intervening discursively by naming it and assigning a name to it which does not deny its 'evental' nature or make it looks like part of the existing situation.

Based on this reading of Event, this thesis argues that the post-2008 uprisings qualify as an Event because these political uprisings not only subverted the dominant ideas about Tehreek but also brought the Kashmir youth on the political scene as an autonomous political category. Instead of looking at Tehreek as a 'separatist' politics limited to (and practised by) few recognisable political actors and political formations (like Hurriyat and JKLF), the post-2008 uprisings highlighted Tehreek as a youth-driven popular movement. Before these uprisings, the hegemonic statist discourses had succeeded in framing Tehreek as a Pakistan-sponsored 'proxy war', and even in the dominant academic discourses, Tehreek's claim was largely interpreted as a response to state's

improper or faulty post-colonial state-building measures in Kashmir. However, the post-2008 uprisings showed that Tehreek was an indigenous political movement backed by popular support and that while people might participate in elections—due to different reasons—elections per se do not alter the political situation on the ground, even while the Indian establishment believed and projected it as people's endorsement of the status quo. Implications of the post-2008 Event also manifested in the way influential Indian civil society members began to write about Kashmir in its aftermath. In a rare acknowledgement of Kashmiri political agency, at least four Indian writers, with different lines of argument and emphasis, advocated Kashmir's independence. Three among the four opinion pieces were carried by mainstream media outlets like *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times*, and *Outlook Magazine*. Writing on his website, economist and famous management guru, Arindam Choudhary (31 August 2008), said:

> No doubt, to do away with a Kashmir is going to be a very difficult decision for citizens of this country, for it has always been a matter of national pride than anything else. But then, even if it hurts our sentiments, citizens of this country should realise that people who genuinely do not want to be a part of us can't be forced for long.

Although in his Hindustan Times article (16 August 2008) journalist Vir Sanghvi provided a cost-benefit argument—describing Kashmir as "constant, painful strain on our resources"—he, nevertheless, argued that "we should hold a referendum in the Valley. Let the Kashmiris determine their own destiny. If they want to stay in India, they are welcome. But if they don't, then we have no moral right to force them to remain". Likewise, columnist Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar's forceful advocacy for Kashmiri independence in *The Times of India* (17 August 2008) was premised on political morality. He called the instrument of accession argument "irrelevant" in the face of changing ground realities where Kashmiris resent Indian rule and have launched an independence movement against it:

> I was once hopeful of Kashmir's integration, but after six decades of effort, Kashmiri alienation looks greater than ever. India seeks to integrate with Kashmir, not rule it colonially. Yet, the parallels between British rule in India and Indian rule in Kashmir have become too close for my comfort.

In her *Outlook* essay (1 September 2008), based on her observations in Kashmir, noted public intellectual, Arundhati Roy, described the 2008 protests as "a full-blown revolution", which for the younger generation of Kashmiri "is nothing short of an epiphany".

Why the uprising of 2016?

Although this study began with a broader focus on the post-2008 period of the Kashmir conflict, initially the primary emphasis was on 2008 and 2010—the two significant years in which *Intifada* like street protests had erupted across IJK. The phenomenon of anti-India street protests necessitated a fresh approach of inquiry into the Kashmir conflict—which so far remains dominated by the inter-state perspective. Moreover, politically significant events of 2008-2010 presented a new theoretical challenge to another dominant approach to the Kashmir conflict: the

institutionalist perspective, which theorises on the internal aspect of the Kashmir conflict. It was, therefore, the post-2008 political developments in IJK that inspired this research and the inquiry was initially designed with a specific focus on 2008-10, with the academic focus on examining and identifying the Kashmiri youth narratives about these events and the larger Kashmir conflict. However, in the summer of 2016, a far bigger and much more intense phase of anti-India street protests broke out in IJK after a local rebel commander, Burhan Wani, who had attained widespread popularity in the region, was killed in a military encounter (Ashiq, 2016; Irfan, 2016; Kumar, 2016).

At the time, this researcher was in south Kashmir, from where the wave of street protests spread across the entire Jammu and Kashmir, including the Muslim majority areas in Jammu (*Indian Express* 3 August 2016) and Ladakh (*The State Times* 22 July 2016). After Burhan Wani's death on 8 July 2016, the state immediately imposed curfew in all the ten districts of the Kashmir valley, which remained enforced for record 53 days (*Greater Kashmir* 31 August 2016). The intense and widespread anti-India protests continued for over three months in which more than 90 people, mostly Kashmiri youth, were killed and thousands injured by the Indian police, army, and paramilitary forces. According to a 49-page United Nations report released in June 2018, "The Government of Jammu and Kashmir in 2017 initially said 78 people including 2 police officers were killed in the 2016 unrest but in 2017 revised the figure down to 51 people killed and 9,042 injured between 8 July 2016 and 27 February 2017" (*Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir*, p. 7).

In general, the mode of protest during the 2016 uprising was *hartal* (general strike), but also included "occupying the roads, freedom marches to the district headquarters, converging to the United Nations office in Srinagar, performing namaz (prayers) on the road, sit-ins in various locations, visiting those injured by pellet guns, boycotting government offices, reading collective pledges, wall painting, playing resistance songs or music, sending letters to the armed forces, holding conventions on the right to self-determination, displaying banners and placards saying 'We Want Freedom', and more" (Dreze, 2016). In many places, violent clashes between the Indian security forces (including local police) and Kashmiri stone-throwing demonstrators also occurred, often resulting in injuries to both sides. By the end of 100 days of the uprising, some 44 government (including police) buildings were burnt, excluding around 23 schools. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, it was a 'rural uprising', because most of the protests happened in rural areas of IJK. As per a police report, out of 2250 incidents (of demonstrations, marches and clashes since July 8), 1566 were reported from the rural Kashmir as compared to 651 from the towns. The report further adds: "In the first week of the turmoil each day 180 to 200 incidents of stone throwing were taking place across Kashmir, and each day around 40,000 people were involved in these incidents of stone throwing" (Ganai, 2016). More protests occurred on Fridays, as post-prayers

many young people could assemble in one place. However, from the initial stage during which stone-through incidents occurred more frequently, the mode of protest eventually shifted to a more non-violent method. In August 2016, five to ten massive rallies (of around 50,000 participants) would take place each day. By the end of October 2016, about 6000 youths were arrested, of which 4800 were released on bail later. Approximately 450 pro-Tehreek activists and leaders were also detained under the Public Safety Act. In all, between 2016 and 2017, Jammu and Kashmir Police arrested around 11,290 protestors, of which 8570 were detained in 2016 alone (*The Hindu*, 3 February 2018).

In most reports and debates on Kashmir, the use of pellet gun remained one of the most critical issues in 2016 uprising. Physicians for Human Rights report (December 2016) state that the so-called 'non-lethal' weapon was used excessively throughout the protest cycles (Barry, 2016; Waheed, 2016), resulting in a large number of blinding and grievous injuries to protestors, and around 12 deaths. The fact-finding team of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), which had visited the Kashmir valley between 14 to 22 October, found that the government had responded to street protests "by heavy and forceful military clampdown which resulted in a continuing spate of killings, injuries and arrests of people" (*Counter Currents* 24 October 2016). In its 23-page long report Physicians for Human Rights (December 2016) corroborated the observations of PUCL and concluded that "Indian authorities […] used indiscriminate and excessive force in responding to widespread protests across Jammu and Kashmir".

Such was the intensity of protests in 2016 that the Indian parliament twice called for a debate on Kashmir on 11 and 18 July 2016, where legislators talked about different aspects of the Kashmir issue; although all reiterated the official position that Kashmir was an 'integral part' of India (*The Indian Express* 18 July 2016). It was the events of 2016 that were at the focus of and prompted the publication of the first ever United Nations report on the human rights situation in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir. The report, released on 14 June 2018, not only documented the human rights abuses and violence that people in IJK have faced in the last three decades but also, in a significant development for Tehreek, reiterated their right to self-determination (p. 49).

Why Kashmiri Youth?

The generation of Kashmiris born after the 1980s can be referred to as a what Ruth Milkman (2017) calls "new political generation". Much like the millennials elsewhere, the contemporary youth generation of Kashmiris, at least a large cohort of them, are shaped by globalisation, many of them are well-versed in English language and embedded in the digital sphere, which has a significant influence on them. They are part of what the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs describes as "the most highly educated generation in human history" (*World Youth Report 2005*, p. 13). Moreover, the current cohort of Kashmiri youths have come of age and have grown

up in culturally changing (borne out of globalisation) and politically most turbulent times of Kashmir's modern history. Their proximity to and personal experiences of traumatic events have had a deep influence on their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990). Exposure to political violence seeping from the uncertain political situation around them has inevitably positioned them within the matrix of ideological contestations on Kashmir. Also, the communication revolution unfolding in the specific political context of recurrent mass protests (2008, 2010, 2016) has also created a heightened awareness about their political situation. Though that is not to say that all young men and women have acquired complete knowledge of the conflict in its historical perspective, the democratisation of communication, nevertheless, has allowed them to be more articulate about their politics, which manifest in their engagement with various discourses both online and elsewhere. Through their articulations, inflected by their distinctive experiences of the conflict, they destabilise the hegemonic meanings and "provide material for the articulation of new meanings and alternative political projects" (Torfing, 1999, p. 223)

After 2008, the Kashmiri youth became a frequent referent, though initially there was a sparse mention about them. On 10 October 2008, while speaking at a press conference in Srinagar, the prime minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, had said, "The recent incidents in J&K show that there is some resentment towards the Government among a section of the youth here on certain issues" (*Prime Minister's Office*). However, in the annual report (2008-09) of the Indian Home Ministry, it was the "separatist elements" who were considered as the main actors of the 2008 civil agitations in IJK. In the four articles from 2008 (cited above), only Arundhati Roy refers to the youth phenomenon. While refereeing to the youth phenomenon, Roy wrote:

> Raised in a playground of army camps, check-posts and bunkers, with screams from torture chambers for a soundtrack, the young generation has suddenly discovered the power of mass protest, and above all, the dignity of being able to straighten their shoulders and speak for themselves, represent themselves. For them, it is nothing short of an epiphany. They're in full flow, not even the fear of death seems to hold them back.

Nevertheless, during the later protest episodes (2010 and 2016), youth became a frequent political referent (see Figures 1 and 2) in official as well as civil society discourses, because increasingly there was a dominant presence of the Kashmiri youth in the street protests and death toll.

Announcing the emergence of youth phenomenon in Kashmir *Voice of America* article headline declared on 7 November 2010, "Kashmir's Young Generation Expresses Frustration with Stalemate" (Achin, 2010). Earlier commenting on the 2010 uprising in the *London Review of Books*, historian Tariq Ali (22 July 2010) would write:

> Now a new generation of Kashmir youth is on the march. They fight like the Palestinians, with stones. Many have lost their fear of death and will not surrender. Ignored by politicians at home, abandoned by Pakistan, they are developing the independence of spirit that comes with isolation and it will not be easily suppressed. It is unlikely however that Prime Minister of India and his colleagues will pay any attention to them.

That the youth generation of Kashmir was showing great enthusiasm in politics and participating in Tehreek activities was also observed by the prominent Tehreek leader, Syed Ali Geelani, in his 2015 autobiography *Wullar Kinaray* (By the Wular Lake). In the chapter entitled "2010 Ki Awami Tehreek" (The 2010 Peoples' Movement), Geelani notes how during his visits to different areas of Kashmir he saw young people thronging his rallies. At one place he writes, "It is quite refreshing that in marches and demonstrations, most participants are youth" (author translation). A few pages later, he again notes down, "the [political] struggle has reached the youth generation, and the emotions, enthusiasm and determination they demonstrate is a refreshing aspect for Tehreek" (Geelani, 2015, p. 518). Likewise, on 2 February 2018, speaking to a congregation inside a mosque in the Shupyen town (in southern Kashmir), Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief, Muhammad Yasin Malik, said, "For this movement youth is giving sacrifice, youth is the tarjumaan [representative] of this Tehreek; this Tehreek is alive due to youths' sacrifices".

When the annual report of the Indian home ministry for 2010-11 was released it also referred to the youth while talking about the security situation in Kashmir, "The [Indian] security forces have resolutely faced the stone pelting by misguided youths with commendable restraint". Priyanka Talwar shows in her 2016 study how the state framing of the Kashmiri youth activism in 2010 was patronising and negative because it projected the youth participants as 'children' and 'non-adults' who must be guided by their parents and not indulge in 'mindless agitations'. Youth were framed as 'misguided' and seen as agents of 'separatists' and Pakistan, and thereby "stripping non-violent protests of any legitimacy or agency" (Talwar, 2016, pp. 157-161). When the prime minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, spoke about the prevailing situation in IJK, he said he was "shocked and distressed to see young men and women—even children—joining the protests on the streets", but implicitly shifted the blame for violence on the Kashmiri youth:

> […] those who have grievances against the Government have to talk to the administration. But it is also true that meaningful dialogue can happen only in an atmosphere free from violence and confrontation. Discussion can take place only if we have calm and public order. The Central and State Governments have already appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the youth, to eschew violence (cited in Talwar 2016, p. 161).

Furthermore, many incidents happened in the last decade where the Kashmiri youth were at the centre of things. In March 2014, an Indian university registered sedition charges against 67 Kashmiri students for cheering the Pakistan cricket team, which was playing against India (Harris, 2014).

Sacrifices of youth precious asset of movement: Mirwaiz

Srinagar, Apr 24: A delegation of Hurriyat Conference (M) leaders today visited Patrigam village in Central Kashmir's Budgam district to offer condolences with the bereaved family of Younis Ganaie, the Kashmiri youth who slain by the government forces on Sunday at Hayatpora.

The delegation comprised Ghulam Nabi Zaki, Abdul Rashid Untoo, Ghulam Qadir Beigh, Ghulam Muhammad Kateri, Hakim Ahsan, and others.

Expressing solidarity and sympathy with the bereaved family on behalf of Mirwaiz and entire Hurriyat Conference, the delegates prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Mirwaiz, who continues to be under house arrest for the past one month, spoke to the bereaved family over telephone and expressed his solidarity and sympathy.

"Entire Kashmir stands with the bereaved family in this time of grief. The mission for which Younis and other lacs of martyrs laid their lives will be taken to its logical end. The sacrifices by the Kashmiri youth are the precious asset of the movement and their mission will be taken to its logical end," a spokesman of the Hurriyat, in a statement today, quoted Mirwaiz as saying, praying for departed soul and urging the bereaved father to be patient in these testing times.

Youth torch bearers of ongoing movement: Sehrai

Srinagar, Dec 9: Tehreek-e-Hurriyat chairman Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai on Sunday said that youth are beacon light and torch bearers of the ongoing Kashmir movement.

In a statement here Sehrai paid tributes to the three militants killed in a gunfight with the government forces at Mujgund on Srinagar outskirts on Sunday. "The cherished sacrifices rendered by our youth won't go waste and will definitely lead us to our destiny. We feel for them but we are proud of their dedication and commitment. The sacrifices of these youth are a part of our collective memory that can't be erased at any cost," he added.

Sehrai also hailed the spirits of people and commended their sensitivity and seriousness towards Kashmir movement. "Nation will never budge from its stand and will carry the mission till its logical end. Sacrifices rendered by youths are praise worthy and exemplary."

"The ongoing struggle has been violently suppressed by forces and the state oppression has become a norm with all kinds of barbarism that sends the message that forces are killing Kashmiris as per their will. Forces have operated with near complete impunity for so long that unlawful killings, Vandalizing properties, bombing houses and other flagrant violations of international law have become a norm," he added.

He said, "Kashmir dispute pertains to the future of millions of Kashmiris and it can only be resolved by giving inalienable right to self determination. International human rights organization should intervene and come for the rescue of Kashmiris. The time is overdue for the international community to intervene and resolve Kashmir issue as per the wishes of people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Sehrai said, "The failure of the international community to intervene to protect Kashmiri people only encourages New Delhi to commit more war crimes against Kashmiris. These crimes will continue in the absence of accountability and will further encourage a culture of impunity."

Figure 1: Statements of Hurriyat leaders, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Ashraf Sehrai (Greater Kashmir Apr 2017 and Dec 2018)

Young MPs for peace in Kashmir

AGENCIES | AUG 05

New Delhi: Concerned over the situation in Kashmir, a group of 40 young MPs cutting across party lines, Thursday appealed the Kashmiri youth to exercise restraint and have trust in dialogue for working out a solution.

"We, as representatives of the people ourselves, believe that together with a positive frame of mind we can seek resolution only through open communication. History teaches us that any resolution can only be brought about through dialogue and not through violence," the MPs said in their "Statement for the Youth of Jammu and Kashmir".

Contd on page 5

Young MPs

The statement said, "What has happened in the recent past has been very unfortunate and we are deeply concerned. We urge our young brothers and sisters in J&K to exercise restraint and have trust in the power of dialogue".

Releasing the statement in Parliament House complex, Congress MP Priya Dutt told reporters that the MPs were deeply concerned over the loss of lives in the valley.

Her party colleague Deepender Hooda said 40 MPs, cutting across party lines, have signed the appeal as they feel that as young people their future was good which applied equally for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

"In this century, when the whole world is looking towards India, and as we look to join the club of developed nations, we believe this dream can only be achieved all of us are equal stakeholders in it. Future belongs to our generation. We, the young parliamentarians, belonging to your generation, sincerely hope for a bright shared future for you and for all of us," the MPs said in the statement.

Among the signatories to the statement are Priya Dutt, Deepender Hooda, Milind Deora and Jyoti Mirdha (Congress), Anurag Thakur (BJP), Akhilesh Yadav (SP), Shatabdi Roy (Trinamool Congress), Supriya Sule (NCP), Bhavna Gavli (Shiv Sena).

Omar appeals youth, offers 50000 jobs

Welcomes PM's reference to autonomy

RISING KASHMIR NEWS | AUG 14

Srinagar: Expressing deep grief and sorrow over the loss of lives during recent happenings in the valley, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah appealed youth to help restore normalcy in Kashmir. He also asked separatists to come to table for resolving political issues.

"My heart bleeds and in their hour of grief I am with the bereaved families whose dear ones have lost their lives. The victims of the unfortunate events are my own brothers and sons and I am in gloom and bereavement," he said in his address to the people on the eve of India's Independence Day.

He said nobody can be so stone hearted as not to be touched by such happenings and no eye can be without tears over the loss of lives.

He also expressed grief over the loss of lives in the recent cloudburst in Leh and said that Government would take every step for the rehabilitation of affected families and restoration

Contd on page 6

CM chairs UHQ meet

DG CRPF attends as spl invitee

ABID BASHIR | AUG 14

Srinagar: Taking strong note of the fresh killings, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah directed the security top brass to exercise maximum restrain while dealing with the protestors and follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) strictly. He also directed DG CRPF to personally review the security situation in Kashmir.

This he said while chairing Unified Headquarters Meeting at State Guest House. Top police, paramilitary, intelligence, army and civil officials were present in the meeting. Chief Secretary S S Kapur was also present in the meeting. DG CRPF attended the meeting as special invitee.

Contd on page 6

Figure 2: Rising Kashmir front pages (6 and 15 August 2010)

9/10/2018 Azadi not possible, you can't fight us: Army Chief General Bipin Rawat to Kashmiri youth

Printed from

Greater Kashmir

Azadi not possible, you can't fight us: Army Chief General Bipin Rawat to Kashmiri youth

Rawat said the forces haven't been 'so brutal' and asked the Kashmiri youth to look at Syria and Pakistan and see 'how they are using tanks and air power in similar situations,' reported Indian Express.

GK Web Desk

Srinagar, Publish Date: May 10 2018 10:09AM

The Indian army chief General Bipin Rawat, in a message to Kashmiri youth, has said that Azadi [freedom] is not possible as "we will always fight those who seek Azadi", a media report said today.

Will halt ops, who will guarantee no attacks: Army Chief

'Azadi will not happen, youth can't fight the army'

'If you want to fight us, then we will fight you with all our force'

GK NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, May 10: The Army chief General Bipin Rawat has said that the army was ready to suspend military operations to avoid civilian causalities but the question was who will guarantee there won't be fire on soldiers and the army vehicles.

"(I am) ready to suspend military operations to avoid civilian casualties. But who will guarantee that there won't be fire at our men, at our vehicles? Who will guarantee that policemen, political

See Will halt ops...on Pg-12

Provocative, illogical: Separatists

Srinagar, May 10: Reacting to the Army Chief General Bipin Rawat's statement telling the Kashmiri youth that "Azadi is not possible and it will never happen and that they cannot fight Indian armed forces", the pro-resistance leaders and organizations today termed it 'provocative', 'self-contradictory' and 'illogical'.

See Provocative...on Pg-12

Figure 3: Greater Kashmir front page web and print edition (10 May 2018)

This incident created a furore in Indian media, which projected the Kashmiri students as 'anti-national' for supporting the enemy country, while in Kashmir people were angry at university's decision and media's vilification campaign. Similar incidents followed where the Kashmiri youths, living or studying in different Indian cities, were physically assaulted and harassed.

With the political situation deteriorating and the political process taking a back seat, the Kashmiri youth became increasingly politically assertive and fearless and started to throng gunfight sites to save trapped rebels when they were surrounded by the Indian armed forces. They also began participating in funeral processions of slain rebels in large numbers, turning the solemn ritual space into sites of pro-Tehreek protests (Yasir, 2016). Some young Kashmiris got recruited into militant organisations during these highly-charged funerals (Yasir, 2018). Some were enthused by social media (Naqash 2017). Some turned into rebels after facing humiliation and severe torture in jails (Wani 2016). According to a report published in *The Indian Express* on 11 June 2018, since summer 2010, at least 467 Kashmiri youth from 354 villages in Kashmir and Chenab Valleys had become rebels (Jaleel, 2018). The Jammu and Kashmir police described the new age militancy in Kashmir as "a youth phenomenon" (Jaleel, 9 June 2018). So, ultimately, by 2016, the Kashmiri youth became a distinct political actor in IJK politics, a force to reckon. In both official and civil society discourses, the Kashmiri youth acquired the position of a leading political actor in resurgent Tehreek.

Many Indian parliamentarians, newspapers, media reports, academics, and columnists underscored and acknowledged the fact in their public speeches and opinion pieces that the Kashmiri youth were at the centre of the 2016 uprising, and thus for any meaningful political process in Kashmir, they needed to be heard and engaged. For example, English daily *The Hindu* wrote in its editorial 'Calming the Valley' (12 July 2016). "In the violent aftermath of his [Burhan Wani's] death […], young men and women have taken the fight to the security forces on the street". Likewise, underscoring the pivotal role of youth in the resurgent Tehreek, the former national security adviser of India, M. K. Narayan, wrote in his article "Address the 'new normal' in Kashmir" (*The Hindu* 10 October 2016):

> To try to retrieve this situation, it is necessary to recognise that, in marked contrast to earlier phases of trouble in Kashmir, the present movement is almost entirely homegrown. The spontaneity of many 'mini-uprisings' demands a different explanation from earlier ones, for it smacks of near-total alienation of an entire generation of young Kashmiris angry with the present state of affairs.

At the peak of the summer uprising in 2016, the Indian Parliament held two debates on Kashmir – on 11th and 18th July. In these debates, the Kashmiri youth were frequent referents when legislators talked about the political situation in IJK (*The Indian Express* 18 July 2016). "We must

enlighten the youth of Kashmir to what is right and wrong", said Rajnath Singh, the Home Minister of India from the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The tone of his party colleague and cabinet minister Arun Jaitley was no less threatening when he suggested: "We must, in one voice, urge the youth in Kashmir to not join any protests, so security personnel aren't forced to take action". Legislators from the opposition parties like Indian National Congress, Trinamool Congress, Communist Party of India, Republican Party of India etc. also made references to the Kashmiri youth when they talked about the unfolding political situation in IJK, though their tone and tenor, unlike far-right BJP legislators, was relatively conciliatory:

> I urge the govt to begin the dialogue process with our own people. They are our own young people [Derek O'Brien, member of parliament. (*Trinamool Congress*)]
>
> Kashmiri youth are very well informed and intelligent. We must place our trust in them and win over their confidence. [D Raja, member of Parliament (*Communist Party of India*)]
>
> My heart goes out to the young lives that have been lost in Kashmir. Tens of youths have been killed and just one police officer has lost his life. This shows the balance of power. Several are battling injuries to their eyes and we don't know if their vision will be restored. [Sitaram Yechury, member of parliament, *Communist Party (Marxist)*]
>
> I want to tell the youth of J&K that yes, injustice has been done to you but we [Dalits] face injustice every day. There are daily atrocities against us. But we do not demand a Dalit-istan. We are attacked daily, but we will continue to live in India. [Ramdas Athawale, member of parliament (*Republican Party of India*)] (*The Indian Express* 11 July 2016)

Similarly, while covering the political developments in Kashmir, international media outlets highlighted the youth phenomenon which was propelling the protests in Kashmir. In its editorial "Kashmir in Crisis" published on 21 July 2016, *The New York Times* partially attributed the political turmoil of 2016 to growing anger among the youth borne out of their traumatic experiences of the conflict: "A major cause of the uprising is the resentment among Kashmiri youths who have come of age under an Indian security apparatus that acts against civilians with impunity".

On 16 November 2016, at the culmination of four months of protests (violent and non-violent), leading Tehreek leaders, Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik, emphasized on the need for transition from short-term agitations to long-term sustainable modes of protest, because the 2016 uprising had kept businesses shut for a very long time. In that same statement, the triumvirate of the resistance leadership acknowledged the role of the Kashmiri youth as the main drivers of the political movement and described their political passion as a "valuable and enduring resource":

> This enemy is not going to yield easily. Not only do they control us militarily they also control our means of livelihood, our education, our channels of communication. How we move forward and carry our struggle towards its goal is a serious question as our sacrifices are immense. On the one hand is the unbroken spirit of our youth who are on the streets resolute and continue to offer sacrifices. Their resistance and their passion for Azaadi is immense and is our most valuable and enduring resource. On the other hand, are the demands and needs for survival, for sustenance. (Greater Kashmir 16 November 2016)

Discursive Responses to the 2016 Uprising

The post-2008 uprisings prompted discursive responses which were published, broadcasted, exhibited through different mediums and channels at various places and venues. Apart from articles and opinion pieces, which were published by the Kashmiri youth in different publications and sites, there were also some young artists who created paintings and illustrations to depict the 2016 uprising (Mirani, 2016). Political graffiti was also prominently used across Kashmiri cities and towns in 2016 (Amin and Majid, 2018). However, the state response to these artistic expressions of dissent was aggressive. For example, in August 2018, the 'United Resistance' (the coalition of three major pro-Tehreek political groups: Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Hurriyat Conference, and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front), had asked people, in its weekly protest programme, to paint the walls and roads with pro-freedom graffiti and slogans. However, immediately after this announcement, the state authorities sent out a circulation via media and concerned government departments that warned people against any such move, invoking the 'anti-defacement law' (Akmali, 2016). When an Indian parliamentary delegation visited the Kashmir Valley in the early week of September, the graffiti and slogans painted on walls and roads in Srinagar was smudged and painted over by the police (*The Hindu* 4 September 2016). In another related incident, in August, MC Kash, a young Kashmiri rap singer, was restricted from performing his hip-hop song at an Amnesty International event in Bangalore (Mirani, 2016). Restrictions were also imposed on communication. Although the state-imposed embargo on the internet and mobile communications affected discursive opportunities for Kashmiri youth to express themselves, those who had access to broadband connections could still send their articles, opinion pieces, poems etc. to different news sites and magazines for publication. As per the official figures, out of 3.35 million internet users in the entire Jammu and Kashmir, a broadband connection is accessed by 0.84 million subscribers. Occasionally, even broadband was suspended (Yaqoob, 2016). Interestingly, to circumvent mobile internet ban, at some places broadband Wi-Fi was surreptitiously accessed by people by hacking into Wi-Fi passwords of the government institutions or private person (Saha, 2016).

Another illustration of the state restrictions on discursive domain was the 16th July police raid and seizure of the Kashmir-based newspapers, which were kept under publication ban for three days (Bukhari, 2016; *The Huffington Post* 17 July 2016). Srinagar-based English daily, *Kashmir Reader*, which is known for its bold reportage and pro-Tehreek stance, was banned by the state authorities because its content, which the government order said, "can disrupt public tranquillity" (Masood, 2016). Other newspapers perceived the ban on *Kashmir Reader* as 'a message' from the government, which had in the past withdrew advertisements from Kashmiri newspapers as a pressure tactic. For example, in its 3 October 2016 editorial, the English daily *Kashmir Observer* wrote: "While we

condemn the arbitrary ban on Kashmir Reader, the government hasn't been kind to other newspapers also. Over the past three months, there has been a deliberate attempt to reduce the advertisement share ostensibly to get the newspapers to moderate their coverage of the ongoing unrest in the state". In a similar vein, *Greater Kashmir*, the largest English daily in Kashmir, wrote in its front-page editorial (3 October 2016): "This time though only one paper has been banned, it hardly detracts from the troubling larger import of the move". After the 2008 uprising, the state had withheld government advertisements to major Kashmir newspapers, thereby bringing financial pressure on them; and because the private sector is not well developed in Kashmir, Kashmiri newspaper largely depends on government-issued advertisements to sustain themselves (*The Hindustan Time* 29 November 2016). In September 2016, the government of IJK again used the tool of advertisement to pressurise the local newspapers. According to a report, the state officials were particularly against publishing full-page photo features about the ongoing street protests (*Catch News* 17 September 2016). The new advertisement policy (*Jammu and Kashmir Advertisement Policy 2016*, Department of Information and Public Relations), which the IJK government brought into force in 2016, empowered the regulatory body called Empanelment Committee to withhold advertisement to any publication should its contents be found "to offend the sovereignty and integrity of India" and suspend/ de-list any publication which is found indulging in "anti-national activities". Therefore, a sort of permissible boundary of freedom of speech was created pushing beyond which could invite state action, and newspapers had to follow the 'rule', or they could face possible delisting. That meant when someone dispatched an article to the Kashmiri newspapers its content had to be within the permissible boundaries set by the state.

The Emergence of the Kashmiri Youth as an Autonomous Political Subject

So far, we discussed how the category of 'Kashmiri youth' gained wide currency in the post-2008 period, as the state and civil society discourses underlined the centrality of the youth factor in the resurgent Tehreek. Frequent references to the Kashmiri youth in political discourses suggests as though this demographic sector has attained an independent political character. And, of course, the state perceives such a development as a security challenge, which requires immediate attention. For example, in January 2017, then Governor of IJK, Narinder Nath Vohra, said about the younger generation of Kashmiris that they were "less engaged civically, exhibits less social trust and confidence and, consequently, has a weaker commitment to the inherited value systems" and the policy should be to "engage them" (Ashiq, 2017). In contrast, the hard-line approach advocated by some members of the ruling BJP is to come down hard against the protesting youth. In any case, in every institution of the Indian state (including the army and media), the prevailing view is that the Kashmiri youth is the political actor concerning whom the state's Kashmir policy must be focused.

However, we cannot understand the Kashmiri youth as an autonomous political entity without looking at the emergence of distinct political subject of *Sang-baaz* (stone-warrior), who also appeared on the political scene in the post-2008 period. In the context of Kashmir, *Sang-baaz* is someone who hurls stones at the Indian forces during anti-India demonstrations or gun-fights between Indian troops and Kashmiri rebels. Although youth activism was a norm in the 1960s (Lockwood 1969), and the youth factor was also present in the outbreak of the armed uprising in the late 1980s, it seems that only during the post-2008 period has Kashmiri youth attained a maximal political subject-hood, which especially manifested in the political figure of *Sang-baaz*, who appeared as a symbol of tenacious anti-state resistance. Nevertheless, for the state, *Sang-baaz*—who is mostly a male activist (though, occasionally, school and college girls have also participated in stone-throwing protests)—is either a social nuisance or a security challenge. By taking over streets during the demonstrations, *Sang-baaz* marks its presence politically. In news items, *Sang-baaz* became a representative picture of the Kashmir conflict. He also featured on the covers of at least three recent books: *Kashmir Intifada: A Memoir* (2017), *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (2018), and *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir* (2018). And, despite being framed as a social deviant or a paid agent of Pakistan, he has emerged as an essential actor of the resurgent Tehreek. He not only challenges the Indian rule over Kashmir but also threatens, wittingly or unwittingly, to undermine the position of established anti-India political formations like Hurriyat. Appearing as a distinct political subject, whose maximal appearance was too evident to be suppressed in the discourse, Kashmiri youth came to dominate the political discussions on the Kashmir conflict. Consequently, the state informally recognised Kashmiri youth as a separate political category, whose central role cannot be ignored in the contemporary phase of the Kashmiri self-determination movement.

However, from the state perspective, the security challenge posed by the youth phenomenon could be tackled by way of 'engagement'. And, to engage the youth, the state required data about this demographic sector. Hence, the Ministry of Home Affairs commissioned a survey, which was executed under the aegis of Institute for Research on India and International Studies by Navnita Chadha Behera, a professor of political science at the University of Delhi. The objective of this survey was to map the media perceptions of the Kashmiri youth, and in the words of the report, "To generate policy options for fostering a better interface between the government and the media on the Kashmir issue" (Behara, 2012, p. 1). As part of the 'engagement' policy, many sports, educational, cultural, and job-placement projects were also initiated to wean away the Kashmiri youth from political protests. For example, in 2011, the Government of India launched a Rupees 1200-crore (approximately 175-million US dollars) scholarship scheme for five years (2011-2016). Also in 2011, under the National Skill Development Council's Udaan Scheme, Rupees 750-crore were earmarked for providing skills and enhancing the employability of 40,000 Kashmiri youth

over a period of five years. Similarly, in September 2016, a Rupees 200-crore package (about 29-million US dollars) was announced: "to engage Jammu and Kashmir youths in sports" (The Indian Express 2 September 2016). For skill development and job placement of the Kashmiri youth in mainland India, the IJK government also signed MoUs worth over Rupees 120 crore with leading employing agencies in March 2017.

Moreover, the Indian state also mobilised its armed forces in IJK to operationalise its 'engagement policy'. Indian army and paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force organised regular district-level sports and other events targeting Kashmiri youth. One of the biggest events called "Chinar Youth Festival" was held by Indian army's 15 Corps at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convocation Centre Srinagar on 29 September 2018, where the IJK governor Satya Pal Malik was the chief guest.

For some commentators, the armed forces-led activities for the Kashmiri youth have been "an investment of limited returns" (Wahab, n.d.), while as some others see such initiatives as an effective tool for building counter-narratives. Speaking at the 19th Asian Security Conference held in New Delhi in March 2011, Lt. General Syed Ata Hasnain, who has commanded the XV Corps of the Indian army in IJK, revealed that in 2011 under his direction Indian army organised Kashmir Premier League, a cricket tournament, which ran for two years.

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At UN, India warns of 'conflagration' over Pak actions

Says New Delhi didn't sabotage 'peace' talks with Islamabad

IANS/PTI

United Nations, Sep 29: If we do not act now, we will have to deal with conflagration later, India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj warned the world leaders on Saturday as she renewed New Delhi's calls for "international action against terrorism" while launching a scathing attack on Pakistan.

Speaking in Hindi at the 73rd UN general assembly, Swaraj said "The demon of terrorism now stalks the world, at a faster pace somewhere, a

» See At UN, India...on Pg-10

Unresolved Kashmir 'blot on conscience of humanity': Pakistan at UNGA

'If India ventures across LoC, it will evoke strong and matching response'

United Nations, Sep 29: Unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains a "blot on conscience of humanity", the Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Saturday, and asserted that Islamabad desires a relationship with India based on "sovereign equality" and "mutual respect." He also sought resolution of disputes through a

» See Unresolved Kashmir...on Pg-10

'Kashmir youth have rendered political, other parties irrelevant'

Corruption deep rooted in Kashmir: Governor Malik

ABID BASHIR

Srinagar, Sep 29: J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik on Saturday said that given the level of their talent and vision, the young generation of the Valley has rendered political and all other parties completely irrelevant.

He said if the state succeeded in understanding the youth anger, their needs and desires, "Kashmir's future will not only

» See Kashmir youth...on Pg-10

MLA's 7 guards quizzed day after SPO flees with 7 rifles, pistol

Figure 4: Greater Kashmir front page (30 Sep 2018)

Figure 5: Army-organised Chinar Youth Festival 2018 at SKICC Srinagar (picture by author)

Almost 390 matches were played, costing around Rupees 1.45 crore (over 200,000 USD). In this way, Hasnain claimed, "we kept 400,000 people off the road [away from protests], primarily watching, playing, clapping, doing anything". He further said that "there is such negativity in that environment [Kashmir] that anything that is positive will contribute to a counter-narrative" (Hasnain, 2017). Interestingly, at a cricket tournament organised by the Indian army in Tangdhar tehsil in northern Kashmir, one participating team had put on the Pakistan cricket team jersey (*Kashmir Dispatch* 29 December 2015).

To engage the Kashmiri youth and wean them away from protests, other types of events were also organised. The objective of all such measures was to create a counter-narrative to Tehreek, by de-emphasising the political nature of the Kashmir conflict and emphasising on issues like scholarship, unemployment, drugs, economy and social development. It also involved creating a negative image of Tehreek leaders by mobilising *Tu quoque* arguments (appeal to hypocrisy), i.e., discrediting the leaders of Tehreek for their failure to act by their purported principles. This line of reasoning, for example, was employed in an event, which was organised by RSS-affiliated Muslim Rashtriya Manch in New Delhi for the Kashmiri students (Nagarajan, 2017).[3] The Indian army chief, Bipin Rawat, also outlined the objective of 'engagement' policy in some detail on 28 November 2018. He said:

> Aspirations of the youth in Kashmir have changed and the same need to be considered in our response strategies. There is obviously a need for greater positive engagement with the youth to motivate them to remain off the streets. Our strategy needs to address issues at systemic level and behavioural level – both individual and collective, and take into account aspiration of the youth in psychological, social and economic domains […] To be able to effectively counter the perceived alienation of the populace, there

[3] Founded in 1925, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is the largest paramilitary organisation in India, with nearly 5 million members. Its agenda is based on Hindu nationalism and it seeks to incorporate Kashmir as well as Pakistan and Bangladesh into 'Akhand Bharat' (united India).

> is a need to create a stronger counter-narrative as part of the comprehensive long term strategic vision. All efforts should thereafter be focused towards achieving this vision. Army has been carrying out perception management operations as part of Operation Sadbhavna in J&K for the last two and half decades, but the actions of all the agencies operating in J&K need to be integrated towards achieving our Strategic Vision (Rawat, 2018).

As part of this counter-narrative campaign, in 2011, Indian army had deployed what Hasnain described during 2018 Military Literary Festival (at Chandigarh) as "information warriors" whose job was to write content on social media that would undermine the narrative of Tehreek. This campaign, however, failed soon (Dutta, 2018).

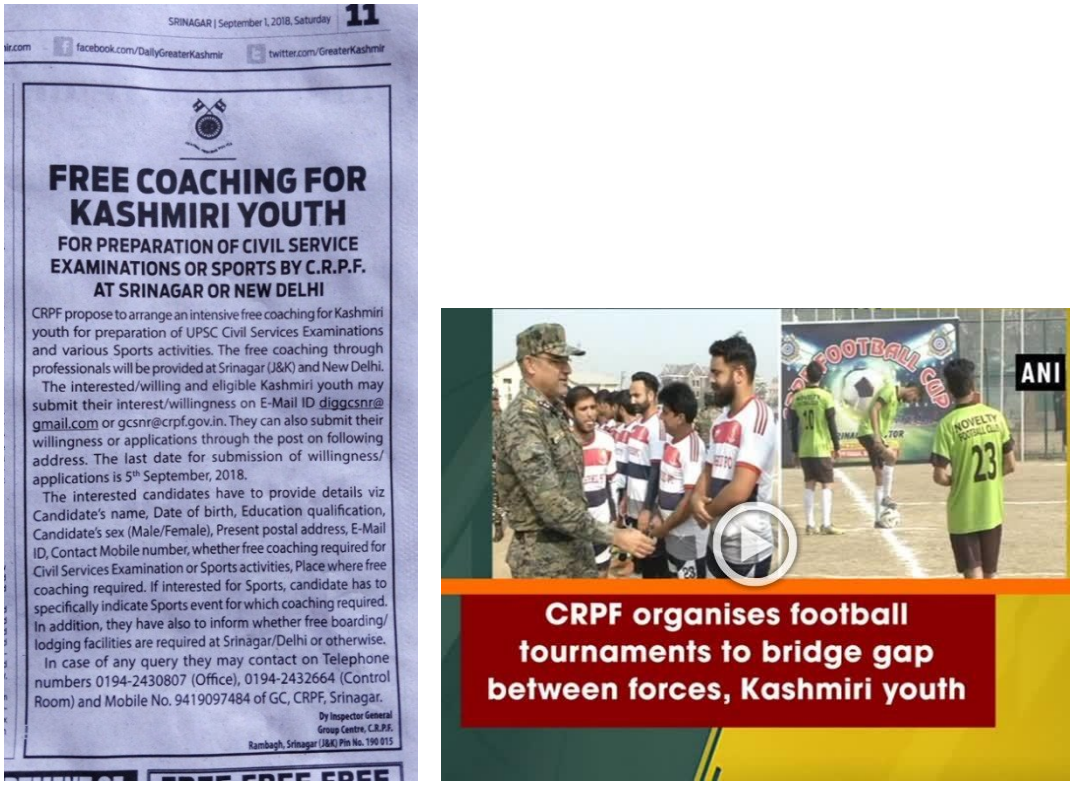

Figure 6: Paramilitary CRPF's ad in Greater Kashmir (2018) and a screengrab of CRPF football tournament (2017)

Moreover, as harsh measures failed to stop stone-throwing protests by the Kashmiri youth, non-coercive methods were also employed. Those youth who had served jail terms or had cases against them were counselled to desist from stone-throwing protests and focus on their jobs and careers. In such counselling sessions or events, state functionaries argued on the similar lines: discrediting Tehreek leadership and empathising with the youth to gain their trust and instil a counter-narrative. On 10 December 2017, in an event organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Police in Baramulla district (in northern Kashmir), a legislator from the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party, Javaid Hassan Beigh, went on to say that "the foundation of political struggle of Hon'ble CM [Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti] is based on safety, security and development of youth of the state and

welfare of youth is the priority of the state government" (*The News Street* 2017). Addressing the youth in the audience in the same event, the top-ranking police officials told them "not to fall in the trap of vested interests who are out to ruin their lives while securing bright future for their own children". How far have the attempts of the state to wean away the Kashmiri youth from Tehreek through non-coercive measures have succeeded needs a separate study. However, through government-sponsored schemes like Udaan and Himayat, hundreds of young Kashmiris have migrated out of Kashmir for jobs in the last eight years. They are placed in different private companies in different cities of India, where along with the widely-spread Kashmiri student community, they have built small ethnic networks.

Figure 7: Police event for Kashmiri youth in Baramulla and an RSS event for Kashmiri youth in New Delhi

Discursive Intervention of the Youth Narrators

In his book, *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir* (2018), Indian journalist David Devadas claims that the pro-Tehreek narratives, which employed terms like self-determination, occupation, colonialization etc. were 'orchestrated' 2008 onwards (pp. 197-99). He believes that such narratives contributed to polarised views and created binaries of us-vs-them (i.e., between Indians vs Kashmiris or Indian state vs the people of Kashmir). As he says:

> the production of a narrative of oppression […] came to light from 2008. Ironically, human rights abuses were rare at this stage. Militancy was more or less over […] those who chose to vigorously publicize narratives of oppression and cruelty found patrons in several quarters (p. 187).

Moreover, he claims that this narrative 'was bound to increase the conflict', but its promoters, the educated middle-class—like young Kashmiri journalists, academics and 'other opinion-makers'—whose careers and popularity hinged on the conflict, lived safely in large mansions (p. 188). Devadas seems to implicitly convey that the natives (i.e., the Kashmiri youth narrators) are untrustworthy story-tellers and only an external observer like him can provide an authentic and nuanced representation of the Kashmir conflict. He seems to think that all Kashmiri narrators come from elite backgrounds and they remain unaffected by the vagaries of the Kashmir conflict. Without specifying the names or entities who allegedly patronised these narratives, he maintains that 'the narratives of oppression', which have shaped the minds and influenced the young

generation of Kashmiris who later took to streets in 2016, were 'vigorously promoted' by those who had 'a stake in the continuation of conflict'.

However, as will be shown in the chapters of this thesis, although the majority of the Kashmiri youth narratives exhibit pro-Tehreek, counter-hegemonic and counter-assimilationist orientation, there are still variations in terms of framing of political events and articulation of political subjectivity; when the youth narrators employ pro-Tehreek collective action frames they do not necessarily have a uniform understanding of them. Devadas' broad-brushed characterisation of the local narrators as unreliable storytellers misses this nuance. And, ironically, while he accuses the local narrators of advancing black-and-white categories and polarised perspectives—which he thinks create an us-vs-them binary between Indians and Kashmiris—his views about local narratives lacks rigour and sophistication, and borders on crude orientalism. While incorporating class factor would certainly enrich the analysis, the local narratives cannot be dismissed simply because much of it is written by the educated middle-class. As Karl Mannheim (1927) argues it is always a small group within a generation-unit who interprets the experiences peculiar to that generation. And, forty years later, Hannah Ardent also said in her essay "What Freedom and Revolution Really Mean" (1967):

> No doubt, it is obvious and of great consequence that this passion for freedom for its own sake awoke in and was nourished by men of leisure, by the *hommes de lettres* who had no masters and were not always busy making a living.

If educated class discursively represent Kashmir, that is but natural. Because they have certain privileges, foremost being access to higher education, intellectual and other resources, which enable them to write and get published. Even then the coercive security apparatuses at home, the geopolitics of the South Asian region and global Islamophobia had a profound effect on them and informed their narratives, which also resonate among a larger cohort of young Kashmiris. Though, it was mostly the lower-middle class youth who participated and died in the street protests, yet, the political opportunity structure is as constraining for the educated class—and, being an aspirational class, they quickly succumb to overt and covert pressures applied by the state.

Furthermore, societies organise their collective narratives around significant (traumatic) events, and they draw from a range of sources, including history. In the period of relative calm or respite, conflict-ridden societies get a chance to archive their memories and pain and relive their past. After all, Tehreek is a movement for the right to self-determination, and even if human rights abuses come down, it will keep inspiring narratives which will be informed by history and collective memories, as in Northern Ireland, Catalonia and other such places. Since they endow political movements with moral force and make their claims legitimate, the stories of oppression are useful for resistance politics. And, finally, pinpointing an absolute point of origin of 'narratives of

oppression', as Devadas does, ignores the long history of the political movement in IJK. We shall return to a detailed discussion on it elsewhere.

At any rate, it was discursive representations, or what in Badioun terms would be *decision* or *intervention* that also facilitated the emergence of the Kashmiri youth as a significant political player. As Robinson (2014) explains, "an intervention is a way of naming or analysing an Event without denying its evental nature. It saves the Event from disappearing by attaching a name to it. And it avoids denying its evental nature by choosing a name which is not simply the name of a part of the existing situation". It is a gradual process of affirmation, whereby Event is labelled as an Event and not something which the state wants to call it, say mob violence or unrest. So, in a way, intervention is resistance against state's ideologically-motivated framing of Event. It is an attempt to create a framing which establishes an Event's historic image as against state's framing of it as a law and order problem. During the post-2008 Event, many more narratives were published in the English language and several different outlets. These narratives drew upon the experiences of the prevailing political situation and presented grounded representations. In a way, this flurry of discursive activity in the post-2008 period was itself a sort of an event within *Event*. Through articles, essays, photographs, poems, and other creative productions, Kashmiri youth protestor (especially a *Sang-baaz*) was framed as a resistance hero, an image at variance with the negative portrayal of him in mainstream Indian media.

Interestingly, even the agents or *interveners* in this decision/intervention process were mostly youth journalists, poets, cartoonists, singers, writers etc. For example, popular songs which glamorised stone-throwing protestors were created by young men in Srinagar. One was by rapper, MC Kash, called "I Protest" and another was "Stone in my Hand". As *Washington Post's* Emily Wax reported on 17 July 2010: "One young Kashmiri with a degree in computer applications edited a powerful video to the lyrics of the Everlast song "Stone in My Hand" and posted it on YouTube, prompting police to launch a chase for him. The lyrics — "I got no pistol, ain't got no sword. I got no army, ain't got no land. All I got is stones in my hand" — became the anthem of Kashmiri youth and is hummed on the streets here".

Even though not all *interveners* may have had the same experiences as the youth protestors on the ground, but they captured the prevailing zeitgeist and represented the political resistance. Ultimately, in this discursive sub-event, fostered by the post-2008 *Event*, youth interveners, like the youth protestors, shone light on the unfolding youth phenomenon in Kashmir and brought the attention of the state and civil society on themselves. In a way, borrowing Louis Althusser's (1971) concept of interpellation, we can say that Kashmiri youth were constituted into a political subject in the process of cumulative hailing. Their maximal appearance in protests and narrative productions manifested what can also be termed as 'youthquake', which refers to a "significant

cultural, political, or social change arising from the actions or influence of young people" (*Oxford Online Dictionary*).

Leaderless Moments and the Role of Youth in Protests

Two significant features of the resurgent Tehreek merit mention. Firstly, the mass participation of youths in street protests and the use of new methods of political activism, like social media, artworks, and narratives (Wright, 2010; Perreault, 2010). Secondly, the leaderless moment in the resurgent movement. In 2010, some commentators would argue that the present political mobilisations in IJK were 'leaderless protests' or "leaderless agitation" (Parthasarathy, 2010). Some held this view even in 2016. For example, the former national security adviser of India, M. K. Narayan, wrote in *The Hindu* (10 Oct 2016), "The particularly ferocious public reaction to Burhan Wani's death should be troubling to everyone — politicians, authorities, the security establishment and even ordinary people. The movement gives the impression today of being on autopilot, without any known leaders" (Narayan, 2016).

As existing leadership (Hurriyat and JKLF) was put behind bars or kept under severe restrictions, young men were left free to manage the protests on the ground. Demonstrations were locally organised and conducted by youth activists, most of whom had no formal links with any Tehreek organisation (Bukhari 22 September 2010). This phenomenon made some Tehreek leaders, who have been traditionally spearheading collective action campaigns in Kashmir, to say that they were not in control of the protests. They were seconded by pro-Accession politicians like Omar Abdullah, who also acknowledged this reality in his public statements (Mushtaq, 2010).

This characteristic of the post-2008 protests is interesting because it provides a room to rethink the youth roles during collective action campaigns, and how leadership is redefined in such situations. The momentary leadership void or 'leaderless moment' within political movements also point to their self-sustaining and autonomous nature. And, this becomes possible when a critical mass of non-affiliated movement adherents internalises the movement politics and become part of their habitus. Among the Kashmiri youth of today, there is a strong tendency to engage in direct militant action and take a frontline role in protests and demonstrations. Some incorporate their political beliefs in their regular social roles at the local level, like within their localities and among their peers. As Abby Peterson (2001, p. 67) says, more and more young men and women of the contemporary times employ "increasingly violent enactments" to "extend their political messages to the polity". Arguing within a Durkheimian framework, Peterson further says that intense emotional moments are fostered by rituals of confrontation between protestors and police on streets, and it is these moments which heighten the "processes of collective effervescence" and forge group unity, or what Peterson calls neo-sects. So, even though traditional leaders (be that middle rung or top wrung) may remain absent from the scene, neo-sects activate themselves and

manage the groundswell however chaotic it may be. Thus, momentary 'leaderless moment' in the movement does not mean there is no one to lead the protests but that the initiative for demonstrations does not come from the above. It emerges spontaneously on the ground as a response to specific stimuli, such as police charge or raid in a neighbourhood. And, when young people act on their initiative and create a situation in which anyone, who is not formally affiliated with the movement, takes up a leadership position, it opens space for the youth to mark their presence and assert their political subjectivity. The temporary leaderless situation also allows class mobilisation within the movement leadership—and this is especially true for those movements where the elite dominates the leadership positions. Because it is mostly the working-class youth who participate in the street protests and during the moment of the leaderless situation, the working-class segment among the social movement adherents get an opportunity to assume a leadership role. There is another aspect to it. Sometimes it also occurs that politically assertive public forces the established leadership to lead them and where they find the leadership making errors they correct them.[4] Syed Ali Geelani was forced by people to take back his words which he made at a mass rally in Srinagar in 2008. Arundhati Roy also captured this episode in her 2008 Kashmir essay:

> The separatist leaders who do appear and speak at the rallies are not leaders so much as followers, being guided by the phenomenal spontaneous energy of a caged, enraged people that has exploded on Kashmir's streets. The leaders, such as they are, have been presented with a full-blown revolution. The only condition seems to be that they have to do as the people say. If they say things that people do not wish to hear, they are gently persuaded to come out, publicly apologise and correct their course.

Generational Consciousness

The recurring protest episodes 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2016 are part of the proximate memory of the contemporary youth generation of Kashmiris, whose idea of Tehreek hitherto had been distanced since they were too young to witness the turmoil of the 1990s. Also, the decade preceding 2008 was a period of relative 'calm', in which the Indo-Pakistan peace process (2004-2008) had seen some progress and spawned a 'peace discourse'. Through the economic reconstruction package given by the government of India, many developmental projects had been initiated by the coalition government, headed by a newly formed the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which promised of 'self-rule' and 'healing touch policy'. Many young men and women came of age in this period of relative calmness, although several conflict-related incidents did occur around the same time which provoked political protests. However, such demonstrations remained comparatively restricted. Between 2002 and 2005, around 6837 people had died in the conflict: 1784 civilians,

[4] For example, in January 2016, the youth of the Pulwama town started defying Hurriyat and forced the shopkeepers of the Pulwama market to keep their stores open during Hurriyat issued hartal calls, because they were not happy with the Hurriyat as the organization did not support them enough during their struggle against the district administration on the issue of setting up a public memorial for the recently killed local rebels.

3897 militants and 1155 armed forces personnel. In the same period, reported cases of enforced disappearances and custodial killings were 176 and 127, respectively. Another major event in the pre-2008 decade was the 2006 Sex Scandal in which, reportedly, many state officials were involved.[5] But again, protests remained confined. Perhaps, the only significant Tehreek-specific political campaigns and events were the Signature Campaign and *Safr-e-Azadi* (Journey to Freedom) of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front conducted in 2006 and 2007.

For the youth generation of Kashmiris, at least for those born in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the post-2008 Event thus provides a primary, immediate, and personal experience of the Kashmir conflict, because, unlike *Safr-e-Azadi* campaign of 2007, this Event was massively wide-spread, politically intense, and of a longer duration. Through this post-2008 Event, many young men and women of the new generation must have realised their position as subjects of a conflict zone, understood the significance of the received narratives about the tumultuous 1990s, about which they might have had a vague memory, or about which they knew only vicariously. Their raw exposure to the post-2008 episodes of contentious politics must have engendered their individual political and discursive positions about the Kashmir conflict. However, that is not to say, memories of traumatic events only stay with those who witness them. As Marianne Hirsch (2012) argues, the generations who have not experienced collective traumatic events can inherit memories of those events through what she calls "postmemory" or post memorial aesthetic processes, i.e. through mediated stories, images, and behaviours passed down personally by the survivors to their children or by the culture in which the generation is embedded. According to Hirsch (2014, p. 339), "postmemory describes the relationship that later generations or distant contemporary witnesses bear to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of others—to experiences they 'remember' or know only by means of stories, images, and behaviors". This idea is analogous to Sigrid Weigel's (2008) concept of "transgenerational traumatisation", where traumas of one generation can become central to the identity of a later generation, which has not witnessed or experienced that trauma.

It is thus through postmemory—mediated by different narrative genres—that the contemporary generation in Kashmir must have connected with the atrocities of the distant and recent past. Moreover, the post-2008 Event might have become a template by which to measure and make sense of the conflict in which they were born and raised but about which, since they were not mature enough, they had not developed a full understanding. It must have vindicated some aspects of the received political narratives and discourses to which they were exposed in their formative

[5] A big sex racket was exposed after Indian daily newspaper, *The Indian Express*, published a news report about in it on 27 April 2006. Jammu and Kashmir Police had found two CDs of a minor girl who was video-recorded nude and Police probe revealed a sex racket, 'involving two top politicians, 13 police and security forces officers and 43 girls' (*The Indian Express* 30 Nov 2013).

years, and, also, certain aspects of these received political conversations must have felt invalid or inconsistent in the light of the post-2008 Event. While history was unfolding in their midst, they, being the post-generation (i.e., having come of age after the 1990s) they were constituted into what Eva Hoffman (2004, p. xv) calls "the hinge generation in which received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth". To put it differently, the conflict and concomitant contentious public events must have informed their political consciousness, because, as Edmunds and Turner (2002, pp. 13-14) argue , traumatic events have a strong bearing on the consciousness and self-identity of a generation whose internalized experiences crystallize into a set of distinct values, interests and political orientation. In this regard, Karl Mannheim (1927, 1952) says that drawing from unique experiences, symbols and ideas, each generation acquires a distinct identity and modes of behaviour, feeling and thought which are often in contrast to the old generation's self-identity. It is in this theoretical backdrop that this thesis seeks to examine the Kashmiri youth narratives, to:

1) explore how the youth generation in IJK frame the significant political events,
2) what discursive strategies they employ to build their frames and express their political subjectivity,
3) and, what are the implications of these findings for our understanding of the resurgent Tehreek and the emergence of the new political generation in IJK.

Methodologically speaking, taking Kashmiri youth as an analytical category to study Tehreek in IJK has the following advantages: firstly, it overcomes what Robert Benford (1997) calls the reification problem in the social movement research. He highlights three problematics of this reification in the social movement studies: the tendency to anthropomorphise the movement, neglect of human agency, and neglect of emotions (pp. 118-19). Secondly, it also helps in overcoming the problem of elite bias. Many studies on Tehreek seem to have this problematic, even when they are empirically-grounded. For example, although John Cockell (2000) departs from the dominant perspectives on the Kashmir conflict by using the subaltern approach to the Kashmiri nationalist movement, a closer look at his informants, however, shows an elite bias in his study. Most of the informants he has interviewed are top-level political activists and journalists. Thus, even though foregrounding Kashmiri voices, Cockell's research still reflects the experiences of certain pro-Tehreek leaders. In this connection, Benford (1997, p. 421) rightly observes, "we tend to study movements either by interviewing people identified as key activists, via media accounts (most frequently newspaper stories) or by analysing movement-generated or related documents". Such an approach brings in the top-down bias in the study since we focus on the movement elites and ignore the ordinary movement workers, sympathisers and others. As Roger McGinty and Pamina Firchow (2016, p. 308) emphasise, we must acknowledge the difference between top-down and

bottom-up representations of peace and conflict for such representations are crucial in terms of potential political and policy implications, because "different framing of a conflict might lead to very different ameliorative mobilisations and responses".

Because of the nature of the research questions that this thesis deals with, it mainly focuses on the published narratives of an educated cohort of Kashmiri youth, so it may also invite accusations of elite-bias. At the outset, it must be said that this study does not seek nor claim to be one accurate representation of the whole Kashmiri youth population. Instead, its primary interest lies in the political narratives available through media sources where they are created dialogically through discursive engagements at the broader public level. Systematic analysis of published political narratives is vital to gain a nuanced understanding of nature (and diffusion) of the language of contention which a new political generation in Kashmir has inherited, reconstructed, modified, and consolidated. Thus, this research mainly focuses on the processes of narrative production.

Even though this study focuses on the published narratives of an educated cohort, the varied views of the non-elite Kashmiri youth are not entirely missing in this study. This thesis also includes and draws from the available surveys— such as the 2012 study "A Perception Survey of Media Impact on the Kashmiri Youth", conducted by Institute for Research on Indian and International Studies—which reflect the opinions of the Kashmiri youth generation. Moreover, if we wish to know how the non-elite or sub-proletariat Kashmiri youth might frame the significant political events in Kashmir, that would require a separate ethnographic inquiry, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. And yet, it could be argued that since the narratives of the non-elite youth are likely to be oriented towards the dominant collective action frames of Tehreek, we may not see much variation in how they would frame the conflict. This claim is based on two things: from the personal observations of this researcher through rich interactions with a cross-section of Kashmiri youth (both activists and non-activists) and the video evidence, accessible on YouTube and social media, where political expressions of the non-elite youth are also broadcasted.

Thesis Plan

In the introductory chapter, the youth phenomenon in IJK is situated in the context of the resurgent Tehreek, discussing why the post-2008 period is considered for this study and what makes the Kashmiri youth central focus of this research and youth narratives a topic worth scholarly investigation. Chapter 1 gives the background of the study, explaining the context of the last three uprisings in IJK (2008, 2010 and 2016). An outline of the historical trajectory of youth activism and contemporary communication opportunity structure in IJK is also provided to give a perspective about the environment (state restrictions, the role of new media etc.) which the Kashmiri youth must negotiate. Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical framework based on which the post-2008 uprisings, Tehreek, and the Kashmiri youth and their narratives are analysed. Here

the discussion focuses on the relevant concepts and theories. Firstly, the generational transmission of the contentious language is outlined. Since we are dealing with political uprisings, an overview of the idea of 'contentious politics' is provided. Contentious politics is a boarder conceptual frame under which a variety of collective actions can be analysed. It involves, in the words of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow (2007, p. 4), "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties". Contentious politics is different from social movement; however, the former is a useful concept to understand the 2008 civilian agitation, which was for the revocation of a government order. In contrast, the 2010 street protests occurred in reaction to police killings (creating a cycle of protests and killings), and the 2016 uprising broke out after an iconic rebel commander, Burhan Wani, was killed by Indian armed forces. Understanding how the 2008 civilian agitation over a government order morphed into a protest for independence becomes clear when we see how contentious politics can interact with social movement, which Donatella Porta and Mario Diani (2006, p. 5) see as "a fluid political movement in which ideas, individuals, events, and organisations are linked to each other in broader processes of collective action, with some continuity over time". So, Tehreek can be considered as a social movement, which is a historical and not a universal category as is contentious politics. Since the thesis deals with the Kashmiri youth, the chapter draws on the generational perspective, as proposed by Karl Mannheim and developed by later scholars, to understand the youth phenomenon in IJK. Karl Mannheim's thesis on generations is integrated into a review of different conceptualisations of the social category of 'youth' to get a theoretical frame for the analyses of the 'new political generation' in IJK. The narratives of this new political generation are situated in their historical location, an epoch of rapid social and political changes which have influenced their worldview and political orientation. While acknowledging that the category of youth is a social construct and it is differently understood in different parts of the world, this thesis, nevertheless, considers the people between ages 15-30 years as a youth. Keeping in view how modernisation and globalisation have prolonged educational years and age for employment this makes sense. Indeed, a large cohort of Kashmiris has gone through secondary school, which, as Pierre Bourdieu (1993, p. 96) says, have put young people "socially out of play". Thus, following Andy Furlong (2013, p. 3), youth age is defined as "essentially a period of semi-dependence that falls between the full dependency that characterises childhood and the independence of adulthood". Theories of narratives are explored and adapted to situate the Kashmiri youth narratives within the context of the post-2008 period.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods/methodology. It first evaluates the 'frame analytical approach' within the social movement studies to establish a framework under which the Kashmiri youth

narratives would be explored later. The framework borrows relevant elements from the critical discourse studies. The section on methods and strategies of data collection outlines the process involved in selecting, gathering, and managing the archive for this study. Moreover, it discusses how the coding framework was developed for analysis. For this thesis, an eclectic mix of sources has been included: newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, song lyrics, surveys, reports, and interviews. To get diverse viewpoints, diversifying source sites was considered necessary, and a range of media sites, where Kashmiri youth have published their narratives, are selected for the analyses. Coding framework is also explained in the chapter.

In chapter 4, the results of the coding and analysis of the results are presented. Based on the sample of youth-authored articles from diversified sources, the main aspects of the Kashmiri youth narratives are explored. Based on a pragmatic approach, the analysis is confined to central themes and dimensions of the narratives, to provide a 'rich description'. First, a brief overview of the historical framings of the Kashmir conflict is discussed, to get a comparative perspective and to see which elements are reproduced and which are new in the Kashmiri youth narratives. In the main analyses section, various descriptions of the political situation of Kashmir in Kashmiri youth narratives are discussed. Finally, different discursive/ideological positions as expressed (or discernible) in the youth narratives is surveyed.

Chapter 5 looks at the linguistic features and discursive strategies in the Kashmiri youth narratives. The concept of deixis is explained, and its usage in the narratives analysed. The remaining part of the chapter discusses philosophical conceptualisations of hope. Based on this discussion it is shown how the element of hope acts as a unifying thread in the youth narratives through which the culture of resistance can sustain itself at the discursive level. Chapter 6 considers the emotional components of narratives and use of figurative language in Kashmiri political discourses, especially looking at how through the metaphorical conceptualisations of Kashmir a relational dichotomy is created, collective identity expressed, and anti-state dissent done. Chapter 7 identifies the twin silences in the Kashmiri youth narratives, ideological and religious. It explains what necessitates these silences. It is argued that the ideological silence is enforced to present a coherent and unified voice of Tehreek and use of religious idioms, which otherwise are often used in the street protests and Urdu literature of Tehreek, is avoided to present the case of Tehreek in a more secularised language which is palatable to the world audiences. The final chapter provides a summary of the significant findings and concludes with the main arguments of the thesis.

Chapter 1

Background and Context of the Study

Introduction

This chapter first describes the significant political events that occurred in India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) in the year 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2016, to provide a political context of the post-2008 period that forms the immediate background of the narratives of the Kashmiri youth—which is the focus of this thesis. In the next section, basic statistics about the Kashmiri youth population are provided, followed by a brief theoretical discussion on the concept of youth bulge and its interaction with political mobilisations. The subsequent section focuses on how the anti-state political activism of Kashmiri youth is framed. Next, the discussion looks at the two types of resistance narratives written by the Kashmiri youth: the popular and the critical. While the former has more of a journalese orientation, the latter is often informed by academic scholarship and critical theoretical insights. After this, the communication opportunity structure and the alternative media in IJK is outlined, to contextualise the political and communicative environment in which the Kashmiri youth narrators have to produce and disseminate their narratives.

The 2008 Mass Civil Agitation

On 20 May 2008, the Government in IJK passed a cabinet order transferring around 800 kanal (40-hectare) of forestland to a quasi-governmental entity, Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB), which manages the annual pilgrimage to a Hindu cave shrine in the Kashmir Valley.[6] This governmental decision sparked a huge political controversy after the Chief Executive Officer of SASB, Arun Kumar—an Indian bureaucrat posted in IJK—made "brazenly communal remarks" during a press conference on 17 June in Srinagar and announced to *Rising Kashmir* newspaper that the land transfer to SASB was "permanent".[7] In the Muslim-majority Kashmir region, people protested the order and demanded its revocation, suspecting that the Indian state was planning

[6] The Cabinet Decision Number 94/7 of 20 May 2008 had stipulated certain conditions of the land transfer to SASB, including compensation payment of Indian rupees 2, 31, 30, 400 prior to any construction, plus rupees 19, 94,00 for afforestation of the land double the size of the transferred land. Moreover, SASB had only non-proprietary rights to the land. On 26 May 2008, the Forest Department passed an executive order for the land transfer vide Government Order No: 184-FST of 2008 (dated: 26 May 2008).

[7] Arun Kumar had told the correspondent of Rising Kashmir newspaper that '*Since the Forest Department cannot sell the land to us, the government has permanently diverted the 800 kanals land at Baltal to SASB*. We have to pay Rs. 2.5 crore to the Forest Department once the demarcation of the land completes. *We do not have to give it back to the Forest Department after the yatra* [pilgrimage] *ends*'. Interestingly, it was Arun Kumar's bureaucrat wife, Sonali Kumar, who in March 2005 had ordered transfer of the land at Baltal area to SASB. Her order, however, was nullified by the government (Noorani, 2008).

demographic engineering in IJK as a way to end the Kashmir conflict.[8] However, in the Hindu-dominated areas of the Jammu region, people protested in favour of the land transfer order (Thottam, 2008). In the ensuing turmoil, and protests and counter-protests, the government forces killed over 30 demonstrators in the Kashmir Valley and four in the Jammu region, and injured thousands of others (Navlakha, 2008).

In the Kashmir Valley, which has been at the forefront of the self-determination movement (or Tehreek) since the mid-1950s and has also seen an armed uprising against the Indian rule in the late 1980s, the 2008 civilian agitation infused a new lease of life into Tehreek. Because from 2004 to 2007 the 'Composite Dialogue Process' between India and Pakistan had created a brief period of relative calm in IJK and reduced incidents of anti-India political unrest.[9] The 2008 land transfer controversy provided an opportunity to the pro-Tehreek groups to mobilise people against Indian rule over IJK. Consequently, on 12 June 2008, the leading pro-Tehreek organisation in IJK, Hurriyat, conducted a press conference where they highlighted "the dangerous consequences" of the land transfer order and announced a protest programme against it (Geelani, 2015, p. 445). Under the leadership of Mian Abdul Qayoom (the president of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association), an Action Committee—which included other political and social groups—was created to spearhead the civil agitation.[10] Interestingly, the land transfer issue became a reason for reconciliation between the two factions of Hurriyat, which in 2004 had split into Hurriyat (G) and Hurriyat (M) over the issue of 'talks' with the government of India.[11] In a significant development, on 19 June 2008, three members from each faction of Hurriyat signed a document

[8] The leading newspaper of the Kashmir Valley, Greater Kashmir, published a frontpage story, claiming to have 'documents in its possession that the construction of pucca (concrete) buildings is going on a war footing at Dumhel, one of the resting points for Amarnath Cave bound pilgrims'. Moreover, in the Kashmir-based newspapers and magazines SASB was framed as a 'state-within-a state' which was working on a secret plan to engineer demographic change in Muslim-majority Kashmir region. This impression particularly gained traction among people due to the then IJK governor SK Sinha, who was believed to be associated with the Hindu right-wing organization RSS, and who was also ostentatiously promoting the pilgrimage site.

[9] This claim of relative calm in the period between 2004 and 2007 is based on crude parameter of the gradual decline in number of war-related fatalities (civilian, militant, and government forces), which, after surging in 2001 (when, according to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, 3475 deaths were reported), came down to 1964 deaths in 2004, and saw a further decline in the consequent years: 2005 (1663), 2006 (1131), 2007 (740). Moreover, this was also the period when a new coalition government of PDP-Congress was in power in IJK. The coalition partner PDP had projected itself as soft-separatist party, by appropriating the language of Tehreek and propagating its novel idea of 'Self Rule'. Perhaps, this strategic pro-Kashmir projection by the PDP had a calming effect in IJK, where people were expecting a political breakthrough regarding the Kashmir conflict through the peace process. Furthermore, at that time, India was ruled by the National Democratic Alliance government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who facilitated the talks between the Tehreek leaders and the Indian and Pakistani establishment.

[10] On 18 June 2008, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the chairman of the Hurriyat (M) faction, had also announced a meeting with Geelani on 19 June where a 'common resistance program' against the land transfer was to be discussed.

[11] G and M in the parenthesis denotes Geelani (Syed Ali Geelani) and Mirwaiz (Mirwaiz Umar Farooq). In 2004, the Mirwaiz faction had entered into talks with the government of India, while as the Geelani faction was (and still is) against the talks unless the government of India first acknowledges the disputed status of IJK.

of unity, pledging to adhere to the core agenda of the right to self-determination and tripartite talks between India, Pakistan, and the people of IJK(Geelani, 2015, p. 448).

The first public demonstration against the land transfer order was supposed to begin from a Srinagar shrine (Khanqah-e-Maula) on 23 June. Nevertheless, the state police and paramilitary locked down the entire area and arrested the Tehreek leaders, thus thwarting the protest programme.[12] Although the protest was against the land transfer order (which the media and civil society in IJK had framed as an Israeli-style ploy of demographic engineering)[13], Syed Ali Geelani in his 30 June address to a large crowd in downtown Srinagar linked the agitation to the larger political movement of Tehreek. In his speech, he said that it was not merely a matter of 40-hectares of land but "under the Indian military occupation, neither our land nor our property nor our dignity nor our honour nor our chastity nor our faith and nor our future is safe. That is why the entire quom [nation] must gear up for complete Azadi [freedom] and attainment of the right to self-determination" (Geelani, 2015, p. 450). Therefore, one of the popular slogans during the 2008 agitation was 'Jabri naata tood do/Kashmir humara chood do' (break the forced relationship/leave our Kashmir).

Under pressure from the civilian agitation, the government of IJK—under the chief ministership of Congress party's Ghulam Nabi Azad—ultimately rescinded the land transfer order on 1 July 2008.[14] However, this decision sparked counter-protests from the Hindu-dominated areas of the Jammu region, where people, with the aid of powerful right-wing groupings, formed a political front called Amarnath Sangarish Samiti, which demanded implementation of the land transfer order.[15] The situation took an ugly turn when the Jammu protestors imposed an economic blockade to choke the Kashmir Valley and starve the people of Kashmir as a way to "teach them

[12] Previously, the signature campaign of 17 June 2008 was also thwarted by the IJK police by arresting the activists conducting that program.

[13] Apparently, it was Arjimand Hussain Talib, who, in his Greater Kashmir column of 11 May 2008 had exposed the secret plan of Hindu settlements around the Amarnath cave. On 17 November 2016, Talib wrote in his Facebook post that he had received the information about the secret settlement plans (which was to be named as 'Amarnath Nagar') in spring 2008 from his friend and a Mumbai university vice-chancellor. Talib wrote in his social media note: 'We met at our office [in Kashmir]. He told me that he had been invited by [S.K] Sinha [the then governor of IJK] for a meeting to discuss a 'psychological warfare' plan for what was planned to be the Amarnath Nagar in Kashmir's Himalayas. Sinha had sought his help. Declining to be part of the plan, the VC had excused himself from the meeting, not even accepting to be reimbursed for his air travel. My friend, a secular humanist to the core, narrated the details of the plan to me with a request to make people know about that, without divulging his identity. In the coming days, I wrote 'Making of Amarnath Nagar' in my weekly column in Greater Kashmir newspaper. The rest is history'. Around the same time, influential Greater Kashmir newspaper also ran front page stories about the construction works in the ecologically fragile area leading to the Amarnath cave. These construction activities were framed as a plan of 'demographic change' being hatched by New Delhi to dilute the self-determination in IJK.

[14] PDP (Peoples Democratic Party), which was the coalition partner of the Congress party, decided to withdraw support from the PDP-Congress government on the land transfer issue. As a result, the chief minister of IJK, Ghulam Nabi Azad (of Congress), resigned on 7 July 2008. With Azad's resignation, the civilian government of IJK collapsed and paved the way for direct rule from New Delhi through the governor, who is appointed by the Government of India.

[15] The right-wing groups who supported the Jammu agitation included BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal, and Shiv Sena.

a lesson" (Navlakha, 2008). Apart from affecting essential supplies like medicines, food grains and baby food—for which the Kashmir region heavily depends on the Indian market—the economic blockade badly hit the apple industry, the mainstay of Kashmir's rural economy.[16] As the economic blockade prolonged, it induced a sense of siege among the people of Kashmir, who consequently started exploring the options to counter the blockade. It was in this context that All Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Association summoned an emergency meeting on 7 August 2008 at Sopore Fruit Market (in northern Kashmir) and it was unanimously decided there that in the light of continuing blockade of Srinagar-Jammu highway, the fruit traders will take their harvest to Muzaffarabad (the capital of the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir) on 11 August.[17] Both the factions of Hurriyat supported the call for Muzaffarabad march. On the day of direct action on 11 August, thousands of people joined, with senior Hurriyat leaders like Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Shabir Ahmad Shah fronting the marchers. IJK police prevented the fruit trucks from moving by deflating tyres of at least 200 lorries in Sopore town and fired tear gas shells at fruit growers and marchers who wanted to take out a march towards Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (*The Economic Times* 11 August 2008). In the police firing on the marchers, Sheikh Abdul Aziz succumbed to his bullet injuries.[18]

Aziz's killing mobilised many more people and sparked further anti-India protests. His *churum* (ritualistic fourth day of mourning) became an occasion for another march-on call, 'Pampore Chalo', which was scheduled for 16 August 2008. Hundreds of thousands of marchers peacefully assembled in Aziz's hometown Pampore (12-km south of Srinagar) where Tehreek leaders made speeches in favour of the right to self-determination. At the Pampore rally, Tehreek leaders also announced another march-on call 'Sonwar Chalo' for 18 August. According to the program, Tehreek leaders intended to present a memorandum to the UN office, situated in the Sonwar area of the Srinagar city.[19] However, since the area has the residences of top politicians and state officials, the IJK police asked Tehreek leaders to change their venue to Tourist Reception Centre

[16] As per an estimate, since 27 July 2008 around two thousand fruit-laden lorries had left from Srinagar to Delhi. However, by 17 August only 100 trucks could reach their destination.

[17] This meeting was also attended by traders and transport associations, bar associations of Sopore and Baramulla districts and a few religious organizations. The Muzaffarabad Chalo was essentially a bid by the Kashmir Fruit Growers Association to throw open the old (and an alternative) trade route through the capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. The call was supported by the Kashmir Fruit Growers Association, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Traders Federation, Hurriyat Conference as well as by Peoples Democratic Party (Geelani, 2015, pp. 467-69).

[18] Three more people were killed in the incident: Bashir Ahmad Malla (Khanpura Baramulla), Manzoor Ahmad Akhoon (Sheeri Baramulla), and Abdul Hameed (Kanli Bagh Baramulla). In separate firing incidents, two youth in Sopore and one in Qamarwari Srinagar were also killed on that day. Enraged crowds torched the police station of Sheeri Baramullah as well as the house of the in-charge Station House Officer of Sheeri police station, Khursheed Ahmad, who was suspected to be behind the killing of Hurriyat leader Sheikh Aziz.

[19] The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was established by the United Nations Security Council after the 1948 India-Pakistan War, as a mechanism to monitor the ceasefire line between the two states. The pro-Tehreek activists often try to present a memorandum to the UNMOGIP office at Sonwar (Srinagar) as a symbolic act to reinforce the disputed status of IJK.

(TRC) ground, located a few hundred meters from Sonwar. At TRC ground, one of the biggest pro-Tehreek rallies was witnessed on 18 August 2008. Three days later, on 21 August 2008, another hugely successful pro-Tehreek rally was organised at Eid Gah (in downtown Srinagar). At the Eid Gah rally, Tehreek leaders announced a general strike for the next three days and asked people to assemble in Lal Chowk (the city centre) on 25 August. However, in the intervening night of 23/24 August, the IJK government imposed a stringent curfew in the entire Kashmir Valley, arrested almost all the top-rung Tehreek leaders, and put a complete ban on electronic and print media. On 25 August, the day when people were supposed to march towards Lal Chowk, at least five civilians, including a woman, were killed in police firing at different places when they attempted to move towards Lal Chowk, the venue of the 25 August rally.

Successful mobilisations and large-scale participation of people in the back-to-back pro-Tehreek rallies in summer 2008 disproved the claims of those policymakers and political commentators who had been saying that the popularity of the self-determination movement in IJK had waned. Although initially, the focus of the agitation was the land transfer issue, it soon turned into a rallying cry for pro-independence demonstrations. Moreover, 2008 provided a chance to Tehreek leaders to prove their relevance in the politics of IJK, and it also manifested the popular support for the self-determination movement. On 27 August 2008, the then Inspector General of Police, S.M. Sahai, approached the top Tehreek leader, Syed Ali Geelani, and told him that there might be a settlement with the Amarnath Sangarish Samiti on the land transfer issue, so what was Hurriyat's plan after that. In his reply, Geelani said that:

> Transferring of the land to the shrine board and taking it back is just a supplementary issue and for us, the real issue is India's continuing militarised occupation of IJK. Whatever problems Kashmiris face are the offshoots of the original dispute and unless India does not get ready to resolve the Kashmir issue as per the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people the situation of uncertainty and instability will continue in the state. Even if peace is established today, the situation may deteriorate again tomorrow (Geelani 2015, pp. 482-83).

Indeed, the 2008 pro-Tehreek mass rallies in Kashmir hugely undermined the statist framing of the Kashmiri self-determination movement as a 'proxy war' of Pakistan. Whereas Pakistan's role in providing diplomatic and material support to Kashmiri armed insurgency cannot be denied, the 2008 movement was a spontaneous, home-grown civilian uprising, which would have far-reaching consequences in later years. The narrative of 'return of normalcy', which the state and a section of Indian media had been promoting after decline of the armed uprising of the 1990s and initiation of the electoral politics in 1996, was ruptured by spectacular images of massive crowds thronging pro-Thereek rallies, which were broadcasted worldwide through conventional and alternative media. This was subversive imagery which unnerved the state. Consequently, following the successful mobilisations during the 2008 mass demonstrations, the Indian state heavily restricted

political protests after the Eid Gah rally of 21 August 2008. To curb political activities, the state police frequently detained the major pro-Tehreek leaders or kept them under house arrest.

The 2009 Unrest

Nevertheless, in May 2009, following the news of rape and murder of two Kashmiri women (17-year-old Asiya and her pregnant sister-in-law Neelofar) in southern Kashmir's Shupyen town, massive protests erupted once again.[20] It was widely believed that personnel of the IJK police were behind the crime. People hit the streets, demanding justice; they also raised slogans against India and in favour of independence (Polgreen, 2009). As a mark of protest, the Kashmir region observed hartal (general strike) for ten days. In the Shupyen town, where the incident had taken place, people formed a citizen's committee called Majlis-e-Mashawarat (MeM) and went on to protest for forty-seven days (Bhat, 2009). It was during the 2009 protests—when police and paramilitary used excessive force against demonstrators—that incidents of throwing stones at the government forces spread, and would later become a regular feature of anti-India protests. In clashes between the government forces and demonstrators, at least two civilians were killed and thousands of others injured in the first two weeks of protests in June 2009. As *New York Times'* Lydia Polgreen reported on 15 August 2009, "The crime, and allegations of a bungled attempt by the local police to cover it up, set off months of sporadic street protests here in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir. It is now the focal point for seemingly bottomless Kashmiri rage at the continuing presence of roughly 500,000 Indian security forces".

Like 2008, pro-Tehreek leaders again tried to mobilise people by giving march-on calls: 'Pulwama Chalo' (on 5 June) 'Shupyen Chalo' (on 8 June) and 'Baramulla Chalo' (on 19 June). However, employing excessive force, including live rounds, the government forces prevented the marchers from reaching the venues of protest (*BBC News* 8 & 19 June 2009). Although, the forensics report, the testimonials of health officials, and the initial reports of the government-appointed Jan Commission and the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, confirmed rape of the two women, the subsequent release of the federal agency, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), declared that it was the case of drowning in the stream (called Rambiyaar) and not rape and murder. The chief minister of IJK of that time, Omar Abdullah, endorsed the CBI report, drawing wide condemnation from human rights and other civil society groups.

In its July 2009 report, "Militarisation with Impunity", the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-administered Kashmir (IPTK) details how the IJK police,

[20] On 29 May 2009, Asiya and Neelofar had gone to tend their apple orchard, located around one kilometer from their home in Bongam Shupyen. Next day, their dead bodies were found in the Rambiyaar stream on the morning of 30 May. Police registered the case under First Information Report no 112/2009 in Police Station Shopian. The forensics report, and the testimonials of the local health officials confirmed rape of the women.

whose personnel were accused to be involved in the crime, interfered in the judicial inquiry and destabilised the investigations. As the report (p. 2) says, "The investigations in Shopian [...] failed to focus on the identification and prosecution of perpetrators or on addressing structural realities of militarisation that foster and perpetuate injustices. The investigation concentrated instead on locating 'collaborators' and manufacturing scapegoats to subdue public outcry. 'Control' rather than 'justice' organised the focus of the state apparatus, including all processes related to civic, criminal, and judicial matters". Since most of the probes and investigations into human rights violations and fatalities caused by the government forces in IJK have rarely led to convictions, people, in general, have little trust in the state institutions. So, the Shupyen rape and murder case was ultimately seen yet another example in the pattern of impunity with which the government forces operate in IJK.

On the heels of the mass unrest over Shupyen rape and murder case, which brought thousands of Kashmiris to the streets, Hurriyat (G) tried to mobilise people against the military occupation of lands in IJK by announcing 'Fauji Inkhla Muheem' (the demilitarisation campaign). On 19 October 2009, during a press conference at famous Ahdoos Hotel in Srinagar, Syed Ali Geelani addressed the media and informed that Indian armed forces had occupied over 2.7 million kanal of land in which they have dumped a huge amount of ammunition (Geelani, 2015, p. 499).[21] Employing the 'demographic change' frame, he likened the situation of Kashmir with Palestine, saying Indian armed forces' occupation of land is like that of Israel, who by occupying Palestinian territories have established Jewish settlements there and have forced the indigenous residents of Palestine to migrate (Ibid). On Friday, 23 October 2009, the first peacefull, and successful, rally of the demilitarisation campaign started from Shupyen, followed by another rally in north Kashmir's Sopore town.[22] To prevent the campaign from spreading to other parts of IJK, the state police put curbs on Geelani by constantly keeping him under house arrest and detaining members of his organisation. As a result, after gaining initial success, the demilitarisation campaign eventually fizzled out due to hurdles put up by the state in its way.

The 2010 Street Protests

Yet, in the summer of 2010, another episode of widespread street protests occurred in the Kashmir Valley, initially spurred by the news of a fake encounter in which the Indian troops had killed three

[21] Exact figures given by Geelani is 27,61,140 kanals of land. In August 2009, the official figures were provided by the IJK government: "different security agencies have occupied 10,54,721 kanals (520 sq kms) of land in state. It includes 8,55,407 kanals under illegal occupation and 1,99,314 kanals occupied by the agencies on the basis of lease, licenses and acquisitions under the provision of Land Acquisition Act". As weekly Kashmir Life puts it, the land under Indian forces occupation in Jammu and Kashmir surpasses the area of Maldives, Andorra and 41 other countries (Mirani, 2009).

[22] According to a youth activist associated with Hurriyat (G), the success of 'the troops withdrawal campaign' in Shupyen can be attributed to the strong cadre base which the organization had established in the town over the years.

innocent Kashmiri civilians. On 30 April 2010, the Indian army had claimed that they had killed three 'foreign militants' in northern Kashmir's Machhil area. However, in a police investigation it turned out that the three alleged foreign militants were actually civilian residents of Rafiabad of the Baramulla district of IJK, and they were killed after lured to an army camp in Kupwara (near Line of Control) by personnel of Indian army who promised them jobs as porters at 2000 Indian rupees per day. But, they were killed in a staged encounter 'only to secure cash award' (Jaleel, 2011). It was against this staged encounter known as the Machhil fake encounter that protests erupted in June 2010 in the Srinagar city. A large contingent of armed police and paramilitary personnel suppressed the protests and in the process killed a 17-year-old student, Tufail Mattoo, on Friday evening of 11 June 2010; a teargas shell, fired by a policeman, had hit his head (Polgreen, 2010). The next day, a big crowd of demonstrators swarmed the house of the slain teenager and took his body in a procession for burial six kilometres away from his home in what is described as the largest Martyrs' graveyard of IJK (Biswas, 2010). On 13 June 2010, Tehreek leader, Syed Ali Geelani, called on people to observe hartal (shutdown) against the killing of teenager Mattoo and to march to Saida Kadal area of the downtown Srinagar. For many days, clashes erupted between stone-throwing youth and riot police at many places in the city. Perhaps, one of the reasons for intensified and often violent protests was that the government forces had killed teenagers in previous months and people perceived the latest killing as part of a pattern: Irfan Ahmad Lone (12) on 2 October 2009 (The Hindu 3 October 2009), Inayat Khan (16) on 8 January 2010, Wamiq Farooq (13) on 31 January (Hussain, 2010), and Zahid Farooq (16) on 5 February (BBC 10 February 2010). Thus, Mattoo's killing was framed by Tehreek leaders as a 'systematic' targeting of young Kashmiris, and in its press statement, published by *Greater Kashmir* (14 June 2010), Hurriyat leaders castigated the government for killing teenagers 'at will':

> There have been similar killings in the past. In the last few months, police and [Indian] forces have been targeting teenagers at will as they have been given unbridled powers.

As the 2008-2009 Gaza assault, in which Israeli forces had killed over 280 Palestinian kids, was in recent memory, Hurriyat's framing of the teenagers' killings might have resonated in Kashmir, where the Palestine conflict is anyway part of the political discourses. All the pro-Tehreek organisations in IJK supported the call for protests and hartal. Some termed the killings of teenagers as 'genocide' (*Greater Kashmir* 14 June 2010). The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) condemned what it termed as the use of "disproportionate force to quell protests" (Wani, 2010). Most Kashmiri newspapers carried the pictures and news of slain teenagers on their front pages (see Figure 8) for many days. Each police killing sparked public protest often lead by youth and during each protest police killed demonstrators to quell what was emerging as a youth-led anti-India uprising.

Throughout the summer of 2010, massive street protests were reported across the Kashmir Valley. International media regularly covered these protests. The government either accused Pakistan for the unrest in IJK or framed these protests as mob violence attributable to drug-addicted youth. By ending September 2010, the cycle of street protests had stopped, but the state repression and police killings left behind over 110 people—most of them young—dead and thousands injured and maimed (Bedi, 2010). In nocturnal raids on private residences, the armed police detained hundreds of young protestors, lodging some of them in prisons in the Jammu region. Some of these arrested youths would later pick up arms against the state after facing torture in jails.

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NEWS

Omar should step down: ANC

P|3

Due to unavoidable circumstances *Rising Kashmir's* today's edition comprises 8 pages only

Amid siege cops thrash mourners, thousands attend funeral

- 45 hurt in fresh clashes
- Safakadal boy critical
- CRPF blamed for atrocities

DAY 2

Dance of Death: Jan-June 2010

Police awaiting autopsy report

Will Tufail's case go the Wamiq way?

Figure 8: Rising Kashmir front page (13 June 2010)

To address the deteriorating situation and youth rebellion in IJK, the Congress party-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in New Delhi appointed a three-member team of interlocutors in October 2010: academician Radha Kumar, journalist Dileep Padgaonkar, and bureaucrat M.M. Ansari. Their task was to talk to different sections of people in IJK and come up with recommendations for a political roadmap. However, the report they produced after spending several weeks in IJK was never seriously considered by New Delhi, and the situation in IJK continued to remain uncertain and unstable. One of the serious consequences of this continuing political uncertainty and the oppression unleashed during and after the 2010 protests on Kashmiri youth was that it ultimately led to what is now known as 'the new age militancy' in which many Kashmiri young men took up arms against Indian rule. One of them was a 15-year old teenager from south Kashmir's Tral town, Burhan Muzafar Wani, whose death would later spark an intensive anti-Indian uprising in July 2016.

The Burhan Wani Phenomenon and the 2016 Uprising

Belonging to a prosperous, educated family, and one of the five children of a government school principal, Burhan Muzaffar Wani hailed from the municipal town of Tral, located approximately 40 km south of the Srinagar city. One evening in the summer of 2010, Wani along with his brother Khalid and a friend were riding on Yamaha FZ bike on the roads of Tral. Personnel of Special Operations Group (a counter-insurgency wing of the IJK police) stopped them and asked to fetch cigarettes. As they were leaving after handing over cigarettes, the police and paramilitary men pounced on them, hurting Khalid (who fell unconscious). Burhan Wani and his friend flee the spot. From a distance, the enraged Wani shouted at the forces, "I will avenge this".

At the time of this incident, Wani was just 15-years-old student of the 10th standard at the government higher secondary school (in Dadsar Tral). Perhaps, making good of his vow, during one night six months later, he left his home and joined the indigenous rebel group Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), whose cadres in Tral operated out from the surrounding dense forests.[23] When Guardian's war correspondent Jason Burke wrote about Wani in August 2013, he was a little-known figure—although within the militant organisations Wani was emerging as a rebel leader under the nom de guerre of Aarif Khan.[24] Gradually, Wani would attract many more young and educated youth to join the armed movement, shaping what came to be described as the 'new age militancy'—which, unlike the insurgency of the 1990s, was composed of tech-savvy, educated, and young cohort of highly motivated rebels who rarely surrendered.[25] Another characteristic of this new wave of militancy was the liberal use of social media by the armed rebels.

Moreover, unlike the guerrillas of the 1990s, the new age militants did not veil their faces, they communicated directly with people and the state through video and audio clips, which found their way into the mobile phones of people in IJK and beyond. Being tech-savvy, Wani made use of social media to create a subversive visual culture, facilitated, ironically, by the communication infrastructure set up the state.[26] His story resonated with the youth of IJK, but it was partially

[23] According to Burhan Wani's father, Muzaffar Ahmad Wani, his son was detained and beaten up by security forces but the thought of revenge lasted in him for only 15 days following his release. He is not sure whether it was his son who contacted the militants or "maybe they [militants] heard about him and got in touch. Then he went. It was only 10 days before his exams" (Burke, 2013).

[24] It was after an audio clip of the last call of a trapped militant, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat (of Lurgam Tral), got leaked that Burhan Wani's name became known to many people through social media shares. Bhat had mentioned Wani's name to an unknown caller, through whom the trapped militant, facing an imminent death during the gun-fight with the Indian troops, wanted to convey a message to Wani. He had said to the unknown receiver of the call, 'Tell Burhan to pray for my forgiveness'. Moreover, Wani's cousin, Adil Mir, was already a top militant (Divisional commander of HM for south Kashmir). Mir became Wani's mentor and after his [Mir's] death in 2013, Wani got the command of the rebel group (Sultan, 2018).

[25] According to a report, of the total of 393 Kashmiri youths who became armed rebels since 2011, at least 100 were graduates or post-graduates (Banakar, 2018).

[26] According to one estimate, while 25% people in Kashmir had access to social media in 2010, it rose to around 70% by 2015.

through social media—where his visuals often showed him posing nonchalantly, smiling and playing with his comrades—that the legend of Burhan Wani emerged; he was given honorific titles by his youth audiences, some named him 'Robinhood of Tral' and some affectionately called him Burhan Bhai (Brother Burhan). It was the unprecedented circulation of pictures and videos of this young, charismatic rebel that created what anthropologist Mohamed Junaid (2016) calls "visual counterculture". As Junaid writes:

> It was not the military logic of 'recruitment' that undergirded Burhan's pictures (as the 'poster boy' theorists would have us believe); neither do I think he intended to create a new visual counterculture of the rebellious Kashmiri youth. The images simply reclaimed the humanity of the 'Kashmiri militant', and reconnected the idea of the rebel with his people at the visceral level. His images also acquired a symbolic logic over time: To exist as a joyous rebel undermined the entire story the Indian state tells its citizens and Kashmiris. If the 'new militancy' was anything, then, it was the emergence of the new exuberant new movement driven by spontaneous solidarities, and the collective expression of popular sentiment against the forces of occupation.

During the post-2008 protests, many young Kashmiris were injured, maimed, shot down and many more were humiliated, detained and tortured in jails. On the political front, nothing concrete was happening except for the so-called 'engagement' policy through which Indian state sought to either Indianize Kashmiri youth (by taking them to all-India tours called 'Watan ki Sair') or facilitate their placement in private companies or engage them in sports activities. Although the Manmohan Singh government had appointed a three-member interlocutor group which submitted its report in May 2012, and the home minister of India, P. Chidambaram, had also acknowledged that Kashmir was "a unique problem which needs a unique solution", nothing substantial was executed in political terms. For example, the interlocutors' report among other things suggested meaningful autonomy, developmental package, removal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which gives impunity to Indian armed forces in IJK. So, in the absence of any satisfying and concrete political initiative, and, crucially, due to the continuing harassment of Kashmiri youth by Indian security forces, some political commentators had, as early as 2010, been cautioning about the possible resurrection of armed militancy in IJK.

Ultimately, Burhan Wani played a significant role in reviving the armed rebellion in IJK, by becoming an influential recruiting player for the 'new age militancy'. Utilising novel methods, he popularised the armed rebellion and achieved unprecedented fame in the social media age. His charismatic personality resonated with the youth generation, who felt (and still feel) chocked in the stifling and perpetually uncertain political environment. He along with other young armed rebels became a voice of the youth generation (Anand and Kumar, 2016). So, when he was ultimately killed by the government forces on 8 July 2016, spontaneous protests erupted in Kashmir (Motta, 2016). By some estimates, over 200,000 people participated in his funeral in hometown Tral (Irfan, 2016). On 9 July 2010, the state government imposed curfew in all the ten districts of the Kashmir Valley and attempted to crush the pro-Burhan Wani protests and prevent the mourners from

reaching Tral, where Wani's funeral was to be held. But, in this violent process, the police and paramilitary forces indiscriminately fired live ammunition and metallic pellets at protestors, killing scores of people. Many young protestors lost their eyesight (in either one or both eyes) after hit by metallic pellets fired by the government forces through pump-action shotguns. The unprecedented use of 'pellet guns' resulted in what *The New York Times* described as "an epidemic of dead eyes" (Barry, 2016). During the four-month-long uprising, over 90 civilians were killed and more than 15000 injured (Yasir, 2017). Two security personnel also died, and many more got hurt during the clashes with stone-throwing protestors. One policeman, Afroz Ahmad, died when the police vehicle he was driving was tipped into the river Jhelum by an angry mob at Sangam area in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Figure 9: Front page of Kashmiri newspapers featuring Burhan Wani's photo

The sheer scale of the 2016 demonstrations made it one of the most massive anti-India political uprisings in the modern history of IJK; some commentators called it a 'rural uprising' (due to large participation of the rural population in the protests), others called it 'a revolt'. As Kashmir expert, A.G. Noorani, wrote in the *Frontline* magazine (19 August 2016):

> What the country has witnessed since July 8, 2016, in Kashmir is not one of the periodic "eruptions" there. It is far graver than even the grave one of 2010 following the murder of Tufail Mattoo. That subsided; as did the previous ones, fortifying long-held delusions in India. But this one was a virtual revolt waiting to happen. It will linger. I write "virtual" advisedly, for it is still not quite a revolt proper. But that can well occur with fearful consequences.

Noorani was proved right, ultimately. The 2016 uprising did linger and spilt over to 2017. On 15 April 2017, the armed police barged into a Government College in south Kashmir's Pulwama town which provoked anti-India protests from students across the Kashmir Valley. In solidarity with their Pulwama college colleagues, some of whom had been injured in the police action, students clashed with riot police at several places and campuses. *The Indian Express* described these protests as "a continuation of the post-Burhan Wani unrest among the Valley's youth" (Masood, Ehsan & Subramanian, 2018). During the same time, local recruitment into rebel groups surged after the 2016 uprising, with 126 Kashmiri youths picking up arms in 2017 alone and 164 by October 2018.[27] Moreover, incidents of youth-led protests continued, with clashes between the government forces and stone-throwing youth becoming a common occurrence during the gun-fights between Indian troops and the rebels—at least 106 civilians were killed near gun-fight sites from January 2017 to August 2018 (Bashir, 2018).

Ultimately, what the post-2008 uprisings, and intermittent anti-India protests, show is that the contemporary youth generation of Kashmiris has been deeply politicised (or Tehreekized) in the last two decades. Confronting repressive state policy of conflict management in IJK, they are not averse to take risks to articulate themselves politically, though with fatal consequences sometimes. Some of them have become armed rebels.[28] However, some youths engage in street protests (including stone-throwing), and others articulate their politics through different mediums and forms. Nonetheless, while the Kashmiri youth's political activism is primarily situated within the context of Tehreek, there are also global influences which inform their worldview. As a background to the empirical chapters where the post-2008 Kashmiri youth narratives will be systematically analysed, the next section will first provide some relevant empirical data about the Kashmiri youth population and their political activism to get a perspective.

The Actual Youth Population in Kashmir

Estimating the actual youth population in Kashmir depends on which age group is being talked about. In the context of this thesis, the age group 18-30 years is considered as a youth (see Chapter 3 for discussion on the concept of youth). Considering that in 2011 IJK's total population was 12,541,302 (over 12 million), the official youth population (15-24 years old) then amounts to only 19 per cent (2,398,375). However, if the broader age bracket of youth (used by the European Union

[27] On 6 February 2018, the then Chief Minister of IJK, Mehbooba Mufti, informed the IJK legislative assembly that 66 local youth in 2015, 88 in 2016 and 126 in 2017 had joined armed groups. Sudden jump in local recruitments in 2017 indicates that the 2016 uprising played a major role. Based on the police sources, Majid Jahangir of *The Tribune* reported on 3 September 2018 that by August 2018, there were 211 local militants, majority of them (181) coming from southern Kashmir, the area where from Burhan Wani hailed. In fact, in 2018, the number of militants had crossed 300 for the first time in the last decade (Jahangir, 2018).

[28] Since 2010, over 400 Kashmiri young men have joined militant organizations to fight the Indian rule over IJK. Also, there has increase in the number of young Over Ground Workers (OGW's), who provide covert logistics and other support to the armed rebels.

and other global organisations) is considered, i.e., 15-29 years old, then the youth population in I JK would amount to over 27 per cent or 3,484, 497 people (see Table 1 below).[29]

Age group	Total	Male	Female
All	12541302	6640662	5900640
15-19	1237462	640362	597100
20-24	1160913	603578	557335
25-29	1086122	584559	501563
15-29 (combined)	**3,484,497**		
15-24 (combined)	**2,398,375**		
0-29 (below 30)	**7,725,208**		

Table 1 The youth population in IJK by different age groups[30]

As per the 2011 census, the total population of the Kashmir Valley (composed of 10 districts) was 6,888,475 (over 6 million), and the official youth population (15-24 age) was 1,326,903 or 19 per cent. However, the under-30 age group in Kashmir was over 63 per cent.[31] (see the table below).

Another youth category considered is a 13-25 age group, which some state officials in IJK claim represents 50 per cent population of Kashmir or half of its total population. But when calculated based on the 2011 census, the percentage of the 13-25 age group in Kashmir amounted to 25.84 per cent of the total population in the Valley and not 50 per cent.[32] Likewise, the portion of the

[29] IJK is comprised of 3 regions namely Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. It has total of 22 districts. Jammu and Kashmir regions have 10 districts each, while as Ladakh has 2 districts. The Kashmir region is more populous of the three regions: Kashmir (54.92%) Jammu (42.89%) and Ladakh (2.19%). The urban population of IJK is 27.38%, while as rural population is 72.62%. The Kashmir region has more urban population at 31.61% followed by Ladakh region at 22.61% and then Jammu at 22.20%. Religious composition of IJK is: Muslims (68.31%), Hindus (28.44%), Sikhs (1.87%), Buddhists (0.90%), Christians (0.28%) and others (0.19%).

[30] Since the age-wise population data of the three regions of IJK (Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh) is published in aggregate, there is no separate youth population estimate available for the Kashmir region, which is the focus of this study. However, the 2011 Census of India does provide district-wise statistics on different parameters (like age, education and employment). Based on this district-wise data, the youth population of the Kashmir region was calculated.

[31] As per the 2011 census, the number of people in the age bracket of 0-29 years was 7,725,208 (over 7 million) in IJK (all the three regions included), while in the Kashmir region, it was 4,363,977 (over 4 million). So, when the number of 0-29 years old (4,363,977) is divided by the total population of the Kashmir Valley (6,888,475), it amounts to 63.35%. The Anantnag district in Kashmir has the highest under-30 population among the ten districts of the Kashmir region: 704145. It is followed by Srinagar (central Kashmir) and Baramulla (north Kashmir) which has 693238 and 636524 people in this group, respectively.

[32] Calculating this age group involved intricate method: the 2011 Census provides age related data in three categories: Single Year Age: from 0 to 100 plus; Five-Year Age Group, e.g., 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 etc.; and, the Adolescent and Youth Population, which has different categories: 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, Youth (15-24) and Adolescence (10-19). To calculate the 13-25 age group in Kashmir's ten districts, firstly the 'Single Year Age' data was used for ages 13 and 14. Then, 15-19, 20-24 age group from the 'Five-Year Age' data was added. And finally, the 'Single Year Age'

youth in the age group of 15-30 years was 30 per cent and not 40 per cent as claimed by Professors Navnita Chadha Behera and Gull Wani.[33] (see the table below).

S. No.	District	15-30 Years Age Group Population
1.	Anantnag	309053
2.	Badgam	211355
3.	Bandipora	124762
4.	Baramulla	314893
5.	Gandarbal	92810
6.	Kulgam	130773
7.	Kupwara	241275
8.	Pulwama	173637
9.	Shupiyan	87071
10.	Srinagar	395145
11.	All Districts (Total)	**2,080,774**

Table 2 District wise youth population (15-30 years old) in the Kashmir Valley

So, as the calculations based on the 2011 Census shows, the percentages usually cited in media and policy documents have been incorrect. This is the case across the youth age categories considered (under-30, 13-25 or 15-30). The actual percentage of the youth population in the Kashmir region in each of the age categories considered is the following:

Age Group Considered	Total population	Percentage
13-25	1,780,337	25.84%
15-30	2,080,774	30.20%
15-24 (Official)	1,326,903	19.26%
15-29	1,902,873	27.82%
Under-30	4,363,977	63.35%

Table 3 The youth population in the Kashmir Valley in different youth age categories

data was again used for age 25. The final summation gave total of 1,780,337 people, which, when divided by the total population of the Kashmir Valley, comes to 25.84%.

[33] The method of calculation for 15-30 age group: first, the age 15-29 was calculated by using the 'Five-Year Age' data, which came to 1902873. This sum was added up by the aggregate of 30-years age group in ten districts of Kashmir by using the 'Single Year Age' data, which amounted to 177901. The final aggregate for 15-30 age group in Kashmir was 2080774 (or 30.20%).

These calculations raise a pertinent question: are the claims of 'youth bulge' in IJK then empirically inaccurate? And, by extension, does this statistical inaccuracy undermine the argument that the factor of youth bulge can explain the recent political violence in the Kashmir Valley (Swami, 2010). To adequately answer this question, we must delve into the concept of 'youth bulge' and its relevance in the context of Kashmir. In other words, do those conditions exist in Kashmir in which youth bulge can lead to political unrest? However, given the space constraints exploring this aspect in detail is not feasible, besides this thesis has a different theoretical focus.

Youth Bulge and Political Mobilisations

Youth are considered as idealistic as well as agents of change. Because young people are usually open to new ideas, that often make them challenge the established authority and norms. However, young peoples' willingness to engage in political activism or violence can be attributed to their social position, since they confront fewer responsibilities and have relatively more freedom of action (Goldstone, 1999). Doug McAdam (1986) shows in the case of the Freedom Summer campaign of the 1960s that participation of a large number of young activists in it was due to their 'biographical availability,' i.e., they were unencumbered by familial or professional obligations. As Karl Mannheim (1944, p. 40) also argues in this regard, "Youth has no vested interests yet, either in an economic sense or in terms of habits and valuations, whereas most of the settled adults have". While in the view of some scholars, youth are perceived as agents of modernisation—for example, Bloom & Williamson (1998) and Bloom & Finlay (2009) attributes impressive growth rate in Asian Tiger economies to youth population ('demographic dividend'), which is an efficient and productive labor force in comparison to other groups—they are also seen as potential and decisive agents of contentious politics by others. This view tries to establish a causal link between demographics and conflict (Moller, 1968; Choucri, 1974). For example, Jack Goldstone (2001, p. 95) argues that:

> Youth have played a prominent role in political violence throughout recorded history: and the existence of a 'youth bulge' (an unusually high proportion of youths 15–25 relative to the total population) has historically been associated with times of political crisis.

Some scholars believe that frequent occurrences of intra-state armed conflicts might be related to the phenomenon of youth bulges, because the growing young population puts strain on state resources and institutions and, in the process, fosters grievances—large youth cohorts would mean more aggrieved people—and when their grievances remain unaddressed political violence may follow (Urdal, 2004). This understanding leads many commentators and policymakers in India to link the recent political mobilisations in the Kashmir region to the issue of youth unemployment and radicalisation. For example, in a 2012 interview, the then Inspector General of Police in IJK,

Shiv Murari Sahai, attributed political unrest in Kashmir to radicalisation among youth: "Our problem today is a radicalised youth bulge [in Kashmir]. Some 50 per cent of the population is between the ages of 13 and 25" (Shukla, 2012). Similarly, for academic Nikhil Raymond Puri (2017) the anti-state youth political activism in Kashmir is primarily underpinned by economic and psychological factors:

> Take 2,80,000 young men from an area spanning 15,948 sq. Km, educate them beyond the national average, then deprive them of jobs, deplete their self-esteem, and limit their search for a purpose to a history of secessionist sentiment, street noise, and militant violence. Nestle these conditions between the Pir Panjal and the mighty Himalayas and you have the present-day reality of the Kashmir valley.

Nevertheless, some political commentators take a more circumspect view, and while acknowledging that the youth are significant factor, but the conflict itself cannot be attributed to having one cause, though there is "little doubt […] that Kashmir's youth bulge has provided the firmament for the crisis to flourish" (Swami, 2010).

Richard Braungart (1984) shows that unemployment and lack of alternative avenues of income-generation among the large pool of young cohorts produces a precarious situation in which they become negatively disposed towards their political system and this situation "weakens the political system's legitimacy and stability" (p. 16). Once this condition prolongs, the young population become inclined to radicalism, because they have not much to lose. In a situation where a country is experiencing a major economic downturn, its youth bulge may then become a curse for it, as it will create a despairing condition which might breed extremism (Choucri, 1974, p. 73). For Paul Collier (2000, p. 94), the absence of any alternative for income generation and persistence of poverty is likely to breed rebellion, because for young people rebellion itself may present an opportunity to generate income. The reason that educated unemployed youth may be inclined to take a lead role in organising protests and joining rebellion may be therefore attributed to unrealised aspirations: economic and political. As Braungart (1984, p. 16) says, "The underemployment and unemployment prospects for university educated youth in many developing countries, as well as in more advanced developed countries, enlarge the reservoir of latent rebellion from which revolutionary politics can be drawn". If a rapidly growing educated population is not absorbed in the economy, there is the likelihood of dissatisfaction and unrest. However, Collier (2000) and Urdal (2004) holds the view that for the youth with the high level of education, income-opportunities are likely to be high, so this aspect reduces the chance of conflict. Because costs of rebellion for them are comparatively higher than the less educated, for whom income-opportunities are likely to be low. Urdal (2012, p. 9) argues that "the level of secondary education appears to have a pacifying effect on large youth bulges in low and middle-income countries, although the effect appears to be contingent on structural economic factors". This view, however, is opposed by

Bricker and Foley (2013), who argues that the higher educational level does not lower the risk of violence. Using their unique measurement of Youth Risk Factor, they establish a link between the increase in the ratio of the youth population (17-26) to the total labour force and the likelihood of an outbreak of violence.

Apart from unemployment, the regime type may also be a factor for youth propensity for political violence. Lack of political opportunity, democratic rights, and freedoms, and persistent political repression can become a cause for some youth cohorts to take to political violence. However, it is argued that the highly autocratic and highly democratic states are less likely to see political violence than the semi-democratic or semi-autocratic states (Urdal, 2012, p.4). Besides, emigration may also minimise the risk of unrest, because by migrating to other regions and countries, youth can find employment opportunities there and lessen the pressure on the home state. Yet, as Urdal (2012) says, despite statistical studies and structural models that assess the interaction between youth demographics and political violence, "there is very limited micro-level evidence explaining what motivates youth who engage in political violence". Therefore, there is a need for sub-regional, micro-level studies which can explain the way youth bulge has a bearing on conflict and political violence.

In IJK, the Indian state uses wide-ranging repressive methods to deal with political dissent and anti-India protests. It also controls the communication channels (including internet) and local news media organisations through surveillance and advertisement policy. In this situation, government employees are less likely to take part in protests, given the high cost involved, like suspension and arrest. For example, in 2016, around 130 state employees faced action for their participation in the street protests during the summer uprising in IJK (Ahuja, 2016). So, the employed young men and women would be unwilling to take risks and participate in anti-India protests. However, for unemployed youth, who do not face professional obligations and pressures, taking to streets is less risky in that respect. Though there are inhibitive factors for them as well, such as state repression and violence. For example, since 2008, thousands of Kashmiri youth were arrested for their political activism, some detained under the draconian law Public Safety Act (PSA) without recourse to trial for months. Moreover, many civilian demonstrators were injured and maimed (some blinded) by pellet guns used by the Indian police and paramilitary.

Kashmir certainly has a youth bulge, and it indeed is a factor in the recent political mobilisations. However, more than lack of economic opportunities and unemployment among youth, it is the political culture of the resurgent Tehreek and the state repression of political dissent which leads to recurrent unrest and violence in Kashmir. If economics was the reason behind the recent political tumult in IJK then educated youth from well-off families would not take part in Tehreek politics, whether by engaging in peaceful dissent or picking up arms (Naseem, 2018). Yet,

suspension of democratic rights, militarization of the civilian spaces, daily harassment of the local population at the hands of the Indian security personnel, unaccountability of the local political elite and government bureaucracy all contribute to the accumulation of political grievances, but these are symptoms (even imperatives) of the militarised occupation and not the main reason of the youth revolt in IJK.

How is Anti-State Political Activism of the Kashmiri Youth Framed

Even when the dominant state and media perspectives in India describe its young population as a great human resource for the nation-building project, the Kashmiri youth gets framed as a problematic group which needs to be assimilated. The proactive participation of the Kashmiri youth in anti-India street protests and political dissent has produced a dualistic perception about them in the official circles and the mainstream Indian media. Although this dualistic perspective on the Kashmiri youth existed in the 1990s also, it prominently manifested itself after the 2010 uprising, in the debates on the Kashmiri youth in the Indian parliament as well in the media discussions. As Priyanka Talwar (2016, pp. 115-63) shows in her study, Indian state adopts a paternalistic attitude towards the Kashmiri youth, viewing them as alienated, misguided, or brainwashed. Their political activism is projected not as an exercise of their independent agency but as a manifestation of their alienation and misguidedness. For example, in an interview in November 1993, the then Governor of the IJK, General K. V. Krishna Rao, had remarked, "…The militants are not our enemies either, they are just misguided youth" (Baweja, 1993). In 2006, the chairman of Indian government-appointed Working Group, Hamid Ansari, also used the term "misguided youth" in his press statement, when he said: "At this time, I am not in a position to make the recommendation of working group headed by me, but as per the outlines of the recommendations we have recommended that misguided youth who have crosses to the other side of Kashmir should be allowed to return to their homes" (Haleem, 2006). Likewise, the Minister of State for Prime Minister Office, Jitendra Singh, said in July 2016: "I think it is important for them [the Kashmir youth] to realize that they should not get misguided by the so-called protagonists of terrorism who are sacrificing them at the altar of what they subjectively describe as a freedom fight; at the same time, they have ensured that their own children are lodged in safe havens" (*The Indian Express* 16 July 2016).

In the mainstream Indian media, Kashmiri youth are either projected as 'Pakistani agents', 'terrorist sympathisers', 'radicals', 'pather-baaz' or shown 'defying separatist and militants' when they join the police or paramilitary, qualify the civil services and other competitive exams. From the perspective of the Indian state and a section of the mainstream Indian media, Kashmiri youth who challenge the state are deemed as deviant, anti-national, miscreants, and considered as outside 'the mainstream'. But, those who keep their activities confined to social and developmental works, join

pro-India political parties, and eschew challenging the state, are considered as within 'the mainstream' and receive state patronage. For the former group (i.e., political dissenters mainly), the state has devised policy measures (like corporate job placements, scholarships, and sports) to 'engage' them and bring them 'back' to the mainstream. A perfect illustration of how the Indian state frames the anti-state political activism of the Kashmir youth is captured in the following statement of a senior officer of the Indian army, published in The Indian Express (19 February 2017). When asked by journalist Muzamil Jaleel: "You mentioned an increase in local recruitment. How does the military conduct operations in an area where a major chunk of the population does not want to be with the country?", the Lieutenant General Deependra Singh Hooda (who had been the senior most officer of the Indian army in IJK between 2012-16) responded:

> Yes, there is anger and a certain amount of angst among the [Kashmiri] youth. See, the answers are not difficult, and it is not rocket science to understand what needs to be done. There is a need for engagement, particularly with the youth. I think 70 per cent of the population there is below 30 years of age. They don't have opportunities. They are also reluctant to come out of the state. There is enough scope for generating employment. There is scope for talking to these guys, understanding what they need. We need to talk to the traders, taxi owners, people in the tourism industry, students, we need to talk to everyone.

Nevertheless, the operative term of the state policy 'engagement' is a bit vague, because its specifics have not been coherently spelt out so far. Hence, 'engagement' is understood and interpreted in different ways by different people. For example, in the statement cited above, the Indian army officer talks mostly about generating employment, so, it is understood specifically in economic terms. However, a slightly different interpretation of the term is offered by the pro-Accession party the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC):

> We need to understand there is a significant, palpable social sanctity for militancy in the young demographic in Kashmir and this derives its vitality from the political sentiment and how New Delhi has failed to engage with the sentiment in a sustained and constructive manner.[34]

So, there are mainly two strands of the state narrative on the Kashmiri youth political activism and anti-state dissidence. One is a moderate version, which calls for dialogue and reconciliation with the 'alienated' and 'misguided' youth.[35] In this version, politics of the Kashmiri youth anti-state activism is acknowledged, but their mode of protest like stone-throwing is denounced. In the second version, which is mostly used by the Indian military officers and the right wing political parties of India, the anti-state political activism of the Kashmiri youth is denounced wholesale by

[34] The party statement was jointly issued by NC's State Spokesperson Junaid Azim Mattu and Political Secretary to Working President Tanvir Sadiq (*Greater Kashmir* 17 Feb 2017).

[35] For example, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Veeri, the National Conference's member in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council, also talks about 'engagement' but in political terms: "The youth of Kashmir have definite political aspirations. It is for the government of India to identify and address those aspirations. Unfortunately, the dominant narrative prevailing in New Delhi is that the Jammu and Kashmir is a development issue bereft of any political content. Engagement of Kashmiri youth is a need of the hour. The state suppression is only making the matters worse" (Veeri, 2016).

employing violent language and threats. For example, on 17 February 2017, the Indian army chief, Bipin Rawat, had warned the Kashmiri youth with a "harsh" response if they created hurdles during the gunfights with rebels in the localities. A year later, he repeated his belligerent talk. Directly addressing the Kashmiri youth, *The Indian Express* (10 May 2018) quoted him saying:

> I want to tell Kashmiri youth that Azadi isn't possible. It won't happen. Don't get carried away unnecessarily. Why are you picking up weapons? We will always fight those who seek Azadi, those who want to secede. (Azadi) is not going to happen, never (Jaleel, 2018).

Despite the state policy of engagement, through which several Kashmiri youths have found jobs in the corporate sector outside IJK and become part of sports activities, the Kashmiri youth continue to take a proactive role in the resistance politics. Since 2010, there has been a steady rise in their recruitment into militant organisations, and many have been jailed for peaceful political activism as well. Then there are those who express their dissent through political narratives, art, and multimedia productions. For this latter group of youth dissidents, the primary challenge is to negotiate the communication opportunity structure, which the state regulates in IJK. Some of the peaceful youth dissenters have also been harassed by the state police by summoning them to police stations or keeping them under constant surveillance.

The Popular and The Critical Resistance Narratives

The legitimacy of any self-determination movement depends on the popularity of its national ideology. But, as Breuilly (1993, p. 62) argues, for a national ideology to be effective and accessible "it needs simplification, repetition and concreteness". Simplification involves underlining ethnic distinctness, reproducing a national history, and typecasting the opponent. Repetition consists of continuous broadcasting of political rhetoric and speeches, folklore and songs etc. And, lastly, concreteness entails observance of national rituals, commemorations, and symbolic acts (Ibid). The self-determination movement in IJK or Tehreek incorporates all these essential components to propagate and reinforce its ideology.

However, the resistance discourse of Tehreek can be divided into two broad categories: critical and popular narrative. While carrying similar content and political and ideological messages, these narrative types somehow vary in terms of their language use and the audience they can reach. Though this contrast between the popular and critical narratives is not absolute, and it should not be construed that popular is not critical or critical cannot be popular. Regarding the style of writing and the tone of analyses, the difference between the two types lies in the method of critique: the critical narratives often make use of academic jargons and utilise theoretical frameworks, while as the popular narratives employ run-of-the-mill journalistic English and often deploy rhetorical language. Nonetheless, those who produce critical narratives are also capable of writing popular narratives, though those who create popular narratives may not be competent or have the required

skills and training to write critical pieces. Social and cultural capital in terms of better academic training, access to higher education and the networks of the cultural elite may be a factor in creating this sort of division of narrative labour. Many popular narratives are produced by newspaper columnists, journalists, bloggers, social media activists, professionals, retired officials, political activists and student writers. One of the features of the popular narratives on Kashmir is that they may provide fine analyses of politics, but often they are a simple description of current affairs. Nonetheless, their importance is that they are comparatively more effective in achieving 'simplification' of the Tehreek ideology.

A cursory glance at the op-ed pages of the Kashmir-based newspapers and magazines shows that there is a repetition of specific themes and deliberation on the same political and historical events in the popular narratives. A 2012 survey of the news content in widely-read *Greater Kashmir* found that between 2008 and 2010 out of 505 stories 63 per cent covered the Kashmir conflict, 40 per cent were about the resistance politics and the state and non-state violence (Behera, 2012, pp. 21-23). Repetition of pro-Tehreek narratives is also noticeable in the way the following themes are regularly covered in the Kashmiri media: the commemorations of the massacres, the death anniversaries of prominent pro-Tehreek political leaders and activists killed during the past three decades, the debate on the 1947 Accession, the UN resolutions on Kashmir, the promises of plebiscite by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Article 370 that governs the relationship between the Union of India and IJK. For example, in mid-October 2010, Greater Kashmir carried back-to-back op-eds on the Accession debate, almost for two weeks. Often, political events prompt these debates. For example, on 1 December 2016, when the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, said at a political rally at Jammu that there should be a debate on Article 370 it spurred a flurry of editorials and op-eds in Kashmiri papers. But, there has been a pattern of discussion on the 1947 Accession, always appearing in October, corresponding with the time when the said accession had taken place on 26 October 1947.

The draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (which gives impunity from prosecution to the Indian armed forces in IJK) and the Public Safety Act (under which political dissidents are arrested without trial) are also significant themes of debate and deliberation in the Kashmiri media. Moreover, two other issues also concern the op-ed writers in Kashmir: exploitation of IJK water resources by the state-owned National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) and occupation of large tracts of land (including orchards and forests) by the Indian armed forces. The motif of resource theft was further encouraged when in June 2011, the then Minister of Irrigation in the IJK Government, Taj Mohi-ud-din, described the NHPC as "behaving like the East India Company in Jammu and Kashmir and draining the state's power potential". Ultimately,

all these themes and debates comprise the fundamentals of the oppositional narratives and for many people are tied to what is an unresolved dispute, political conflict or militarised occupation.

On the other hand, the critical narratives are more nuanced and often informed by academic scholarship. Such narratives mostly come from the highly educated professionals, journalists, and academicians, some of whom have either studied or worked outside Kashmir and were exposed to diverse academic and political discourses, and had access to the networks of the cultural elite. Some of the critical narratives on the Kashmir conflict has been produced by non-Kashmiris as well. However, unlike the popular narratives, the prose of the critical narratives is typically complex (sometimes filled with academic jargons), but they also exhibit nuanced analysis even if they have a radical streak. Some of the post-2008 books on Kashmir contain both popular as well as critical narratives.

Whether popular or critical, English has been the preferred language for the Kashmiri youth to write their narratives on Kashmir. This trend appears to be attributable to the fact that in the last two decades, English has been taught in IJK almost in all government and private schools from the elementary level, and most private schools in Kashmir already had English as their medium of instruction for a long time. Moreover, a large section of Kashmiris has seen socio-economic mobility upward, especially after the wide-ranging 1950s land reforms (Thorner, 1953; Aslam, 1977), which extended land ownership rights to Kashmiri peasants, who made up the majority of the Kashmiri population. Because of the socio-economic mobility, more and more children from the lower and middle-class families were enrolled in private schools, and there was also a gradual increase in the number of schools in IJK. The impact of the 1950s land reforms on the Kashmiri society can be inferred by looking at the statistics on the relevant parameters, like literacy and poverty scenario, over the decades. For a general overview, the overall poverty level in IJK has decreased, from around 39% in 1978 to approximately 10% in 2011. Likewise, the literacy rate has also shown a positive upward trend, from 30.64% in 1981 to 55.5% in 2001 and 67.16% in 2011.

Consequently, a sizable population of the Kashmiri youth had acquired English language skills in the last two decades or so. One of the results of which has been that by the late 2000s, Kashmiri journalists from the new youth generation had started writing narratives on Kashmir for the global audiences, some of whom worked for New Delhi based media houses. Arguably, *Curfewed Night*, a well-acclaimed memoir-cum-reportage written by journalist Basharat Peer, was the first book published by an international publisher (Random House and Scribner). It became an instant best-seller in IJK, for it recounted, from a Kashmiri perspective, events of the bloody years of the conflict (Noor, 2009). Well before Peer, Agha Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri-American poet, had also written on Tehreek in his poems on Kashmir. Ali also emerged as the favourite poet of the English educated Kashmiri youth. After Peer's successful memoir, more narratives followed, such as *Until*

My Freedom Has Come (Penguin), *A Tangled Web-Jammu and Kashmir* (HarperCollins), *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom* (Verso), *Of Occupation and Resistance* (Tranquebar Press), as well as fictional works such as *The Collaborator*, *The Book of Gold Leaves*, *Half-Mother*, *Scattered Souls*, and *The Night of Broken Glass*. This post-2008 narrative eruption also included dozens of pamphlets, and self-published volumes of poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

The Communication Opportunity Structure in Kashmir

The 'repetition' aspect of an effective political ideology hinges on the communication opportunity structure. Whereas some publications are widely read, some cater to a niche audience. Not all narratives are published by the conventional press in IJK, for there is state as well as self-censorship. Nonetheless, over the last decade, an alternative media ecosystem has emerged which accommodates the radical pro-resistance narratives of the Kashmiri youth—although these alternative platforms also face state harassment in Kashmir. The new communication technologies, including web-based media, social media, and other digital platforms, have become preferred avenues for the Kashmiri youth, like in other societies, to publish their accounts and narratives about Kashmir. This has enabled them to circumvent the regime of censorship. However, that is not to say that the availability of alternate avenues makes them automatically accessible to the Kashmiri youth. It is the state that regulates both the communication infrastructure and internet access in IJK. As a corollary of the political opportunity structure, the communication infrastructure is a crucial part of the oppositional politics, but given the disputed nature of IJK, the communications had, from the very beginning, assumed strategic importance for the Indian state (Bhat, 2013). To counter Azad Kashmir Radio (based in Muzaffarabad in the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir), which was popular among many Kashmiris in IJK, a radio station in the capital Srinagar, named as Radio Kashmir, was immediately established in 1948, "with a mandate to safeguard the strategic interests of the country [India]" (Ibid., p. 171). In 1949, four dailies, 2 English weeklies, and about 25 weeklies (in vernaculars) were published from Srinagar, with a circulation of over 100,000 copies for the dailies. However, as the state kept tight control over political activities and communication, the press also remained either government controlled or faced censorship (Korbel, 1954, pp. 207-209). When an anti-India uprising broke out in the late 1980s, the Kashmiri press came into the focus of the state, which viewed it as favourable to 'secessionists'. In January 1990, two popular Urdu dailies in Kashmir, Alsafa and Aftab, were briefly banned for their 'anti-national' content and pro-Tehreek slant (*Crisis and Credibility: Report of the Press Council of India*, 1991, p. 62). The state continued to target the Kashmiri media even in the 2000s. One of the leading dailies of India, The Indian Express, reported on 27 March 2005: "The heads of security forces in Kashmir have called for intensifying a crackdown on suspected unarmed separatist 'sympathisers' and journalists indulging in 'anti-national activities'. These were among the decisions taken at a special

security meeting held on March 10, according to a confidential document detailing its minutes, a copy of which is with *The Sunday Express*" (Cited in Noorani 2005, p. 1803). The report also informed that the Indian state had planned to book those Kashmiri media persons who were 'indulging in anti-national activities' under the Public Safety Act. Consequently, the state agencies started harassing and pressuring some major newspapers, like *Greater Kashmir*, *Al Safa*, *Aftab*, *Rehmat* and *Tameel-e-Irshad* (Ibid., p. 1802). The police department in IJK had strictly instructed the Kashmiri newspapers not to give coverage to pro-Tehreek leaders on their front page and restrict news items related to them to a column and a half in the inner pages (Navlakha, 2011, p. 5).

In the late 2000s, many cable TV operators in IJK had started their news channels, creating an independent, but largely amateur, electronic media space. However, in 2009, their news segments were restricted by the state to 15 minutes a day, while entertainment programmes were encouraged. As per a report in *The Hindu* (1 August 2009), the state authorities had imposed these restrictions on the local cable channels because their news broadcasts about Hurriyat was not acceptable to the state (cited in Navlakha 2010, p. 29). During the 2008 uprising, media in Kashmir faced aggressive state restrictions. According to *The Indian Express* report (2 Sep 2008), circulation of Kashmiri newspapers was stopped for a complete week and "there were at least 28 incidents of violence against the media in which security forces killed a cameraman and injured 36 reporters and photographers" (Jaleel, 2008). In 2011, the Government of India issued a circular to different government departments, including public sector units, and directed them not to issue any advertisement to five newspapers: *Greater Kashmir*, *Kashmir Times*, *Rising Kashmir*, *Buland Kashmir* and *Etalaat* (Navlakha, 2011, p. 5). On 12 October 2011, *Mail Today* reported: "The (home) ministry has decided that newspapers with anti-national agendas will not be given any government support. If these newspapers change their attitude the ministry can reconsider its decision".

Notwithstanding the problems mentioned above, according to The Registrar of Newspapers India statistics, over 260 newspapers are published from the Kashmir Valley, including 49 English, 87 Urdu and 4 Kashmiri dailies. Besides, there are 35 English, 64 Urdu and 2 Kashmiri and Hindi weeklies. Unlike newspapers, few magazines are published from Kashmir, as magazines do not survive long enough. For example, popular magazines *Honour* (started in 2008) and *Conveyor* (started in 2009) ceased to operate within two years of their publication, even when they had a decent enough readership.[36] Same happened to *Kashmir Newsline* magazine, which discontinued its operations within a year in spring 2018. Pertinently, according to a 2011 survey, around 60 per cent young men and women in the Kashmir Valley read English and Urdu newspapers. While over 96 per cent youth read English daily *Greater Kashmir*, roughly 15 per cent read *Rising Kashmir* (Behera

[36] Author interviews with the editors of *Honour* and *Conveyor* magazines in Sep 2016 in Srinagar.

2012, p.7). Although *Kashmir Reader* was not in circulation at the time of the survey, it has emerged as a competitor to *Rising Kashmir*. At any rate, *Greater Kashmir* has the largest readership in Kashmir. Moreover, in 2011, around 31 per cent Kashmiri youth had access to the internet, with 77 per cent accessing it on their mobile phones (Ibid., p. 8). A number of Kashmiri youth with access to the internet has grown since the last three years, partly after the introduction of JIO SIM in 2016.[37]

Since its debut in 2003, mobile subscribers in Kashmir had reached over 3 million by 2009 (*Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Report*, 2009). With the spread of wireline and wireless services, internet subscriptions also increased in Kashmir (*Census of India, Mode of Communication 2001-2011*). By March 2015, there were 3.35 million internet subscribers in IJK, with more subscribers in the rural areas (1.79 million) than in urban areas (1.56 million). Furthermore, out of 3.35 million internet subscribers in J&K, 0.84 million had access to broadband services (Table 4.4). So, in simple terms, according to the 2015 Telecom Regulatory Authority of India report (pp. 30-34), per 100 population 27.27 had internet access in J&K, which was better than the all India average of 24.09 people per 100. Even though mobile phone use increased over the years, certain provisions put some restrictions on use. For example, mobile sim card purchased from within the Kashmir Valley has no service access outside the region, except the post-paid ones, and sim cards obtained from outside Kashmir cannot be used within the area. In effect, Kashmiris either use phone-booths or buy separate mobile numbers once they travel outside. On occasions, the state has also imposed extreme measures to control communication. For example, the pre-paid mobile connections (and renewals) were altogether banned in November 2009 (*ABS-CBN* 3 November 2009). Later, Short Message Services (SMS) were prohibited throughout the Kashmir Valley in the wake of summer 2010 anti-India street protests (Bukhari, 2010). Previously, an SMS ban was also imposed in August 2008 during the mass uprising (*Internet and Democracy Blog, Harvard University*, 26 August 2008). Considering that the large proportion of internet usage in Kashmir is through mobile phones, the state usually blocks access to mobile phone services—and typically leave broadband access intact. But during the 2016 uprising, broadband too was banned on many occasions (*The Hindustan Times* 13 August 2016), consequently hampering the operations of various newspapers in Kashmir, and completely cutting-off communication of Kashmiris with the outside world (Zargar, 2016). While internet bans aren't unique to Kashmir—as the local authorities in many Indian states have also resorted to such moves—but the internet shut down incidents have been more frequent in the Kashmir region (*The Freedom House Report 2016*). Since 2012, at least 97 internet shutdowns were

[37] In September 2016, amid the state-imposed communication ban in Kashmir, a private Indian telecom company *Reliance* started distributing its landmark JIO SIM in Kashmir (JIO, a wireless 4G LTE service, was launched by the company in India in December 2015). Within first weeks, over 2000 JIO SIM cards were sold, and these numbers surged soon (Inam ul Haq, 2016).

imposed in Kashmir (Jalan, 2018). In effect, from 2012 to August-2018, on average Kashmiris had no access to the internet for nearly 15 days every year.

Clearly, within the context of state restrictions as discussed above, communication in the Indian-controlled Kashmir, has certain limitations. However, restrictions on communication networks do not necessarily translate into constraints on the publication of narratives/accounts, which can still be published, in the event of communication restrictions, by dispatching them via non-electronic channels, like surface post—although, in the present times, most sites and outlets prefer emails over surface mails. The communication restrictions, however, have a more substantial impact in terms of limiting or obstructing—depending on the severity of restrictions—access to social media, and by extension, to blogging and writing for digital platforms that require internet access. For the Kashmiri youth, while it had been easier before 2014 to circumvent the state restrictions on SMS by switching over to WhatsApp and other messaging services for personal communication purposes and political activism (Sharma, 2014), it was difficult in 2016 to overcome the communication restrictions during what journalist Majid Maqbool (1 November 2016) described as "the great internet blockade in Kashmir". For many Kashmiri Millennials, whose political activism is also informed by their status as 'digital natives', internet shutdowns create a significant setback. As Ruth Milkman (2017) shows, social media has profoundly influenced the worldviews of the Millennials, who came of age in the era of new communication technologies. The Millennials in the US have used new technologies of communication "to a qualitatively different degree" than older generations. In the four social movements, which she focuses on, social media "were critically important".

And yet, there is a paradox of communication shutdowns. As an alternative communication platform, the internet has shaped a substructure of subversivity in terms of making available a variety of sites (like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc.) where similar themes related to Tehreek thrive and disseminate. And because of this subversive potential of the internet, authoritarian and semi-democratic regimes are incredibly wary of it. However, here is the paradox: the state provides the necessary infrastructure for the internet access to the people, but as soon as the same facility enables them to engage in anti-state discursive activities, and do not work the way the state expected, it arbitrarily snaps the access to it. Where this arbitrary shutting down measure becomes frequent, the authoritarian nature of the regime becomes manifest. Such extreme measures reveal anxieties and distrust of the regime with respect to people's democratic action. Ultimately, not only the state loses its credibility as the frequent extreme measures of communication blockade brings focus on its authoritarian nature, but it also underlines the importance of the facility which is being denied. As Christine Hine (2015: 52) says, 'taking away a technology is a good way to stimulate talk about what it means'.

The Alternative Media in Kashmir

Growth and popularity of social media in Kashmir reflected similar trends globally, but the perception of the Kashmiri youth about the state-run and private Indian channels—as biased, propagandistic, and unreliable—is counted as one of the major factors which catalysed local initiatives (Behera, 2011, pp.12-14). In table 4 below, some of the most popular youth-run web-portals are cited below along with the details of their readership size (relevant information about some of these web portals is provided in the appendix).

After the 2008 uprising, some enterprising Kashmiri youth created a relatively independent, web-based communication structure (see Table 4). Invariably, all these outlets published content in English. Perhaps, it started with chat room conversations. For example, there used to be a MIG 33 chat room where around 50 people conversed with each other at a time. In this forum, young Kashmiris would share links to news items and post updates about political developments.

According to a MIG 33 participant, most of the content on the forum was pro-Tehreek. Later, this chat room group graduated into a Facebook page by the name of Bekaar Jamaat (The Group of Idlers), which, however, was taken down mysteriously. The Bekaar Jamaat later resurfaced as Hoshiyar Jamaat (The Group of Vigilant) and then as Aalaw (The Call), which attracted thousands of netizens and played an important role during the 2010 uprising. As Sanjay Kak (2011, p. xvi) writes in the Introduction to *Until My Freedom Has Comes*:

> Unused to any sort of scrutiny, comfortable and unchallenged in the representations of the unfolding situation [during the 2010 street protests], the protection of the newsrooms was suddenly not swaddled enough for the journalists and television anchors of New Delhi. They found themselves inundated with alerts and corrections, and inevitably, some abuse. International observers had the equivalent of a ball-by-ball commentary of street battles, with a rich context that was impossible to ignore. Watchful young people from small towns across Kashmir were reminding the Indian establishment that communication on Twitter was two-way and that Facebook was, after all, available to millions on the worldwide web.

So, with the spread of social media, many young Kashmiris started using Facebook and other social networking sites for political purposes. Using diverse digital platforms, the Kashmiri youth disseminated the resistance narratives and kept conversations about the Kashmir conflict alive, by sharing updates about daily happenings, which might have been either censored or omitted by the mainstream Indian media. Ultimately, the emerging alternative media helped circumvent the restrictions and censorship, which the conventional press faces, though, on a few occasions, even social media pages have been blocked by the state.[38]

[38] The *Only Kashmir's* founder claimed that his web-portal was blocked by the state in 2011 after the survey 'A Perception Survey of Media Impact on the Kashmiri Youth' had mentioned it among the top five new portals in IJK. Also, in 2015 and 2016 two *Only Kashmir* Facebook pages were also blocked with almost quarter million subscribers. (author online interview on 31 March 2017).

Web-portal's Name	Year Founded	Founder & Background	Age	Following on Facebook
Only Kashmir	2009 (relaunched in 2011)	Bilal Bashir Bhat (student)	27	250K (pre-2011) 60K (post 2011)
JandK Now	2009	Vijdan Mohammad Kawoosa (student)	17	350K
Kashmir Walla	2010	Fahad Shah (student)	21	124K
Vox Kashmir	2010(now defunct)	Sheikh Saaliq (student)	20	10K
Kashmir Dispatch	2010	The team	Under 30	200K (pre-2016) 64K (post-2016)
Alternate Kashmir	2013	Unknown	N/A	24K
Authint Mail	2013	Tawseef Lone (student)	Under 30	9K (post-2013)
The Varmul Post	2014	Noor ul Haq (student) and Muneeb ul Haq (student)	27 & 28	68K
The Parallel Post	2009	Umer Beigh (student)	Under 30	7K
With Kashmir	2017	Muhammad Faysal (student), Arsilan Aziz (student) and Khizer (student).	27. 21 & 21	46K
Wande Magazine	2017	Irfan Mehraj (professional)	25	6K
Free Press Kashmir	2017 (re-launched)	Qazi Zaid (journalist)	29	69K
Oracle Opinions	2017	Abu Bakar Fazili (student)	Under 30	7K

Table 4 Thirteen prominent youth-run web portals in Kashmir

Conclusion

In this chapter, an empirical and historical context of the thesis was provided. First, the causes of the recent political mobilisations in IJK were discussed, focusing on 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2016 protests. Cumulatively, these episodes of mass anti-India demonstrations have manifested the youth phenomenon in IJK in terms of how the Kashmiri youth have fronted these protests, though with fatal consequences sometimes. As a result, there has been increasing scrutiny about the youth factor in the resurgent political turmoil in the Kashmir Valley. Though policymakers and media commentators regularly talk about the connection between the young people and the recent political violence in IJK, yet exact data about the Kashmiri youth is lacking. The section on the

youth demographics, therefore, provided detailed figures about the Kashmiri youth population, which is over 30% of the total population of 6.8 million people in the Kashmir Valley. Dynamic interaction between this youth bulge and political mobilisations was outlined in light of the theoretical insights on the subject. It was argued that the economic factor alone could not explain the youth political activism in Kashmir. However, in the official and media discourses, anti-state political activism of the Kashmiri youth is negatively and patronisingly framed. While much focus is on the street activism of the Kashmiri youth, there are also those young men and women who resist the state through the medium of narratives, of which two types exist: popular and critical, with the latter often informed by academic scholarship. Nevertheless, for Kashmiri narrative to reach its audience, the Kashmiri narrators negotiate the communication opportunity structure, which the state regulates. However, some enterprising youth in Kashmir have set up web-portals and created an alternative media ecosystem where Kashmiri narratives thrive and circulate globally.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this chapter, an overview of the conceptual framework is provided for a nuanced study of youth political activism and narratives. After conceptualising the relationship between language and subjectivity, the following section outlines the interaction between new generation and the language of contention, coupled with a survey of contentious politics and social movement literature, theoretically contextualises the recent uprisings and Tehreek in general. The next section then looks at the social category of 'youth' and 'generation' and evaluate different conceptualisations of the term, including how globalisation or the latest phase of modernisation plays a role in shaping young lives and ideas about them. In the subsequent section, the Kashmiri youth narratives are situated in their socio-historical and theoretical context. Following this, the discussion focuses on the idea of the 'moments of clarity' which occurs during significant political events and potentially stimulates a change among some youth by changing them from being politically passive to being politically active. Finally, the chapter concludes by listing a theoretically-informed set of research questions that are then explored in the subsequent empirical chapters to gain a nuanced understanding of the Kashmiri youth narratives.

Language and Subjectivity

The Enlightenment idea that a human subject is being in possession of free and autonomous selfhood has been contested by modern theorists (Biehl, Good & Kleinman, 2007). For example, Michel Foucault (1982) sees subjectivity as our everyday life conduct which is conditioned by discourses, institutions, and social formations, where diffused networks of power pin individuals to fixed categories and identities and create templates for proper conduct through rationalised principles and knowledge. So, instead of being a free expression of our true inner selves, subjectivity, according to Foucault, is rather a reflection of our disciplined, regulated behaviour and action. Subjectivity, in this way, is being subjected to subjection or subject to a form of power (p. 781). In other words, our subject-position is linked to particular forms of knowledge and practices, which create meanings and power—of which a subject becomes a bearer.

However, as Foucault also says, there is always the possibility of a reversal in a power relation, a possibility of resistance to hegemonic mechanisms of power through counter-hegemonic discursive challenges. Foucault (1978, p. 100) argues that rather than seeing discursive universe as divided between dominant (or accepted) and dominated (or excluded) discourses we should imagine "a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies...and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes".

From an anthropological standpoint, subjective life can be understood by interrogating the symbolic forms "through which people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another" (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman, 2007, p. 7). To get a better understanding of self-hood would be to examine the interactions between collective and individual processes, as subjectivities are constituted in relation to particular economic, political and social configurations. And yet, modes of subjectivity emerge in a dialectical relationship with their conditions and should be seen as "the means of shaping sensibility" (Ibid., p.14).

So, in relation to this thesis, understanding political subject-hood (subjectivity) of Kashmiri youth would mean examining the emergent subject-formation in the context of ideological contestations and discursive positions viz-a-viz the Kashmir conflict; exploring in what ways the language of contention reflects an expression of political subjectivity as constituted in a dialectical relationship with other narratives and dominant discourses; and, locating resistance and subversivity of the youth narratives by analysing the linguistic elements which are part of the dynamic process of appropriation and re-appropriation of language in constituting counter-hegemonic culture.

New Political Generation and The Language of Contention

A long-drawn political struggle must sustain itself through successive generations. That means it must not only be institutionalised at organisational level but also at the discursive level, because while organisations may survive, change or be defeated by the state (or be rendered irrelevant by changing times), a political struggle can still endure through the oppositional talk, where it can continue to challenge the state (Johnston, 2005). However, if, as Gamson (1992) says, oppositional consciousness is a prerequisite for any collective action to emerge, how is this oppositional consciousness diffused once forged. We get an answer from Snow and Benford (1988, 2000), who highlight the importance of framing through which movements align their ideas and ideals with the values of the people and mobilise them for political action. Ultimately, frames resonate within a cultural context (Williams, 2004). So, here language of the movement, or what Tarrow (2013) calls "the language of contention"—which relates to the social and cultural resources through which a social movement preserves itself (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007)—becomes a significant factor. The importance of the language of contention is that it is an indispensable part of the broad and dynamic processes of social interactions which constitutes political actors and symbolic boundaries between different sets of entities involved in contention (Tarrow, 2013, p. 16). And, it is at critical junctures—because they stimulate the political environment and heighten public awareness—that language of contention becomes acute, often giving birth to new words to frame that critical situation. In Tarrow (2013), the language of contention narrowly relates to certain defining words (such as, strike, boycott, revolution, occupy etc.), which emerge at critical junctures—and such words either diffuse into everyday discourses or disappear. This thesis, however, broadens the

ambit of the concept to include political narratives, which emanate from within the dynamic interactions of formal and informal politics, and through which people understand and make sense of the social and political configurations in which they are entrenched (Bruner, 1987; Somers, 1994; Patterson and Monroe, 1998).

As was saw in the last chapter, the 2008 mass uprising was a watershed moment, a critical juncture for Tehreek, as it reinvigorated the Kashmiri self-determination movement, by not only mobilising people in large numbers against the status quo but also initiating a new generation of Kashmiris into the politics of Tehreek. In case of young people like Huzaifa Pandit and Hina Arif, who had hitherto lived a politically passive life, the critical juncture of 2008 came as a moment of clarity and became a decisive factor in the formation of their political identity and action. The critical juncture of the 2008 mass uprising also produced new contentious words and performances, such as the symbolic dance of *ragda rada* (trample! trample!) and *Chalo* (march-on) calls (e.g., Muzaffarabad Chalo, Pampore Chalo, TRC Chalo etc.). Internalising the oppositional consciousness that the 2008 contentious public event reawakened in Kashmir was further consolidated as the new political generation reaffirmed it in their narratives, which they produced in response to what this thesis defines as the post-2008 *Event,* which was, indeed, a revolt of the new generation, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Conceptualising the post-2008 Event as a critical juncture allow us to locate the youth revolt—that defined/defines that event—as part of the changing dynamics of Tehreek, because this critical juncture was the result of Tehreek's politics and should be considered as one of the stages in its long history. It is this longevity of Tehreek which qualifies it as a social movement, as it has passed through different phases, attracted mass participation, encountered setbacks, and in the process produced a range of actors and entities (with differing ideologies) as well as repertoires of contention. It was the Plebiscite Front which first changed the contours of politics in IJK by denying legitimacy to the 1947 Accession (which is the basis of India's claim over the disputed region) and raising the issue of a plebiscite as a valid mechanism to settle the Kashmir conflict, which the partition had produced. The Plebiscite Front utilised both institutional as well as extra-institutional means to achieve its political agenda, though there were some disagreements within the organisation on what plebiscite (rai-shumari) entailed. After Sheikh Abdullah signed the 1975 Accord with the Indira Gandhi government, the organisation was dissolved, but the political culture (and new oppositional groupings) that the PF helped to establish remained intact, with the slogans of Azadi and self-determination becoming entrenched in the repertoire of Tehreek's contentious language. The armed uprising of the late 1980's and subsequent state repression and widespread human rights abuses added new vocabulary to this repertoire, reflecting the changed situation on the ground, foremost the pervasive military intrusion into civilian lives and the concomitant

increasing vulnerabilities of people in terms of them being exposed to the structure of exception (Agemben, 2005).

Contentious Politics and the 2008 Civil Agitation in IJK

In any contention, there are at least three elements involved: subject, object, and claim. The subject is the one who makes a claim (it can be an individual or a corporate) and object is the one who receives the claim (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 4). Although claims can be of many types— "from timid requests to strident demands to direct attacks" (Ibid., p. 5)—there is a difference between the contentions that play out in the context of mundane social life (for example, between friends or within a school) and the one in which government agents are (directly or indirectly) involved. It is this latter aspect of contention that will be discussed below.

Contentious politics as a conceptual approach has been described as 'return' in social sciences as compared to the other turns (for example, 'cultural turn' in social sciences). Because unlike the exclusivist case study focus of the social movement studies in the 1960s that had "a relatively short historical compass", this return has taken an approach in which "systematic comparative and historical studies" has broadened the canvas of movement research under the rubric of contentious politics (Tarrow, 1996, p. 874). In Tilly and Tarrow's (2007, p. 7) formulation, the three fundamental components interact to make contentious politics visible: contention, collective action, and politics. In broader terms, contentious politics is a joint political struggle, but, theoretically speaking, contentious politics mainly focuses on the processes and mechanisms which leads to political identity formation, mobilization of actors, their collective action, interlinking of struggles and their fragmentations, modification of tactics and strategies within and across movements (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2004, p. 32). Therefore, contentious politics works as a theoretical frame which can be used to analyse all types of collective actions across cases and for different kinds (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 10). Although contentious politics show "enormous variations" regarding its elements (actors, interaction, issues, claims etc.) and spatial and temporal outcomes, there are "great regularities" which emerge out "in the ways that contention unfolds" (Ibid., p. 11). It is an interactive approach to contentious politics through which Tilly and Tarrow (2007) seek to emphasise the way different trajectories and outcomes spring from comparable mechanisms and processes "depending on their combinations and on the social bases and political contexts in which they operate".

However, the definition of contentious politics provided by McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2004) has been critiqued for its overemphasis on government or, in other words, due to its state-centric orientation. It is a valid critique because not all contentious politics necessarily require the government to be present in the equation. For example, the oppressed-castes (Dalits) in India make claims which bear on the interests of the dominant-castes (Brahmins). So, as a corrective, Leitner,

Sheppard and Sziarto (2008, p. 157) have provided a modified definition of contentious politics: "concerted, counter-hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries". Nonetheless, Tilly and Tarrow (2007) hold that even when claims are made outside the government system, there is still state involvement regarding how it defines the parameters of action. For example, the state can intervene by allowing or banning assemblies and enforcing other forms of interventions (p. 9). They give three main reasons which show 'distinctive properties' in those contentions in which government is involved: governmental power gives some people leverage over others; regulation of forms of claims-making advantages those who impose those regulations; and finally, possession of coercive means like police and courts maintains an asymmetrical power equation between parties in contention (pp. 5-6).

Methodologically speaking, the questions which a researcher confronts when employing the term contentious politics is "what to exclude from the range of contentious politics" (Tarrow, 1996, p. 881), what to make of what Katzenstein (1990) calls unobtrusive mobilisations, or how to deal with the eventless aspect of social movements where no public performance happens. The path towards an answer to such questions may become easy if we take Tarrow's conceptualisation of a movement as "an actor or coalition of actors whose presence can be traced by observing the combination of collective actions which typify its interaction with its antagonist, allies, and publics but one that is not reducible to or comparable to a particular form of action" (1996, p. 881).

The 2008 Civil Agitation as Contentious Public Event

Of the three mass uprisings of the last decade in IJK (2008, 2010, 2016), the 2008 civil agitation against the government order of land transfer to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (see Chapter 2) can be considered as a typical episode of contentious politics, which is defined as "public, collective and episodic interactions between makers of claims when a) at least some of the interaction adopts non-institutional forms, b) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims, and c) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2004, p.5). In the initial stage of the 2008 agitation, there were three claimants: Muslims of the Kashmir Valley, who opposed the government land transfer order and demanded its revocation, the Hindus of the Jammu region, who fought the dismissal of the land transfer order and demanded its implementation, and the government of Jammu and Kashmir, which had passed the order in the first place—Jammu and Kashmir Government was a coalition of the Valley-centric Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Indian National Congress (INC).

We can think of the 2008 agitation as a political context which produced different outcomes in the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region despite, more or less, similar processes and mechanisms being at play. In the Kashmir Valley, the modular performances ranged from street protests to

media and online activism, but the state action against Kashmiri demonstrators lead to over three dozen deaths and injuries to thousands of people. By 7 July 2008, when the civilian government of IJK had collapsed, at least seven protestors had been killed in the Valley. In contrast, in the Jammu region, along with the street protests and media activism, people also engaged in the economic blockade of the Kashmir Valley by indulging in arson and physical assaults on Kashmiri truck drivers. Moreover, there was a marked difference in how the state dealt with the demonstrations in the Jammu region. A dominant view among many state functionaries was that the Jammu protestors were 'nationalist forces' while as the Kashmiri protestors were 'anti-national forces'. Hence, harsh state clampdown on Kashmiris was justified. Human rights activist Gautam Navlakha (2008, p. 48) provides a good illustration of this phenomenon:

> In contrast to Jammu, where rioters remain free and it appears that all and sundry may be paid compensation, in Kashmir 250 first information reports (firs) were filed against the protestors and 300 persons were detained after the August agitation. One hundred and fifty persons have been booked under the Public Security Act, as against two in Jammu. On 2 September, when newspapers began to come out in the Valley, reports started appearing of security forces singling out young men in the villages for organising protests, taking them into custody in batches and releasing them after a severe beating […] The state was defending 'territorial integrity' when the security forces opened fire in Kashmir, but appeasing 'nationalist forces' when it soft-pedalled the BJP-Congress-led agitation in the Hindu majority districts of Jammu…

Jammu protestors obtained leverage over Kashmiris because a section of the state was informally aligned with them. Besides, they were also led by the people associated with the most prominent far-right organisations of India, Rashtriya Sayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Shiv Saina, and Bajrang Dal. The broad support that Jammu protestors received from some governmental agencies and the far-right militant Hindu groups in India encouraged them and made their collective action a success, at least in imposing an economic blockade on the Kashmir Valley.[39] It was only after an agreement was reached with the IJK government, now under Governor's control, that the two-month-long Jammu agitation ended on 31 August 2008 (*The Economic Times* 31 August 2008).

While the Kashmir Valley protests had already achieved their main objective when the government revoked the land transfer order on 1 July 2008, the economic blockade imposed by Hindus of the Jammu region along with the violent attacks on Kashmiri truck drivers turned the contentious politics of Kashmiris from a demand for revocation of the land order into the demand for the right to self-determination (*Greater Kashmir* 19 August 2008). As the land transfer order was already framed by Kashmiri newspapers and politicians as an attempt at demographic engineering in IJK, the economic blockade only worsened the situation by inducing anger and desperation in Kashmir.

[39] In the Jammu region, four Hindus were killed by the security forces while two consumed poison. However, seven Muslims were also killed in that region, including two policemen who were lynched by a mob. The death toll in Kashmir was far higher, with over 30 Muslim protestors killed by the government forces.

And, it was against this economic blockade that Tehreek leadership was successful in mobilising people in the Kashmir Valley for four massive pro-independence rallies: Muzaffarabad Chalo (11 August), Pampore Chalo (16 August), TRC Chalo (18 August), and Eidgah Chalo (22 August). Although the state did not allow the Lal Chowk rally on 25 August, the repression worked only in the short term, as its consequences did not take long to manifest when anti-India protests broke out one after another, most prominently in 2009, 2010 and again in 2016. However, unlike the 2008 rallies, which were peaceful gatherings of men, women and children, the latter protest phases witnessed the increased level of violence, because the government forces suppressed peaceful protests and even denied permission for civil society seminars (*Raiot* 6 September 2016).

Ultimately, there were political consequences of the 2008 agitation. In Jammu region, due to its pro-active role in the unrest, the BJP could improve its electoral tally in the IJK Assembly elections, from a mere one seat in 2002 to 11 in 2008. Likewise, in the Kashmir Valley, for its pro-Kashmir role in the 2008 agitation, the PDP's seat tally rose to 21 from 16 in the last election. For Tehreek, 2008 was a watershed moment after it had been written off by some political commentators in the preceding years of relative calm. For the teenagers who witnessed the two-month long 2008 agitation and the state repression, the resurgent Tehreek became tied to their formative years, and subsequently when 2010 unrest broke out many of these teenagers were at the forefront of the street protest and other forms of political activism. Proximity to the renewed Tehreek and political conflict would shape their political orientation and behaviour; some of them picked up arms and others engaged in frequent stone-throwing demonstrations. Thus, one of the unintended consequences of the 2008 contentious politics was that it furnished vitality to Tehreek by introducing the new generation of Kashmiris into the politics of the Kashmir conflict. It was the 2008 public agitation through which this young generation got connected with the social movement of Tehreek.

A Theoretical Overview of Social Movements

Emergence, rise, and fall of various social movements in the last century generated tremendous interest among social scientists, who tried to understand what conditions and factors create and sustain social movements, which actors are involved, how and why they are mobilized, what the espoused issues are, and what factors make achievement of movement goals possible or not possible (Morris 2000; Jasper 2011; and DeCesare 2014). In broader terms, social movements can be described as collective struggles of people; they can also be defined as goal-oriented sustained campaigns.

For some European scholars, informed by the Marxist traditions, social movement essentially meant "labour-socialist movement" (Williams, 1995, p. 92). From the initial post-War Marxist tradition, the study of social movements shifted to what became resource mobilisation (Jenkins,

1983) and political process (Meyer, 2004) approaches. Within these theoretical models, the central argument is that individuals are rational beings and they respond to incentives (material, social and political), weighing risks and costs before getting involved in any collective action campaigns. Any political move on behalf of the opposition groups is context-dependent, as external factors either facilitate or constrain their actions, whether it is activating cadres, advancing claims, seeking alliances, using political tactics or influencing mainstream institutions (Meyer, 2004, p. 126). However, these concepts have been criticised by some scholars, who argue that political process theory does not fully appreciate agency of political activists and offers only "a mechanistic understanding" of social movements which may not fit other cases (Ibid).

In the latter part of the 1980s, social movements research saw a 'cultural turn', a framework which has two broad approaches: one theorising new social movements of the post-industrial societies by focusing on 'cultural, moral, and identity issues, rather than on economic distribution' (Williams, 1995, p. 92). And, the second focusing on how issues are framed or presented by movements utilising cultural symbols that resonate with potential adherents or general people. Some scholars contend that the notion of 'new' in the new social movement theory is a misnomer or "historical misrepresentation" because the supposed novel characteristics assigned to the new movements (culture, values, norms, identity) were also present in the past movements (Calhoun, 1993, p. 388). As Craig Calhoun (1993, p. 398) says, "It is important to see the ways in which early nineteenth-century social movements were rooted in problems and attachments of everyday life and the defence of valued ways of life". In the latter strand of the cultural turn, the focus is on how collective identity is mobilised through language and discourse for recruiting people, garnering support for a cause or collective action (Goodwin and Jasper, 2015, p. 6). In the context of this thesis, the cultural approach of the frame analytical perspective is utilised. This perspective engages with the question of "how people 'do things' with culture – that is, the deployment of symbols, claims, and even identities in the pursuit of activism" (Williams, 1995, p. 93) (the frame analytical perspective is discussed in Chapter 4).

For Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper (2015, p. 3) social movements are to be understood as "conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means". Social movements change the contours of politics within a polity by highlighting issues, raising awareness of new dangers and desires, bringing in new ideas or contesting the existing ones, and mobilising people for affecting change (Ibid., p. 4). But, it is easy to assume that social movement and contentious politics are interchangeable concepts and many people confuse the two. A narrower definition of social movements provided by Tarrow and Tilly (1996, p. 874) is that these are sustained campaigns which challenge powerful entities on behalf of a disadvantaged population, which either live or are influenced by the powerful entities.

However, Tilly and Tarrow (2007, p. 8) suggest that researchers should resist from extending the term social movement to "all contentious politics, its social bases, and its cultural contexts" because such an approach has at least three main drawbacks. First, all types of contention being put under the same category (i.e., under the rubric of social movements) hinders systematic comparison across cases. Second, because of such standardisation of all types of contention makes transition among them hard to assess. Thirdly, the essential character of social movements as a historic category, as opposed to a universal one, gets blurred (Ibid). While contentious politics emerges when three components of contention, politics, and collective action interact, to qualify as a social movement some additional elements or features must be present. These include: firstly, sustained campaigns, public performances in terms of marches, rallies and use of other public communicative modes and channels for advertising, and "repeated public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment". And, secondly, presence of social movement bases – social and cultural resources in terms of traditions, networks, solidarities, and organisations for the movement sustainability. Not all events or episodes of contention qualify as social movements and nor do all social movements sustain long enough (Ibid., p. 111). Social movements emerge over time, their fundamental feature is that they build upon social and cultural resources, exhibit a degree of resilience and relay their claims through sustained campaigns. Although the nature of institutions and regimes always influence movements, the social movement bases can develop both within and outside of institutions (Ibid., p. 124).

As far as regimes are concerned, it is the governmental capacity and the degree of democracy that affects the form of contention. While as a high-capacity government has extensive control over institutions and resources, and as such, it can put substantial constraints on social movement formation, a low-capacity government finds it hard to suppress the oppositional struggle because of a lack of large-scale coercive means to do that (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2004, p. 20). The other aspect of a regime that affects the form of contention is the degree of democracy. Within democracies and quasi-democracies, the institutionalization of politics facilitates 'distinctive repertoires' regarding civil and political rights and access to relatively open and free media. These political opportunity structures allow social movements to engage contentiously with other actors within the institutional context (Ibid). However, because un-democratic regimes do not offer such enabling institutional infrastructure or political opportunity structures, it is hard for social movements to operate within such a constraining atmosphere; also, they are immediately co-opted. As we shall see in the case of IJK, the dynamics of the political opportunity structure is further complicated in the context of Kashmiri political institutions because they are tightly controlled by New Delhi. In the case of IJK, we confront a situation which is described by Paul Staniland (2013) as a "paradox of normalcy", which arises due to discordant policies of the Indian state in IJK. One

the one hand, the Indian state seeks to preserve the status quo in IJK and to woo Kashmiris employ the rhetoric of liberal democracy. However, on the other hand, when Kashmiris attempt to utilise democratic processes to articulate their political will and demand the right to self-determination, the state uses repression, because such demand, even though articulated through political processes, threatens the status quo and collides with the state's political and strategic objectives. Thus, the political will of Kashmiris and the agenda of the state run against each other, thereby fostering a paradox 'that encourages unrest and instability [in Kashmir] even in the absence of substantial militant violence' (Staniland, 2013, p. 932).

The Plebiscite Front as a Social Movement

After the Prime Minister of IJK, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, was arrested and imprisoned by the Nehru administration in August 1953, a new political organisation, Mahaz-e-Rai Shumari or the Plebiscite Front (PF), was founded by Abdullah loyalists in August 1955. The Front was a new oppositional platform for many people who were previously associated with the National Conference (NC), the party which Abdullah had founded, and which, ironically, had concurred with the controversial 1947 Accession with the Union of India. Abdullah was a popular leader, so his arrest led to widespread protests and created discontent among the people of IJK. The Front channelled this discontent politically by organising contentious events. It drew extensive support from the people, who were against the Accession. However, the PF faced constraints and state repression for its professed stance: that a referendum should be held in IJK under the aegis of the United Nations, allowing people to decide their political future. It was not permitted to contest the state elections of 1967 and 1972, hundreds of its cadres were arrested for protesting dilution of autonomy of IJK, and the Indian government banned it in 1971 under the Unlawful Activities Act. In the face of relentless state repression against the PF, some of its leaders got co-opted. This created discord within the ranks of the organisation. Ultimately, the PF was dissolved by Sheikh Abdullah after signing an accord with the Indira Gandhi government in 1975. Abdullah became the chief minister of IJK only after accepting India's sovereignty over IJK (Bhat, 1980, pp. 240-48).

In the context of a repressive political environment where the Indian state rigged elections in IJK to plant it chosen people in powerful positions and closed avenues of democratic participation, Kashmiri youth came forward and formed protest groups. Their primary demand was right to self-determination. In the mid-1960s, some youth groups had already been established, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Youth League (JKYL), which was "the first forum of political activism for a new generation of pro-freedom youth" (Cockell 2000, p. 330). The youth groups like JKYL confronted the old leadership of the PF and rejected its personality cult. In response, the PF also created its youth wings, like Young Men's League and Students' Unity Meet. What propelled the

sort of youth revolt of the 1960s in IJK was the PF's unpopular move to contest elections, something which it had previously boycotted. The decision to enter the electoral contest was interpreted by people as PF's deviation from its original stance of the plebiscite. The discontent among the youth population resulted in frequent protests and violence; hundreds of students were arrested in different parts of the Kashmir Valley (Bhat, 1980, p.147). According to John Cockell, the post-1975 period "marked a key turning point in Kashmiri political mobilisation". With Sheikh Abdullah discredited (for surrendering before Indian government) and the oppositional void created after the dismantlement of the PF, "the political process shifted to the new youth protest groups and the emergence of political militancy in which sporadic acts of political violence were no longer unthinkable" (Cockell, 2000, p. 330). Although Sheikh Abdullah dissolved the Plebiscite Front, the organisations' two-decade-long dominance over the political turf of IJK had popularised a new language of resistance in the process. PF's core agenda and slogans (*rai-shumari* and *Azadi*) had become part of Kashmiri resistance discourses, giving rise to new political imaginaries and groupings, including the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, which espoused the cause of an independent IJK. The subsequent political formations built on PF's legacy articulated the political ideas which the leaders of the PF had abandoned in 1975 for political expediency or power. In IJK, Abdullah's agreement with the Indira Gandhi government was framed as a 'sell-out' by anti-Accession constituency, while many of Abdullah supporters grudgingly assented to his decision.[40] The 1975 Accord is still seen as a decisive moment in IJK's history because it undermined the self-determination movement. However, out of the erstwhile PF emerged a new political grouping called Muslim Mutahhida Mahaz or Muslim United Front (MUF), which contested the 'infamous' 1987 state assembly elections. An alliance of disparate groups, the MUF was formally announced in a Srinagar hotel on 2 September 1986 (according to a former MUF member, the alliance was "actually born in jails and interrogation centres where youth wanted to end this routine (of being jailed)" (Hussain, 2016). Although the MUF could mobilise thousands of people and it was due to its participation in the 1987 elections that nearly impressive 80 per cent voting was recorded in the state polls, the group could not sustain itself long enough and disorganised within three years in 1989. Rigging of the 1987 elections, torture and jailing of its members, internal discord among its founding members, and growing resentment among the youth population ultimately led to the disintegration of MUF.[41] Unlike the Plebiscite Front, which had sustained for twenty years (1955-

[40] Under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership, the wide-raging land reforms of the early 1950's had immensely benefited the working class, who continued to support Abdullah even after the 1975 Accord. For them Abdullah was a father figure ('Bab') who had fought against the exploitative system of Dogra monarchy and given them ownership of land they had been tilling through generations. Perhaps, it was the personality cult of Abdullah that counterbalanced the opposition to his controversial 1975 decision.

[41] The two biggest rallies of the MUF were organised on 17 November 1986 and 4 March 1987, both in Srinagar's Iqbal Park. Two weeks before the elections of 23 March 1987, at least 600 MUF cadres were arrested by the state police.

1975), the MUF was a short-lived campaign of just three years.[42] Nevertheless, as armed rebellion broke out in the late 1980s and a political vacuum was created by unprecedented violence and upheaval, some of the members of disbanded MUF formed the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC; also called Hurriyat) in 1993 to provide political leadership in the changing environment. Today, Hurriyat is the leading resistance organisation in IJK which works on the agenda of the right to self-determination.[43]

One commonality between the Plebiscite Front, MUF, and Hurriyat is that they have been the dominant political forces within 'the oppositional domain' (Osa, 2003, pp. 45-47). The genesis of the contemporary Tehreek can be traced back to the autonomous political mobilisations embodied in the politics of the Plebiscite Front and its off-shoots, including the MUF (Cockell, 2000). Many PF activists later joined the MUF; and, when the MUF disbanded, its members founded Hurriyat. So, these resistance formations succeeded one another, and, importantly, passed on a specific repertoire of dissident politics, which shaped the culture of political rebellion in IJK.

The Plebiscite Front lost its credibility due to the decision of its senior members to contest elections. But, when the MUF entered the electoral fray, its agenda was to capture the power and declare independence, or, in the least, declare the 1947 accession with India invalid (Geelani cited in Hussain, 2016). In an interview, the former MUF candidate, Muhammad Yusuf Shah, claimed that: "We fought elections so that we could pass a resolution in the assembly for freedom of Kashmir. India knew that. That is why they rigged the elections […] Fighting elections were a means to educate masses about the freedom struggle. We wanted the endorsement of public sentiment in the assembly" (Ahmad, 2008). Because the PF was disbanded by Abdullah after signing the 1975 Accord with New Delhi, its election history is not seen with the same prism as that of MUF, whose members continued to be part of the oppositional domain and did not budge from the stance of the right to self-determination. Just as the PF leadership was trapped in its own political rhetoric of election boycott the same situation has arisen for the members of Hurriyat, who endorsed electoral politics during MUF campaign but as the 1987 election was heavily rigged in favour of pro-Accession National Conference the newly constituted Hurriyat adopted the principle that it won't contest elections by taking oath under the constitution of India, something that PF had also proclaimed. Thus, like the PF, Hurriyat also has got trapped in its political rhetoric. If its leadership decides to contest elections now, they will lose credibility like the PF leadership.

[42] According to Syed Ali Geelani (2006, p. 53), the MUF did not expect to win a two-third majority in the IJK Assembly, so there was little chance that they could have brought a bill that would have declared the conditional Accession of 1947 as invalid. Nevertheless, as an effective opposition, the MUF's participation in the state assembly might have given the people of Kashmir a hope of change through democratic processes. But, India rigged the polls to install its chosen people.

[43] Though in the 'oppositional domain' there are other actors and entities, such as Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), Kashmir University Students Union (KUSU), Dukhtaran-e-Millat (Daughters of the Community) etc.

However, detachment from electoral politics means Hurriyat's activities are confined to strikes, demonstrations, and campaigns, which are suppressed by the state. Moreover, its leadership and cadres are always vulnerable to political vendetta and police harassment.

Nevertheless, although electoral politics is associated with pro-Accession parties in IJK, and pro-Tehreek activists are, in principle, against elections, there is one politician, Sheikh Abdul Rashid (popularly called Engineer Rashid), who has created a niche for himself in IJK politics by appropriating the discourse of Tehreek. His kind of politics can be categorized as what Nicole Watts (2006) calls representative contention, i.e. his anti-Accession dissent is practised by staying within the electoral politics, which provides legal protection and access to political resources.

Fighting or not fighting an election is a highly dilemmatic scenario for social movements, as electoral success can bring with it an element of defeat. As Tilly and Tarrow show, when social movements engage with the institutional politics, their sharp contentious edge is blunted, because "institutional logic takes over from the logic of contentious politics" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 133). However, it is also true that the hegemonic discourses of the statist politics are quite dominant and institutional political processes have wider international legitimacy. Therefore, for social movements, it is difficult to chart an entirely free form of political action. In the context of IJK, John Cockell (2000, p. 333) argues:

> So, we must conclude not only that the post-colonial politics of Kashmiri nationalism evinces a subaltern insurgent consciousness, but also that this consciousness (and its political agency) are not entirely autonomous but only intermittently so. As a result, there is significant flux in the dynamics of nationalist mobilisation, with political formations first gaining popular legitimacy and then losing it to new formations as they become compromised by their engagement with the state and its dominant discourses.

For Cockell, such processes of discontinuities within the Kashmiri self-determination movement engendered disillusionment among the new generation of Kashmiris who saw inadequacy of peaceful methods in achieving the political goals. Every political mobilisation was repressed and treated in the same manner by the state, which refused to acknowledge the right to self-determination of Kashmiris. Eventually, some members of the movement took a revolutionary step in the late 1980s when they embraced the armed militancy that received widespread support. Initially, the militant movement was spearheaded by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, which sought to establish an independent IJK. After its brief, spectacular show in the early 1990s, the armed rebellion was controlled by the state by the mid-2000s through sustained and brutal military campaigns. Nonetheless, after the 2008 mass uprising, a 'new age militancy' would emerge alongside the unarmed youth-led revolt against the Indian rule (see Introduction and Chapter 1).

The New Political Generation in IJK

In his 1927 essay "Problem of Generations", Karl Mannheim argues that a young generation sharing same historical location, where they confront rapid social and cultural processes, potentially develop distinctive modes of thought and patterns of behaviour. What adolescents experience at an early age become decisive impressions whose imprints can be seen in later life, often crystalising into "a *natural view* of the world". Later experiences of life are then meaningfully evaluated based on the set of early experiences, "whether they appear as that set's verification and fulfilment or as its negation or antithesis" (Mannheim, [1927] 1952, p. 298). However, within a historically-located generation, sub-units of different political attitudes and opinions also exist though it is usually a small concrete group within a generation that develops suitable articulations and interpretations that are peculiar to that generation's historical location. Such representations resonate and find recipients among other individuals whose experiences of their times satisfactorily reflect in them (Ibid., p. 307).

Even if they have inherited the basic ideas and principles of Tehreek and its language of contention (Tarrow 2013), Kashmiri youth have also expressed their distinct impulses which are forged in the rapidly changing social and political situations brought about by the political conflict as well as the processes of globalisation, especially the communication revolution of the new century. Thus, if the contemporary Kashmir youth is what Ruth Milkman (2017) calls a new political generation, it is because, in the words of Mannheim, they have created "new collective impulses and formative principles original to itself and adequate to its particular situation" (p. 309). Drawing on Mannheim's generation thesis, this study then locates the heightened political activism among the Kashmiri youth in the specific historical and socio-political processes, which have shaped their political subjectivity by influencing their distinctive political behaviours, including street protests and other forms of dissent. Though, while talking about political subjectivities of the new political generation of Kashmiris, what are the ways through which such subjectivities can be studied? What constitutes as a generation's political subjectivities in empirical terms and where to locate them?

C Wright Mills (1939, p. 678) says that "[w]e may 'locate' a thinker among political and social coordinates by ascertaining what words his functioning vocabulary contains and what nuances of meaning and value they embody…A thinker's social and political 'rationale' is exhibited in his choice and use of words". That means we can examine discursive practices (or narratives) to survey political subjectivities of the Kashmiri youth usefully. Because discourse has "a material reality of its own" (Jager and Maier, 2009, p. 37), and as social action it is instrumental in constituting identities, constructing and transforming social reality, and at the same time it is a tangible form (or manifestation) of thoughts and worldviews. Structural violence or strain does not per se shape collective grievances and demands, but they are foregrounded 'partly through processes of

interpretation, discursive practices, and active meaning making" (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 203). Insofar as one can transcend the representations structured by hegemonic discourses, it manifests articulation of political subjectivity and affirmation of human agency.

This research, while partially focused on contentious public events, mainly examines the 'unobtrusive' forms of mobilisation in the shape of political narratives. For this study, a frame analytical method is used to explore the Kashmiri youth narratives in the post-2008 period. In the context of social movements, political narratives serve to subvert the dominant discourses and reproduce contentious frames to destabilise the existing cultural and political orders. Through a systematic analysis of political discourses, this thesis seeks to understand how the Kashmiri youth affirm their political subjectivity by employing subversive frames in their narratives, what salient linguistic elements comprise these subversive frames, and what are the variations across cases. Additionally, it aims to unravel the imprints of generational consciousness in these narratives, and how they while inheriting the anti-status quo language of contention, consolidate it, and thereby diffusing the collective action frames of Tehreek into the discourses of the new generation. Before addressing these questions (in the later chapters), it is important to conceptualise the operative categories of 'youth' and 'generation', whose narratives this thesis purports to examine.

Defining Youth

In his 2017 book *The True Life*, philosopher Alain Badiou describes what it means to be a young person. He says that even though they may not be fully aware of it, young people are often confronted with two possible, sometimes imbricating and inconsistent, life directions, and he pithily sum-ups these two temptations as "either the passion for burning up your life or the passion for building it". (p. 11). Many scholars of youth studies may not necessarily agree with such a definition. Because, largely due to the late modernity, the concept of youth has assumed a complexity which makes it difficult to identify the youth phase (Furlong, 2013, p. 4). Unlike in the old agricultural societies, young people in the modern period take up employment after spending a long period on education and that way they may stay within the condition of dependency for lengthier periods (Ibid). Therefore, to address the definitional complexity of the term youth, some new categories have been suggested, such as post-adolescence (Keniston, 1971), or emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Unlike the youth stage, the adolescent period is relatively easily identifiable and "can be tied reasonably accurately to a specific age range and the completion of a set of developmental tasks" (Furlong, 2013, pp. 2-3). Therefore, acknowledging the different meanings of youth as a social category across the globe, Andy Furlong (2013) defines it as

essentially a period of semi-dependence that falls between the full dependency that characterises childhood and the independence of adulthood".[44]

Walter Heinz (2009) also recognises the context-dependent definition of youth across cultures and societies and time. Different countries have different legal definitions of maturity age and thus youth period is defined in terms of those legal definitions (p. 4). As Heinz says, "Modern societies differ in their institutional arrangements concerning life transitions: education and training provisions, labour market regulations, exclusion mechanisms, social assistance rules, and the extent to which there is an explicit youth policy" (Ibid., p. 6). Keeping in view the disagreement about what it means to be youth, we can argue that youth or adulthood is a social construct. As Wyn and White (1997, p. 9) also say, "Youth is problematic largely because *adult status itself is problematic*". Henderson et al. reaffirm this argument when they assert: "adulthood does not exist, it has to be invented" (2007, p. 20).

A Brief Overview of the Debate on Youth Generation

Although Lewis Feuer has been criticised for his psychological reductionism in his 1969 book *The Conflict of Generations*, which analyses student movements, some of his theoretical insights are still useful. He argues that youth as agents of change play a significant role in historical progression, which manifests itself in the generational conflict. The generational consciousness among youth is often a consequence of great political events (such as defeat in war or other national humiliations) which the younger generation attributes to the weaknesses of the parental generations against whom they often grow antagonistic tendencies. Also, the generational consciousness in youth can be a result of a perceived lack of adaptability among the elders to new ideas and cultural practices. Thus, the perceived failure of the older generation leads to what Feuer calls "de-authorisation" of them in the eyes of the new generation. In Kashmiri political discourses, blame for the current unpleasant political situation in IJK is often attributed to Sheikh Abdullah and the generation that blindly followed him and did not protest his signing of an agreement with the Indira Gandhi government in 1975. Usually, when phases of state oppression grow in Kashmir, disparagement of Abdullah and political de-authorisation of the older generation also intensifies. They are sardonically reminded of the popular slogan, which they sang during their time: "Alli kari wangan kari/Bab kari lo lo" [Whatever or Bab decides; literal trans: whether he makes squash or aubergines of us, only our Bab will decide].

Nevertheless, Phil Cohen (1999) criticises the old assumptions which view youth as a unitary category and a stage of peculiar psychological development. He calls these conceptions 'youthism',

[44] Furlong (2013, p. 1) also argues that "Youth is a socially constructed intermediary phase that stands between childhood and adulthood: it is not defined chronologically as a stage that can be tied to specific age ranges, nor can its end point be linked to specific activities, such as taking up paid work or having sexual relations."

which, according to him, "first crystallised in the 1880's". Over the years, this youthism, underpinned by a large body of scientific studies became "unquestioned common sense" (Cohen, 1999, p. 182). Cohen critiques Stanley Hall's psychologically-oriented theory on adolescence (in which Hall sees adolescence as a phase of 'storm and stress': an adolescent is driven by dualistic forces, one pushing him to primitivistic impulses and another towards rationalistic sensibilities). He also sees inadequacies in Karl Mannheim's 'problem of generations' thesis (where Mannheim argues that each generation, drawing from unique experiences and ideas, moulds a distinct identity and modes of behaviour and thought, which in tension with the old generation's self-identity). He finds Talcott Parsons' functionalist model problematic (where Parsons draws an uncritical distinction between family systems in the traditional and the modern industrial societies and locate youth position "at the maximum point of tension between these two value systems") (Cohen, pp. 183-86). According to Cohen, since the 1950s, the new studies on youth have retained a 'social problem orientation', especially in Britain. Much of it was to do with the moral panic over youth revolt against capitalism and political and cultural deviance among the young people. Because of this theoretical approach, a dualistic conception about youth emerged in which they came to be divided into two types: good and bad; mainstream and deviant (pp. 193-94). This trend continued to later years, with its contradictions and unresolved problematics. As Cohen (1999) observes:

> The classical errors are not only conserved, they are compounded. Socio-biology biologises the social; it certainly does not provide us with a material history of the youthful body and its social techniques. Psycho-history either psychologizes the historical or historicises the unconscious. It has nothing to tell us about the changing ideological basis of particular modes of production of subjectivity in different periods or types of society. Within these perspectives, it becomes impossible to locate the youth question in terms of a specific set of economic, social and cultural transformations. Yet it is precisely because the models bequeathed us by Hall, Mannheim and Parsons are inadequate for the purpose, that we have to try to construct new and better ways of periodising youth history, rather than abandon the project altogether (p. 191).[45]

Yet, on the other hand, there are "popularist approaches", which tend to typecast a generation chronologically in accordance with a generation's assumed consumption pattern and stereotypical image as projected in the mass media. It is through this popularist approach that terms like *baby boomers* (1946-64), *generation X* (1965-80), *millennials* or *generation Y* (post-1980) have become well-known (Furlong, 2013, p.14). Though, some scholars have worked on the inadequacies in the previous youth research and developed new models which consider the role of social, economic and political processes in constituting youth. For example, Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva (1998) locates the notion of youth as a social category emerging in modernity through bureaucratic processes, which defined populations according to the age for welfare and educational provisions.

[45] Cohen sees a political motive behind theoretical perspective which draw historical parallels between different generations. He believes that by showing that the youth of the 19th century was as disobedient and lawless as in the late 20th century, there was an attempt to undercut Margaret Thatcher's call for a 'return to Victorian values'.

Bill Osgerby (2004) looks at media representations and development of youth cultures in the western countries, and argues that it was in the mid-20th century, specifically during the post-Second World War consumer boom, that youth was constituted into "a distinct consumer group" owing to its demographic significance, with the youth market becoming a lucrative business sector. Edmunds and Turner (2002) also takes a sociological approach and defines a generation "in terms of a collective response to a traumatic event or catastrophe that unites a particular cohort of individuals into a self-conscious age stratum" (p. 13). They postulate that traumatic events (like wars, conflicts, and economic meltdowns) have a profound effect on consciousness and self-identity of a generation which experiences such events. Internalised experiences of traumatic events can sublimate into a distinct set of values, interests and political activities so that the unique experiences of a traumatic event distinguish a generation from its past and future and "becomes the basis of a collective ideology and a set of integrating rituals" (Ibid., pp.13-14).

Although within the youth studies the concept of generation has been contested and debated, its analytical usefulness has not been denied. For Wyn and Woodman (2006, p. 497), "it is necessary to develop an understanding of how each generation is located within its social, political and economic milieu, because…the meaning of age is constructed through the prevailing social and economic relations of society". They emphasise that the post-1970s marks a 'clear break' from the previous configuration of the socio-economic and political life, and on either side of this historical divide, the different generations and their differing dispositions have taken shape. Arguing along the same lines, albeit in the German context, Mark Roseman (1995) claims that German poets manufactured the image and myth of youth in the 18th century and this myth of youth was tied to the theme of spiritual redemption and unity of the nation which was under threat from foreign aggression and internally riven with factionalism. Thus, on the youth, which was conceived as a force outside the established (corrupt) order and capable of bringing a change, was projected the hope of the nation. This aesthetic construct would later assume political undertones, with the theme of youth intertwining with the idea of national unity (of Germany) throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Roseman, 1995, p. 13). Roseman maintains that generational consciousness created through the compelling idea of youth as a redemptive moral agent has been a "distinctive feature of German development" (p. 9).

Looking at the Muslim youth in the global south, Asef Bayet and Linda Herrera (2010) point out that youth movements should be "treated in their own right" rather than relegated to subcultural studies or viewed from the perspective of social problems. However, their assertion that youth movements are essentially about claiming or reclaiming youthfulness (i.e., their objective is to have control over how they carry themselves) appears to be problematic. Bayet says: "When young persons develop a particular consciousness about themselves as youth and begin to defend or

extend their youthfulness in a collective fashion, a youth movement can be said to have developed" (2010, p. 31). Such narrow definition of youth movement takes out substantive political grievances (such as nationalist assertions) from the matrix of youthful claims, and underplays the agency of youth movements as actors of politico-historical changes, and rather present them as a corporate body which pursues self-interest of vanity. From the street protests in the Middle East to referendums in Europe, youth generation has been playing a decisive role in nationalist politics, and their political activism is not necessarily informed by narrow agenda of claiming youthfulness in terms of asserting their sartorial choices and sexuality. Rather every generation expresses a desire for an ideal society which it seeks to realise through political action; some find agenda of the right as attractive, and some find left as good. As such, youth political activism is a significant area for investigation, because findings from studies focused on youth phenomenon not only helps in devising informed policies but the insights gained through such research can tell us more about how political changes are linked with revolutionary forces like youth, who retain a transformative potential due to their vitality and "biographical availability" (McAdam, 1986).

Finally, within the youth debate, the 'transition' and 'generation' perspectives may seem theoretically conflicting, but, as Professor Ken Roberts (2007) argues, this separation of perspectives is unnecessary. Because, even if the contemporary youth is different than its mid-twentieth century counterpart, "youth is still a life stage and is therefore inherently transitional" (p. 266). And, transitions are socially constructed and contain a degree of complexity, so as such transition and generation "can be used complementarily" (p. 265). For example, Jefferey Jensen Arnett's (1998, 2004) concept of 'emerging adulthood' postulates that prior to taking up adult responsibility, young people can delay—therefore manifesting individual agency—their transition to adulthood during which period they enjoy a degree of autonomy beyond adolescence. It is a period where they are no longer adolescents and yet have not attained the status of full adulthood, which is characterised, by the standards of the late modernity, by independent decisions, financial independence and self-sufficiency. In the emerging adulthood period, a young person is usually filled with a sense of optimism, and it is a period of career and identity explorations (Arnett, 2004). Kenneth Keniston's themes related to 'post-adolescence' are more or less based on the same idea, where he says that self-identity of youth and expectations of society are in tension. There are inherently temporary youth-specific identities and roles, and there is a desire for movement (inner and outer) but when the drive and sense of high optimism in youth confronts setbacks they develop a feeling of 'being caught in a rut' or 'getting nowhere' (Keniston, 1970, p. 639).

Globalisation and Youth

One of the significant processes that distinguish and make (or shape) the contemporary youth is the globalisation or the late modernity, or what Zygmunt Bauman (2000) calls "liquid modernity",

which is characterised by "the patterns of dependency and interaction" which are "malleable to an extent unexperienced by, and unimaginable for, past generations" (p. 8). Although social and cultural conditions in south Asian societies like IJK may not have reached the same stage which the western nations have experienced, there are still influences which travel through global networks. For Richard Flacks (1970) it is often young university students who, stimulated by enabling environment of academia, question social practices and interrogate received ideas and develop new cultural sensibilities by internalising new values (p. 151). This interaction between globalisation and youth is pertinent with respect to this thesis, for locating the new political generation of Kashmiris within the complex matrix of late modernity.

A shift from industrialization to knowledge-societies has ushered in a new phase of modernisation that has brought considerable changes in social and economic profiles of developing countries, intensifying individualisation and social inequalities – the latter manifesting itself in the way the gap between rich and poor has widened, and certain social groups have been rendered vulnerable, including the young people (Bendit, 2008, p. 29). Even when old institutions continue to bear their influence and determine the life course of individuals, globalisation or the latest phase of modernisation has certainly brought vast changes which have great significances for the young people (Ibid., p. 30). Lopsided distribution of resources and opportunities may be attributable to the factors of class, gender, education and ethnicity, yet individual decisions (individuation) appear to circumvent these to a certain extent. As the Preamble of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (1995) states: "Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox, seeking to be integrated into an existing order or to serve as a force to transform that order". With rapid and far-reaching changes bringing in new socio-economic and political realities, some scholars suggest that the youth question needs to be "continually rethought" (Cohen, 1999, p. 181). So, it becomes even more important to ask what consequences globalisation to have on the youth question.

Indeed, economic contexts vary from country to country, meaning that the effects of globalisation differ.[46] Nevertheless, globalisation can reshape and influence the social and generational changes, and present an array of pressures, challenges and opportunities for youth, propelling them to either engage and assimilate in the process or take a radically different approach. While the existing institutions may not withstand the consequences of globalisation, yet "they continue to have a central relevance in societal processes linked to the economy, culture and socialisation" (Bendit,

[46] Bendit (2008, p. 29) elaborates on this: "Since globalizing factors are confronted in different countries with different economic contexts and with strongly rooted institutional structures, not only linked to labour market regulations or different existing welfare systems but also to differences prevailing norms and values, they become "filtered" in a special way, giving the globalization process a specific character in each country."

2008, p. 29). Potentially, the life courses of young people can get affected because of the transition from education to work (Ibid).

In the highly-developed countries, youth are encouraged to be individualistic. With an independent life, they can contribute—of course, with the aid of state provisions like education, training, and welfare system—to the reproduction of social modernisation and economic progress (Ibid., p. 36). However, in the less developing societies, youth confronts a different reality. Distinct societal expectations in developing countries propel distinct responses from young people. As Bendit (2008) observes, in the developing societies, the conception of young people as promising agents of change is tied with their tendency to challenge social inequalities and traditional imaginaries which they are capable of altering through praxis (p. 36). Perhaps, that may be the reason that while youth generally tend to remain aloof from formal politics and institutions, in many countries (especially in the developing ones), they are seen at the forefront of social movements (p. 37). The Kashmir case illustrates this theoretical assertion well because the recent mass political mobilisations that took place in that region were mostly led by the contemporary youth generation, who seek to change the status quo.

Globalisation and Muslim Youth Identity

Muslim youth are also part of a global generation because they are also consumers of global youth culture. However, the events like 9/11, the conflict in the Middle East, the discourses regarding Islam in the West, along with a general precarity emanating from livelihood issues, the Muslim youth is constituted into a "generational subset" (Bayet and Herrera, 2010, p. 10). Broadcasted primarily through the new media, the generational consciousness among Muslim youth manifests its engagement with issues of social justice and human rights. Like global youth, they also feel moral outrage at global injustices and inequalities. As June Edmunds and Bryan Turner (2005) say after the internet has supplanted the TV, the new generation, in comparison to the 1960's generation, is more global (p.569). With the communication revolution, which has made public interactions horizontal and less hierarchal, there is "greater scope for mutual influence" for the new generation (Ibid). The emergence of social media in the late 2000s has provided youth with new avenues of protest as well as a platform to easily navigate varied linguistic and cultural sites, from which they acquire new ideas to practice back home. However, exposure to the global cultural industry can cultivate tastes and desires which may not be fulfilled in the condition of economic dependency which generally characterises the youth stage and may lead to a sense of deprivation.

At the same time, discourses of Islamophobia and political happenings in the Middle East, especially the continuing oppression of Palestinians, also travel through media and induce a feeling of victimhood among global Muslim youth (Bayet and Herrera, 2010, p. 9). These and other global processes reinforce among Muslim youth a collective identity, which becomes a prism through

which they see the neoliberal world order; and they may rebel against the perceived unpleasant political configuration by withdrawing into religious conservatism. As a reaction to the alienating political order, youth may then look up the transnational Islamist networks which can provide a space where they get "a sense of pride in belonging to an Islamic brotherhood" (Herrera and Bayet, 2010, p. 361). However, as Bayet and Herrera (2010) emphasise, Muslim youth exhibit variegated responses to the structural challenges and they "diverge radically among themselves in how to turn their common sentiments into action, how to respond to their status of 'subordination'" (p. 10). For example, where a secular authority lacks credibility, youth may exercise their autonomy and express their dissent in the idiom of religion, and where religious authority (as in Iran) is overbearing, they may adopt what Bayat (2010, p. 36) calls "subversive accommodation", i.e. appropriating the religious rituals for their youthful expressions.

The Kashmiri youth also face similar concerns and anxieties that global Muslim youth confront, though the local political context may be different. Kashmiri youth live under a nominally secular authority, but strong undertones of Hindu majoritarian of the Indian polity is not lost to them—the rise of the Hindu far-right since 2014 has particularly accentuated the negative perception of India among Kashmiris. On the one hand, there is the militarised occupation, which controls their movement, restricts their freedoms, and violently suppresses their political activism, and contributes to mental distress in Kashmir (Tamim, 2016). On the other hand, there is a complex world of geopolitics, which affects the political dynamics within IJK, coupled with the wave of global Islamophobia that enables misrepresentations of the political struggle of the people of IJK in mass media, especially Bollywood films, which "perpetrates a gross oversimplification of a very complex situation on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir" (Kabir, 2018, p. 289).[47] Kashmiri youth have to negotiate these challenges that potentially render them vulnerable to 'indifference', which usually characterises the global responses to the oppression of Muslim societies in the hands of the allies of the neo-liberal order.

Globalisation and the New Youth Generation in IJK

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005, p. 13), the people born in the 1980s and afterwards are considered as 'the most highly educated generation in human history'. In IJK, school enrolment has surged in the last two decades, and the literacy rate has risen from 30 per cent in 1981 to 55 per cent in 2001 and reached 68 per cent in the last census in 2011. However, although in private (especially Missionary-run) schools, English has been taught at least since the early twentieth century, it was only in 2003 that the language was introduced as a

[47] Kabir (p. 298) further argues that the Bollywood films' "engagements with nascent narratives of global terrorism have opened out an extra-national discursive space where undesirable Kashmiri Muslims may be jettisoned and the [Indian] national body cleansed".

medium of instruction in the state-run schools. Expansion of English education had a considerable impact on Kashmir society. A study by Aadil Kak (2005) shows how due to globalisation, English has established itself in Kashmir, especially among the youth generation, as a language of prestige which provides good things in life, and symbolises intelligence and modernity (p. 43). Those lacking in English language skills face handicaps in the job market, while as English speakers get attention and can impose informal authority in the public sphere. English skills have facilitated the mobility of Kashmiri youth.[48] Since the last decade or two, there is a trend for opting for programs like MBA and B. Tech, as these courses open job prospects in multinational companies. With cheaper airfares offered by private airlines—which started to operate from the Kashmir valley from the mid-2000's—young middle-class Kashmiris are frequently travelling to different cities of India in pursuit of education, employment and business opportunities. Some Kashmiri youths also go to the Middle Eastern countries for employment. Numerous Kashmiri students study in Indian universities where they have access to various academic, cultural, and political networks.

Ironically, in contrast to the stifling atmosphere of IJK-based universities, where state surveillance is pervasive in educational institutions and moral policing is also noticeable to some degree, the campuses in mainland India have been relatively tolerant for Kashmiri youth. They have been able to research the themes of their choice, articulate their political opinions, cultivate friendships and alliances with leftist dissidents and students groups such as All India Students' Association (AISA), Students Federation of India (SFI), and Democratic Students' Union (DSU).[49] While as student unions are banned in IJK, young Kashmiris have contested and won student-body elections in outside universities.[50] For example, in 2015, Shehla Rashid Shora, a 27-year-old student at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), became the vice-president of Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (*The Times of India* 8 March 2016). In 2016, a Kashmiri research scholar, Tajamul Islam, became the president of the students' union of Hyderabad-based Maulana Azad National Urdu University (*Deccan Chronicle* 9 September 2016). A year later, in 2017, another Kashmiri research scholar, Sajad Subhan Rather, was elected as the vice-president of Aligarh Muslim

[48] Out of the critical mass of English-speaking Kashmiris has spawned a cultural elite who has acquired skills and vocabulary to engage with the globalized cultures. Their knowledge about terms and conditions easily enable them to articulate and express their politics at the trans-national stage. Their positionality as English-speaking intellectuals endows them with social and cultural capital and a privilege lacking among the subaltern, who faced hindrances, intellectual and financial. For the privileged lot, intellectual advancement (through English competency) usually facilitates material advancement as well. For example, a young Kashmiri journalist competent in English can do freelancing for Indian and western media outlets and earn good money.

[49] The SFI is the student wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), while as DSU is a radical group aligned with the Maoist ideology. Unlike AISA, which frames Kashmir as a human rights issue, DSU advocates political self-determination for the people of IJK.

[50] Although, Kashmir University Students' Union remains banned, Kashmiri students have been vocal about moral policing and have countered it through media campaigns. For example, a student wrote an article in Greater Kashmir about Kashmir University and denounced what he described as the university's "vicious program of programming young impressionable minds with patriarchal, misogynistic, hierarchal, violent prejudices". See, Shah, *Greater Kashmir*, 10 July 2015.

University Students Union (Jaiswal, 2017). More recently, in 2018, a PhD scholar of history, Aejaz Ahmad Rather, was elected as General Secretary of JNUSU and an undergrad student of history, Aeshal Nisar, won the presidential post at the College of Vocational Studies, University of Delhi (Singh, 2018).

So, within universities outside IJK, many young Kashmiris found their voice and relatively free space to engage with new ideas and practices and organise events related to the Kashmir. In her article "What Studying at Ramjas College Did to My Unquestioning Faith in Religion", Kashmiri student, Muntaha Amin, narrates how after entering a Delhi University college, she "learnt about ideas I had never thought of or imagined before" and how she "joined the gender forum, other democratic solidarity forums for students and had conversations with different people, people from left student parties on different issues". Talking about a university event, which was vandalized by a far-right student group, Amin writes:

> 'Cultures of Protest' (which was also the name of our seminar which was vandalised by the ABVP) gave meaning to my life. Cultures of dissent and protest gave meaning to me more than anything else before.

In left-leaning campuses, where vibrant student bodies are deeply politicised, Kashmiri students could vocalise their political stance on Kashmir, something that is either forbidden or tightly controlled on the campuses in IJK.[51] Of course, such political articulations were informed by the traumatic experiences and narratives assimilated back home in Kashmir, where the war has killed thousands of people, traumatised an entire society and deeply impacted its social fabric. It was in this context that Kashmiri scholar Abir Bazaz, who teaches philosophy in a private university in India, would remark: 'I wouldn't be at Ashoka university teaching Dostoevsky if it wasn't for violence in Kashmir'.[52]

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[51] A research student of mass communication at the University of Kashmir told this researcher in September 2017 that his supervisor had asked him to remove certain words from his thesis, because she did not want to get into trouble. She had suggested him to use the term 'turmoil' and not 'conflict' for the political situation in Kashmir. In comparison, a former Kashmiri student of Delhi University told me that when he told his supervisor that he will not use the word 'separatism' to describe the Kashmiri political movement but will find a suitable synonymous of the word resistance, which he had used, the supervisor said that he was also okay with the word 'resistance'. A few other research scholars of the Kashmir University also said that they felt their varsity's environment stifling. In fact, Manan Wani, a former research scholar of geography at AMU who later became a rebel, was also critical of KU's suffocating atmosphere in his September 2018 article.

[52] Quoted in *The Edict* (20 October 2017), a student newspaper of the Ashoka University. Abir recounts his experiences of Kashmir as a young man and says: "I was just like everyone else, I wanted to be a sportsman, I wanted to study science but then I got into these existential and spiritual questions after my experiences in the early 90s because of the violence that I encountered. I was so disturbed by the violence that I distrusted most institutions, including the institution of education. and I decided that I didn't want to study anything for a year, and my parents were totally alarmed. Then I met the poet Agha Shahid Ali and he told me, 'But Abir, you can just study literature'. My reaction to that was, 'Is that something I can do?' It was a strange gift; it put me on this other path and set me off on another intellectual journey, which has been rewarding in its own way. I wouldn't be at Ashoka teaching Dostoevsky if it wasn't for violence in Kashmir".

Through the 2000s, as Kashmiri student community grew in numbers, Kashmiri voices gained strength. Solidarity offered by like-minded colleagues, friends, and teachers also helped. Ironically, in places like Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), which has attracted Kashmiri students since the early 20th century—and since the early 1990s perhaps hosts more Kashmiri students than any other campus in mainland India—there has always been a certain inhibition among Kashmiri students to express their pro-Tehreek stance ostentatiously and in the manner as Kashmiri students have done in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).[53] That is not to say that Kashmiri students in AMU maintain a passive or apolitical posture. There has always been a close-knit group of Kashmiris in AMU who talk and debate about the Kashmir conflict and resistance politics but mostly in an unobtrusive manner. For example, in the 2000s, some AMU students created a Yahoo email group called Society for Education and Culture (SEC), which became a platform for political debate and article sharing.[54]

Nevertheless, Kashmiri students have also faced surveillance, harassment and prejudice in mainland India.[55] Although a sense of fear and harassment accompanied Kashmiri students wherever they went inside India, it became pronounced after the rise of Hindutva politics, which made Kashmiris particularly vulnerable to hate speech and physical assaults. In Mar 2016, in an interview with popular Indian vernacular *Patrika*, JNU Professor Amita Singh had made some uncharitable remarks about Kashmiri students. In response, sixteen Kashmiri students in Delhi wrote an open letter, accusing her of "creating a hostile environment for Kashmiris, Muslims and Dalits" (*Greater Kashmir* 20 March 2016). However, Professor Singh's remark was just a speck of what was happening at the broader level. Many TV channels and media outlets had already started targeting Kashmiris after 9 Feb 2016 episode in JNU campus, where some students had raised slogans in favour of Kashmiri independence. Ultimately, heightened sense of insecurity and growing incidents of assaults and pervasive hate speech against Kashmiris made them reticent to

[53] As brutal military campaign intensified in IJK in the wake of the armed rebellion, many middleclass families sent their wards to AMU for safety.

[54] A cursory glance at the posts in SEC Yahoo group shows a deep interest among its members in the Middle East politics, especially the Israel-Palestine conflict. This also shows how the political developments in the Muslim world concerns the Kashmiri youth.

[55] According to a former Kashmiri student of JNU, during the NDA regime (1999-2004) Kashmiri students in Delhi felt threatened in the latter years of NDA regime when there was increasing anger against Kashmiris in the wake of the Parliament attack of December 2001 and growing xenophobia attributable to rise of right-wing BJP. However, as Kashmiri student population increased over the years, they gained confidence and organized themselves. From mere 8-10 students in JNU in the early 2000's, the Kashmiri community grew gradually as universalization of internet created awareness and more students qualified the entrance tests. By the time two significant political uprisings broke out in IJK (in 2008 and 2010), the Kashmiri student body in Delhi was organized enough to hold protests, though one of the reasons that they did not face much problems in doing that was that the Vice-Chancellors of that time were centrist and worked under the relatively tolerant Congress-led UPA government. Situation for Kashmiri students again went bad after BJP came into power in 2014 and any talk on Kashmir was either banned or violently disturbed by right-wing groups.

venture their opinions publicly, and some even left their studies and returned to Kashmir after facing constant harassment in mainland India.

Growing Kashmiri Voices Globally

In the last two decades, many young Kashmiris got scholarships to study in western universities, where some of them also produced critical scholarship on Kashmir. In foreign countries, they could freely campaign for Kashmiri self-determination movement and cultivate solidarity networks. Likewise, young Kashmiri journalists received assignments from international networks to cover the Kashmir conflict. This opportunity to work for global media networks allowed them to take the Kashmiri narrative to global audiences. Moreover, in the last decade, Kashmiris have found places in international media networks, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Harpers*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Independent*, *Granta*, *Guernica*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *TNT*, *Press TV*, *Gulf News*, etc. This global networking has allowed them to disseminate Tehreek narrative around the world and foreground Kashmiri voice on the Kashmir conflict, whose representation at the global level has been dominated by Indian and Pakistani perspectives. It was also in the last two decades that social media use spread and by around 2010 a sizable number of Kashmiri youth had signed up for Facebook, which became a vibrant platform to learn and disseminate resistance ideology and get organised with like-minded comrades. By one estimate, in 2010 there were around 40,000 Facebook users in Kashmir. One of the earliest social media-based youth groups—which posted items related to Tehreek—was a Yahoo chat room and later as Facebook became popular this group turned into 'Bekaar Jamaat' and then to 'Aalaw', the latter two played an important role during the 2010 street protest.

How to Understand the Youth Narratives

When we talk about identity, we are dealing with the question of how people draw from available resources of history, language and culture and constitute themselves through narrativization of the self (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Through narratives, people understand and make sense of their location in social configurations in which they are embedded (Bruner, 1987; Somers, 1994; Patterson and Monroe, 1998). Narratives, essentially, are normative frameworks, which focus on salient characteristics of a prevailing situation and indicate what ought to be, and because they create common cultural understandings, they are also sites of contestation (Patterson and Monroe, 1998). They are "cultural meanings and interpretations that guide perception, thought, interaction, and action" and "organize […] social relations, interpretations of the past, and plans for the future" (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004, p. x). By taking a narrative analytical approach, we can gain an in-depth understanding of social movements by integrating person, culture and change (Ibid). Political narratives, which emanate from dynamic interactions of formal and informal political frameworks, can be studied in terms of how they constitute discursive consensus framework that underpins

certain political orientations and behaviours (Shenhav, 2006). Examining the Kashmiri youth narratives, thus, we can identify the discursive patterns which constitute a unifying political ideology underpinned by generational consciousness, and explore the varied ways of expressing this political ideology and the tensions within it.

For Anthony Giddens (1991), tradition has been significantly weakened in the late modernity and therefore individuals, because they no longer have readily available models which tradition usually provided, confront questions about their identity, which they answer, "either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour" (p. 70). In turn, this idea of self-identity interacts with the more significant processes like globalisation, state, and market, thereby creating a mutually influencing relationship and interconnectedness. The dynamic relationship between the lower level changes (self-identity, self-awareness) and the higher-level changes (laws, state policy, mass media) create a situation whereby society and normative frameworks have seen changes in the late modernity. In many countries, especially in the developed world, such changes manifest in different domains and spheres of life. For example, marriage and sexuality are viewed and practised differently than say fifty years ago, religion is challenged much more openly now, or rationality is perceived as the gold standard to measure the validity of things. In this post-traditional, post-industrial context, self-identity of an individual becomes a reflexive project, a continual process of self-assessment and self-presentation, which entails creating, maintaining, and revising own biographical narratives (Gauntlett, 2002, p. 99). As Giddens (1991, p. 54) says:

> A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor—important though this is—in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self.

While Giddens' thesis of the reflexive project of self is a useful conceptual framework to look at the Kashmiri youth narratives, it (along with Ulrich Beck's theory of individualisation) has been criticised by many scholars.[56] In the Kashmir context, Mohd Aslam Bhat and Tareak Rather (2013, p. 199) argue that socio-economic structures and class-based social inequalities still bear heavily on Kashmiri youths' life chances and their perceptions of the future. Based on a survey of students of two (elite and non-elite) schools in the Srinagar city, they show that "making rational choices and decisions, which does constitute individualisation […] still requires access to socio-economic and cultural resources and/or is heavily dependent on one's class position" (Bhat and Rather, 2013, p. 199). This line of argument corresponds with Steven Roberts' (2010, p. 143) assertion that while

[56] For example, Skeggs (2004) criticizes Giddens for generalizing his theory to the majority, while as Jamieson (1998) argues that he has overlooked resilience of tradition and inequality in the present times. A more general criticism of Giddens' thesis is that it assumes that we have choices over our life-courses which we can autonomously exercise. However, Henderson et al. (2007, p. 19) have a different view of Giddens' reflexive project, arguing that, "Perhaps we can also understand it as referring to the process through which the appearance of choice and control is created".

manifestations of the class have become increasingly complex, its impact on life chances of youth cannot be discounted. To understand youth lives in the global south, Craig Jeffrey (2008) also emphasises upon theoretically integrating fluid identity and subjectivity formation with analysis of social inequalities, economic structures, and political opportunities.

Nonetheless, the characteristics of the reflexive project resemble the conditions of youth life, which is characterised by "uncertainty, experimentation and immediacy" (Henderson et al., 2007, p. 19). Based on this perspective, a question can be asked: how youth propel themselves into the future? Because, as Giddens understands it, adulthood does not exist but must be invented. Here narratives work to explain the past and articulate the aims and intentions for the future, and through this process, "self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives" (Giddens, 1991, p. 244). However, since perceptions of youth are shaped by the structures they are enmeshed in, we cannot abstract their narratives from their socio-economic and political context. So, in the situation where political discourses of the Kashmir conflict suffuse the social milieu of IJK, and the militarised occupation governs many aspects of civilian life, narratives cannot remain unaffected. That means we must consider the political context to understand the youth narratives.

The Context of Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Each generation is historically located in its distinct political and social context, which shapes their narratives. In the context of Northern Ireland youth, Henderson et al. (2007, p. 20) says: "[their] narratives are 'occasioned' (being closely tied to the circumstances in which they are told) and draw on existing narrative repertoires that reflect the cultural and social resources that young people have access to".[57] Similarly, for the new youth generation in IJK, the political environment, in which they came of age, is qualitatively different than what it was for the preceding generations (say, those born in the 1960s and 1970s). Firstly, the new generation of Kashmiris is exposed to the dramatic and traumatic accounts of the 1990s comprised of themes like armed rebellion, human rights violations, violence of the state and non-state actors etc. Besides, as compared to the previous generations, globalisation has had a more pronounced influence on the contemporary youth generation. Secondly, increasing militarisation and insurgency (and the last three mass uprisings) occurred in their lifetime, so they have been exposed to the violence from a young age. In addition, they are also affected by the Indian right-wing political formations whose toxic rhetoric constantly otherize Muslims and vilifies their history and cultural heritage. So, experiences of these political

[57] In the beginning of the peace process (late 1990's), the young people of Northern Ireland expressed and regarded their identity in strongly political, religious and ethnic terms, but as the social landscape witnessed a slight change brought on by the leisure industry, drug culture, and secularisation of the society, avenues and opportunities of interaction (and eventual social integration) was made possible. Though a little transformation overall, but this slight gradual change also engendered a change in the narratives of the youth in Northern Ireland when they were interviewed in 2006.

events and processes inform their understanding of politics, and the combination of these internal and external factors have shaped their political subjectivity.

As Henderson et al. shows (2007, p. 20), scholars use different terms to describe those moments which have a profound effect on individuals' biographies: *turning points* (Mandlebaum 1973); *epiphanies* (Denzin 1989); *fateful moments* (Giddens 1991); *breaks* (Humphrey 1993). Henderson et al. (2007, p. 20) use the term *critical moments*, which "represent interactional moments which leave marks on people's lives, altering their fundamental meaning structures". These critical moments, though consequential they are, may not make their significance known at the time of their initiation, but they become comprehensible retrospectively. Though, not all critical moments produce the same effect. Some may be more consequential than others, "depending on resources and timing" (Ibid., p. 21). For example, in their study, Henderson et al. (2006) found that the lives of some young people were particularly vulnerable to events which were beyond their control (illness, violence, family disruption etc.), for some others, their critical moments were mainly related 'to internal changes' (depression, break-up etc.). Nonetheless, generally, critical moments potentially influence the formation of self-identity among young people and may determine how they think and act in their wake. Yet, while these concepts explicate actions and behaviours occasioned by certain critical points in a young individual's life, they do not address the problematic of passivity, which precedes the critical moment. For example, if certain significant events (such as political uprisings) have had consequences for the Kashmiri youth in terms of initiating them into political activism, how can preceding passivity of them be understood in the context of the Kashmir conflict? During the fieldwork in late 2016, this researcher received an email from a Kashmiri student which prompted this question. She had written:

> …just before 2016 unrest, I was alien to all the dirty kitchen politics and their executors, the freedom movement, the history of my nation, article 370, AFSPA, and so on. It so happened in these few months that I underwent such a psychological transformation that I seem to be more interested in the movement rather than science.

From the first reading, the email gives the impression that a young Kashmiri female student of sciences is reflecting on the changing political situation in her homeland. However, on a closer look, it becomes clear that the student does not only express peculiarities of the Kashmiri conflict from an individual's point of view but also refers to the aspect of 'psychological transformation'. In relation to the generational perspective of this thesis, this concept of psychological transformation is important one, as it furnishes a potential clue about how Kashmiri youth can turn from passive bystanders into active adherents of Tehreek.

Of course, becoming 'active' here does not mean formally joining a Tehreek organisation or voluntarily taking political action on the streets but the initiation of political consciousness with

respect to the political zeitgeist, against which people articulate an ideological or discursive position. From the narrative perspective, this would further mean consciously emplotting nationalist (or Tehreek) ideology into their stories of Kashmir through universal narrative prototypes (Hogan, 2009, p. 12). In the email mentioned above, the student confesses that the traumatic events of 2016 spurred her interest in the movement and occasioned her initiation into Tehreek. Although she might have been exposed to Tehreek discourses earlier, some aspects of those discourses present in her vocabulary may be an aftereffect of her "psychological transformation". But, this raises a pertinent question: how are we to understand the period of passivity which traumatic events seem to rupture?

Political Passivity in a Context

When the student talks about her psychological transformation, we can assume that there was a period of her political passiveness (conscious, cultivated, or unconscious) before the 2016 uprising. This preceding phase of political passivity can be analysed using the conceptual framework of 'crisis as context'. According to Henrik Vigh (2008, p. 8), "We need to depart from our regular understanding of crisis and trauma as momentary and particularized phenomena and move toward an understanding of critical states as pervasive contexts rather than singular events". When a crisis (such as political conflict, war, military occupation) prolongs and normalises itself over a time, it tends to make people, who live under its shadows, adapt to it as a coping mechanism. This adaptation to conditions of crisis is a strategic and pragmatic response imposed by mundane necessities of human survival and does not necessarily mean acquiescence to them. Resistance against the condition of military occupation may remain dormant but it is not terminated indefinitely. Nonetheless, since the crisis state is chronic, such a world is not characterised by order and balance but chaos and disorder, and this 'abnormal' state becomes ordered as it perpetuates itself overtime. Some people may get co-opted by the state and work to further entrench the state's stranglehold over the subject populace, yet there are always some who resist and rebel either by engaging in a war of attrition or adopting peaceful resistance, including subversive art and narratives.

For at least last two generations of Kashmiris, the massive militarisation with around half a million Indian security personnel (both combatant and non-combatant) stationed in numerous military camps across IJK is symptomatic of pervasive crisis. Although intelligence and military presence have been there since 1947, what precipitated the crisis in IJK was the popular armed rebellion against the Indian rule in the late 1980s and the brutal and long military clampdown against the uprising. In addition to the local crisis, there are also crises at the global level, which has a direct bearing on the Muslim youth of IJK. The so-called 'War on Terror' has ravaged Muslim countries and has produced undesirable by-products which affect the global Muslim youth, who feel

vulnerable to ascendant Islamophobia; a sense of siege and identity crisis is prevalent among them, and this feeling also percolates to the youth of IJK. The global Islamophobia and the politics and discourse of 'War on Terror' have helped the Indian state in labelling the political resistance in IJK as 'terrorism', which must be crushed.[58] So, even though, in the words of Pankaj Mishra (2010), "the killing fields of Kashmir dwarf those of Palestine and Tibet", the world community hardly shows any moral indignation at "the immense human suffering" in IJK. To this situation, young people in IJK might respond differently; some might embrace political militancy, and many others might adopt political passivity.

Since most people in IJK supports the anti-India political resistance, every civilian, especially the able-bodied youth, is a suspect for the state, which deploys varied strategies to control the rebellious population. There is an extensive coercive apparatus that inflict daily violence on the body and psyche of the local civilians to control them. State violence and terror is justified on the name of 'national interest'. Every uprising is brutally crushed, all avenues of political protest controlled, and political roadmaps for conflict resolution ignored. What is preferred instead is conflict management, focused mainly on four aspects: counter-insurgency, elections, developmental activities, and perception management. Therefore, for the new youth generation, who have grown up in such a condition of chronic crisis, the daily killings, shootings, arbitrary detentions, public humiliations, protests, strikes, curfews may not seem like a disruption of 'order', but, as these events have become frequent, they are seen an order itself rather; not as aberrant shocking events in an otherwise smooth flow of things. In other words, these events and the protracted political turmoil represents, in Vigh's (2008, p. 9) terms, "…not a short-term explosive situation but a much more durable and persistent circumstance". Living in what is officially called a "disturbed area" and under the shadow of intrusive military apparatuses (who enjoy legal impunity), Kashmiris are exposed to a situation comparable to what Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2003) calls a state of exception, where their human rights are severely curtailed and the right to life constantly under danger.

For the youth of IJK, therefore, the prevailing political situation is analogous to perpetual war, and the seeming intractability, irresolution of the political conflict, and enduring military occupation

[58] As anthropologist Richard Shapiro (*Greater Kashmir* 29 August 2010) writes: "By viewing every Kashmiri as a terrorist, terrorist sympathizer, or potential supporter of terrorism, India's dominant discourse reveals its 'communal' nature. What distinguishes the Kashmiri who dissents Indian rule from the indigenous person in central India labeled a Naxalite is that the latter is defined as 'one of our own people', and the Kashmiri is an enemy other, whose presence within India is nevertheless demanded to legitimate India as a secular nation, and safeguard economic resources. What makes the Kashmiri the enemy is precisely that as Muslim, dominant Indian discourse fails to distinguish between Kashmiri Muslim, Pakistani national, terrorist, once Mughal rulers, mujahedeen from Afghanistan, and al-Qaeda jihadist. Such indistinction in thought is state racism. To deterritorialize Islam into a monolithic homogeneity divorced from the particularity of culture, history, and politics furthers the communalization of Indian society and legitimates Indian dominance of Kashmir as a national security imperative".

induces a feeling of helplessness where they cannot balance and control the exterior forces that influence and affect their possibilities and choices. Though, not everyone might feel in the same way, since positionality of each varies, socially, economically, and politically. For example, son of a pro-state politician, who benefits from the status quo and receives largesse and preferential treatment, may not feel same revulsion at the prevailing state of affairs as a less privileged, nationalist, politically conscious, and ethically rooted person. For the vast majority of Kashmiri youth, however, the exterior forces, which govern their lives, manifests itself in varied forms: the militarised spaces, the securitised administration and public policies, the denial of autonomous politics, and the statist media which appropriates and misrepresents their identity.

As it is in this social, political (and global) environment that young people "have to work [regain] their possibilities and positions", two crises interact: societal and personal (Vigh, 2008, p. 13). The personal is intimately linked to the social "in ordered layers of concentricity", but in the situation of chronic crisis uncertainty prevails and affects perceptions about the social world, creating self-doubts and a feeling of "progressless motion" (Ibid., p. 17). Such a sense of existential instability occurs because prolonged crisis "destabilises the way we have constituted and constructed ourselves as parts of larger entities" (Ibid., p. 15). Perhaps, it is this phenomenon that may explain why there is a mental health crisis in the Kashmir Valley, where nearly 93% per cent of people have experienced conflict-related trauma (Tamim, 2016). In such a precarious situation, people might withdraw into indifference and inertia, get drawn into religion and spirituality for solace, or cultivate disinterestedness with the political happenings to cope with the pressures of an unyielding situation. A hazy political environment created by the competing propaganda may further stimulate the state of passivity, as consistent misinformation and half-truths obfuscate political realities and suppress local narratives about them; this manipulation of the minds through powerful tools of communication can thus also foster ambivalent attitudes among young people.

The Critical Moments as Moments of Clarity

Militarised occupations are maintained not only by a vast network of bureaucracy and coercive apparatuses (like police and military) but also through language, which enables hegemony of the occupying state over the occupied people and territory. So, there is not only a spatial dimension to occupation but also a linguistic one. This linguistic dimension of state control is intimately connected with the legal aspect, as the former reinforces the latter. And, it is often this linguistic aspect of state control that resisting subjects try to counter. Because having clarity in the language of the resistance is essential for effective political mobilisation and subverting the state hegemony. Clarity is not easy to achieve in the face of a powerful state that deploys varied tools and methods of propaganda, misinformation, and denial to rule the occupied territory. Nonetheless, despite the challenges from the state, the occupied people eventually externalise their resistance, which finds

ways to nurture itself through underground networks and unobtrusive activities. Here we can think of James Scott's (1990) concept of *infrapolitics*, which entails concealed, strategic forms of resistance. For example, in the early 1940s, resistance against the Vichy regime was carried through the Clandestine Press, or, in the former USSR, dissidents circumvented the state curbs on communication through 'samizdat', by reproducing censored material and passing it on through personal networks.

In some cases, resistance manifests itself in a dramatic eruption which ruptures the situation of purported normalcy. Dramatic eruptions are occasioned when resisting people spontaneously, though consciously and forcefully, disturb the external imposition through direct action, and in the process, make evident the essential nature of the relationship between the occupying state and the occupied people. Such dramatic eruptions take time to build up, but once they happen, they become moments of clarity where a proactive mass political assertion replaces the adaptive attitude of people to the 'normalised situation' (of military occupation or colonialism). Since people *en masse* revolt against the status quo, the statist narratives lose their credibility and hence become ineffective. For a new generation, who could not make sense of the hazy political environment, the dramatic eruption then gives a clearer picture of the state of affairs and the real political mood of their society.

Edmunds and Turner (2002, p. 13) define a generation "in terms of a collective response to a traumatic event or catastrophe that unites a particular cohort of individuals into a self-conscious age stratum". A generational cohort that experiences the moment of clarity potentially also produces a unique culture of resistance, as they internalise the consciousness related to the traumatic event. It is traumatic events (wars, uprisings, economic downturns, etc.) that produce a profound effect on a generation's consciousness and self-identity. The experiences of trauma are internalised and get sublimated into a unique set of values, interests, and political activities, separating one generation's past from another and becoming "the basis of a collective ideology and a set of integrating rituals" (Ibid., pp. 13-14). Significant political events are assimilated in the form of narratives, and through social dialogue and debate, they are organised into a collective memory (Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997; Eyerman, 2004). Nevertheless, in temporal proximity of a significant political event, the affected generation tends to keep a distance from commemorations, because coming to terms with the event itself takes much time and energy; besides lack of resources (financial, social, and political) make commemoration difficult (Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997). Though with social media becoming a pervasive aspect of modern life, it has become easier to document and talk about traumatic events as they unfold and commemorate them on the virtual world with the least expenses.

Although significant events (like uprisings) occur infrequently, political resistance through formal and informal networks,[59] general strikes[60], curfews, state-imposed restrictions and other aspects of the militarised occupation effects a persistent traumatic condition which reinforces political grievances and collective narrative about them—even though statist counter-narratives may obfuscate the ground realities and destabilise the collective narrative of the anti-occupation resistance by deploying linguistic and legalistic tricks. At the time of the dramatic eruption, as a great many people start to write about the event, it opens a window for the resistance to assert its truth. The dramatic event itself vindicates the collective narrative; and when it's framing by different people synchronise in terms of connecting it with the collective narrative, a further validation is achieved, which helps in clearing the contours of the political ideology of the resistance for the youth generation, who witness but also assimilate the tremendous political upheaval through the collective narrative. Initiated in this way into the language of resistance shapes their political subjectivity, which manifests in their political actions on the streets (such as stone throwing and sloganeering) as well in the narratives and accounts that they produce in response to their political environment. Although identities (ethnic, gender, class, vocational, etc.) are fluid which can potentially revise over time among the young adults, traumatic events or moments of clarity may accentuate a core political identity in them. The critical moment also becomes a moment of clarity in the sense that significant political tumult makes pragmatic adaptation to the militarised occupation a socially questionable position, and during dramatic eruptions, political lines get drawn between them and us. Individuals (in some instances, also groups) are judged on the bases of their specific response to the upheaval, even their quotidian words and deeds in that period assume a special significance and become vulnerable to divisive interpretations in the charged context. And, it is often the case that most people identify with their ethnic fellows during political upheavals.

Since youth is a period of world probing and developmentally emergent stage, encountering a significant political event can become a decisive factor in the formation of their political identity. Many young Kashmiris have acknowledged that the 2008 uprising was a critical moment for them because it made them think about their identity and they began to assert themselves as Kashmiris. For example, young Kashmiri poet, Huzaifa Pandit, says that he used to identify himself as an Indian till the 2008 uprising happened and changed his political views. Similarly, Towfeeq Wani, a young literature student and author of a self-published novel *The Graveyard*, also attributes his

[59] As Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani (2006, p. 131) says: "Individual participation in a movement's life is by no means restricted to membership in specific (mainly political) organizations. By going places, being connected to several groups or associations, patronizing specific venues, cafes, or bookshops, individuals create and reproduce dense webs of informal exchanges. As a result, informal social networks constitute subcultural oppositional dynamics. These help to keep collective identities alive even when open challenges to authority may not be taking place".

[60] Since January 1990 to 2013, *hartal* [general strike] was observed in Kashmir for 1711 times against many killings, human rights violations, and other issues, and pro-independence processions and demonstrations were held for 2108 times (*The Indian Express* 4 January 2013)

change of political views to the 2008 uprising. As he told weekly *Kashmir Life* (1 July 2013): "It was during 2008 (Amarnath land row) agitation that helped me understand and see Kashmir differently". Speaking to *BBC Urdu's* Sairbeen on 3 August 2018, New-based Kashmiri artist Hina Arif said:

> I used to make paintings since childhood, but when in 2008 situation in Kashmir deteriorated, I realised that there is perhaps some problem with me, I am Kashmiri, and there is some issue with me. Then slowly 2010 came, and there I realised no really something is wrong and my paintings changed from the landscape, and I started painting the victims, and it [paintings] started to reflect the conflict, and slowly it became part of my existence.

Many such testimonials can be found, and in them we find essential clues regarding the political implications which the post 2008 Event has had on the youth generation in IJK in terms of changing their political attitudes, from being politically passive to active, and shaping their political subjectivity and informing their subsequent articulations about the Kashmir conflict.

Conclusion

As a social movement, Tehreek's durability is closely tied to its spread and reproduction through successive generations. So, adopting the generational perspective, this thesis looks at the discourses of the Kashmiri youth generation, chiefly for two reasons. Firstly, a movement's durability is connected as much to organisational resources and political opportunities as to the diffusion of its ideas and memories at the discursive level. And, secondly, the Kashmiri youth generation is essential, as it is as the centre of the resurgent Tehreek, and whose specific historical location has forged in them a distinct impulse or generational consciousness, which impresses itself upon their political narratives. If people understand and make sense of things through stories, then how the new youth generation frame the Kashmir conflict and Tehreek in their descriptions become a relevant area of inquiry to understand the changing dynamics of Tehreek that, as this thesis emphasises, is tied to the emergence of a new political generation in Kashmir. In the youth narratives, we can capture the thought-currents through which Tehreek's collective action frames sustain among the contemporary generation, whose representation of Tehreek and reception and reproduction of pro-Tehreek political ideology will determine the endurance of the movement at the discursive level. As discussed previously, critical junctures have the potential to influence the formation of self-identity among young people, as illustrated by the examples of Huzaifa Pandit and Hina Arif. The organisation of collective memory or collective narrative vis-à-vis the defining traumatic event provides a frame for individual stories to locate themselves (Eyerman, 2004). In creating a consensus narrative, people ascribe a particularised meaning to their circumstances. As the Kashmiri youth are enmeshed in the political culture and discourses that have evolved since the 1950s—from Plebiscite Front through following organisations such as JKLF and Hurriyat—it is pertinent to analyse their political narratives in terms of assessing to what extent have they

internalised and intervened in the contentious language of Tehreek. Drawing on the theoretical insights on generation furnished first by Mannheim (1927) and then refined by later scholars (such as Eyerman, Edmunds, Turner etc.), this thesis attempts to illuminate the role of new political generation in the current phase of Tehreek. It does so by focusing on the political discourses of the youth generation, who, having been born and raised in the traumatic events of the armed conflict, have reconstructed the language of contention by inscribing upon it their memories and experiences of the political turmoil. Thus, inflected by their generational consciousness, we will see in what ways have these narratives reproduced and reaffirmed the collective action frames of Tehreek as well as consolidated them.

Nonetheless, globalisation also has produced significant structural changes in the economic and cultures spheres and engendered outcomes which have a direct bearing on the youth generation's professional and personal aspirations (as discussed in this chapter). Especially, influenced by the internet, the contemporary young people around the world are comparatively global in orientation (Edmunds and Turner, 2005). For the Kashmiri youth generation—those born in the 1980s and 1990s—globalisation has, however, created two striking results, one negative and another positive. Negative regarding how rising tide of global Islamophobia has created anxieties and fears, and led to a sense of siege and victimhood, and compounded the political crisis at home as it facilitates anti-Muslim rhetoric of Indian right-wing. This negative global trend locates them in what Bayat and Herrera (2010, p. 10) call the "generational subset" of global Muslim youth. Globalisation had a positive effect in the way it has exposed people to new ideas and diverse social movements, encouraged learning of English language and thus opened avenues for Kashmiri youth to work and study abroad as well as reach out to the global audiences for their solidarity. These global influences coupled with political opportunities back home have influenced the narratives of the Kashmiri youth and their subjectivity formation. So, in what ways these influences manifest in their political expressions is also one of the questions that this thesis seeks to address.

Ultimately, the post-2008 Event and global influences and trends (such as communication revolution and rising Islamophobia) have together worked to shape political subjectivity of the youth generation in Kashmir and their articulations. It is therefore by locating this youth generation within its specific historical location, and social and political milieu, that we can grasp the varied meanings that they attribute to the social and political configurations in which they are entrenched. Generational perspective is thus a more useful conceptual framework to understand the changing dynamics of Tehreek because unlike the classes it is generations which have shaped political cultures and movements in the latest phase of the modern period (Edmunds and Turner, 2002). In Kashmir case, the new political generation—which has reinvigorated Tehreek—was formed in a traumatic period, whose experiences and memories have sublimated into unique set of values and

political attitudes, and has become "the basis of collective ideology and a set of integrating rituals" (Edmunds and Turner, 2002, p. 12).

Now, based on the theoretical discussion which situates the new youth generation in Kashmir in the context of protracted political conflict and dynamic global processes, this thesis seeks to address the following specific questions:

a. how are the significant political events in IJK and the Kashmir conflict in general framed in Kashmiri youth narratives?
b. which aspects of these youth narratives locate the imprints of generational consciousness;
c. what patterns and variations are discernible in their frames of references;
d. how do they express their ideological or discursive positions in their narratives;
e. what discursive strategies are employed to ascribe agency and construct identity and to what effect;
f. what are the linguistic and cultural resources they draw upon to frame the Kashmir conflict;
g. what are the salient features of these youth narratives in terms of their pragmatic intent;
h. and, on what aspects are these narratives silent and why.

In addressing these questions, this thesis attempts to provide an empirically and theoretically grounded analysis of the political discourses of the Kashmiri youth and underline their importance in the resurgent Tehreek. It is by systematically analysing the youth narratives and gaining a nuanced understanding of them that we can make sense of the recent tumultuous period, as such stories provide us with vital clues about the thinking of the new youth generation which underlie the recent political mobilisations and unrest in Kashmir. Employing the frame analytical perspective and drawing upon critical discourse studies, the empirical chapters of this thesis will have a detailed discussion on each of the aspects underlined above. The research methodology of this study will be discussed first in the following pages by briefly sketching the concept of framing and then explaining the scale of the material and methods of data gathering, coding, and analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The nature of the research questions that this thesis attempts to address requires adopting a qualitative mode of inquiry, because these questions deal with complex aspects of politics, such as political culture, ideology, values, beliefs, and perceptions. A fuller understanding of such aspects can be adequately achieved through a qualitative research approach. And since the study deals with narratives and political discourses, it will use elements from content analysis and critical discourse studies as a method of data analysis. This mixture of research methods is necessitated by the inadequacies inherent in the approach of content analysts, who, as Harold Laswell (1953, p. 32) wittily remarked, "go at language with a hatchet, rather than a razor". Nonetheless, for evaluation of word frequencies and examination of other quantitative aspects of the data, content analysis is used as a complementary method and not as a primary method, as it does not capture the subtleties and nuances of language, and mostly deals with and analyses the *manifest* content. In words of Laswell (1952, p. 32), "Content analysis is, in the first place, a method for "reading *on* the lines" and for reporting the results which can be verified". However, strict reading-on-the-lines approaches would leave rich details and insights which exists in the latent content of the language. To get "between-the-lines" insights into the language, then, requires adopting relevant analytical tools. Therefore, this study utilises the approach of the critical discourse studies (or what is also known as Critical Discourse Analysis), which explore the nexus of language, discourse and politics (Forchtner & Wodak, 2018).

A range of theories and approaches exist within the field of discourse studies, each underpinned by different philosophical concepts and each postulated from the perspective of different disciplines. At its heart, however, discourse studies attempt to unpack the intricate workings of language within a society, to understand how language operates to shape socio-cultural structures as well as get moulded by them. While approaches to understanding the language/politics nexus differ in terms of theory and method, most scholars converge on the idea that studying political communication needs a transdisciplinary approach. Because the political incorporates social, cultural and economic processes, and it is through a transdisciplinary approach, scholars can capture the interlinkages and overlaps between them and the effects they have on each other (Wodak and Forchtner 2018, p. 5). For example, when we look at Kashmiri youth narratives, we can ignore neither the influence of Kashmiri 'culture' nor the socio-economic effects of globalisation on how a young Kashmiri narrator writes about political issues and events.

As this thesis deals with political narratives related to the self-determination movement in IJK, it will also incorporate the frame analytical perspective borrowed from the study of social movements, to assess the degree of alignment between collective action frames of Tehreek and the dominant frames in the youth narratives. Frame analytical approach is inextricably linked with discourse analysis, and together they comprise as primary elements of the linguistic turn in social movement studies which brought focus to interpretative frameworks. As Johnston (1995, p. 219) says: "I will argue that with a microfocus on discourse, namely on the spoken and written texts of social movement participants, and with a microanalysis of frames, namely of the mental schemata by which experience is interpreted, the cultural analysis of social movements can become more conceptually specific and systematic".

To understand how communities express, reaffirm, and constitute their collective identities, it is essential to map and analyse the keywords and forms of conceptualisations which operate in their linguistic cosmos and lend substantive meaning and emotional depth to their identity narratives. Utilizing particularised frames, in which they also use certain metaphors, Kashmiri youth narrate their individual stories but these individual narratives also plug into and constitute the collective narratives of the community of which they are part. In that sense, individual narratives are building blocks of larger political discourses. So, the theoretical and methodological framework for analysing the universe of the political narratives of Kashmiri youth include the following key conceptual terms and linguistic elements: discourse, narrative, frame and metaphor.

This thesis takes discourse as a matrix of communicative events which relate to sociocultural processes of meaning-making and formation of social categories. Discourse defines and constitutes a topic, an object of knowledge, as well as governs the interpretative framework through which they can be meaningfully discussed or debated. Speaking in Foucauldian terms, discourse is a "group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment…Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But…since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect" (cited in Hall, 1997, p. 44).

This study takes published media article as a unit of analysis. In that sense, narrative is primarily used as an alternate (and interchangeable) term for *story* or *account* (i.e. article as a story or narrative). However, theoretically speaking, narrative is understood as an expression (verbal, oral, visual) which reconstructs an event/s, communicates an argument, tells a story embedded with a certain discourse, moral meanings and reiterations. As Seymour Chatman (1978, p. 19) describes, "each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*), that is, the

expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*". Narrative is, therefore, essentially a communicative vessel to articulate and make known inter-subjective experiences and other social processes.

Frame is understood as a particularised interpretation of a phenomenon. This study takes Robert Entman's (2007, p. 164) definition of framing as "…the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them, to promote a particular interpretation". However, moving away from the theories which focus on the cognitive dimensions of framing, this thesis draws upon Stephen Reese's methodology of looking at the latent aspects of the text in order to examine how a phenomenon is defined and morally evaluated by a narrator, and disambiguate contents of a frame by considering interlinked ideas, myths and narratives that makes it work or resonate in its specific sociocultural and political context (2009, p. 19).

Finally, this thesis draws on Critical Metaphor Analysis (Chilton 1996; Musolff 2004; Charteris-Black 2004, 2006) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) to explore metaphor use in Kashmiri political discourses. Following Ricoeur (1974), this study takes metaphor as more than a substitution for another literal word which can be retrieved through translation. Metaphor is approached from the perspective of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who sees metaphor as fundamental to imagination and conceptualisation of things because it gives an accessible cognitive framework (or *image schemata*) by which to make sense of intangible dimensions of inter-subjective experiences and other social processes. What makes metaphors important in the context of this thesis is that they are linked to the affective aspect of political narratives and frames, as emotions are metaphorically conceptualised. Identity formation is as much linked to specific social and economic configurations as affective narratives rooted in cultural practices and values. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors have an intimate relationship with human emotions because "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature".

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore Kashmiri youth narratives and their interpretations of conflict-related events, experiences, and actors, and to locate patterns, regularities and elements within these narratives which potentially form among a cohort of the Kashmiri youth generation what Karl Mannheim (1924) calls "partisan integrative attitudes". In other words, the study seeks to probe those elements in Kashmiri youth narratives which cluster together to construct, consolidate and reinforce collective identity and meaning around Tehreek. Employing the frame analytical approach, coupled with aspects of critical discourse studies, will facilitate a nuanced analysis of the discursive strategies in the Kashmiri youth narratives, through which political events

and the existing political conflict is framed, collective political identity reaffirmed, and subversive narratives against the status quo reinforced.

If, as Gary Alan Fine (1995, p. 128) says, "social movement is a bundle of narratives", then, at the heart of the narratives is a particularised message, which is packaged through the arrangement of certain vocabulary favourable to the message (and image) of a social movement. Thus, primarily, a social movement's narratives frame the issues and events which fundamentally concern the movement. As Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 143) say, a frame is "a central organizing idea or a story line that provides meaning" to events related to an issue. However, for Stephen Reese (2009, p. 21), "the frame is always an abstraction and finds its manifestation in various locations", be that cultural, symbolic, or psychological. Taking the frame as a cultural structure of meaning leads to examining the network of concepts and underlying narrative and myths that gives it power as an organizing principle, therefore it is important that "the *what* of the frame must be understood before the *how* of its effectivity on citizens" (Ibid., p. 37).

What is a Frame: A Brief Overview of the Concept?

The term frame has been used by scholars of different disciplines, like Bateson (1972) and Frake (1977) in anthropology; Hymes (1974) and Goffman (1974) in sociology; Minsky (1974) in artificial intelligence research; Fillmore (1975) in linguistics. Deborah Tannen (1993, p. 15) provides a concise summary of the other terms related to frame and the scholarship and research traditions around these terms. Some of these interlinked terms are: *script*, *frame*, *schema*, *categorization*, *scene-and-frame*, *active developing patterns*, *organized settings*, *module*, *prototype*, and *structures of expectations* (Ibid., pp. 15-16). Although different, these terms have been used to describe, more or less, the same phenomenon, i.e. the perception and interpretation of objects and events by individuals. According to Tannen (p. 20), all these complex terms "in some sense…derived from Bartlett" who was the first to use the term *schema* in relation to his idea that "the past operates as an organised mass rather than as a group of elements each of which retains its specific character" (Bartlett, 1932, p. 197). Bartlett felt that the term *schema* did not capture the whole complex phenomenon which he was trying to conceptualize because terms like schema or frame give a notion of static and not of constant change. Although he coined other suitable phrases, such as "active, developing patterns" and "organised setting", he retained schema as a useful concept, albeit defining its application more narrowly (Bartlett, 1932, p. 201). Tannen (pp. 138-39) argues that the complex ideas that the above-mentioned terms try to define can be condensed into RN Ross's (1975) concept of *structures of expectations*, i.e. an individual's knowledge of the world is based on his experiences within a given culture or amalgam of cultures, and it is possession of this knowledge that allows him to foresee interpretations and associations concerning emerging data, actions, events and experiences. Drawing from Bartlett, Chafe (1977) problematized this concept by asking that in the post-event,

"What kinds of processes must [a] person apply to convert his knowledge, predominantly nonverbal to begin with, into a verbal output?" Three elements come into play in this process: firstly, an individual perceptually identifies the event; secondly, she articulates about the actors and the nature of their involvement in the event; and thirdly, she chooses a naming category for the elements involved in the event (Chafe 1977a, p. 41. As cited in Tannen 1993, p. 139).

Bateson (1972) compared the idea of frame to the physical object of the picture frame. He used the concept of frame in 1955 "to explain how individuals exchange signals that allow them to agree upon the level of abstraction at which a message is intended" (Tannen, 1993, p. 18). Likewise, Hymes (1974) used the idea of frame in relation to "means of speaking", as an interpretative device which enables a person to ascertain the context in which a certain utterance (joke, sarcasm, abuse etc.) is made (Ibid). In sociology and anthropology, when frame was used the emphasis was on its dynamism concerning the relationship between individuals; the frame, in other words, was understood as "a relational concept rather than a sequence of events" (Ibid., p. 19). This emphasis on the dynamism of frame was in response to those theorists who viewed frames as static structures, like Minsky (1974, p. 212), who understood frame as "a data structure for presenting a stereotyped situation". Fillmore (1975, p. 124) utilised the concept of frame in linguistics which makes it useful in discourse analysis. He uses the two words frame-and-scene. *Frame* is understood as "any system of linguistic choices …that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes", and *Scene* is understood as "any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings". Within the language acquisition framework, Fillmore argues that "people associate certain scenes with certain linguistic frames" (Ibid., p. 2). This idea is then useful for discourse analysis and learning of word meaning (Tannen, p. 20).

Numerous theoretical essays critically engage with the concept of frame and framing in social movements. In fact, the literature on frame analysis makes for a separate field of study, which emerged in the 1980s. Since the Resource Mobilization paradigm, popular in the 1970s, was criticized for not seriously engaging with variables of ideology and grievances as determining factors in protest participation, there was a need for a better explanatory paradigm. The old paradigms were not convincing enough in terms of explaining how and why certain issues, demands, and grievances come to be taken up as priority and rally support of protestors as compared to others (Lindekilde 2014, p. 195). The eventual response to the theoretical inadequacy was "more linguistic, cognitive, and discourse-sensitive methodological approaches to the study of social movements" (Ibid). This new theoretical perspective viewed actors as both carriers of ideas and ideology as well as active organising and mobilising agents who define and interpret issues and grievances, drawing on cultural resources. The frame and discourse analysis form dyad of interpretative approaches within what is termed as 'the linguistic turn' in the study of social

movements. Both share ontological and epistemological assumptions, and they can be combined or used separately as methodological approaches to the study of the social movements. However, according to Lasse Lindekilde (2014, pp. 200-201), the "frame analysis is less ambitious than discourse analysis in terms of uncovering the process of social construction or reality, but more targeted in terms of explaining the effect of the more manifest content of texts on mobilization and participation".

Different conceptualisations of frame analysis provide us with two basic understandings. Firstly, that frame is a process and presentation in the textual domain. And secondly, that it is a cognitive function of interpretation. As Kinder and Sanders (1990, p. 74) say, "The overlapping conceptions from different disciplines suggest that frames function as both "internal structures of the mind" and "devices embedded in political discourse." Framing, according to Robert Entman (2007, p. 164), is "…the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them, to promote a particular interpretation". For Gitlin (1980, p. 7), framing is "the persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse". Concerning the media environment, framing is not some kind of special expertise which is exclusive to journalists. Rather, it emerges within the societal matrix: sources (who provide the information), journalists (who receive, process, and disseminate the information) and the audience (who consume the information). Framing, therefore, is an integrated process in which all these actors engage on the bases of their societal role. These actors—sources, journalists, and audiences—are "linked to one another by the news discourse that they design, construct, transmit, and act on" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). Scheufele and Scheufele"s (2009) work on framing looks at the cognitive dimensions of frames, i.e., how interpretative schemas are activated by frames. They argue that mediated communications influence what people do, and this effect is achieved by framing in terms of making people think about certain issues in the way political actors want them to think (p. 337). This cognitive approach is, however, critiqued by some scholars on the account that it focuses on frame effects on individual opinions and not much on how it effects "in terms of power, of who gets their way in politics and policy" and decisively exerts influence over "the ideological moderates" (Entman, 2009, p. 333). Entman (2009) is particularly critical of the empirical studies that seek to measure the effects of frames in experimental research. For Entman framing research is "strikingly apolitical" because it "tends to divorce framing from its use as a tool for exerting power in a system of political relationships" (p. 332). Another critique against the cognitive approach is based on the notion that it is process-centric, and it tends to seek those features in a frame that lead to its success and the role of media in that process (Reese, 2009, p. 20). Such approach imagines a competitive environment in which actors construct and promote frames "to

achieve some predetermined outcome" (Ibid). Taking these critiques into consideration, we can follow the advice of Scheufele and Scheufele (2009), who, while working within the cognitive perspective of frame analytical approach, urge for "conceptual integration" in terms of incorporating macroscopic and microscopic theoretical perspectives from other disciplines to achieve better and a more holistic understanding and also leveraging "methodological opportunities" (p. 131). We can start by looking at the *what* of the frame before seeking to understand the *how* of its influence on the recipients (Reese, 2009, p. 37).

Frames: What and How Distinction

There is a distinction between the effects of a frame and the composition of a frame, and this distinction is essential in the context of this study, where the focus is mainly on examining the frame elements and the cultural and political resources from which they are drawn. Nevertheless, the study does look at the effects of the frames utilised in Kashmiri youth narratives regarding their pragmatic intent (through which hope in the political struggle is reinforced) and subversive potential. Therefore, it is pertinent here to understand Reese's (2009) conceptualisation and the distinction between the *what* and the *how* of frames.

Reese (2009) is critical of the research approach in which the traditional agenda-setting model is appropriated to measure the effect of the frame on the receiver of the message because frame in this sense is understood as moving from one location to another, "from textual structures to mental structures". However, employing the concept to the cognitive and textual domains may lead to confusion (p. 21). As Reese points out, certain scholars (like Nelson & Willey, 2001; Scheufele & Scheufele, 2009) underline how frames establish a hierarchy of values in which frames in textual domain activate innate mental frames among the receivers to lend salience to some values and facts over others. But, this does not explain the process of how they become effective (p. 22). To put differently, focusing on frame *effects* tends to ignore the cultural context in which the frame emerges, and which lends substance to it. Therefore, Reese calls for the cultural approach which considers the participation of social actors in creating and maintaining certain frames, the active structuring of the discursive environment, and "the interests that are served in the process". In other words, Reese advocates a more integrated approach to frames rather than decontextualised psychological approach. Such an approach has been discussed by other scholars, who, however, use different terms to describe it. For example, Williams (2004, p. 95) uses the term "cultural environment", while other scholars use terms like "toolkits" (Swidler 1985), "cultural structure" (Rambo & Chan 1990), "cultural opportunity structure" (Noonan, 1995; McAdam, 1996; Benford & Snow 2000). But, at the centre of all these concepts is an analytical focus on cultural dynamics within movements and on the social and cultural symbols and their meanings from which social movements draw.

Borrowing from Hertog and McLeod's (2001, p. 140) conception of frames as structures of meaning, Reese (2009, p. 24) explains his framework in the following way:

> The network of concepts, with notions of centre and periphery, could be tackled with semantic association analysis and the identification of nodes, links, and structure. The basis for these links, however, lies in the societal associations of meaning and their historical evolution, and draws on a different tradition. This approach to framing traces to the concept of ideology, a lineage provided by Hackett (1984), who regards framing as the application of "deep structure," the naturalized, take-for-granted beliefs by members of society about what goes together. In that respect, the examination of the myths, metaphors, and narratives calls for a more qualitative, interpretative approach. The ultimate frame may not be plainly visible from simple inspection of the manifest content and terminology that it invokes. Rather, it must be interpreted in its latent message.

This notion of a latent message of the frame is relevant in the context of this thesis. As Kashmiri youth narrators write about the political conflict within an undemocratic environment, some of them employ established frames containing tacit meanings. Reasons are varied for doing this, like being in a professional position—for example, some work in government departments which constrains them to write in the idiom of Tehreek (though, that is not to say that Kashmiris working in the public sector do not use the contentious language of Tehreek in their writings or social media posts). Using frames with the latent message, therefore, provides a way to navigate the limitations of free speech. Moreover, the idea of a frame's latent message allows us to critically evaluate the political language of the pro-Accession politicians in IJK that sometimes appear to overlap with the language of Tehreek. For electoral gains, the Unionists must strike a rapport with the local population, the majority of whom have a robust ethno-nationalist attitude and want a resolution of the Kashmir conflict. By maintaining a degree of ambiguity about their position on the Kashmir conflict, the Unionists present themselves as anti-assimilationist (i.e., although they take part in the electoral politics, they do not support the status quo). While they affirm their allegiance to the Indian union through allegiant performances, such as saluting the Indian national flag during official commemorations or giving a pro-India public statement in media, yet many of the pro-Accession politicians in Kashmir emphasise on the resolution of the Kashmir conflict without explicitly spelling out their roadmap for such a resolution. Such a situation where ambiguous language prevails paradoxically contributes to the narrative of Tehreek. For example, in his speech in the state legislative assembly in October 2010, Omar Abdullah, the then chief minister of IJK, stressed on the point that Kashmir had *acceded* to India but not *merged* with it, and the Kashmir issue needed to be *resolved*. Likewise, now and then, other Unionist politicians in IJK make similar statements, where they emphasise the resolution of 'Maslah-e-Kashmir' (the Kashmir issue).

Such narratives ultimately reinforce the disputed status of IJK, since within operative terms like maslah (issue) and hal (resolution) contains the underlying message that Kashmir's accession with India is yet to be ratified by the people of IJK; that the status quo is provisional. From the perspective of pro-Tehreek people in IJK, the phrases like 'the Kashmir issue', 'the Kashmir

conflict', 'the Kashmir problem', 'the Kashmir dispute', 'Resolution', 'Maslah-e-Kashmir' etc. essentially mean the pending case of implementation of the United Nations Resolutions, which asks for holding a plebiscite in the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir to determine the political status of the region.

However, from the perspective of the pro-Accession political parties and the Unionists, these terms may denote different things. For the pro-Accession National Conference (NC), for example, the question of Kashmir's accession with India is already concluded through the Instrument of Accession of 1947. But, what is the unresolved maslah or issue, though, is the restoration of greater autonomy that NC, as the ruling party of IJK in the 1950s, had negotiated with the Government of India and got formalized in the Delhi Agreement of 1952. That is why NC's pro-autonomy political demand is also referred to as the restoration of the pre-1953 position. For example, on in March 2016, Farooq Abdullah, the President of the National Conference stated: "National Conference stands for the restoration of autonomy, pre-1953 position, and safeguarding Article 370 in its original form" (*Greater Kashmir* 16 March 2016). The PDP has a similar demand embodied in its slogan of Self-Rule. The Unionists justify their position as political expediency, because, they maintain, the intransigent state would not concede the popular demand of Azadi (independence).

Paradoxically, the deliberate ambiguity of the pro-accession politicians allows room (or political opportunity) for others—who are hesitant to employ the explicit resistance language—to use the same idiom of ambiguity to express their anti-Accession dissent. It is often the case that an op-ed by an NC or PDP member would sound similar in terms of the line of argument as that of a pro-Tehreek activist. This intersection between the narratives of pro-Accession and anti-Accession activists is the result of the discursive "deep structure" shaped by history. Genealogically speaking, the terminology, which reinforces the disputed status of IJK can be traced back to the political discourses emanating from the correspondence and public speeches of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1947, the Government of India White papers of 1948, the UN Resolutions on "India-Pakistan Question" (S/RES/38) 1948 and the concomitant political/ diplomatic arguments, and contestations between the main actors in the dispute. Perhaps, it was the Indian government, particularly Nehru, who, by strategically using the idea of a plebiscite to woo Kashmiris, made it a part of the public discourse. Over the years, the Plebiscite Front (PF) further entrenched the idea of the referendum into the political landscape of IJK. Though PF was prosecuted for demanding a referendum on IJK, its rhetoric on the issue of the plebiscite and the associated vocabulary eventually was taken-for-granted. Whereas before the 1990s "Haq Humara Rai Shumari" (Plebiscite is our right) was a widely used slogan, it was replaced by an emphatic cry for independence, expressed through the popular slogan "Hum Kya Chahte, Aazadi!" (We want freedom!), after the armed uprising of the late 1980s. Nonetheless, despite this shift of emphasis in

rhetoric, most of the pro-resistance narrators, perhaps wary of the state, continued to employ a more diplomatic language in their narratives by calling for the "resolution" of the conflict. Though, the term "resolution", for many narrators, is a euphemism for the political demand of independence.

Furthermore, there is also the human rights language, where different narratives, especially of pro-Tehreek ideologues/activists and the Unionists seem to imbricate. A Unionist may be highly critical of the Indian state for its aggressive approach in IJK and may employ rhetoric against the human rights violations in the region by appropriating the language of Tehreek. For example, they may use the metaphor of "paradise lost" or "wounded" which however has a different political interpretation for the pro-Tehreek people. The Unionist's critique, like the human rights critique of some Indians, could be within the Indian context without any nationalist implications. It could even be the view of a strong Indian nationalist who believes that if human rights issues are addressed, Kashmiris might settle for autonomy. The same human rights critique could for a different author/speaker be evidence of the inhumanity of Indian rule and the necessity for a more radical political change including Azadi (independence). Hence, contextual analysis can determine the likely motivation of the author.

In light of the above discussion, we can see the importance of Reese's distinction between the two approaches of frame analyses. The *what* approach is frame-centric and focuses on frame building. It consists of disaggregating the frame contents, like the interconnected concepts and the distinct narratives and myths "that make it [the frame] work" (p. 19): the *what* approach is keen on examining the text's latent aspects, such as how the problem is defined, and issues morally evaluated, besides the specific keywords "that constitute the concepts underlying frames" (p. 20). As Reese says, the what of framing analysis focuses on "the special configuration of discourse elements that articulate culture". In a way, it is a deeper level analysis in terms of seeing topics in their social, historical and cultural contexts and examining their particular features (Ibid). Reese argues that the contention of some scholars that what approach leads to ad hoc analysis which is relevant only to specific topics and issues overlooks the fact that this "specificity" brought about by the what approach helps in identifying resonant themes within a culture and thereby illuminates the "unique social and political understandings."

Conversely, the *how* approach is process-centric with constructionist underpinnings. Adopting this approach, a researcher focuses on those features of the frame that contribute to successful outcomes, and also on the role of news media in that process (Ibid). In a way, in the how approach, frames are "situated in competitive social and political environments" and are understood as "constructed and promoted to achieve some predetermined outcome" (Ibid). Reese's contention against this approach is that the *how* of framing analysis emphasizes the cognitive processes to

underscore the frame effects and take the *what* part for granted which is unhelpful, because such approach cannot explain why a particular frame resonates in a particular culture, in the first place (Ibid., pp. 20-21). Therefore, a better way, in Reese's view, is an integrationist approach in which the *what* facilitates in examining the *how* aspect. As Reese says, "putting the what before the how provides a valuable foundation for selecting more specific frames for further effects analysis, because their importance within the overall society has been more clearly demonstrated and understood" (p. 21).

Following Reese's advice, this study contextualises the frames of Kashmiri youth narrators in their "surrounding web of culture" in which they produce and reproduce their narratives. The set of frames emanating from the Kashmiri youth narrators is an outcome of the discourses in which they are enmeshed and to which they also actively contribute; so, these frames are not just something which impacts them and then later procures a different outcome. Nonetheless, there can be a factor of expertise. Young journalists and academics may know what frame is and how to use it. So, they may consciously embed their writings with the collective action frames of Tehreek. On the other hand, the general narrators (non-academic and non-journalists) may not know about frames and may use contradictory frames within the same essay. Moreover, there is a historical context which has shaped the political discourses on Kashmir, and these discourses have two broader dimensions, one which relates to the conflict *on* Kashmir and the other which refers to the conflict *in* Kashmir. This distinction is vital regarding examining the dominance of one discourse over the other.

The earliest writings on the Kashmir conflict in the English language have appeared in the late 1940s (Thorner 1948, 1949; Hafizullah 1948; Barton 1948; Korbel 1949) and the early 1950s (Barton 1950; Korbel 1950, 1953; Khan 1950; Dean 1951; Gurmani 1951; Birdwood 1952; Park 1952; Brecher 1953; Chang 1953; Palmer 1953; Alexandrowicz 1954). One commonality in these earliest writings, apart from their theme, is that they have been mostly written by non-Kashmiri authors, and have emerged in response to the political deadlock over the question of Jammu and Kashmir: whether the region should, as a united entity, join the newly created dominions of India or Pakistan. However, many of the later writings on the state were in response to the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan and the subsequent (re) internationalisation of the Kashmir conflict which restarted academic discussions and strategic analysis on this topic (Anderson, 2006). Geopolitical and strategic context informs many of the following academic analysis on the Kashmir conflict. As such, both the earlier as well as the recent academic writings must be contextualized if they seem to vary in their analysis, details, and theoretical orientations.

Nonetheless, their focus on the conflict *on* Kashmir is categorized in this thesis as the inter-state perspective on Kashmir (also understood as geopolitical perspective) which, it is argued, is one of

the dominant perspectives in academic discourses on Kashmir conflict. On the other hand, the theme of conflict *in* Kashmir in discourses emerged as a response to the armed uprising of the late 1980s. The unexpected outbreak of the armed rebellion shifted the focus in academic discourse from an *on* to an *in* aspect, thus engendering a new perspective, which this thesis categorises as the post-colonial institutionalist perspective on the Kashmir conflict (in short, the institutionalist perspective). Even though the Kashmir conflict has two aspects, they are not mutually exclusive, nor interchangeable. Instead, they dynamically influence each other, in the sense that the *on* element of the conflict, which brings Pakistan in the equation, is seen, from the perspective of the Indian state, as the reason why there is the *in* aspect. From this perspective then, the *in* aspect is an epiphenomenon, an outcome of the outside push.

Conversely, from the perspective of the Pakistani establishment, the *in* dimension is the reflection of the *on* aspect, and unless the two states resolve the conflict in its external dimension the internal aspect will not go. It is between these two competing inter-state perspectives that Kashmiri perspective gets lost or appropriated by the two rival states, both of which claim IJK in its entirety. These classifications of academic perspectives on Kashmir is done here for analytical purposes, as it will help in identifying and evaluating perspectives in relation to each other. Besides, by taking dominant academic frames as templates, we can see if Kashmiri youth narrators also draw upon those frames to talk about Kashmir.

A Brief Historical Overview of the Frames on Kashmir

The political situation of Kashmir is understood differently by different people, and hence different narratives on Kashmir exist; many Indians view Kashmir as a part of India's sovereign realm, while many Pakistanis believe Kashmir, being a Muslim majority state, should have joined Pakistan as part of the 1947 Partition plan. And yet, there is also Kashmiri version of the Kashmir story, where many Kashmiris assert that only the people of Kashmir have the right to decide their political future as per their wishes. These three actors—India, Pakistan, and Kashmiris—marshal historical resources, utilise rhetorical narratives and reasoned arguments to present their side of the story. Naturally, a discursive matrix has been created where conflicting narratives on Kashmir intersect, collide, and confuse. Due to the inter-state contestation over the region of Jammu and Kashmir, which was, until 1947, a de facto independent state, and the peculiar circumstances which turned the state into a battle zone in late 1947, Kashmir received international attention and garnered much discussion during the early years of the newly constituted United Nations. It was one of earliest conflicts—along with "The Palestine Question" and "The Indonesian Question"—that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) had to deal with in the immediate post-war period.

Recounting a brief history is important for the context. More importantly, to get a proper perspective on how the conflict in and over the region of Jammu and Kashmir has been described

in early years—when the political status of the region became a matter of dispute—and how it is described in the Kashmiri youth narratives in the contemporary times. Tracing the timeline of the narratives on Kashmir not only allows us to assess the changing dynamics of the conflict, but this procedure is also appropriate to see how and what kind of interventions the youth narratives are making in the political discourses on the conflict. Which discursive remnants and legacies of the past still hold, and which elements of the discussion have changed over the years or are being challenged and subverted by Kashmiri youth.

Hence, some of the earliest writings on the Kashmir conflict are briefly reviewed in the discussion below. These writings were published in different journals between 1947 and 1970. Barring one piece, which is penned by Sheikh Abdullah and published in *Foreign Affairs* journal in 1965, all other articles were written by foreign authors, like Alice Thorner (*Far Eastern Survey*, 1948; *Middle East Journal*, 1949), Josef Korbel (*Foreign Affairs*, 1954), Lord Birdwood (*International Affairs*, 1952), Richard Leonard Park (*Far Eastern Survey*, 1952), Norman D. Palmer (*Far Eastern Survey*, 1953), and David Lockwood (*Asian* Survey, 1969). A cursory glance at these early writings shows that much discussion on Kashmir used to revolve around the following themes: the 1947 partition of the British India, the "tribal invasion" over Jammu and Kashmir state, the contested nature of 1947 Accession and uncertain political status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the antagonism Kashmir has created between the newly independent countries of India and Pakistan, and the role (and limitations) of international diplomacy in the conflict.[61] In short, the Kashmir conflict, in these early writings, was viewed as an inter-state territorial contestation where the two newly independent countries are locked in a ceaseless "struggle for Kashmir" (Korbel, 1954). The conflict was regarded as unfinished business of the 1947 partition where a Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir was supposed to make a final call on its political status. The talk of the plebiscite was still taken seriously, even though intransigence of the two warring sides—India and Pakistan—on the terms and conditions of the referendum was acknowledged.

Alice Thorner is perhaps among the first commentators to call the political situation in Kashmir as "The Kashmir Conflict"—which is also the title of her 1949 article. In his 1953 article "The Changing Scene in Kashmir", Norman Palmer uses the term "dispute" to characterise the political situation of Kashmir. T. Walter Wallbank also uses the expression "the Kashmir dispute" in his 1958 book *A Short History of India and Pakistan* (p. 245). Writing in *Far Eastern Survey* in its July 1952 issue, Richard Leonard Park describes the relationship between India and Kashmir as of two sovereign entities—which also reflects in the title of his article: "India argues with Kashmir". However, in this relationship one of the entities (i.e., Kashmir) has surrendered certain sovereign

[61] Most authors do not use the official nomenclature of "Jammu and Kashmir" but the short form "Kashmir" for the entire region.

powers to the other (i.e., India). Arguably, Park's description is apt as far as the original "constitutional" arrangement between the Government of India and Sheikh Abdullah administration was concerned, in which the state of Jammu and Kashmir retained substantial autonomy, including its own constitution, flag, and judicial code. Nevertheless, while speaking within the framework of the centre-state relationship, Park (1952, p. 116) takes into consideration the larger political question of the Kashmir conflict in which Pakistan is also involved and where Kashmiri political aspiration is incompatible with the status quo:

> Hitherto there has seemed to be every likelihood that the Kashmir dispute would eventually die down and that, with the passage of time and political consolidation, it would eventually be settled in favor of India. Sheikh Abdullah has opened a debate the full extent and consequences of which cannot be determined. The immediate benefit goes to Pakistan. There is reason to believe, however, that the artificial atmosphere of harmony having been dissipated, India and Abdullah's Kashmir may enter a period of negotiation to resolve certain important differences which for a long time have simmered beneath the surface.

In the early writings, words like *dispute*, *conflict*, *issue*, *case*, *problem*, and *matter* appear with respect to the political situation in Kashmir. However, sometimes, perhaps with the assumption that its conflicted status is granted, only Kashmir is mentioned without any compound word construction. The word Kashmir itself stands as a linguistic marker for the dispute. In the wordings of the Kashmir-related Security Council Resolutions, the unresolved issue of the state of Jammu and Kashmir was referred to as "The India-Pakistan Question", though the word "dispute" was also used to characterise the political situation in the region. As the Security Council Resolution of 21 April 1948 says, "The Security Council […] *Having considered* the complaint of the Government of India concerning the dispute over the State of Jammu and Kashmir". Or, as the wordings of the Security Council Resolution of 14 March 1950 reads, "Declaring its belief that it is the duty of the Security Council in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to aid the parties to reach an amicable solution of the Kashmir dispute and that a prompt settlement of this dispute is of vital importance to the maintenance of international peace and security" (*International Organisation*, 1966, pp. 788-97).

Consequently, these earliest framings of the Kashmir conflict must have had a primacy effect in terms of leaving strong traces on subsequent writings; as first descriptions tend to reify themes and patterns. In other words, the idea that Kashmir was as an inter-state dispute was established early on when the partition of British India made it a contested territory. This dominant framing, however, relegated the autonomist politics of Kashmiris into the footnotes; the autonomist politics, which had emerged in the 1940s and embodied in the "New Kashmir" document (which envisioned a constitutional monarchy) of the National Conference, was in a nascent stage around the Partition, which, along with the creation of Muslim Pakistan, overshadowed it. However, with the eruption of a popular armed insurgency in the late 1980s, a discursive rupture in the reified

inter-state framing occurred, with the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front's (JKLF) armed challenge to Indian state highlighting the third dimension to the conflict. The JKLF was a guerrilla organisation which worked on the agenda of an independent, secular republic, and this armed group enjoyed wide support in Kashmir.

Nevertheless, despite the changing reality of the conflict, many writings on Kashmir during the early 1990s still repeated the inter-state framing, though there were some scholars and journalists who did acknowledge that the challenge to India's sovereignty over Kashmir emanated not externally but from within the region, not only from the Pakistan-aligned groups but from the widespread autonomist constituency as well. In Indian official discourses, the armed conflict was projected as Pakistan sponsored "proxy war"; which again was an understanding of Kashmir as a territorial contest between India and Pakistan. What helped the state in reinforcing the inter-state framing was the formation of some pro-Pakistan armed groups (prominently Hizbul Mujahideen) who hijacked the armed uprising and, by destroying the pro-independence JKLF, established their dominance. It was the eruption of youth-led civilian uprisings in the post-2008 period that ultimately created a significant rupture to the inter-state framing of the Kashmir conflict. As this period simultaneously witnessed some significant developments which facilitated in foregrounding the autonomist politics of Kashmiris, like the expansion of social media and production of nationalist narratives by English-speaking young Kashmiris, who challenged the earlier representations of their national identity and politics. How young Kashmiris could subvert the hegemonic representation of the Kashmir conflict shall be discussed in the next chapters.

Methods and Strategies of Data Collection

This study examines the frames that the Kashmiri youth employ in their narratives on the Kashmir conflict. Examining and analysing the Kashmiri youth frames would allow us to understand how the resistance language or discourse of Tehreek is produced, reproduced and reconstructed by the Kashmiri youth in the post-2008 period, and how through this language of contention a collective political identity is reaffirmed, and the anti-state movement strengthened. Tehreek discourse includes materials which reflect the resistance politics against the status quo in IJK. As its focus of analysis, the study examines articles, essays, opinion pieces, poems as well as non-textual materials like cartoons, photographs, artworks and videos.

The archive for this study was taken from two sample years, 2010 and 2016—in which major youth-led uprisings erupted in the Kashmir region. Since not enough youth narratives were available from 2008, that year was not considered. Narratives published in both pre-and post-unrest periods were analysed. Apart from conventional newspapers, other mediums and platforms, where the Kashmiri youth have published their narratives, were also explored. This was done because relying on only one source of communication can result in missing substantive data produced and disseminated

outside the conventional media platforms. However, since the content available was copious, the sampling technique for analysis was employed—which also helps to keep the data to a manageable size and avoid the data saturation. Besides analysing media content, books, pamphlets, and political speeches were also examined.

The data collection process, technically, involved selecting, skimming, downloading, scanning, and reformatting. Each one is explained in turn:

Selecting: this process involved the selection of those sites and outlets where Kashmiri youth mostly publish their narratives. Only those articles which had been published in newspapers and magazines were considered. The reason behind this selection choice was that a person will send those articles for publication to a newspaper or a magazine which she considers as the best reflection of her opinion on an issue or an event. Besides, the published articles reach a much larger audience than blogs and can invite reactions and counterarguments and thereby reflect a wider discourse in society. Debates carried out through widely read mediums contribute to public discourses and as such have a dialogical relationship with the society.

One part of the selection process is selecting sites and outlets through which narratives are disseminated, but another part is to choose the number of sites and outlets by deciding on valid criteria for inclusion and exclusion. The logic of inclusion was to incorporate diversified sources and viewpoints, so the sites from within and outside Kashmir were both chosen. Moreover, given the fact that sites and outlets within Kashmir operate within a specific context of a politically charged armed conflict, the selection of outside-Kashmir sites and outlets was a reasonable choice. The presumption was that certain viewpoints, themes or semantic usages may face editorial restrictions or censorship from within the conflict region, hence to capture 'rich data' source diversification made sense.

Therefore, following from the above-mentioned logic, two broad locations were considered: within Kashmir and outside Kashmir. The latter category (outside Kashmir) means those narrative sites and outlets which are based in mainland India and those based in the different cities outside India. In effect, three locations were selected: Kashmiri, Indian and International.

From within Kashmir location, those outlets were selected which had a wider reach and contained the Kashmiri youth narratives. *Greater Kashmir* (GK), *Rising Kashmir* (RK), *Kashmir Reader* (KR), *Kashmir Times* (KT), and *Kashmir Life* (KL) were selected, as these are the major English newspapers with the highest circulation, and published the Kashmiri youth narratives on major political events in IJK. As a daily, GK is in circulation since 1993 and with around 50,000 copies per day, it is the largest-selling newspaper in Kashmir. RK was founded in 2008 and KR in 2012, and both newspapers have a decent circulation of about 5000 daily print runs (*Kashmir Reader* was briefly

banned by IJK government from 2 October to 28 December 2016). Started as a daily in 1964, KT is perhaps the oldest English newspaper in IJK. *Kashmir Life* began in 2009 and has emerged as the leading English weekly.

The outside Kashmir narrative sites and outlets were searched online, and the number of sites was kept flexible to acquire enough data. To find relevant Kashmir related articles, key phrases and words were clustered to guide this process: Kashmir unrest 2008/2010, 2008 Amarnath land row, 2010 protests in Kashmir, 2016 unrest/uprising in Kashmir. Apart from manually searching, another strategy to was adopted to acquire Kashmir related articles. On social media, this researcher subscribed and followed many Kashmir related pages/groups, journalists, and academics (who work on Kashmir). This meant access to the continuous flow of articles and news related to Kashmir. In some cases, the snowball effect came into force. For example, when phrase 'Kashmir unrest 2016' was entered in the search bar of *DailyO*, an online opinion site based in India, it furnished a number of articles related to Kashmir and when one of these articles was clicked, there were embedded links to other relevant articles about Kashmir. So, one Kashmir related article led to another and so on. Following were the outside Kashmir sources: *Indian Express*, *Scroll*, *The Wire*, *Tehelka*, *Dawn*, *Counter Currents*, *Kindle Magazine*, *Quint*, *DailyO*, *Two Circles*, *Raiot*, *The Express Tribune*, *Youth Ki Awaz*, *Café Dissensus*, *Helpost*, *Feminism India*, *Alt Media*, and *Hoot*.[62]

In total 168 articles were selected from a range of 23 different sources. From the sample years 2010 and 2016, a total of 85 and 83 articles were taken, respectively. Initially, over 100 articles from 2010 and 87 from 2016 were collected, but during the processing stage, some were excluded for biographical details of their authors was not available. Besides these 168 articles, other materials like poems, cartoons, and song-lyrics were also included in the data. All the authors were in the age category of 18-30. In terms of gender representation, out of the 168 articles, 128 were male-authored and 40 were female-authored.[63] The majority (around two-thirds) of the authors were undergrad and postgrad students, followed by professionals (journalists, lawyers and engineers etc.). The shortest article in the sample was approximately 500-words long, while the longest article was over 5000-words. However, most articles were on average between 700-1200 words in length.

English sources were selected because Kashmiri youth narrators usually prefer to publish in English—which also manifests in the huge number of youth articles and youth-run portals available in that language—though a sizable number also write in Urdu. Most Kashmiri youth, while they can converse in Kashmiri, are not competent enough to write in their mother tongue, as it was long

[62] Majority of the narratives from 2010 were taken from Kashmir based sources, because in that year many of the out-side Kashmir outlets mentioned above did not exist or carry narratives of Kashmiri youth.
[63] To get more female-authored articles for the data, this researcher reached out to social activists and female academics and journalists, as well as used social media platform.

neglected and not taught rigorously in schools. While both Urdu and English are taught from the elementary level in Kashmiri schools, due to the factor of modernisation English is preferred over other languages by the youth generation, even though during street demonstrations Urdu is widely used as a political language. Furthermore, not only were youth-authored articles in Urdu fewer in number but the data in that language, unlike English, was also available from less diverse sources. So, selection of English sources was a better option. Besides, Urdu sources, thematically speaking, are not expected to significantly differ from the English ones. Nevertheless, some Urdu sources have also been incorporated into the data. This researcher had advanced competency in all the three languages used in Kashmiri political discourses.

Skimming, downloading, scanning, and reformatting

After selecting the location and number of narrative sites and outlets, the next step was skimming for article selection. Skimming through article contents was done to identify the research-relevant topic and theme. There were two phases involved in the skimming process: online and off-line. Articles available online were easy to skim through and download. But some from-within Kashmir outlets had their electronic archives partially available. The selected youth articles from such sources were first converted into individual PDF files and then imported into data management software.

With some web pages the problem is that they are written in a mark-up language HTML and contain multimedia elements, and hyperlinks to other web pages. That way they form an integrated text or what can be referred to as intertextuality. Due to this problem, such web pages were omitted. But the ones included were carefully reformatted by copy-pasting them into Word files to facilitate convenient data import into NVivo software; such formatting allows taking full advantage of features in NVivo like coding and setting up queries. Another reason for converting online articles into Microsoft Word documents was that sometimes web pages disappear due to technical or some other reasons. One major problem with analysing web-based texts is that web pages are difficult to define because, sometimes, their formatting is such that they cannot be separated from their associated components like images, graphics, illustrations, links, sounds, texts etc. Besides, web pages are sometimes constantly updated, modified and on many occasions completely removed from the web (Flick, 2009, p. 277).

Since the thesis looks at the Kashmiri youth narratives, the authors of the chosen articles were emailed for biographical details. In some cases, biographical details were already appended with the articles in short-bio, and sometimes within the article. For example, in an article published in August 2016, the narrator says, 'I was born a year after the infamous 1987 elections, and a year before the beginning of the armed movement against Indian rule in Kashmir'. This piece of

information confirms the age of the author and the age group in the demographic sample he belongs to.

In the discussion on the Kashmir conflict literature above, the two dominant perspectives were identified: inter-state and institutionalist. In these dominant perspectives, Kashmiri voice is hardly represented, hence the need to take into consideration Kashmiri narratives to understand the conflict from a native perspective. Following from this, the term Tehreek is used in this study for the following reasons: the frequently used terminology like 'Kashmir issue' or 'Kashmir dispute' connotes a territorial inter-state conflict, so these terms do not seem to capture native Kashmiri perspective on the conflict. However, since the term Tehreek is widely used by Kashmiris to characterise their political struggle, this term is more specific to native Kashmiri perspective.

Theoretically derived codes (*a priori*) or data-drive codes (*in vivo*)

Deciding which approach of coding to embrace requires examining the merits and shortcomings of the options. As Graham Gibbs (2007, p. 52) says "one of the dangers of coding, and of any type of qualitative analysis, is importing your own motives, values and preoccupations into the codes and analytic scheme you construct". Absolute open coding or *in vivo* coding assumes that a researcher approaches the data without a preconceived, theoretically-driven bias, and categories and concepts generate from the data itself. The unique terms and expressions used by the participants are used to name codes and then these indigenous terms and expressions are explored. This view, however, is contested because a researcher being a social subject observes (and reads about) the social world and naturally develops an understanding about it and carries theoretical and empirical assumptions all the time. Thus, the assumption of *tabula rasa* does not hold true in absolute terms or is simply impractical. On the other hand, theoretically-driven coding means having or constructing a list of categories and concepts based on prior knowledge or the extensive reading of the existing literature. While *a priori* codes are useful, such an approach can also be restrictive (Bazeley, 2007, p. 76). A researcher can try to remain grounded in the data by not imposing preconceived ideas or pre-existing theories on it. In case she is following a well-defined theoretical framework then the potential codes and categories are more likely to be conceived *a priori*, which, however, may be modified, altered, or dropped altogether during the advanced stages of analysis. In the view of Meijer et al. (2002, p. 162) "the use of insights from other research is only legitimate when this is done on condition that the insights can be reformulated or revised in order to make them fit the data".

For the analysis, NVivo 11 software was used, which is an efficient data analysis and management tool for qualitative research. The coding was done in two phases: pilot and main. The categories and concepts that emerged during the pilot phase were further developed in the main phase.

The pilot phase → framework analysis (literature, preliminary reading, hunches) →the main phase → coding framework (the pilot phase framework analysis and emergent codes)

The coding process also involved two phases: phase 1 (named as free coding) and phase 2 (named as tree coding or developing categories). In the first phase, two articles were selected from the sample and read closely. One was from the pre-Burhan period written by a male author and another from the post-Burhan period written by a female author. During this stage, passages were coded at free nodes without putting them into broader concepts or categories. In other words, the first stage involved *in vivo* coding. Through this process over 40 free nodes were created.

In the second phase (tree nodes), those free nodes which were identified and labelled in the first phase were clustered together into broader conceptual nodes in which they seemed to belong together. For example, free nodes, such as arrests, injuries, pellet guns, media gag, freedom of expression were clustered together into a tree node labelled as *Human Rights Issues*. Likewise, references to elections, funerals, protests, slogans, stone pelting, 2008-2010 were clustered together in tree node labelled as *Events* because these all seemed to share the attribute of events.

After the second phase of coding, five broad themes emerged (or were created): Political, Economy, History, Culture and Media. Under the theme/frame labelled as *Political*, six categories were identified: Characteristics, Events, Geopolitics, Human Rights Issues, Ideological Position and People/Actors. These categories were further populated by their constituent elements or sub-categories (See the figure below):

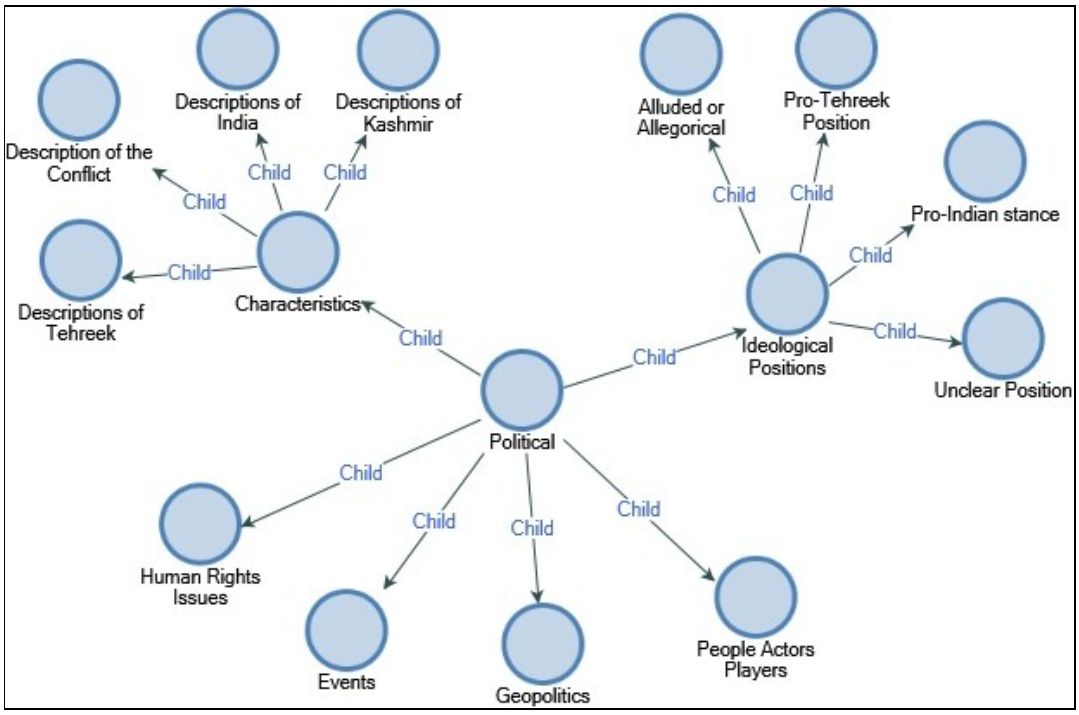

Figure 10: Coding Framework

Pat Bazeley (2007, p. 61) says that 'The first document you handle can have a significant influence in determining the categories you create and the ideas you carry through the analysis, as it will sensitise you to watch for certain types of detail'. Keeping this caveat in mind, the following steps were taken to address the issue. The first two documents to be coded were Arshi Javed's 'Understanding the Burhan Phenomenon' (11 July 2016) published in TwoCircles.net which is an online platform based outside Kashmir and Dar Wasim's "Deliberate amnesia and stereotyping truth" (21 Mar 2016) published by Srinagar-based Kashmir Reader. It was both a deliberate and random choice. Deliberate: to gender balance the perspectives, so first an article from a female author was chosen and then from a male author. But within each gender category, both articles were randomly selected. The third article was Hanan Zafar Naqeeb's 'Why Insaniyat is Missing from the Indian State's Handling of Kashmir' (29 August 2016) published by Youth ki Awaaz. The first stage of coding was done manually line by line. Later all data was imported into NVivo and analysed through stages. During close reading of the first 10 articles, over 40 codes were generated. Similar types of codes were merged into the categories in which they seemed to sit together. Three stages of analysis were followed: open coding, developing categories, and developing themes. In the second stage, initially, 6 categories were created based on the open coding: culture, economy, history, media, narrative features, and political. However, in the final stage, based on the research questions and emerging codes, the political category was further sub-divided into sub-categories (as shown in the figure above) and articles were coded accordingly. For example, under the sub-category Ideological Positions, articles were coded to four categories: Pro-Tehreek Position, Pro-Indian stance, Alluded or Allegorical and Unclear Position. Similarly, under the sub-category People/Actors/Players, articles were coded to different actors involved in the Kashmir conflict, like Indian forces, militants, pro-India people, pro-Tehreek people, the international community, Indian civil society etc. Likewise, through the category Narratives Features, linguistic devices like satire and sarcasm, rhetoric, metaphors, and deictic expressions were explored.

Conclusion

Any occurrence or event is infused with meaning through language. At critical junctures (revolutions, uprisings, wars) new forms of words and expression are born to frame the events, creating new meanings and understandings of things (Tarrow 2013). As Karl Mannheim (1936, p. 83) says, "The slightest nuance in the total system of thought reverberates in the individual word and the shades of meaning it carries. The word binds us to the whole of past history and, at the same time, mirrors the totality of the present." So, language plays a significant role in effectuating how an event is understood and remembered by people because writing or talking about an event is 'a form of rehearsal' which organises the public memory. Social discourses on significant events strengthen ethnic solidarity among those who are affected by them. And, within a cultural

framework when significant national events are talked about overtime, a perception about them is created—a kind of a 'consensus narrative'—which constructs a social reality. It is this instrumentality of language that calls for a systematic analysis of the Kashmiri youth narratives to understand their significance in the context of the political conflict in IJK, where the state employs varied methods and techniques of control, both physical and cultural, to assimilate the rebellious population who demand the right to political self-determination. The Kashmiri youth narratives are important because a consensus narrative can remain as a consensus narrative when it is being believed, shared, and reproduced by a new generation in their praxis. If the language of Tehreek is not rehearsed and reconstructed by the new youth generation, it is likely to be consigned to margins. By looking at the consensus narrative of the new generation we will be able to know the extent (and nature) of diffusion of the collective action frames of Tehreek and the permutations of Tehreek's contentious language in general. As Tarrow (2013, pp. 20-21) argues, "Changes in the culture of contention results from newer actors adopting the language and the forms of action invented by previous actors, which are modified, ritualized, and in some cases institutionalized". Although the coordinates through which consensus narratives are structured are many, it is the media, a vastly significant site of discourses, where political narratives are often reconstructed, reinforced as well as challenged. So, it makes sense to analyse the youth narratives which have appeared in the media sources. Nevertheless, to have a layered understanding of the Kashmiri youth narratives in terms of their counter-hegemonic and subversive orientation requires looking for both their explicit and latent messages, because there are limitations of free speech in the context of Kashmir. Which means understanding the subversive language expressed through explicit frames as well through tacitly understood terminologies and linguistic strategies, including metaphors and silences. In comparison to the content analysis, the frame analytical approach, coupled with the elements of critical discourse analysis, provides a way to contextualise the Kashmiri youth narratives within what Stephen Reese (2009) calls the 'surrounding web of culture' in which they are produced and reconstructed, and in which they resonate. Besides, such an approach is also useful in terms of gaining rich description and having an inter-textual reading of the data. The analysis ultimately aims to unravel the ideological messages embedded in the youth narratives and their alignment (or departure) from the collective action frames of the Kashmiri self-determination movement by looking at the linguistic strategies through which certain actors and political claims are ascribed or denied legitimacy (or agency). By examining the subversive terminologies and frames and others linguistic trends within the youth narratives, we will be able to discern the unique intervention of the new political generation in Kashmir at the discursive level, and theorise how this discursive intervention (and its diffusion) reflects a distinctive generational consciousness that underpins the recent political mobilisations in Kashmir. Therefore, in the empirical chapters that follows, while analysing Kashmiri youth narratives, following themes are

explored: a) how salient political categories like the Kashmir conflict, Tehreek, and India are described in the political narratives; b) what discursive or ideological positions are discernible viz-a-viz the Kashmir conflict or Tehreek in terms of frame alignment; c) what linguistic devices and strategies are utilised through which a collective political identity is constituted or reaffirmed; d) which unifying themes can be found in the narratives. Exploration of such themes and aspects of the Kashmiri youth narratives are useful to get insights about political subjectivities of an educated, mostly middle-class Kashmiri Muslim youth cohort, as political subjectivities are constituted through discursive practices and within representation (Hall, 1996).

Chapter 4

Framing the Kashmir Conflict: Descriptions and Discursive Positions

Introduction

This chapter examines the usage of key descriptive terms and political frames in the Kashmiri youth narratives. After a brief overview of the process of coding of political categories, the next section first provides a short introduction about the vernacular terminology which has been locally employed to describe the political situation in Kashmir and then analyses the widely used term conflict as it appears in the Kashmiri youth narratives from 2010 and 2016. Afterwards, use of the word occupation is discussed, looking at how this relatively new terminology in Kashmiri political discourses is potentially most subversive, and what facilitates or restricts its diffusion in Kashmir. Following this, the outline of the other terms that are frequently used to describe Kashmir is provided. The next section then examines the varied ways through which the youth narrators express their ideological or discursive positions concerning the Kashmir conflict, by analysing the degree of alignment between their frames and the collective action frames of Tehreek. This section also discusses the deployment of alluded/allegorical language and unclear/ambiguous discursive positions. Finally, the concluding section summaries the key findings and presents the main arguments based on the analysis of the youth narratives in the chapter.

Coding the Categories

During the free coding stage, a word frequency query generated a list of the most commonly referenced terms (with a minimum length of two letters). As can be seen in table 5 below, the top twenty frequently used words in the youth narratives of 2010 and 2016 includes references to the core actors involved in the political situation: Kashmir, people, India, state, government, Pakistan, and forces, as well as the deictic expressions: we, they, their, our, them, and us. Although in both the samples common references can be noticed, there is still a difference. As can be observed in the table, references to youth are more frequent in 2016 than in 2010—which gives us an indication of the gradual emergence of the youth as an independent political category. Based on the initial free coding of the sampled texts coupled with the word frequency queries, a broad category of *Characteristics* was set up. The objective was to identify those passages which describe the categories like the Conflict, India, Kashmir and Tehreek, and to code them at the sub-categories named after them. Each identified sub-category will be discussed in turn.

Frequently used words (2010)	Number of references	Sources (85)	Frequently used words (2016)	Number of references	Sources (83)
Kashmir	659	81	Kashmir	916	81
Their	397	73	People	502	80
We	375	62	Their	489	80
People	375	75	They	466	74
They	367	78	We	456	68
India	294	56	India	311	60
Our	201	49	Our	289	56
Indian	215	48	My	288	43
State	214	58	Indian	274	52
Them	194	61	State	234	60
My	173	30	Them	227	69
Kashmiris	148	43	Burhan	189	37
Government	132	47	Youth	164	35
Political	131	42	Government	160	50
Kashmiri	126	55	Us	159	52
Pakistan	111	31	Political	156	47
Forces	106	46	Forces	144	47
Us	97	40	Kashmiri	139	45
Delhi	97	32	Police	135	31
2010	95	85	2016	125	78

Table 5 Frequently references words in 2010 and 2016

Description of The Political Situation in Kashmir as 'Conflict'

In Urdu, which is a widely spoken (an official language) in Kashmir, two main phrases are commonly used to describe the Kashmir conflict: *maslah-i-Kashmir* (literally: 'issue of Kashmir') and *tanaza-i-Kashmir* (literally: 'dispute of Kashmir'). Among these two expressions, *Maslah-i-Kashmir* is more popular, stemming from two main factors. Firstly, the ease of the phrase. The expression *Maslah-i-Kashmir* gels well with spoken Kashmiri due to phonetic similarities. Secondly, the phrase

had remained in use for at least last six decades and thus becoming a part of the Tehreek literature, which, especially before 1990, was predominantly written and propagated in Urdu. Almost all the major leaders of Kashmiri Tehreek have authored their books, autobiographies, pamphlets in the Urdu language. For example, *Nida-e-Haq* (Munshi Muhammad Ishaq), *Juhd-e-Musalsal* (Amanullah Khan), *Wular Kinaray* (Syed Ali Geelani), *Qaidi no. 100* (Zamruda Habib) etc. Since Urdu has been the language of Tehreek for a long time, therefore, in contrast to *Maslah-i-Kashmir,* the English term 'conflict' is a relatively new entrant in Kashmiri political discourses; though, apparently, non-Kashmiri writers and commentators have employed different English terminologies, including conflict. As English grew in Kashmir with the spread of private educational institutions, and the introduction of the language in the early 2000s at the primary level in state-run schools, a new cohort of English-speaking generation began writing about Kashmir. The emergence of this sizable English-speaking generation ultimately led to healthy growth of the English language press in the Kashmir Valley in which the term started to appear regularly.

Usage of the term 'Conflict' in the 2010 and 2016 Youth Narratives

In the sample of 85 articles from 2010, 19 authors (with a total of 34 references) have employed the term 'conflict' in their narratives (see Figure 11). Comparatively, in the 2016 narratives, 27 authors (with 59 references) out of 85 authors have utilised the same term. In a very few instances, the word has been utilised to describe either a different conflict or an interpersonal conflict. As could be expected, usage of this specific term varies among different authors, even though it is employed to describe the same phenomenon. Whereas a more common usage of the term about Kashmir is to label (or define) the situation in political and academic terms, some authors, however, also metaphorically apply the word, to sketch a solemn and evocative description of the Kashmir situation. For example, talking about what is seemingly intended to be a general condition of a 'common Kashmiri', Saima Manzoor writes in her article entitled "A Tale of Common Kashmiri" (*Rising Kashmir* 5 May 2010):

> He belongs to a world of conflict, a world darkened by oppression; the images of which oppress him even in his dreams. A world where every day in front of him the monstrous lies prosper and the truth dies a dreadful death…

Again, a metaphorical usage of the term is evident in the article "A Letter to an Unborn Kashmiri" (*Rising Kashmir* 27 Aug 2010), where a PhD student, Sajad Hamid, talks about "this land of conflict":

> I know it must seem weird of me to write you a letter while you are still in your mother's womb preparing to bless this land of conflict, but I feel it's my prime responsibility to tell you something about the world you are planning to make your own. I hope you'll allow me.

Likewise, for other youth authors, the conflict is a point of departure as well as a prevailing condition which affects life-courses, identities, and political attitudes of people in Kashmir. Since the youth generation of Kashmiris has grown up in the great political tumult and violence of the last three decades, the situation has inscribed a profound mark on their psyche; the political situation has become an alternate identity marker, which is quite clearly discernible in the journalese phrase 'the children of conflict' that some of the authors often deploy.

In the 2016 narratives, usage of the term 'conflict' was not any different (see Figure 12 below). Though in some instances, the word was also invoked different meanings. For example, one of the authors employed the term in its plural form to underline the tense inter-state relations between India and Pakistan. In another case, the term was not directly invoked by the author but was in the selected quote embedded in the article. Overall, in most of the articles from 2016, the term conflict was typically employed to describe or allude to the political situation in and around Kashmir. However, even while utilised to describe the same intractable political situation in Kashmir, the term, in its varied usages, could also point to different aspects of the conflict. That is why in one narrative, it popped up in a sentence like this: "Whenever a boy dies in the conflict, my eye inevitably perceives his age," and in another narrative, the term became a way to distinguish the spatial and experiential realms: "Talking to kids outside this conflict zone, their childhood 'fantasy world' really is charming". And yet, in some narratives, the word emerged with its certain academic peculiarity, as noticed in this sentence: "Militancy has again found a popular support in Burhan's Kashmir. Attempts made over the years aimed at conflict management like the so-called Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) have proven futile or not worked".

In his *Greater Kashmir* essay, ingeniously titled "Creative Neo-Warfare" (5 October 2016), young Kashmiri architect Taha Mughal speaks about art's association with war and political turmoil. After laying out a sort of theoretical frame of his essay, he goes on to analyse the contemporary art scene in Kashmir through which the political situation of the region is addressed. When implicitly referring to Kashmir's situation, he invokes the term 'conflict zone', which gives a sense of a geopolitical entity where somehow normal life is in animated suspension, or a place where violence and death seem to be ominously close.

> However, in conflict zones where bombardments often subdue the gagged whispers, people across ages and time have by-and-large learnt this language collectively as a political resistance tool, and have evolved creatively to communicate, express and somehow survive, thus becoming the indirect patrons of art.

Figure 11: References to the word conflict in the 2010 narratives

This sense of looming violence which people feel in a conflict zone has been visually depicted by Kashmiri artists, especially political cartoonists of daily newspapers. In the cartoon below (Figure 13), while commenting on the mental health crisis in the Kashmir Valley, Mir Suhail shows people going about their work through Lal Chowk (as represented by the clock tower called Ghanta Ghar). However, their lives are unhealthy (or unenviable), since everyone's head burdened with a military tank, which represents the heavy militarisation of Kashmir. In the inscription at top left, we read "93% Kashmiris suffer from conflict-related trauma", a reference to the report *Kashmir Mental Health Survey 2015* published by Medicine Sans Frontiers. Here, the phraseology 'conflict-related trauma', which is specific to NGO discourses, finds its way into Kashmiri political discourses, indicating the processes through which certain linguistic constructs are sometimes imported by people, especially when these constructs exemplify a local situation in a way that is universally

understood. Otherwise, Kashmiris, in their day to day conversations in the local language, always refer to the political situation has "*Halat*" or "*Haalaat*", which roughly translates into 'situation' or 'state of affairs'.

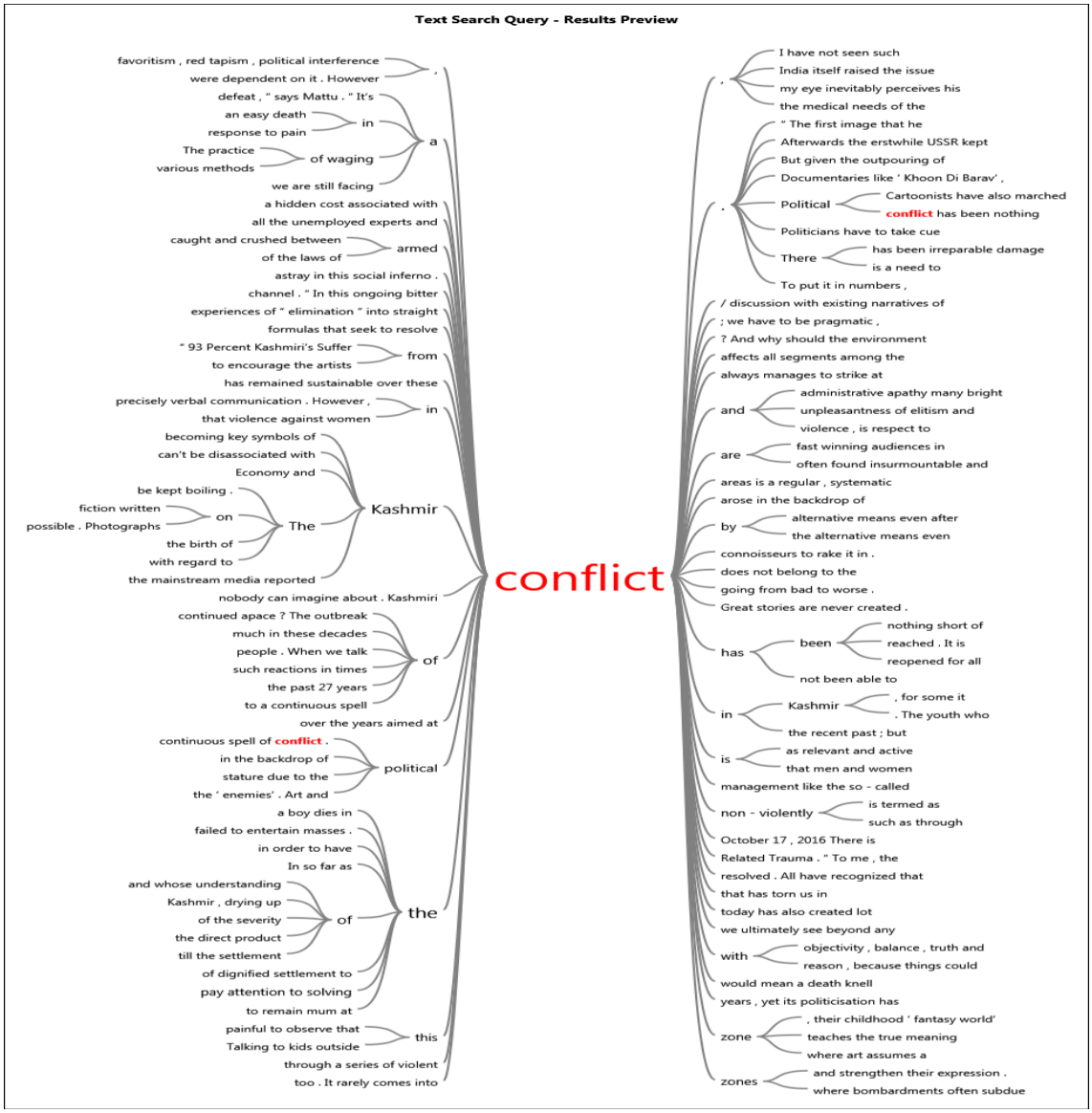

Figure 12: References to the word conflict in the 2016 narratives

Usage of the term 'Occupation' in 2010 and 2016 Narratives

Now, 'occupation' is a term which is of recent origin regarding its usage in Kashmiri political discourses—though Kashmiri academic, Mona Bhan, says that it was used in the 1970s and even earlier by some Kashmiri intellectuals.[64] Incorporation of the term occupation in Kashmiri political discourses is significant in the way that it shows us how the youth generation, influenced by

[64] Author interview in 2018. According to Mona Bhan, the term occupation "appear very explicitly all the time in my grandfather's [Pandit Raghunath Vaishnavi] writings (and am sure there were others who were using it too)." Editor and politician, Pandit Raghunath Vaishnavi was the founding member of the Kashmir Political Conference, which opposed Kashmir's accession with India. He served as the party's vice-president from 1953 to 1964. In the 1950's, he edited an Urdu newspaper *Jamhoor*, and also contributed to journals like *The Radical Humanist*.

globalisation and exposed to the literature of other social movements, has made a discursive intervention. By employing the term occupation to describe the political situation in Kashmir, these youth narrators subvert the dominant frame that is informed either by the inter-state or the institutionalist understanding of the issue.

Figure 13: Mir Suhail cartoon in Rising Kashmir

In 2013, an edited volume *Everyday Occupations: Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East* was released by the University of Pennsylvania Press. The book contained one chapter on Kashmir— "Death and Life Under Occupation: Space, Violence, and Memory in Kashmir"— authored by US-based Kashmiri anthropologist Mohamed Junaid. It was probably for the first time that the word occupation was used in the title of an academic article about Kashmir, that too by a Kashmiri researcher. In fact, Junaid's chapter anthropologically dealt with the issue of military occupation in Kashmir, bringing focus on the subject which had received little academic attention. Around the same time, other scholars of Kashmir studies also began to use the term occupation to characterise the political situation in Kashmir. The perfect illustration of which are the titles of Kashmir-related works that have appeared in the post-2008 period, like *Of Occupation and Resistance* (2013); *Morality and Martyrdom: Dams, Dharma, and the Cultural Politics of Work in Indian-Occupied Kashmir* (2014); *Love in the time of occupation: Reveries, longing, and intoxication in Kashmir* (2016); *Constituting the Occupation: preventive detention and permanent emergency in Kashmir* (2017); *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (2018); and *From Administration to Occupation: the reproduction and subversion of public spaces in Kashmir* (2018).

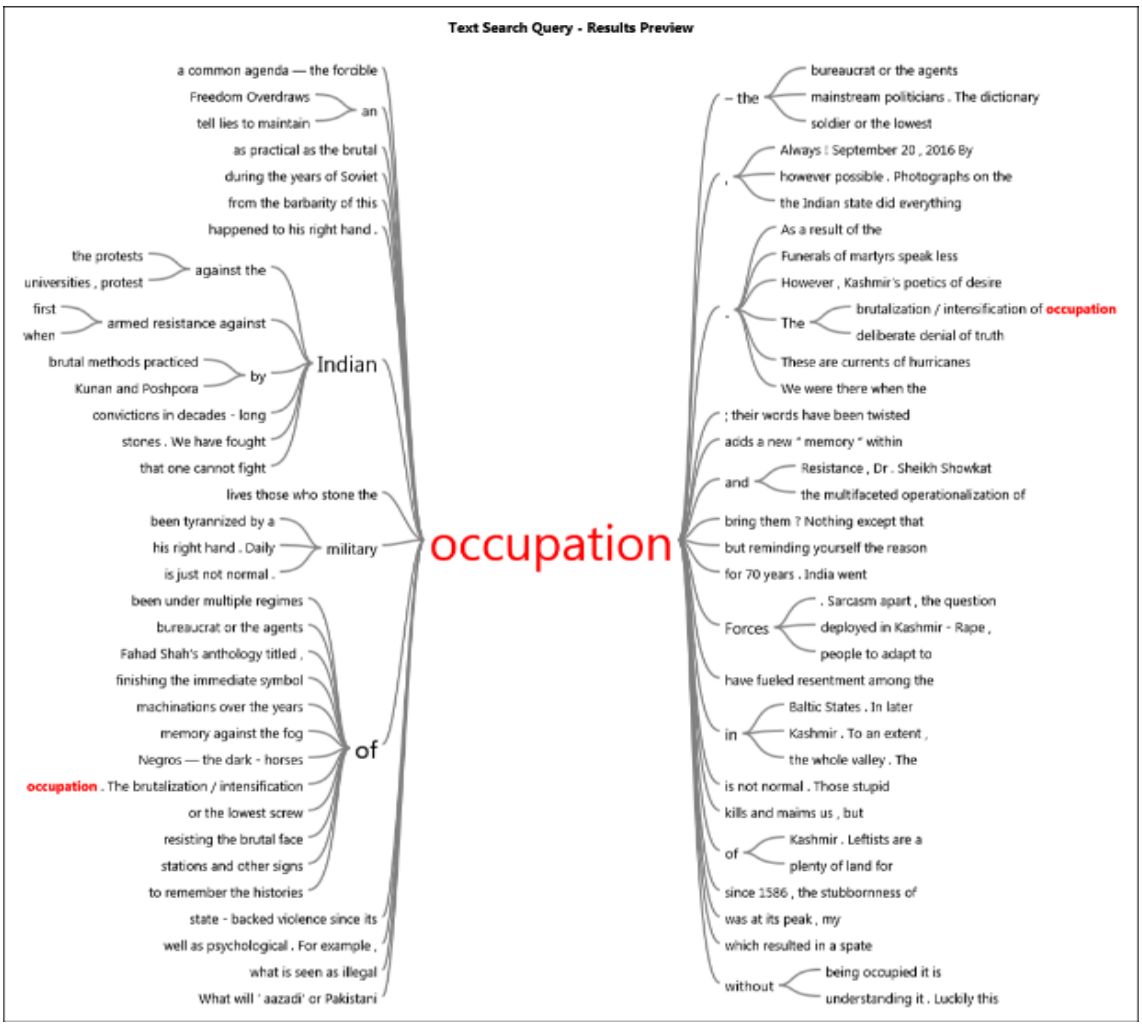

Figure 14: Use of the word occupation in 2016

Perhaps, it all was the outcome of the post-2008 resurgence in Tehreek which changed the way the Kashmir conflict was conceived in both academic and non-academic discourses. Also, with many Kashmiris taking up social sciences and humanities and getting trained in academic research, an intellectual challenge to the dominant statist narratives on Kashmir started to emerge in this period. In many articles and essays, which were written by young Kashmiris, occupation became a recurrent word. Because, unlike other terms, the phrase occupation categorically asserts a pro-Tehreek position and allows for little narrative manipulation which the euphemistic words such as the dispute, the issue, or the problem can. For example, underlining the importance of using the word occupation to describe the state control of Kashmir, the editors of a recent edited volume stated in the introduction:

> This practice of naming the brutal modalities of power in Kashmir as occupation is a political and moral choice, a commitment to exposing the Indian performance of democracy, human rights, and citizenship that has continually undermined the basic rights and freedoms of Kashmiris. The raw brutality of occupation is felt and recognized in the margins. Such recognition has opened space for new forms of solidarity between differently positioned academics who share a common commitment to the language of occupation, the vision of *azadi,* and the project of ethnography (Bhan, Duschinski, & Zia, 2018, p. 35).

In the word-tree above (Figure 14), you can see how the term occupation was used in the narratives from 2016. Interestingly, in the narratives from 2010, the word 'occupation' features only in three out of 85 articles. In fact, in one article the word is part of the quote attributed to the then foreign minister of India, who had referred to the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir as an 'occupied' territory. Nevertheless, while the word occupation was not explicitly mentioned in one of the three articles, its author, through a different discursive strategy, still implied the same thing (occupation) when he wrote: "That Kashmir is an internationally accepted dispute, in which the land is under more than half a million ruthless Indian Army soldiers[...]". Pertinently, the two articles where the term occupation is explicitly used to refer to the Indian-controlled Kashmir were published in a leftist Kerala-based web portal called Countercurrents (where a good number of Kashmiri narratives have appeared since 2010). The quotes reproduced below are from the articles—"Kashmir: An Epitome of Struggle" and "Hearken to the Vale"—published by two Kashmiri undergrad students in Counter-Currents in August 2010 in the midst of the summer uprising. The arguments in these two articles operate within the political frame where a clear pro-Tehreek position is asserted. While, in the first narrative, a sub-frame of resistance is evident, a sub-frame of human rights is more prominent in the second article.

> We have to fight all elements so that every kind of pressure is exerted on the occupation. Whether people work inside the constitution of both countries for the 'basic right of self-determination' or outside the electoral frays, their strategies should be acceptable to the international community.
>
> If things were normal, what were 8 lakh troopers doing in the valley? Actually, the occupation is never passive. It always imposes itself upon the occupied. Rapes, murders, fake encounters, etc. are the defining feature of occupied Kashmir.

The absence of the term 'occupation' in Kashmir-based newspapers is telling and points to the aspect of censorship, either from the authors themselves or from the news organisations. At least till quite recently, Kashmiri papers would hardly ever allow the word occupation to appear in their op-eds because of the pressures from the state, often exerted through different means (Naqash, 2016). A sub-editor of an English weekly told this researcher in the summer of 2016 that his editor would carefully edit out the word 'Indian occupation' before publishing the press releases of Tehreek organisations. Nevertheless, after the advent of new media, especially online news portals, the word occupation is now far more frequently used by Kashmiris. These online platforms have little at stake as compared to the print media, who quickly succumb to the state censorship due to lack of robust private sector in Kashmir which could have supported them. Since government advertisements remain their financial mainstay, Kashmiri print media cannot step beyond the permissible parameters set by the state. Though governments do not issue directives about what can be and cannot be said, and there are legal provisions which guarantee freedom of speech and expression, there are still ways through which the state subtly exerts its pressure or execute

censorship. For example, in July 2017, Indian newspaper *The Tribune* reported that the state intelligence in IJK has put up a list of columnists and academics for surveillance (Qadri, 2017). It was a hint to Kashmiri intellectuals—some people interpreted it was a psy-op. Likewise, on previous occasions also, there have been news reports about how the state seeks to tackle journalists and newspapers in Kashmir who are seen as "separatist sympathiser" and who indulge in what is termed as "anti-national activities" (Noorani, 2005; Navlakha, 2011). In an apparent bid to control the Kashmiri newspapers, the state brought in a new legal provision in 2016 called the Government Advertisement Policy (2016). It empowered the regulatory body called Empanelment Committee to withhold advertisement to any publication should its contents be found "to offend the sovereignty and integrity of India" and suspend/de-list any publication which is found indulging "in anti-national activities." Also, in July 2018, the administrators of a popular Kashmiri web-portal were summoned by the intelligence department in Srinagar where senior police officers interrogated them for three days; along with them, two young Kashmir university students, whose articles and essays have appeared in different media outlets (both in Kashmir and internationally) were also summoned by the police for questioning.[65] These cases show that the state attempts to control Tehreek narratives by harassing the indigenous intellectuals and activists.

Therefore, while, in the post-2008 period, many Kashmiris use the term occupation or its variant, many still do not use it out of fear or inhibition. But, on social media platforms, usage of the term is widespread. Some social media users have their 'location' listed as 'Indian-occupied Kashmir', even though asserting one's political subjectivity in this way sometimes can expose a Kashmiri subject to a precarious position, especially when he or she has to deal with the state for official work. In one telling case, in May 2018, a Kashmiri medical student tweeted to India's External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj, requesting her to help him get a new passport after his previous passport had got damaged. Due to his 'deteriorating' health, the Kashmiri student, who was in the Philippines at that time, needed to go home for a medical checkup. But, an interesting turn of events, Ms Swaraj replied to the desperate Kashmiri student, saying, "If you are from J&K state, we will definitely help you. But your profile says you are from 'Indian occupied Kashmir'. But there is no place like that." (*The Hindustan Time* 10 May 2018). On 11 May 2018, the largest Indian English newspaper, *The Times of India*, reported this exchange with the following headline: "Sushma Swaraj gives geography lesson to J&K student". Being in a distressed position, the Kashmiri student immediately changed the details of his location on his Twitter account, which was acknowledged by Ms Swaraj. Later, he was forced to delete his account altogether after he got trolled by Indian nationalists.

[65] Author e-interviews in July 2018.

In contrast to the youth narratives from 2010, the term occupation appears at least in 17 articles in the 2016 sample. In 13 articles the word is invoked as a clear expression against Indian control over Kashmir, though one of the authors has used an allegorical method to talk about the same thing—which, once again, may be due to the censorship issue (self-imposed or editorial). Interestingly, only in one instance was the term explicitly used in relation to the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. In a few cases, where the term is deployed to describe the political situation in Kashmir, a variation of usage is noticeable. For example, writing in a New Delhi-based digital platform, *Youth Ki Awaz*, Junaid Rather says in his article "Why I Think Kashmir Celebrates Martyrdom" (16 Aug 2016):

> India's aggression on Kashmir has always been extreme. Since 1989, when Kashmir witnessed its first armed resistance against Indian occupation, the Indian state did everything to suppress people, from killing people, to arresting on suspensions to burning down markets.

Though Rather's article frames the situation in Kashmir as a political problem, its thrust is also on human rights. However, this piece has a certain inconsistencies. On the one hand, by using terms like occupation, military invasion, and martyrdom, the author appears to align with the pro-Tehreek stance ideologically, but, on the other hand, he also echoes, towards the end of the article, the statist narrative of winning hearts and minds (WHAM). WHAM is a constitutive element of the counter-insurgency doctrine that was deployed in Kashmir in the early 2000s, most prominently during the tenure of Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain, who served as a Corps commander of the Indian army in IJK.

Writing in a slightly different tone, and within the framework of gendered human rights, media student Arshie Qureshi, unlike other authors, mentioned the word occupation to describe Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. Interestingly, she also enclosed the word Azadi within inverted commas, which may imply that while criticising Indian state's human rights record in Kashmir she wants to maintain a distance from Kashmiri Tehreek as well. Though she alludes to what people's political aspirations are, her own ideological position is somewhat ambiguous. To provide a context, her article was published in April 2016 in an online platform *Feminism in India* as a response to Indian novelist Chetan Baghat's open letter to Kashmiris. Baghat's open-letter had appeared in *The Times of India* blog on 16 April 2016, in which he had enumerated the reasons why it was better for Kashmiris to integrate with India instead of seeking independence or union with Pakistan. Qureshi's rejoinder was prompted by Baghat's assertion that Kashmiri women would be better off within India than in an independent Kashmir or Pakistan, where their rights, Baghat believed, would be curbed due to what he calls "the hold of fundamentalist Islam". Speaking from a feminist position, Qureshi responded by reminding Baghat about the 1991 Kunan Poshpora mass rape

committed by the Indian army in Kashmir and other cases of sexual assaults on Kashmiri women by Indian armed forces. At one place she asks rhetorically:

> What has the state done for these women who survived mass rapes? Nothing. What will 'aazadi' or Pakistani occupation bring them? Nothing except that their scars won't be rubbed on everyday basis and the malefactor won't be tagged as my savior.

Description of The Political Situation in Kashmir in Other Terminologies

Among the six most common terms which are used in relation to the political situation in Kashmir, *dispute*, *issue* and *problem* seem to be often interchangeably employed. In the youth narratives from 2010, the word 'issue' was used in more articles (33) than 'dispute' (18) and 'problem' (22). In the narratives from 2016, while over 29 authors employed the term 'issue', 21 used 'problem', and only 13 used the phrase 'dispute'. Although Indian establishment is averse to mentioning the term *dispute* in diplomatic language, however, since it is comparatively not as subversive as the word 'occupation', Kashmiri newspapers rarely censor its use. The Indian establishment's aversion to the word 'dispute' can be gauged from the fact that in 2011 the then President of Pakistan, Parvez Musharraf, told Indian media that he understood that India was allergic to the word dispute and he was ready to use a different term. Indian magazine Outlook quoted him as saying in this regard: "Okay, call it an issue and not a dispute. We cannot even agree to a word; how can we move forward?" (Dougal, 2001). Endorsing the term for Kashmir, Christopher Snedden in his 2015 book *Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris* (p. 9) says

> The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) calls the issue of resolving J&K's international status 'the India-Pakistan Question'. This is a euphemism for the more commonly used term 'the Kashmir dispute'.

Even though academics and journalists prefer the word dispute to characterise the political situation in Kashmir—which also underlines its inter-state dynamics—it seems the word 'issue' is being much more widely used, both in its compound and generic constructions—there are also other noun constructions like 'K-issue' or 'K-word'. A good illustration of how the terminologies are interchangeably used in relation to Kashmir situation is the article by Khurshid Ahmad Mir entitled "Kashmir Festers" (*Greater Kashmir* 22 July 2010):

> If India and Pakistan are really well-wishers of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, then they must resolve this long pending *issue* with seriousness and immediateness. Let the aspirations of the people of state be respected and rewarded and give an ultimate solution to this *problem* which has cost much more to all the three parties of the *dispute*. (emphasis mine)

Ideological or Discursive Position in the Youth Narratives

After discussing how the youth narrators describe the political situation in Kashmir by employing specific terminologies, the analysis in this section will now turn to examine the discursive/ideological positions that the youth narrators exhibit in their stories. As discussed above, invoking certain terminologies about Kashmir can provide us with a clue to see how the frames constructed in the youth narratives align with the collective action frames of Tehreek. However, as the discussion so far shows, not all authors invoke these terms when they write about the political events in Kashmir. Which raises a pertinent question: what are the different (or other) ways through which political events in Kashmir are represented in the youth narratives? And how can we assess the relationship between the frames in the youth narratives with other frames (like pro-state or pro-Tehreek)?[66] A close analysis of the data shows that sometimes the youth authors do not openly express their political opinion on Kashmir but rather allude to it or resort to allegorical devices. So, to investigate the ways and means of articulating a political position vis-à-vis Kashmir, a category 'Discursive/Ideological Position' was created. Those passages which were pro-Tehreek and pro-India were coded at the nodes labelled, respectively, as 'Pro-Tehreek Position' and 'Pro-Indian Position'. The passages in which a political position was only alluded to or allegorically conveyed those were coded at the node labelled as 'Alluded or Allegorical'. Finally, where the discursive/ideological position or slant was unclear, such passages were coded at the node labelled as 'Unclear Position'.

Pro-Tehreek Frame

The criterion for coding a passage (or article) as aligning with a pro-Tehreek frame was that there should be an explicit or implied expression of support for Tehreek, which is also referred to and understood in political discourses as Azadi, self-determination movement, armed struggle etc. Moreover, using certain terms like a martyr and its derivates for slain Kashmiris, especially for the armed rebels killed by the state forces, would also suggest a pro-Tehreek discursive position. According to Jager and Maier (2009, p. 124-25), discourse position is the ideological basis from which individuals "participate in and evaluate discourse." Within the specific context of Kashmir, where a raging conflict exposes people to varied and often competing narratives, one would naturally develop a discourse position concerning Kashmiri politics and other domains of life affected by it. Nonetheless, as Jager and Maier argue, the subject-discourse interaction is dialectical, whereby "discursive positions contribute to and reproduce the discursive enmeshments of subjects". People encounter various discourses in their life course, and they work them into their

[66] Within the pro-Tehreek movement there are two streams: pro-Independence (those who want an independent state) and pro-Pakistan (those who want Kashmir to become part of Pakistan). But here they have been clubbed together in the analysis, because their constituent elements overlap. They both refer to the Indian state and the same history, and it is also not always possible to categorize them into two separate streams.

ideological position, even though while they may retain the core principles of their ideological position, there may be some diffusion about some less important issues. Furthermore, people may appropriate elements from hegemonic discourses and subvert their meaning to create a frame for their ideological position (Ibid).

Authors can express explicit support for an ideological position in different ways. One of which is "predication strategies" for discursive characterisation of social actors, actions or phenomena. This effect can also be achieved by using deictical and phoric expressions like we, they, I and our (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 113). Characteristics and qualities attributed to actors, events or phenomena may be negative or positive. Another discursive strategy is "perspectivization" through which an author positions her viewpoint and expresses involvement or distance from the arguments and attributions presented (Ibid). For Gamson (1992), "oppositional consciousness" is a *sine qua non* for a collective action to emerge, and he lists *identity*, *agency* and *injustice* as three core elements of a collective action frame. It is the element of *identity* in collective action frame in which 'we' as aggrieved subjects are specified who share some common values and interests, contrasting this *we* (as victims of injustice) with *them* (as perpetrators of injustice). According to Tilly (2017, p. 390), "the great bulk of stories we hear and tell in everyday life convey their agents, causes, and effects in radically simplified ways: someone did something to someone else, and that caused some outcome". In all spheres of social life, we engage in the practice of what Tilly calls "reason giving". Which means we assign credit and blame, whether it is war, peace, economy, or politics. Someone is responsible for some bad happening, and somebody is the reason for some good outcome; there is a hero, but there is also a villain. If a devastating conflict has occurred, 'moral culpability' is assumed, because someone is responsible for causing it. Even when events have multiple causes and layered antecedents, people still point out an absolute point of origin (Hogan, 2009, p. 170).[67] In a way, the idea of reason-giving also corresponds to the idea of a frame as conceptualised by James Hertog and Douglas McLeod (2001, p. 147):

> When a topic is 'framed' its context is determined; its major tenets prescribed; individuals, groups, and organizations are assigned the role of protagonist, antagonist, or spectator; and the legitimacy of varied strategies for action is defined.

Applying this framework, we can understand how the youth authors reinforce certain elements of the narratives—to which they align—by identifying agents, events, causes and effects, and by underlining roles and responsibilities of the actors and entities involved in the Kashmir conflict. Where a discursive pattern emerges regarding how authors assign blame on the same set of actors and entities and hold them responsible for the continuation of the conflict and attendant

[67] Hogan further says that "any event results from confluence of many earlier events. Nonetheless, we act as if there is an absolute point of origin".

oppression, we are dealing with what Shaul Shenhav refers to as "consensual paradigms". As Shenhav (2006, p. 255) explains, "consensual paradigms of political reality are revealed when elements of discourse on a certain subject become a recurring theme in a critical mass of political texts. Such a theme can manifest itself in the repetition of, or a variation on, the episodic representation of particular events, the representation of events in sequence, or even full representation that also includes causal relationships."

As an illustration of how 'reason-giving' operates in youth narratives whereby actors are identified who are assigned credit or blame with respect to Kashmir's political situation, we can analyse the extract taken from a postgraduate student Adil Bhat's article in *Greater Kashmir* entitled "The Poetics of Resistance in Kashmir" (25 August 2016):

> Pakistan doesn't defray stones to Kashmiris. These are our stones and our protests, our pen and our poetics of resistance, our land and our struggle for freedom. Such conclusions that India jumps to make have failed in the past and are bound to fail in future. The call for peace lays in the history of an unfulfilled promise, that is, the promise of a plebiscite.

In the above excerpt, the author touches upon the salient aspects of the political situation in Kashmir and mentions all the actors involved in the conflict: Pakistan, India and Kashmiris. However, regarding reason-giving, i.e., who can be accused of perpetuating the turmoil, he assigns the blame on India and underplays the role of Pakistan. Countering the state propaganda which attributes the political unrest in Kashmir entirely to Pakistan, he uses the discursive strategy of perspectivisation whereby he not only positions himself within the politics of Tehreek but also owns up to stone-throwing protests, calling it our "struggle for freedom". Which effectively creates a relational binary, where the author is now identifying himself in opposition to the state. By asserting his political subjectivity this way, his position within the framework of reason-giving, and the position of the political collectivity he identifies with is that of a dissident with a legitimate political grievance. And, the specific actor who does not address his political claim is the one who must get the *blame*. That actor comes out to be Indian state in this discursive construction because it denies his autonomous political agency by saying that Pakistan orchestrates the political resistance (stone-throwing protests) in Kashmir. In this schema of reason-giving, the author himself and the collectivity he belongs to is *credited* with resisting. This motif is discernable in the majority of the youth narratives in the sample. Cumulatively, the youth narratives seem to shape a consensual paradigm where Indian state is seen as the central actor responsible for the continuation of the Kashmir conflict because it shows intransigence and does not address the political problem. Another element of this consensual paradigm in the Kashmiri youth narratives is that it sees Indian armed forces as an oppressive entity which has no regard for Kashmiri life and is responsible for not only for human rights abuses but keeping Kashmir within the India union forcibly. This view

about the Indian forces is diametrically opposed to the mainstream Indian view which regards Indian armed forces, especially the Indian army, as 'the saviours of the nation' and calls them 'our jawans'. Indeed, questioning the Indian army on its role in Kashmir is tantamount to questioning the nation and invites immediate opprobrium from Indian media and civil society members, especially on the right. In the Gramscian commonsense, one's love and patriotism for the Indian nation is best demonstrated by supporting 'our jawans' unconditionally, never to question their conduct in Kashmir. In the Indian nationalist narrative, the *blame* solely lies with Pakistan and Kashmiris themselves for the continuation of the Kashmir conflict, and the Indian army is *credited* with protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation.

Therefore, how the institution of the Indian army is framed in the narratives also becomes a site of ideological contestation and nationalist projection. Where the Indian army is criticised and assigned *blame* for oppression in Kashmir, we have another clue of pro-Tehreek position. However, there is a caveat regarding such construals. Some Indian liberals also criticise Indian army's role in Kashmir, but that does not necessarily make them pro-Tehreek—this would even be strongly integrationist based on the assumption that development and human rights would resolve Kashmir's issues with India. A difference lies in how the author positions herself concerning this institution, is it described through proximating constructs like 'our jawans', 'our army' or in distalling expressions like 'their army' and 'Indian troops'. In the former case, even when the army is criticised, they are not regarded as an outsider entity, in the latter a dichotomous relationship is marked by placing the military outside the deictic field (see the discussion on the deictic field in chapter 6).

In quantitative terms, we can look at the statistics below (Table 6-7) for the percentage of discursive positions and dominant frames present in the two sets of youth narrative samples.[68] As can be seen, in both 2010 and 2016 narratives, the pro-Tehreek position, with approximately 72 per cent articles, shows a clear dominance. As compared to human rights, the political frame is employed much more frequently (in 67 per cent articles in 2010 and over 81 per cent articles in 2016). While as the number of the human rights frame in 2010 is 27 per cent (23 out of 85 cases), it is only 14 per cent (12 out of 83 cases) in 2016.

[68] Many articles contained varied, and sometimes contradictory themes. While certain aspects (say resistance or identity) was strongly emphasised, an author would also talk about human rights. However, looking at the entire article, if resistance or national identity was the major theme, then its dominant frame was categorised as Political. On the other hand, if the dominant theme in an article was human rights, even when touching upon other aspects, its dominant frame was categorised as Human Rights. Of course, there is not strict boundary between political and human rights, but for the analytical purposes these categories were separated because of the political context of Kashmir, where human rights discourses are sometimes intimately linked with the statist or status quoist positions.

Discursive position (2016)	No. of Articles	% of Articles	Discursive position (2010)	No. of Articles	% of Articles
Pro-Tehreek	60	72.28	Pro-Tehreek	62	72.94
Pro-Tehreek (implied)	24	28.91	Pro-Tehreek (implied)	9	10.58
Ambiguous	22	26.50	Ambiguous	19	22.35
Pro-India	1	1.22	Pro-India	4	4.71

Table 6 Statistical table of the discursive positions in 2016 and 2010 youth narratives

Dominant frames (2016)	No. of Articles	% of Articles	Dominant frames (2010)	No. of Articles	% of Articles
Political	68	81.92	Political	57	67.05
Human rights	12	14.45	Human rights	23	27.05
Others	3	3.63	Others	5	5.9

Table 7 Statistical table of the dominant frames in 2016 and 2010 youth narratives

In the 2016 narratives, the main themes in the political frame are resistance, state terror, identity, international intervention, political history, conflict resolution etc. In the 2010 narratives, the conflict resolution frame operates as the primary frame in five articles; the resistance appears as the primary frame in one piece only but as the secondary frame in not less than twelve articles. Furthermore, while as the conflict resolution frame operates as a sub-frame in five articles, the resistance frame is also present as a sub-frame in at least six cases. The difference between a secondary and a sub-frame is that the former is present parallelly with the primary frame, while the latter can be considered as a sub-theme under the larger frame.

For example, in some articles, the human rights are the central theme, but the discussion also touches upon Tehreek—though, in such items, human rights receives more emphasis than the political movement, and vice-versa. Out of the total of 85 pieces from 2010, the following are the main sub-frames which operate under the primary frames: human rights (12), political (8), resistance (6), and conflict resolution (5). Some of the other minor themes in the 2010 narratives are history (6), democracy (2), economy (2), social critique (1), media critique (1), and leadership (1).

Alluded or Allegorical Frames

Allegory is a linguistic mode of reference which allows authors to describe a situation or convey a meaning of a phenomenon by way of symbolic and implied comparison between events or stories. As Angus Flecther (1964, p. 2) defines it, "In the simplest terms, allegory says one thing and means another". Though specific details of the actual phenomenon may remain concealed, allegorical referentiality creates an enhanced effect on interpretation without making the reader lose sight of the provisional nature of the invented description. In situations where an author fears the state or

non-state entities and develops inhibition to talk directly, allegory provides a creative space to express political views or assert a discursive position concerning an issue. Many authors and writers have used this form of writing to navigate the censorship and surveillance in Kashmir (on the use of metaphors, see Chapter 6).

In Adeela Hameed's article "The Autumn of our Time" (*Greater Kashmir* 1 November 2016), terms like 'revolution' and 'uprising' are invoked in relation to the 2016 political protests, but she draws metaphors from nature like wind, autumn, hurricanes etc. to subtly convey her political message; she also employs medical terminologies like 'depression' and 'stress' to define the experiences of people during 2016. Without naming any person or group, except Kashmir and Kashmiris, she expresses her political position implicitly through the discursive strategy of 'perspectivisation'. In her figurative linguistic constructions, she consistently makes use of the deictic expressions, like 'we', 'this' and 'our', through which she indicates a personal identification with the 'revolution' or 'uprising'.

> This autumn our wills are not to be shaken, our hopes not to be shattered. We are a people who have fought tyrannous hurricanes of policy. We are not someone who are easily defeated.

Her inhibition or reluctance to directly assign blame to an actor or to identify an entity who is responsible for the political turmoil becomes evident in the way she evades taking names. For example, continuing with her nature metaphors to define the political movement in Kashmir, she says:

> The autumn comes with a gust of wind too. To some, it is a realization of fruitfulness and serenity while to others it comes to pluck prosperity out keeping them forever discontent and in misery. The latter, I believe, are all who we know as 'you know who'.

This linguistic construction 'you know who' is a careful reference to an entity which is presumed to be known by the audience she is trying to address in her article. She is confident that this reference would be interpreted the way she intends it to be. Because, earlier in the paragraph, she already provides a clue: "the people ruling us now". In slight contrast to Hameed's allegorical framing of the 2016 uprising, Asma Rafi's article entitled "My Name is Kashmir" (*Greater Kashmir* 10 November 2010) is more of a lament on the worsening political situation in Kashmir. Unlike Hameed, whose framing is political and implicitly pro-Tehreek, Rafi's is a story of Kashmir said within a human rights frame though couched in an allegorical language. However, like Hameed, Rafi also utilises the elements of nature to construct her symbolic description of the political situation (the referent 'my' in the following sentence is Kashmir, who is anthropomorphised in the article as the title already indicates):

> My homes are set ablaze. My waters kill and vandalised mountains mourn. The streams gushing with the blood of my beloved send shivers down my spine, drenching me to the soul. I, a maimed sparrow, envy the lark that soars high into the sky. The joyous singing of my children is replaced by heart-wrenching cries. Even the amber red leaves that you crush under your feet wail and narrate my story. You too can listen provided you lend an ear.

Unclear or Ambiguous Discursive Positions

In the Kashmiri youth narratives, variation in discourse positions is also noticeable. Although the pro-Tehreek discursive position is predominant, not in all articles is it clearly or explicitly expressed. Out of 85 items from 2010, 13 authors allude to a pro-Tehreek position, and nine do that implicitly. Also, there are four articles with a pro-independence discursive position. In contrast, only four articles show a pro-state (or the status quoist) discursive position; one among these is pro-autonomy, and another one is implicitly status-quoist. Compared to the 2016 narratives (where 26 per cent articles exhibit ideological ambiguity), the number of articles with an unclear/ambiguous discursive position is 22 per cent in the 2010 narratives.

Interestingly, the granddaughter of a very prominent Tehreek leader also exhibits an ideologically ambiguous position in her article published in 2016 in a popular Indian online portal. While her article is written within the human rights frame, she seems to have eschewed articulating her ideological position due to her profession—as she is a journalist working in an Indian news gathering agency. Even though through deictic expressions, she positions herself as a Kashmiri, still a certain political vagueness is reflected in sentences like these:

> My friends in Delhi, keep on saying that Kashmir is an "integral part of India". I do not contest them. Neither do I question their obsession for Kashmir. I just have a simple question to the stakeholders…How can you do this to the people whom you call your own?

What explains this ambiguity in political stance in certain youth narratives (to be precise, in at least 24 per cent articles out of the total of 168)? If pro-state and pro-Tehreek are the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum that operates in Kashmir, how do we understand those narratives which do not openly identify with either of the two? Is it a discursive strategy to navigate censorship or an inhibition born out of lack of confidence in one's ideological position? Or, is it a contrarian attitude (a way to exert individuality by steering clear of both the state and Tehreek narratives), or yet, are these ambiguities emblematic of what Michael Billig (1988) calls ideological dilemmas?

I would argue ambiguous discursive position may emanate from one of the factors mentioned above, but to have a proper empirically-grounded discussion on this aspect will require including interviews with the authors of the ideologically ambiguous narratives. Also, this may be the case that an author may exhibit an ambiguous position in one story but articulate a clear

ideological stance in some other article. Again, that would mean incorporating more data in the analysis. However, since it is both beyond the scope of this study to include more data, and it is also unlikely that we can find more than one article from all the sampled authors, the discussion of this aspect is therefore confined. But, for illustration, we can see this example: Wasim Khalid's narratives usually align with the collective action frames of Tehreek., but, in his article "A View from Inside the Curfew" (*Rising Kashmir* 14 October 2010) we find an ambiguous discursive position. This eschewing of ideological articulation seems to do with the publication *Radio Netherlands Worldwide* (RNW) in which his piece first appeared. As RNW was a state-owned international public broadcaster, Khalid had to maintain a balanced tone of a journalist in his article, keeping his ideological position in check. Thus, in Khalid's case, it is the professional requirement which makes his article ideologically ambiguous. However, not all 41 authors (who exhibit an unclear discursive position) share identical positionality.

According to Billig et al. (1988), there is a distinction between 'intellectual ideology' (shaped by thinkers and academics) and 'lived ideology'. The former is a "unified system of beliefs" which is internally consistent (guiding people on "how to react, feel and think"), while the latter is underpinned by values, ideals and practices of a culture which forms commonsensical ways of life for a society and is often embodied in proverbs and maxims (p. 27). However, in everyday lived ideology, contradictions galore. As people try to act on some issue as per the common wisdom, they are often confronted with two opposing options or contrary views. Therefore, suffused with varied bits of different elements (from past to future), as such commonsense "does not provide a unitary discourse" (Billig, 1996, p. 15). Nevertheless, the presence of contrary themes in everyday ideology enables conversations. As Billig (1996) puts it: "Themes and counter-themes (common-sense logo and anti-logoi) permit the possibility of discussion, argument and criticism". Looking from this perspective, we can analyse the contrarian views or ideologically ambiguous positions in the youth narratives, by acknowledging the possibilities of contradictions of lived ideology slipping into the intellectual thinking as represented in the youth narratives. Such heterogeneity also shows how Kashmiri national identity is expressed in varied ways by the youth and have varied salience for them. Moreover, it is also possible that an intellectual ideology that a person professes may not reflect in their social practices, because some different intellectual currents might inform their ideas whose time has not yet come, or they might belong to what Foucault (1980) calls the subjugated knowledges.

Conclusion

In the preceding discussion, we looked at some of the critical terminologies which are mobilised by different actors and entities to characterise the political situation in IJK. Among the most salient terms were: issue, question, problem, conflict, dispute and occupation.

Examining which of these terminologies were most frequently employed in the Kashmiri youth narratives give us a good indication of their endurance and diffusion in the political discourses on IJK. As some words are ideologically invested, their recurrence in narratives plays an essential role in the perpetuation of the political ideas which they embody and represent. In recent years, many youth narrators have been explicitly deploying the word *occupation* to describe Indian rule over IJK and that way their narratives categorically align with the collective actions frames of Tehreek. Although only 3 out of 85 articles in 2010 used the word occupation, it appeared in at least 14 articles in 2016, which indicates a gradual diffusion of the term. Although fear of state reprisal creates inhibition among some narrators to use this term, its increasing use is still a significant development (or discursive intervention) given how it modifies the terms of debate on IJK. Many more youth narrators use seemingly neutral terms like conflict and dispute, but these are also used in constructing pro-Tehreek frames, as their inherent ambiguity enables different actors to deploy them for various political ends. So, what all this indicates is that the existent language of contention propagated by Tehreek activists in the last thirty years (or seventy for that matter) is being reconstructed, reinforced and modified by the new political generation in IJK, as revealed by a large number of articles (over 60%) with pro-Tehreek discursive positions.

Nevertheless, some narrators also display ambiguity, which could be interpreted in two ways: inhibition to declare pro-statist position under social pressure or a retreat into cynicism. This ambiguity may also reflect ambiguous reality. If an author is unable to articulate a clear ideological position, it does not necessarily mean that that author is reluctant because of external pressures only (state, society or otherwise), but it can also be the case that the political situation on the ground is itself mired in haziness. But, then why are many more people able to articulate their discursive position? We may say that it shows intelligentsia's relative autonomy, which make them defy the prevailing consensus. Whatever may be the reason for ambiguity, what we see in the ultimate analysis of Kashmiri youth narratives is the diffusion of political ideas and frames oriented towards the self-determination movement. Transmission of political opinion or project is possible when a critical mass of new generation embodies it because it is not only an abstract principle or worldview but also a consistent and coherent social practice which gives political ideas their objective existence. Analysing Kashmiri youth narratives, we can see a unity of purpose in them and discern their relative cohesiveness—and manifestation of shared political subjectivity—in how they reconstruct and reiterate the political ideas or frames of Tehreek. By inscribing upon the political narratives their unique experiences and memories of the conflict, Kashmiri youth narrators exhibit a generational consciousness which informs their writings on Kashmir, and at the same time endow the

inherited language of contention with a distinct generational force. In the next chapter, we shall discuss in some detail what discursive strategies are mobilised by youth authors to reconstruct this language of contention and their counter-hegemonic, subversive frames against the status quo.

Chapter 5

Discursive Strategies and the Element of Hope in the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Introduction

This chapter evaluates the ways by which hegemonic (statist) discourses on Kashmir (and Kashmiris) are countered and subverted by the Kashmiri youth narrators in their articles, poems, and essays. Drawing on the elements of critical and political discourse analysis, the first section of the chapter explores the 'discursive strategies' which are utilised by young Kashmiri narrators to express a distinct national identity and to mark off an ideological boundary between Kashmir and India. Since the youth narrators articulate differences (political and ideological) in response to the dominant representations and imaginaries of Kashmir and Kashmiris in mainstream Indian media and official discourses, theirs are essentially counter-hegemonic articulations. These are what Hank Johnston (2005) defines as oppositional speech acts, because they practice contention politics through contentious language, and strategically respond to "distortions of communication and information flow". However, where these counter-hegemonic articulations assume a subtler form, we can conceive of them as 'hidden transcripts' (Scott, 1990). In the following section, the role of metaphor in Kashmiri political discourses is evaluated, exploring how figurative language is utilised by the Kashmiri youth narrators to frame the political situation in Kashmir and express their political subjectivity, and how metaphorical language allows a creative space for contentious politics or dissent. This chapter identifies the salient linguistic features and devices through which the youth narrators concretise and exemplify the collective action frames of Tehreek. It shows how the youth narrators as concrete, albeit an unorganised, group of intellectual functionaries within a generational-unit (in Mannheim's sense) reproduce the language of contention and frames (and discursive and political culture) of Tehreek as well as generate new modes of thinking about Kashmiri resistance movement. The chapter seeks to unpack the salient features of the Kashmiri youth narratives by locating them in their social context and examining their distinctiveness by looking at the political culture of the 'literary strata', whose language use is inflected by its historical location and socio-political changes.

The Nexus of Language and Politics

Politics infuses all the spheres of life, both public and private. As David Held and Andrew Leftwich (1988, p. 144) argue, it is a phenomenon which is "expressed in all the activities of co-operation, negotiation and struggle over the use, production and distribution of resources which this entails". For Pierre Bourdieu (1989, p. 21), politics is "a struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division". The field of the political, therefore, encompasses cooperative and antagonistic human relations. And, since there is a contest over the allocation of material resources and the meaning of things in the political realm, political discourses are essentially deliberative. In the words

of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, 2015), political discourses are 'primarily argumentative'. So, when we speak of politics, we imagine actors and entities locked in a perpetual contest over not only material but also symbolic resources. One set of actors seek to establish their hegemony by way of not only coercion but through the symbolic power of discourse. It is a condition where the nexus of language and politics operates in the matrix of power dynamics. However, as Foucault (1976) says, "where there is power, there is resistance". Thus, against all hegemonic discourses, through which power is exercised, there can arise discursive resistances. And since discourses oriented to resistance seek to undermine power relations, they are "ideologically invested" (Fairclough 2010, p. 67).

Within the framework of power relations, discursive resistance is a process of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', where some people are considered as belonging to a group or ideology and thus seen as an 'insiders', while as some others are regarded as 'outsiders' for their opposing political position or contrarian views. However, who is included and who is excluded is a dynamic process of political discourses, since political alignments shift all the time—with former enemies becoming allies, friends turning foes, 'radicals' turning 'moderates', ideologues becoming disillusioned, and so on. So, even when we talk about a generational cohort as an 'ingroup', there is always a likelihood of "disorganised complexity of contradictions and contrasts" within the group (Jaeger, 1985, p. 286).

To the complex discursive process of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' is linked the linguistic practice of clusivity. Wieczorek (2009, p. 119) defines clusivity as "a general phenomenon which includes a number of linguistic forms by means of which the speaker communicates (lack of) belongingness of chosen notions/actors in political discourse". As Chilton (2004, p. 56) also argues, using first-person plurals (we, us, our), interlocutors acquire a sense of group identity and allow them to mark off the boundary between insiders and outsiders. But analysis of dichotomous relationships—marked by clusivity—is incomplete without incorporating the idea of deixis in the inquiry, because there must be a reference point in relation to which an entity, notion, or individual is marked off (Wirth-Koliba, 2016, p. 26). Moreover, the notion of deixis is inextricably bound up with the interactive dynamics of narrative and subjectivity, or subjectivity in narratives (Duchan, Bruder & Hewitt, 1995).

What is Deixis?

To understand a deictic statement, an interlocutor requires to disambiguate the meaning of an utterance by understanding the context of the speaker's words. A hearer or reader who lacks prior knowledge of the discursive-event will not get the full meaning of deictic expressions. In a deictic statement, there are a set of reference points to which a deictic utterance is anchored, and these reference points are positioned, often, in relation to the speaker. As Chilton (2004, pp. 57-58) explains:

> In processing any discourse people "position" other entities in their "world" by "positioning" these entities in relation to themselves along (at least) three axes, space, time and modality. The deictic centre (the Self, that is, *I* or we) is the "origin" of the three dimensions. Other entities (arguments of predicates) and processes (predicates) "exist" relative to ontological spaces defined by their coordinates on the space (s), time (t) and modality (m) axes.

To illustrate, let we consider this statement: "In this unfortunate land, we are killed every day and treated as slaves, while our ministers enjoy a luxurious life in their fortified mansions there provided by their masters". In this example, the pronoun 'we' is positioned in relation to 'ministers' and 'masters' and this 'we' includes not only the people who are said to be treated as slaves but the speaker herself. Such narrative construction activates polarised binaries of us vs them. However, the position of entities in the deictic centre is dynamic, and there are degrees of proximity from the core of the deictic centre, with certain entities either staying close to it or going outward. And, if an entity goes outside the periphery, then it is excluded. Thus, 'our ministers' still retain a position within the deictic centre, even though they are near the periphery, moving outward. Our ministers are part of the *in-group* but locked in a non-cooperative role with that in-group. As Chilton (2004) shows, there are three dimensions of the deictic centre: space, time, and modality. Spatial deictic expression positions entities along the spatial axis (*s*). So, the locative preposition 'in this land' in the statement ascribe spatial dimensionality to the referent. Though, how this locative preposition will be interpreted depends on where the addressee got to see or read the statement. If the speaker is standing in Srinagar, then the reference ('in this land') is obviously to Kashmir, because for the local reader the spatial context is a given. But if a Kashmiri makes the statement in a Srinagar-based newspaper, but he is sitting in New York, then 'in this land' is a symbolic deictic referent or an indexical cue which the author presumes his intended audiences will get.

Moreover, spatial dimensionality also manifests by words like 'they' and 'their' which are used to mark 'the ministers' off—as 'they' and 'their' are distal terms—from the 'we', who could mean a certain social or political collectivity on whom the speaker projects his own experience or subjectivity. Personal subjectivity is embodied in I (the narrator) but in the statement above it is projected through the inclusive pronoun 'we' (which incorporates the narrator I into the collective we), and the 'we' in the statement is crucial since it is the originary deictic centre and acts as the perspectival vantage point. However, in analysing the process of marking off or markers of clusivity in discourse, grammatical features like first-person pronouns (I and we) alone should not be a focus. Instead, incorporating the pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of pronoun use will greatly benefit the analysis in understanding the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in political discourses (Wirtha-Koliba, 2016, pp. 25-26).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 29), we impose artificial boundaries to understand our socio-ideological position in relation to others. As they argue, "Each of us is a container, with a

bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces, [as] there are few human instincts more basic than territoriality." But, we must also remember that public utterances reflect the assimilated social environment and our responses to that environment's need (Mills, 1939, p. 675). All communicative statements implicate the "generalised other" and to be heard and diffused they must conform to the prevailing "principles of logic" (Ibid, p. 674), though the generalised other (as the implicated audience) may only constitute "selected societal segments" (Ibid, p. 672). Mills argues that "Along with language, we acquire a set of social norms and values. A vocabulary is not merely a string of words; immanent within it are societal textures—institutional and political coordinates. Back of a vocabulary lies sets of collective action" (p. 677).

Now, the analytical framework outlined above will be used to illustrate how through specific discursive strategies the Kashmiri youth authors construct a dichotomous or polarised relation of us vs them to assert a distinct national identity. By extension, how they also counter the assimilationist agenda of the statist narratives, embodied in the slogan of "Kashmir is an integral part of India". In the sample of 86 articles from 2010, at least 63 authors (nearly 3/4th) have used the first-person pronoun 'we' in their narratives, with over 390 references in total. Comparatively, in the 83 sampled articles from 2016, 'we' pronoun is deployed by 68 authors (4/5th), with around 456 references in all. Table 8 below provides a comprehensive list and usage frequency of deictic terms in the youth narratives.

Locating Deixis in Kashmiri Youth Narratives

In an article entitled "Plebiscite: A Way Forward" (*Rising Kashmir* 19 Oct 2010), Aijaz Hussain Malik, writes:

> It is high time for the leadership to get under one umbrella and force India to settle the issue once and for all. They should be firm in their manner and speech, unified in demand and in ideology. They must realise that we are struggle against tyranny, aggression and oppression. It is time for them to live up to the expectations of the people.

In this statement, the relation between India and the people of Kashmir is dichotomised by marking off their respective positions in the deictic field, with people of Kashmir and their leadership marked within the deictic centre and the entity India positioned outside the boundary. The author uses the second-person plural pronoun 'they' to address the leadership. But, unlike its usual deployment as a distal term, here it is used to rather distinguish between the leadership and the people, who remain in proximate position relative to each other within the deictic field, as they are marked off against the third entity, India.

Pronoun	Total Sources (in 2010)	Total References (in 2010)	Total Sources (in 2016)	Total References (in 2016)
Our	50	217	55	289
Us	41	101	52	159
Them	62	197	69	227
They	79	369	74	466
Their	74	404	69	227
My	30	173	43	288
I	41	427	58	719
Me	26	86	39	164
This	80	389	83	494
Here	29	46	27	37
There	62	142	67	234
Now	50	106	62	144

Table 8 Usage of deictic terms in the youth narratives from 2010 and 2016

The author assumes two addressees: we, which includes the author himself and the readers of the paper, and the political leadership (addressed as 'they'). However, the degree of proximity between the people and the leadership is not clear enough even though the pronoun 'they' is used inclusively. If the author had used the possessive form 'our leadership' instead of 'the leadership' we could argue that the proximity of pronoun 'they' (the leadership) to the focal point of the deictic centre (the people) is closer. Also, there is ambiguity regarding who is considered as the leader. Is it all the political leaders of Kashmir, including the pro-Accession politicians and pro-Tehreek, or just the latter. However, in the context in which the article is written, it could be assumed 'the leadership'

implies the leaders of Tehreek, who had split in 2003 into two major camps: Hurriyat (M) and Hurriyat (G).[69]

In her article, "Mother's Agony" (*Greater Kashmir* 20 Oct 2010), Andleeb Rashid Shah utilises the inclusive noun 'we' to identify herself with the political collectivity of Kashmiris. However, since she does not explicitly mention but only alludes to this collectivity, it is not clear what her discursive position is vis-a-vis Tehreek. However, this ideological ambiguity has to do with the style of her writing, where she takes recourse to figures of speech and deploy euphemisms and metaphorical language. For example, she says, "the mothers in this 'Land of Sorrow' turn out to be the worst victims of this naked dance of death that has befallen our valley". Here, Kashmir is figuratively characterised as 'this land of sorrow', and the conflict—the context of the article is the killing of civilian protesters during the 2010 uprising—becomes 'this naked dance of death'. What is not explicitly named are the actors who have inflicted violence on Kashmiri mothers, none of the political entities who are involved in the conflict is mentioned either, neither with their official nomenclature nor through their metonymic name. It is not until the penultimate paragraph that the generic term 'state' comes up, but a sentence like "an entire generation of juveniles falling prey to bullets" omits the agency. Who is firing the bullets is left unspecified. Also, the political conflict is only alluded to and described pronominally as "shockingly adverse circumstances". From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, such linguistic feature (of 'nominalisation' or passive construction) is often used in bureaucratic language to obfuscate the agency and foreground the process.[70] Nonetheless, even though she resorts to euphemisms and passive constructions, does her discursive position align with the state? That is also uncertain. Because she invokes specific phrases which seem to express a distinct Kashmiri identity ('our valley'; 'the agony of being a Kashmiri') and ascribe an adversarial orientation to the relationship between Kashmiris and the state ('a state which speaks through the barrel of the gun'). Is this ambiguity deliberate, out of the fear of the state? Or do such uncertainties reflect fissures and contractions in the collective narrative?

Perhaps, we can also argue that where an author's discursive position shows signs of unclarity, the degree of alignment of her narrative with the contentious language of Tehreek is relatively weak. Nevertheless, despite this non-alignment or disconnection with Tehreek, ambiguous narratives still

[69] M in parenthesis denotes Mirwiaz Umar Farooq, who represents Awami Action Committee within the Hurriyat Conference, which he also heads. Hurriyat Conference of Mirwiaz is considered as 'moderate' group. While as G denotes Syed Ali Geelani, the chairman of Tehreek e Hurriyat group, which split from the original party All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in September 2003. The APHC, which was formed in March 1993, is an amalgam of around 26 pro-Tehreek groups in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

[70] In his book *Language in the News*, Roger Fowler (1991, p. 80) describes nominalization as "inherently potentially mystificatory; that it permitted habits of concealment, particularly in the areas of power-relations and writers' attitudes . . . If mystification is one potential with nominalization, another is reification. Processes and qualities assume the status of things: impersonal, inanimate, capable of being amassed and counted like capital, paraded like possessions."

contribute in reinforcing the dichotomous relationship between the state and the people, if the structuring of their deictic expressions, whether imbibed or unconsciously regurgitated, synchronise with the dominant pattern. For example, in his article entitled "Ground Zero" (*Counter Current* 7 July 2010) Aleem Akhtar says, "We see anarchy in the courtyard of Kashmir. An offensive against our nationalism. A bullet for a craving of dignity". Despite the unclear ideological position of the author, the expression "our nationalism" fashions a binary relationship, because possessive 'our' implicitly positions (or assumes) one nationalism against an opposing nationalism. In the context of the article, the opposing nationalism is a reference to Indian nationalism. So, through this discursive construction, Indian nationalism is conceived as aggression (notice the use of a military term 'offensive') which is as a threat to Kashmiri nationalist movement; the latter is ascribed a positive value and framed in moralistic terms as 'a craving of dignity'.

Writing with a certain contrarian thrust, Aqsa Mushtaq, in her article "The Dichotomy Within" (*Greater Kashmir* 28 July 2010) also provides an ideologically 'ambiguous' narrative. She evaluates the political situation in Kashmir by way of a social critique. The intractability of the conflict and the attendant 'muddle' and disorder is attributed not to larger entities (the state) but to the social group with which the author identifies herself—as she uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' and 'our' throughout. In terms of temporality (*t*), her statement is positioned in the present, and her assertions are oriented towards the future ("what we require is a long-standing transformation"). However, it is the dimension of modality (*m*) of the deictic centre that emerge prominently in her narrative. According to Chilton (2004, p. 59), when we think of modal axis, "[t]he general idea is that Self is not only *here* and *now*, but also the origin of the epistemic *true* and the deontic *right*". Epistemic modality deals with degrees of certainty and deontic modality relate to obligation and permission, and these two are closely connected. The scale of deontic modality is "directional, oriented towards the Self's authoritative 'position' in relation to Other. The ends points are the speech acts of command ('you *must* do such and such') and prohibition ('you are *forbidden* to do such and such')" (Ibid., p. 60). In the article, the authoritative assertions of the author are predicated on the belief that Kashmiris at individual level lack ideological coherence which prevents collective 'emancipation and empowerment'. So, if the 'political imbroglio' is to be resolved Kashmiri people must first address the 'discord within' their minds, because, she seems to suggest, it is wrong to have 'conflicting thoughts'. Concluding her arguments, she writes:

> Unless we make a resolve to clear our minds of the ambiguity and stand by what we say we'll never move ahead and always get trampled down. Hollow words are not what are desired, it's after all actions which speak louder than words. Make or mar your motherland-The choice is yours!

Ironically, her personal voice is itself mired in internal inconsistencies because of her vague ideological stand. In the earlier part of the article, she seems to align with the status quo, but, as a

reader progresses through the piece, indications of disassociation with the status quo becomes discernible. For example, she signs off her article with the remark, "make or mar your motherland-the choice is yours!" Which motherland is being referred to here is not clear. Though answer lies in who is the addressee: 'your'. As Johnson (1995, P. 227) suggests, "All speech and writing embody interactional goals that can often be ascertained by looking at the overall structure of the text in terms of "where it is moving"". In the context of the article, her addressee must be Kashmiri political collectivity, of which, of course, she is a part. And, from the pragmatic-intent perspective, her goal seems to awaken Kashmiris to ethical lapses in their social behaviour and political disunity in their ranks, so that they can address these issues. Thus, the second-person pronoun 'your' is used only as a rhetorical flourish, not to distance herself from this collectivity—in the preceding sentence, where the call to people to be unambiguous, already contains the possessive our ('clear our minds'), which brings forth her sense of belongingness with the group. So, to continue with the discussion above, this article once again demonstrates that though if certain narratives of Kashmiri youth authors show peculiar ideological ambiguity that does not mean that these narratives lack potential to reinforce a dichotomous relationship between India and Kashmir. Because even in ideologically ambiguous narratives, India is almost invariably positioned outside the deictic field. And, as Wieczorek (2009, p. 125) says, "elements outside the deictic centre constitute ideologically opposing entities with a potential to threaten the elements inside the deictic centre."

Moreover, to make a larger point, this feature in the youth narratives also ties to the dominant pattern in Kashmiri political discourses where the *topoi* of 'irresolution' and 'the tripartite dimension' of the Kashmir conflict operates in the frames of both Tehreek groups as well as in the discourses of the pro-Accession political parties. Interestingly, it is these *topoi* of 'irresolution' and 'the tripartite dimension' of the Kashmir conflict upon which political identity of Kashmir (and, by extension, of Kashmiris) hinges. For example, in August 2010, in a *Wall Street Journal* interview, Kashmiri author Basharat Peer was asked a question about his identity by an Indian journalist Subhadip Sircar:

> Subhadip Sircar: A sensitive question. You have an Indian passport. Do you consider yourself one?
>
> Basharat Peer: I still have an Indian passport as that is the only travel document available to anyone from the Indian-controlled-part of Kashmir. The question of my nationality continues to be a matter of dispute. I refer to myself as a Kashmiri, as a journalist, as a writer (Sircar, 2010).

Regarding a speech situation, which governs the rules of civic discourses, Peer is engaging with the Indian journalist through a neutral venue—*The Wall Street Journal*—and via an impersonal channel (email). This set up certainly changes the power differentials between the two—the Indian interviewer and the Kashmiri interviewee. As virtually entire mainstream media in India follow the

official line on Kashmir, at least the title of the interview— 'My Nationality a matter of dispute'— is unlikely to get editorial approval in an Indian publication. Such ostentatious political statement is, in the context of Indian politics, going to be controversial. That is not to say that Indian publications censor ideological statements of Kashmiris. Even if mainstream newspapers and magazines, who mostly follow the official line on Kashmir, may not allow it, alternative media platforms show more flexibility in this regard. If we analyse this interview from the perspective of social role (Johnston, 1995, p. 224), which influences what gets said and in what way, Peer is primarily speaking as a writer. However, as soon as the interviewer poses a specific question on identity, a switch in social role immediately takes place, from a writer to a Kashmiri nationalist. In response, Peer asserts that he considers himself as a Kashmiri. Which implicitly means he does not want to be called an Indian. And, of course, when he makes a nationalist assertion, Peer is conscious of his status as a well-known representative of Kashmiris at an international forum. Though he brings forth his nationalism in a subtler or alluding way by reiterating the *topos* of 'irresolution' contained in his chosen expression "a matter of dispute".[71]

In certain cases, where youth authors write in favour of the status quo, their arguments still presuppose a polarity between India and Kashmir, because arguments for the status quo (or a political settlement short of complete independence) are either premised on economic expediencies or geopolitical compulsions. That means while a political arrangement within the Indian federal system is considered as one of the practicable options, a sense of distinct Kashmiri national identity is still preserved, manifesting itself in the way authors structure the terms of the debate.[72] Such peculiarity in narratives is best illustrated in the article authored by Azhar Yasin, "Demanding an impractical solution" (*Rising Kashmir* 14 July 2010). Let me quote the central arguments of this piece in some detail here:

> None of us can be sure of the future of independent Kashmir. Some consider it viable and others unviable. I believe in the latter. This is the 21st century [...] No one is going to come and help us out.... because all of them have their own issues to handle [...] Now for the sake of argument even if we agree that independent survival is possible. Why we think that India will give us independence? It has its own legal authority over the state of J&K. and neither are we so strong and neither India is so weak that it would listen to us [...] So the options we have is either to continue the protests and ask for something India is never going to entertain or make our demands flexible and entertain India BUT on our own terms.

In this excerpt, what is easily noticeable is a close interaction of epistemic and deontic modalities. However, on a closer reading, one can also find in it blending of aspects of space and modality. Palmer (1986, p. 16) defines modality as "the grammaticalization of speakers' (subjective) attitudes

[71] Logically, a matter of dispute is something which requires resolution. And, a condition which is yet to be resolved is a condition of irresolution.

[72] Former Tehreek leader and now a legislator in IJK Legislative Assembly, Sajad Gani Lone's document 'Achievable Nationhood' exemplifies the status quoist position of many Kashmiris.

and opinions." Modal expressions are used to express a sentiment or attitude concerning a probable fact, to encourage or negate a possible action. Epistemic modal expressions are those statements which concern with the theoretical possibility of truth-ness of some proposition and exhibits a speaker's degree of certainty towards her belief in something to be true. It is, in the words of Jan Nuyts (2001, p. 21), "(the linguistic expression) an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring, or has occurred in a possible world which serves as the universe of interpretation for the evaluation process". On the other hand, deontic modal expressions deal with opinions and judgments and seek to control possible action ('we must not do it'). According to Nuyts (2001, p. 25), deontic modality "is an evaluation of the moral acceptability, desirability or necessity of a state of affairs, i.e. it crucially involves notions such as 'allowance', 'permission' and 'obligation'".[73]

The premise of Yasin's argument is that India is a powerful state and it will not entertain the demand for independence from a weak entity like Kashmir. Thus, from his pragmatic perspective, a better way to resolve the conflict is for Kashmiris to change their demand from independence to autonomy. However, while arguing for autonomy and against independence (or the right to self-determination), he does not see Kashmir as *a priori* part of India which cannot or should not secede—as many Indian nationalists tend to believe—but articulates his position by keeping in view the prevailing geopolitical circumstances. Therefore, even though he expresses a position which goes against the core agenda of Tehreek (i.e. the right to self-determination), he still maintains an ideological distance between India and Kashmir, as manifested in how he structures the debate. For example, if we apply the framework of deictic field to his statement, the pronominal referent 'we' and 'us' in the sentence "Why we think that India will give us independence" are at the core of the deictic centre (where the author's subjective self is also positioned), while as India is externalised and placed outside of this deictic field. India is an entity to which 'we' does not belong organically but can accede to or join 'voluntarily'; Kashmir's sovereign or quasi-sovereign nature has not dissolved even though it is under the control of India. To reinforce the polarity between the two geopolitical entities and mark off their relational boundary, conjunction 'but' is capitalised for emphasis. This bold 'but' announces the condition of the deal: that any decision to remain within the fold of Indian sovereignty must be taken by Kashmiris on their terms, implying that the status quo as it exists is not an acceptable political arrangement, but there needs to be a negotiation for a better deal.

[73] And then there is third category of modal expressions which is known as dynamic modality, which "involves an ascription of a capacity or a need to the subject-participant in the state of affairs, or of a situation-internal potential or necessity for him/her/it to do something (usually this involves animate entities, but it can also be extended to inanimate subjects)."

If we conceptualise Tehreek in a non-materialistic or ideational sense, it is an embodiment of collective narrative, a discursive agglomeration of similar experiences and memories within a shared socio-political and historical location. This collective narrative provides a frame for individual stories and constitutive of the individual as well as collective identities. However, a tacit agreement exists in a group that governs which aspects of their shared experiences and memories are reproduced. As this discursive practice is reiterated over a period, it shapes a narrative identity of the group. Being conversation partners in the collective narrative, individuals become subjects; they express their political subjectivity by inserting themselves in the narrative web of the group. That means their individual story speaks in relation to the collective narrative, which gives their personal voice its political and ideological identity. It is in this way that pro-Tehreek talk is a discursive fragment of what Charles Taylor (1989, p. 36) calls "webs of interlocution", which gives individuals their self-definition. And, it is this discursive fragment which acts as "an instrument for construction of *imagined community*" (Martin, 1995, p. 8). The relevance of this discussion to our analysis is that it points to the 'performative effects and signification' of narratives, to their ability to "refresh the moral resources of protest, offer meaningful possibilities of identification, and generate (partially unintended) potential meanings" (Tanner, 2016, p. 138-40). As for illustration, we will take an excerpt from Muhammad Faysal's "Dispatch from Srinagar" (*Dawn* 15 July 2016):

> Our hearts mourn but we do not give up. We have been there in those cold winter nights when our bodies were made to crawl on the snow. We have been there in those tiring crackdowns. We have been there in those long marches holding out drinks to the people. We have been there giving out tehar to the hungry when their houses were set on fire. We have been there when our youngsters were massacred. We have been there to rescue them from the barbarity of this occupation. We were there when the floods wreaked havoc in our homes. We are here now.

In this excerpt, the author makes references to those events which are part of the shared narrative of Tehreek: crackdowns, marches, houses on fire, massacres. In Kashmiri people's memoryscape, these events mark those tumultuous and violent episodes during the 1990s which have, directly and vicariously, shaped political attitudes of the contemporary youth generation of Kashmir.[74] As he is writing amid the 2016 uprising, these events are invoked by Faysal to connect the past with the present, to refresh the memories and history of the resistance movement. In the expression 'we are here now' is a call for solidarity, while as 'we have been there…' is an affective remembrance of the moments of solidarity which have happened previously in similar circumstances. In this excerpt and the whole story as well, through the clusivity marker of communal common ground, Faysal invokes shared norms and values and inscribe them with a political meaning. Bringing in his own experience to bear on the narrated events, he is reinforcing the shared narrative of Tehreek,

[74] The term memoryscape is used here instead of memory because it captures the complexity of the social processes through which memories are preserved and reproduced. As Kapralski (2015, p. 150) defines it, memoryscape is "a site of concentrated cultural practice, the main function of which is to order the meaning of the past".

inscribing his memories upon it. By inserting himself into its narrative web, he is reproducing those aspects of Tehreek which allow him to make sense of his actions. For example, he is positioning himself as a volunteer who helps his people during the worst crisis, and at the same time acts as a witness who reports from the ground. However, in the excerpt above, his subjective position is not expressed in the first-person singular 'I' but through the inclusive pronoun 'we'. Which means his identity of a volunteer and his moral vision of solidarity and resistance is projected onto the pronominal referent 'we', the people of Kashmir. By doing so, a positive self-representation of the people of Kashmir is created using an ideological square (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 734). However, it also allows him to affirm his political dissent in a collective way. In this affirmation, the inclusive 'we' (the *ingroup*) is positively valued by the attribution of good qualities, while as the adversary of this 'we' is nominalised as 'this occupation'.

Moreover, the normative framework of his argumentation is moralistic, altruistic, and resistance oriented. However, unlike Yasin's narrative, his story is not overtly prescriptive or deontic, rather the rhetorical formation of the text is epistemically modalised. Though most of the paragraphs in the text are paratactic, one remarkable semantic feature of the excerpt is its effective rhetorical construction by way of parallelism (sentences begin with anaphora 'we were there…'). Furthermore, unlike many young authors who have used subtler forms to express their discursive position regarding the Kashmir conflict, Faysal articulates his politics explicitly as a dissident author, using a more direct way of expression. One significant difference between these two forms of articulations of politics (subtler and explicit) is the degree of affirmation involved or perspectivisation. For example, towards the end of the article, he writes, "A feeling of brotherhood unites us all, in a common dedication to the cause of freedom".

Mudasir Irfan's article "Understanding the current situation" (*Greater Kashmir* 25 October 2016), mirrors Faysal piece in terms of the rhetorical flourish. However, there are specific differences concerning discursive strategies. To elaborate, let me quote from Irfan's article:

> India forcefully continues to hold Kashmir in order to maintain and claim secular credentials of its polity thereby successfully mobilizing its Muslim public opinion in its favor which is evident in their (mis) perception of Kashmiris struggle. Whatever the case we witnessed the travesty of democracy when the first prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir was arrested on mere pretense of harboring anti-national ambitions. We witnessed the democratically elected governments being dethroned and more loyal cohorts installed in order to erode the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The rigging of elections in 1987 showed us how so-called democracy can trample us with ease. This paved the way for the armed insurgency which was entirely backed up by the people as is the case with many popular guerrilla uprisings.

In contrast to Faysal's story which falls under the purview of 'non-argumentative genre', Irfan's text is a narrative of Tehreek in a more conventional sense, i.e., it works within a dramaturgical framework: laying out a situation, specifying characters, imputing causation, constructing a climax,

and in the end, delivering a moral story. Irfan's narrative also differs from Faysal's in terms of perspectivisation. Whereas Faysal uses a personalised narrative voice and explicitly asserts his dissident position, Irfan, throughout his article, switches between subjective and objective points of view. Moreover, unlike Faysal, who recounts the events of the 1990s only, Irfan's historical arc sweeps a wider temporal plane. Taking a broader historical perspective, Irfan mentions the political events since the 1930's, including the August 1953 arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the first prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir, to comment on the unfolding events of the 2016 uprising. In its ideological orientation, Faysal's is a story of solidarity and resistance, while as Irfan narrativises Kashmir's political history from a Tehreek-supporter's perspective. Nevertheless, what unites Irfan's narrative with Faysal's, or with most of the young authors for that matter, is their subversive relation to the hegemonic statist representations and imaginaries of Kashmir and Kashmiris. For example, in the very first sentence of the above excerpt, the author not only marks off a relational boundary (by deictic expressions like 'its' and 'their') between India and Kashmir but also distances Indian Muslims from the deictic centre of Kashmiris and position them as a separate entity outside of the metaphorical container which houses Kashmiris only.

In a text, the pragmatic intent of a writer manifests itself in the overall structure of the narrative. Thus, we can identify the social, cultural and political goals that pragmatic intent embodies by looking at the 'narrative direction'; this entails finding out where a narrative is moving regarding its interactional goals, and what it seeks to accomplish (Johnston, 2005, p. 247-48). Although within a single text, a writer may utilise different and contradictory interpretative frameworks to accomplish different argumentative objectives and demonstrate her reasonableness, "the meaning of an utterance depends on its rhetorical context" (Billig, 1995, p. 71). Following from this, we can see that apart from a counter-hegemonic orientation, the element of hope, either implicitly invoked or actively promoted, is another unifying thread in the Kashmiri youth narratives. Cumulatively, hope endows a certain ideological coherence and infuse an emotional force in the stories of Kashmiri youth. A psychological attraction towards the desired outcome, hope can act as an enabling emotion to sustain the aspirational aspect of Tehreek, inducing in its adherents a positive anticipatory approach to an uncertain future and motivation to engage in hopeful activities, like planning and imagining. It is hence to this pertinent concept of hope that we shall now turn in the next section, discussing first hope's philosophical underpinnings and then understanding its practical and symbolic value for Tehreek.

Hope and the Hopeful Narratives

> Me chum aash paghich/pagah shouli duniya
> [I am hopeful of tomorrow/the world will brighten up]
>
> *I am hopeful of tomorrow*, Dina Nath Nadim

> The siege will last in order to convince us we must choose an enslavement that does

no harm, in fullest liberty!
Resisting means assuring oneself of the heart's health,
The health of the testicles and of your tenacious disease:
The disease of hope.

Under Siege (2002) by Mahmoud Darwish

History says *don't hope*
on this side of the grave…
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme

The Cure at Troy (1990) Seamus Heaney

Hope is an emotion which can influence our plans and actions, especially our approach to adversity, illness, conditions of precarity, and the idea of future. Historically, from the East to the West, many thinkers have reflected on the sense of hope; religious scriptures and prominent historical figures have talked about it in different ways. In the Orient, for example, thinkers like Rumi, whose verses often draw on Islamic traditions, has stated, "where there is a ruin, there is a hope for a treasure" (Barks, 1997, p. 207). Complicating the notion further, he has also said: "Existence does this switching trick, giving you hope from one source, then satisfaction from another". In certain philosophical and religious traditions, hope is deemed as a virtue. In fact, hopelessness is considered as unbelief in Kashmiri culture—embodying in the common adage, "Na-Umeedi Kufr Hai". *The Quran* itself is replete with verses which encourage hopefulness: "And whosoever fears Allah…He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine" (65:2-3). Likewise, hope is also a fundamental concept in Christian theological discourses (Brueggemann, 1987) For Saint Paul, *hope* along with *faith* and *charity* constituted the three core Christian theological virtues (Martin, 2013, pp. 72-97).

In ancient Greek, philosophers had different, and sometimes conflicting, opinions about hope. Some viewed it negatively as a manifestation of weak knowledge and potential for misjudgement (like Plato, Seneca and Thucydides), while as others had a more favourable view of it, seeing hope as an integral component of courage and a sense of honour, a virtue highly regarded by Greek philosophers (Vogt, 2017). For example, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says: "The coward…is a despairing sort of person; for he fears everything. The brave man, on the other hand, has the opposite disposition; for confidence is the mark of a hopeful disposition". It is, nevertheless, only when hope is linked with courage (because it creates confidence) that it becomes a virtuous temperament (Gravlee, 2000).

In her book *How We Hope* (2013), Adrienne Martin critiques what she calls the orthodox definition of hope in the analytical philosophical tradition. In the orthodox definition, hope is related to the desire for an outcome coupled with the belief in the possibility but also the uncertainty of the outcome (Ibid., p. 4). She argues that the orthodox definition cannot account for the

phenomenology of "hoping against the hope". For example, responding to a similar condition, two persons may alike desire an outcome, but their hope of this outcome coming true may differ qualitatively. In her example, Martin talks about two cancer patients, Alan and Bess, who are in their advanced stage of cancer. They enrol for a medication which is at trail-stage, and both hope this medication may cure them miraculously, as there is one per cent chance of its success. However, whereas for Alan hope is weak but he still opts for the cure because this experiment will help people in future, Bess is motivated by this hope that maybe somehow, by a small chance, the trial medication will work. The difference of motivation between Alan and Bess is that the former is hopeful in an ordinary way and the latter is hoping against the hope. The orthodox definition of hope, Martin argues, is inadequate to explain this variation.

Critiquing the Humean theory (which emphasises non-rational sources of human action) and the rationalist theories (which views human action as driven by rational impulses), Martin provides a new conceptual framework to understand hope. She corrects the orthodox definition by including in it what she calls the 'incorporation analysis', which is premised on the dualist theory of motivation. Her account of hope is that "to hope for an outcome is to *desire* (be attracted to) it, to assign a *probability* somewhere between 0 and 1 to it, and to judge that there are sufficient *reasons* to engage in certain feelings and activities directed toward it" (pp. 7-8). A sense of achievability of a hoped-for outcome licenses a person to incorporate her desire into her agency (or rational scheme of practical things) and treat that desire as a justification to engage in hopefully oriented feelings and activities, including fantasising. It is what makes hope, as compared to desire, a force of sustenance. As Martin (p. 6) argues, "desire is pretty unreliable as a form of motivation, while hope has the potential to regulate our imaginative and agential activities in a steady and sustaining way". Martin's account complements Kantian understanding of hope, where hope is viewed as rational regarding how it as a vital element which propels desire (moral duty) among people to act for the common good.[75] In Martin's understanding, "genuinely unimaginable hope has a special kind of theoretical or epistemic rational license," that is, as there is no way to know—or no empirical evidence—if the desired outcome will come true or not, the hopeful person will cling to hope and not give up (p. 101). Martin's hope, in its more general sense, is thus "revelatory of the structures and operations of reflective human consciousness" (p. 10).

The philosophical conceptualisation of hope outlined above will allow us to appreciate its relevance in the realm of the political, though very few political thinkers have analysed hope with relations to politics. Hannah Arendt for one has indirectly dealt with the subject through her idea of 'natality'. In her book *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt argues that the fact that with each new birth a

[75] In the Critique of Pure Reason (1781), "For what may I hope?" is one of the core questions of philosophy for Kant.

unique person appears in the world who retains the potential of beginning something new, our capacity for action thus indicates that there is always an expectation of the unexpected, that is, we are "able to perform what is infinitely improbable" (pp. 177-78). Nonetheless, Arendt argues, capacity for action (i.e., to start something new), and to act in concert with others, is intertwined with a narrative. Action without narrative would be meaningless, since it is "only through the spoken word" that we identify ourselves as actors, announce what we do, have done, and intend to do (p. 179). Narrative discloses our identity as to *who we are* (with our specific uniqueness) as opposed to *what we are* (with our generic human attributes). Thus, in Arendt's view, a narrator or a story-teller assumes a great significance as a carrier of memories.

When Kashmiri youth narrators retell stories publicly, they perform a political act. By writing about specific people, events, deeds and actions, these youth narrators assume the role of the carriers of stories or ordered narratives, which are passed on with a hope that they will be memorialised and reproduced by the next generation. Since a narrator narrates with the wish to memorialise certain deeds and actions, he is required to talk to his community, who will in turn pass on this remembrance. It is the hope for the continuity of collective remembrance. By internalising the memorialised stories, a community of remembrance is shaped (Wolin, 1977, p. 97). And, since certain political narratives influence its self-identification, the 'community of remembrance' can be regarded as a political community. The post-generation embodies memories of both its own generation and the one whose collective experiences and knowledge and myth of traumatic events it inherits; "transgenerational traumatisation" (Weigel, 2008) or the post-memorial aesthetic processes (i.e., stories, images, and behaviours transferred either personally by the survivors or by the culture) concretise the community of remembrance.

Ernst Bloch also relates the idea of hope to the political. He critiques what he sees as backwards-looking orientation in philosophies and theories (especially in the psychoanalytical tradition), where the present is viewed as a remnant of the past, or in the history is located the reservoir of the present actions. So, taking a radically different approach, Bloch inverses the notion of the unconscious, which is typically conceived as something which contains repressed memories and prehistory, and instead forwards the idea of "Not-Yet-Conscious". As a central element of his forward-looking theoretical model of human progress, *not-yet-conscious* is something inherent in us that articulates itself through anticipation. It is a tendency disposed towards "something new that is dawning up". To quote Bloch (1986, p. 12) in some length, he explains:

> there is in present material, indeed in what is remembered itself, an impetus and a sense of being broken off, a brooding quality and an anticipation of Not-Yet-Become; and this broken-off and broached material does not take place in the cellar of consciousness, but on its Front. So, it is a question here of the psychological processes of approaching, which are so characteristic above all for youth, for times of change, for the adventures of productivity, for all phenomena therefore in which Unbecome is located and seeks to articulate itself. The anticipatory thus operates in the field of hope; so, this hope is not taken

> only as emotion, as the opposite of fear (because fear too can of course anticipate), but more essentially as a directing act of a cognitive kind (and here the opposite is then not fear, but memory). The imagination and the thoughts of future intention described in this way are utopian, this again not in a narrow sense of the word which only defines what is bad (emotively reckless picturing, playful form of an abstract kind), but rather in fact in the newly tenable sense of the forward dream, of anticipation in general. And so, the category of the Utopian, besides the usual, justifiably pejorative sense, possesses the other, in no way necessarily abstract or unworldly sense, much more centrally turned towards the world: of overtaking the natural course of events.

Having outlined different conceptualisations of hope, we can now look at how 'hope' acts as a vital thread in the Kashmir youth narratives. The argument presented here is that hopefulness lends a certain coherence to political discourses of Kashmir youth. Since it underlies political action at the discursive level, the element of hope has instrumental value in the context of Tehreek. Incorporating the generational perspective, the anticipation of continuity of the resistance in future rests on the confidence that the next generation would carry forward the struggle. Therefore, while a political narrative speaks for (and to) the age (or generations) which produces it, a *hope* that such a political narrative sustains is also directed to those who are yet to come. Whereas hope is subjective in the sense that it allows youth to express their political vision and find meaning in their unique historical location, it is objective in the way it processes a reality for a larger cohort of youth who express their political subjectivity with reference to it. Hope, thus, becomes a point at which varied voices converge, even when their abstract political visions differ. Since political visions—be that pro-independence, pro-autonomy, or pro-Pakistan—are future-oriented, they are premised on a hope for a political breakthrough, or on the events that may cause that breakthrough. However, as hope extends to an indeterminate future, as such a hopeful person would not necessarily envision herself at the moment when the desired outcome is finally realised. That means hope is not necessarily self-directed (in a selfish manner) but nurtured collectively in anticipation of a probable future political breakthrough whose beneficiaries would be a different generation. In a way, hope is a vision of one generation for (yet to be) other generation. Mary Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" (1978) brilliantly captures this idea, when she says:

> Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
> I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

Locating Hope in the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

In a *Greater Kashmir* article "Same Old Song" (21 July 2010), Ibreez Aijaz starts on a pessimist note "The entire Kashmir affair has become quite boring. Nothing sparks my interest anymore". And yet, as we read through the narrative, Aijaz's prose radiates with hope and verve. Readers are asked to "Represent our nation with dignity. Bring the true nature of the Kashmir issue out". And also, speaking in a forward-looking way, "We can stand just fine on our own, so long as we work with a goal in mind; think little of bettering yourselves, and more instead of beautifying our motherland."

Aijaz's narrative is congruent with the collective action frame of Tehreek, albeit with an emphasis on peaceful means to achieve the political goal. The hope that her piece evokes is resistance (or Tehreek) orientated in terms of how she emphasises "We can stand just fine on our own". In contrast to Aijaz's pro-Tehreek *hopeful* narrative, Eeliya, a 12th-grade student at the time of writing the article, strongly criticises Hurriyat and questions the whole resistance movement. Without explicitly naming the actors and entities involved, she ascribes negative values to the people who lead the resistance. She echoes, though indirectly, certain pro-state tropes, which seek to undermine the legitimacy of Tehreek through the *tu quoque* argument.[76] For example, she asks rhetorically:

> I wonder why these "leaders" aren't the first ones among the mobs to pelt a stone; or why aren't their children and family ever involved in the issues that are so "close to their hearts."

Nevertheless, she comes out hopeful in her narrative, although her hopefulness, in comparison to Aijaz, is orientated towards the status quo, to which she refers subtly by saying, "The first step towards it—Take things as they are. Accept." However, it is in the sentences that follow in which the normative framework of her hopefulness takes a more definite shape:

> There's always a tomorrow. Well, almost always. After all they say the world's going to end in 2012. So, it may not be long before everything changes. Or if this prediction, like all the other predictions, fails; we can hope to make plans for a change (we never act, let's at least plan) and hope for a better life. In an ordinary situation, I'd say – Don't just hope; do something about it. But that would be too much to ask for.

Writing in the *Counter Currents*, a leftist online portal, Idrees Athar opens his essay "Kashmir: Green Turns Red" (17 August 2010) with a gloomy sentence: "One gets to the verge of despair and madness at the turn of events and the macabre images that doted our screen both television and computer. It looked as if the angel of death was drunk and scolded by Lord took his hangover in the raw blood of Kashmiri Youth." However, as the narrative progresses towards the end, and after arguing a strong Kashmiri nationalist line in highly eloquent prose, where he resorts to sarcasm, irony, and parody of pro-Pakistan and pro-Accession constituencies, Athar concludes on a hopeful note. At one point he writes: "We know your [India's] rising population and emerging market has given you an edge over others and the world's crony capitalist predators are in your support, but you must not forget the Laws of Karma." Here, hope is tied not necessarily to the political breakthrough in terms of a resolution of the Kashmir conflict through a negotiated settlement, but evoked by reference to a cosmological process, which, it is hoped, would cause a breakthrough and that could be anything.

Uzma Qureshi's article "Time to celebrate?" (*Greater Kashmir* 11 September 2010) evokes hopefulness in a similar vein, though she uses a more moderate voice than Athar to build her case

[76] The *tu quoque* is a logical fallacy which points out hypocrisy of the opponent to distract from the argument or issue.

for the future. However, like Athar, she also concludes her argument with reference to a metaphysical intervention.

> This is the generation that now wants to be free of fear. I do believe we will live in peace; the question is how much pain we will have to go through to get there. The sufferings and sacrifices of Kashmiris should not go waste. It should bring the desired results. It should restore our right-the right to live freely. I drop my pen and for the time being, with moist eyes, I wish all Muslim ummah Eid-Mubarak. May this Eid bring some favourable results for the people of Jammu and Kashmir! Ameen!

So, hopefulness pervades most of the youth narratives. In fact, hope is the most remarkable feature of these narratives, although not always is hope oriented towards Tehreek. As already mentioned above, hopefulness in some stories is also geared towards the status quo (though it is obliquely noticeable), or, oddly, geared towards no specific political position. To give you a perspective, nearly 90% articles (76 out of 85) from the year 2010 exhibit the element of hope and only nine have tone and tenor of pessimism. Among the pessimistically-oriented articles, one has an anti-state position and one is vague—the latter is ominously, and sarcastically, entitled "Roadmap to Peaceful Killings".

However, among the hope-oriented articles, we also find variations in political positions. While many of the hope-oriented articles are disposed towards Tehreek in general, four are specifically oriented towards the pro-independence stance, and at least three are also geared to the status quo. Moreover, not less than twelve articles are oriented towards conflict resolution. In some narratives, hope is strongly exhibited, while in some others it is implicit or guardedly articulated. Interestingly, in three articles hope is geared towards an unclear position.

In emphasising the element of hope in political discourses, what is being attempted here is to point at the emotional component that lay at the interstices between representation and action. We can agree with the notion that "representations should be analysed as constitutive elements of arguments", but, pace Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), before an argument (or discourse) provides a reason or makes a case for a line of action, it must pass through a liminal zone or an anterior cognitive event where hope is generated first for an agent to be motivated to take an action. The very act of representing or political deliberation presupposes hope. Because someone would put pen to paper (or hands to laptop) and write a political narrative when there is a hope of an outcome which a person aims. From the perspective of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, p. 240), "the action is intended to connect the present state of affairs to a future state of affairs (transform the present, solve the problem) in accordance with the agent's values or concerns" and in envisioning a future in accordance with their values, agents are governed by "the particular normative source". In their example, the normative framework in the case of parliamentary debates, which is a specific genre, is underpinned by the rationale of disagreement resolution,

whereby the *normative* requirement is a *decision* (by the majority) and not some collective belief or consensus (pp. 241-43).

However, what is the specific context of the Kashmiri youth narratives? In contrast to the genre of parliamentary debates, these narratives are a media genre insofar as they are published in newspapers and magazines. So, does this specific characteristic tie them to a normative standard which is governed by certain institutional and moral orders? Certainly, unlike a social media post (where a user regulates the content and its audience), narratives that appear in newspapers and magazines must get editorial approval; a piece which resorts to pointless innuendo or reckless profanity is less likely to pass the editorial stage in a standard media outlet. That means a certain degree of reasonableness is expected from a narrator, even if there is no apparent contribution to any political debate or there are internal inconsistencies in the narration.

In other words, there are institutional constraints which allow only those narratives to appear in public forums which adhere to some normative requirements specific to the media genre. But, the Kashmiri youth narratives are also written in the broader context of (and concerning) a political situation, and that means the normative standards which would guide their arguments must derive from the culture in which they are embedded. Now, the pertinent question that must be addressed here is: does this broader cultural context also act as a constraint on the narratives and what is the normative framework which is engendered within this cultural context?

According to Margaret Somers (1994), it is the structural and cultural relationships and self-constituting narratives which govern actions of people, since they are entrenched within them. In this matrix of social relations, actions are not driven by pure interests as is usually understood (p. 624). However, while acknowledging an individual's *sense of being* having been constituted by narratives (which also underlies their thoughts and actions), "the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of *time* and *place* and *power* that are constantly in flux". Due to this reason, social categories are endowed with certain fluidity (Ibid., p. 621). While publishing their narratives publicly, Kashmiri youth must negotiate the normative requirements of institutional (media) and cultural contexts, and together they constitute for them what Rhys Williams (2004) calls cultural environment. This cultural environment can facilitate but also restrict their narratives. In terms of negotiating 'boundedness', their stories are supposed to exhibit *intelligibility* and *legitimacy*. What is said must be understandable to the intended audience, though publicly written descriptions can travel to a variety of audiences. And, what is said must be presented in a language and in a manner which resonates with the larger audience within the society in which the narrator is embedded (Williams, 2004, p. 103).

In Kashmir, the dominant political opinion is in favour of the right to self-determination or what is also called Azadi.[77] That means pro-state or status-quoist narratives are likely to be fewer in number as compared to pro-Tehreek narratives (this is also corroborated in the last chapter). However, since the context of the Kashmiri youth narratives is different from parliamentary debates, it is difficult to see them—since being a different genre—aimed to persuade the majority for a decision. They may contribute to mobilising people during specific periods of political turmoil, but such an effect would be rather epiphenomenal. So, what purpose do such political narratives serve if, following Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), political discourses are primarily argumentative and tuned to justify a line of action? What action does the Kashmiri youth narratives envisage? When in her article "The Autumn of our Time", Adeela Hameed says, "We must understand that this revolution has to progress from our hands to the next", her addressee is a social category 'we' who is presumed to share her political ideology and its goals. However, her addressee is neither the government nor the legislators, as she is not embedded within 'constitutional' practices, but like the people who adhere to Tehreek, in an extra-systemic institutional process. In parliamentary deliberations, when a person presents an argument, her hope is oriented towards an outcome which has a precedent, which is at least part of her experience. But, in the specific political deliberations carried out in the youth narratives, hope is oriented towards an outcome which is unprecedented, hypothetical, and only vicariously experienced through the events which have happened elsewhere—Eritrea, East Timor, Kosovo, South Sudan etc. Therefore, in these two different contexts, while hope is a common factor, it nevertheless traverses different realms of experiences. In the case of the youth narratives, the entire edifice of the argument is built upon hope, because it licenses a person to treat her desire (by interlacing it with her rational schema) as a justification to write hopeful narratives.

Conclusion

In the above discussion, we looked at how the discursive strategies employed by young Kashmiri authors subvert the dominance of the statist representations of Kashmir and Kashmiris. We analysed those aspects of youth narratives which concretise and exemplify the frames of Tehreek, crystallise collective identity, and nurture an imagined community. In identifying and investigating the linguistic features, we could see how the process of defining 'we' and 'they' in Kashmiri political discourses operate, because the question of 'who we are' is of vital importance for the self-image of any political movement. Even when certain youth narrators display ambiguity or ideological dilemma (embodies in their ambivalent position vis-à-vis the Kashmir conflict), they still maintain/assert an ideological distance between India and Kashmir by dichotomising the

[77] This claim is based on the surveys (*Outlook* 1995; *CSDS* 2007; *Chatham House* 2010) and the extent of people's support for the armed uprising in 1989 and the post-2008 civil uprisings.

relationship of these two geopolitical entities. At least this is the case with most of the articles, where the authors while constructing an inclusive 'we' (Kashmir/Kashmiris) as a political entity position it at the centre of the deictic field but with respect to and in opposition to India/Indians who are described through distal terms like 'they', 'them', and 'their'. Also, while some authors affirm their dissident identity in explicit terms, others adopt a subtler form of dissent, couching their adversarial argumentation in relatively 'neutral' linguistic categories. At any rate, the structure of their argumentation works to forge a sense of collective Kashmiri victimhood which feeds into the collective action frames of Tehreek, whereby a binary and polarised distinction between the polities of India and Kashmir is reinforced by emphasizing identity differences and unjustness of the system imposed by the state to rule Kashmiris. Since narratives have pragmatic intent and are usually goal-oriented, Kashmiri youth writings, in their cumulative effect, foster a discursive reservoir of possibilities. The pragmatic intent or goal-directedness of narratives can be ascertained by considering their historical and cultural context and reading them in their entirety. We can see recurrent hints and suggestions of possibilities abounding the youth narratives which makes them effervesce with hopeful optimism. Very few youth narratives end with a cynical conclusion, though some stories do contain pessimistic notes here and there—like the concluding sentence of Irfan's article: "All this reveals that the Indo-Pak relations have plummeted to a new low and the future looks too bleak for any breakthrough." And yet, most narratives advance practical arguments in terms of advocating, explicitly or implicitly, a line of thinking and action which is compatible with Tehreek's principles and agenda. It is perhaps the element of hopeful optimism permeating in the political discourses of resistance movements that help them sustain even after facing a crisis (like state violence, prosecution, psy-ops, internal divisions, co-option of members, factionalism etc.) and orchestrated counter-narratives. States, especially their military strategists, often aim to eviscerate the vital element of hope in insurgent movements to defeat them. However, when hope is preserved and nurtured through collective narratives (or through 'organised remembrance') it undercuts state's attempt to present the status quo as a fait accompli; in a way, a strong immunity to psychological surrender is developed by what Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish calls 'the disease of hope'. Perhaps it was the reason that knowing the influence of hope on the psychology of people and in sustaining political ideologies, Shah Faesal, a young Kashmiri bureaucrat, who the Indian state projected as a role model for Kashmiri youth, wrote in an Indian newspaper:

> The politics of hope is a dangerous thing because it can trap people into a flawed reading of history. That is exactly what happened to us.

In the conclusion of the article, he argues that the best bet for Kashmiri is to come out of the time warp in which Kashmiris are stuck in, "abandon false hope and macabre heroism and work towards a dignified exit from the conflict" (Faesal, 2016). In contrast to the pragmatic reasoning in

narratives like that of Faesal or Yasin, who argues for a political settlement short of independence, there are always cases of radical positioning and abiding optimism in the narratives like "Freedom overdraws an occupation, always!" (*Kashmir Reader* 20 Sep 2016), wherein young student Harun Lone writes:

> Some teachers recently told me that one cannot fight Indian occupation without understanding it. Luckily this is not true; if it were, our case would be hopeless. Even though India has considerable industrial power and defense capability at its command, we cannot rest content with this, for we know that even the biggest guns and the heaviest industry with its relatively high living standards are not enough to put the sentiment of Azaadi to sleep. Azaadi to us is what breathing to Indians is.

It is these *hopeful* collective narratives, which a (political) generational-unit within the youth population of Kashmir is reproducing, that influences the discourse of resistance in the contemporary phase. These narratives have a significant bearing on the culture of Tehreek as well, not least in how it orders the memory of the conflict, but also in how that memory propels political action on the ground or on the internet. Narratives resonate in a cultural and historical context by appealing to emotions (*pathos*), which, as Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, p. 15) suggest, are of vital importance in political discourses, since "without a motivational and emotional investment, no belief could ever lead us to act at all, because nothing would really matter to us".

To shine more light on the emotional aspect of Kashmiri youth narratives, the next chapter shall look at the use of metaphors in political discourses. As metaphors are rooted in socially embedded knowledge and practices, they easily appeal to us and also express our shared values and collective identities. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, metaphors are linked to our emotions in that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature".

Chapter 6

Role of Metaphor in the Youth Narratives

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we discussed how by employing specific discursive strategies (like *proximation* and *perspectivisation*) the Kashmiri youth narrators reaffirm a distinct Kashmiri political identity, subvert the assimilationist narratives of the state, and reinforce hopefulness viz-a-viz Tehreek. Drawing upon theoretical insights from Critical Metaphor Analysis (Chilton 1996; Musolff 2004; Charteris-Black 2004, 2006) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), this chapter examines the use of figurative language in the Kashmiri youth narratives, analysing how metaphorical conceptualisation of the political situation in IJK also actualises the ideological polarisation, relational dichotomy, as well as allowing for anti-state dissent.

In the words of Roland Bleiker (2000, p. 218), language is "part of a larger discursive struggle over meaning and interpretation, an integral element of politics". Language is encoded with people's values and worldviews (and essences). Which is why Martin Heidegger asserts that "Language is the house of Being" (Capuzzi, 1998). When analysing linguistic frames, which people utilise to make sense of their political situation, it is important to examine the emotional components that make frames resonate with people. Because, as Goodwin et al. (2001, p. 9) argue, "It is difficult to study frames, after all, without noticing people's feelings about specific beliefs and understandings, or collective identities without appreciating the sentiments attached to them". Alberto Melucci (1995, p. 45) also sees emotions as integral to the process of collective identity formation. Metaphor, especially, is one linguistic component which can reveal the affective feature of political narratives, since "emotions are metaphorically conceptualised and structured" (Kane, 2001, p. 265). As metaphors are rooted in socially embedded knowledge and practices, they easily appeal to people, and in their specific usage, they may reflect on culture or society and "express specific values, collective identities, shared knowledge, and common vocabularies" (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p. 86). Metaphorical mappings make comprehension of vague, indeterminate or ill-understood conceptual domains easier because "the source domains are intuitively understood and have holistic structure, so that if one part is accepted other parts follow" (Chilton, 2004, p. 52). Metaphorical language in political discourses is as an important rhetorical element which facilitates ideological polarisation between *them and us* and legitimises a world-view (Charteris-Black, 2017, p. 202). Metaphors are important in political discourses because they conjure up complex situations. Certain metaphors can potentially act as powerful linguistic vessels into which various subjectivities coalesce into a unified political expression or what Shaul Shenhav (2006, p. 255) calls the "consensual paradigms". Anne Kane (2001), who studied metaphor use during the Irish Land Movement in the late nineteenth century, argues that metaphorical expressions are emotive

structures embedded within political narratives, and they can propel political action, forge a collective identity and group solidarity. She shows how through metaphorical language the meaning of 'constitutionalism' was transformed during the movement, and the earlier narrative of humiliation and shame ultimately transformed into the narrative of militancy, resistance and pride at the zenith of the movement. Andreas Musolff's study in 2000 investigated the use of Europe-*as-a-house* metaphor in the Euro related debates in Germany and Britain and found that this metaphor played "an important function for the development of political discourse," even though different parties employed it to affirm varied and sometimes contradictory political arguments (p. 227).

Engagement with metaphors, therefore, will serve to outline how Kashmiri political narratives draw from a specific, but forceful, aspect of language to construct a frame of reference by which to understand political events and do dissent, how through specific political imagery a particular conceptualisation of the Kashmir conflict is reaffirmed and how that ties to the resistance or Tehreek. The chapter, therefore, seeks to deepen the understanding of Kashmiri political narratives by examining to what effect metaphorical language operates within them and, looking at the interplay between dissident and pro-state narratives which operate from a shared discursive field, what specific metaphorical entailments occur by way of different 'framings' of the Kashmir conflict. Three metaphors feature prominently in Kashmiri political discourse: *paradise lost*, *wound*, and *prison*. Kashmiris narrators utilise these metaphors to evoke pathos (emotions) for solidarity, to express political grievances, counter statist narratives, and to affirm a separate national identity. Metaphorical language, thus, acts as a site of resistance to forge a political identity as well as subvert the hegemonic representations of the conflict. Moreover, metaphorical language is also a way to navigate control of press and restrictions on free speech, and thus it forges a creative space for "oppositional speech acts" (Johnston, 2005). Though, inherent ambiguity of certain metaphorical framings also allows differently—ideologically and geographically—located actors to use them for different political ends.

Concepts about Metaphor

In earlier theories, following Aristotle, metaphor was considered a stylistic ornament, an illustrative analogy, or deviance of sense; and, the metaphorical meaning was secondary and dependent on the primary literal language, involving transference of a word to a new sense through comparison (or analogy) of two unrelated things. However, per Berggren (1962), since the 18th century, old notions on metaphor were contested, with philosophers like Vico, Croce and Collingwood arguing that "metaphor historically or logically precedes the solidified meanings of conceptual language, and further performs a uniquely revelatory function" (p. 237). Later, Nietzsche (1873) would postulate

a sociological conception of metaphor and argue that it was fundamental to the formation of all concepts, and "to be truthful" is to "use the customary metaphors" ([1873]1989, p. 250).

Max Black (1955, 1962) provided new insights by positing that metaphoric meaning is realised at the sentence level, a view that favours the 'interaction theory' of metaphor. Black argues that when a complex of words, composed of literal and metaphorical, interact a new meaning is forged. Even when the (figurative) word is at the focus, it needs 'frame' of other literal words in the sentence. However, any attempt at a literal translation of metaphor would mean the loss of its 'cognitive content'. For Black, other than semantical rules, which governs a word's literal use, the meaning of a word also relies on other rules which are understood and adhered to by the speakers of a language, and these other rules determine the "system of associated commonplaces" (1955, p. 287).

Paul Ricoeur (1974) agrees with this 'interaction view' of metaphor, as he also believes that metaphor is more than a substitution for another literal word whose meaning can be retrieved by translation or paraphrasing. However, Ricoeur differs with Black in that he sees Black's "specially constructed systems of implications", which support metaphors to gain new (and expand the possible) meanings, as problematic. Because, as Ricoeur (1974, p. 102) says, "indeed we enlarge the notion of meaning by including the 'secondary meanings' as connotations within the scope of the full meaning, but we keep linking the creative process of metaphor-forming to a non-creative aspect of language". Therefore, Ricoeur views metaphor as something which is dynamic, opens new vistas, is perpetually new and becoming. For him, the salient feature of metaphor is linked to "the function of poetry as a creative imitation of reality [mimesis]", and metaphor's power lies in its intricate association with imagination, imagination not "as the faculty of deriving "images" from sensory experiences", but as the one whose power is conveyed by "emerging meanings in our language", and which allows new linguistic creations "build our self-understanding" (Ibid., p. 110).

However, Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty contend that metaphoric words are nothing more than what they mean in their literal interpretation, they have no cognitive content. They seem to argue against viewing metaphor as containing some essential epistemological and ontological truth, and, as Willson-Quayle (1991) says, they seek to "eliminate the mystique that metaphor holds for thinker".

Within cognitive linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain that metaphor is central to human understanding and imagination because it provides an accessible cognitive framework (or *image schemata*) to make sense of theoretical aspects of human life and experiences. Their central argument is that "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p. 3). Drawing on this conceptual model, Lakoff would later show in his

1996 book *Moral Politics* how the conservatives in America won over electorates by deploying the strong metaphor of 'family'.

Overall, while conceptualisations of metaphor may differ, they do not discount its importance in condensing complex ideas and common social understandings into one compelling conceptual frame, and indeed not its rich history and efficacy in political discourses. So, from here we can proceed to look at different metaphorical framings in Kashmiri political discourses, utilising the conceptual model briefly outlined at the start of the next section.

Metaphorical Framing in Political Discourses

Since Murray Edelman's 1971 *Politics as Symbolic Action*, many theorists have written about metaphorical framing in political discourses (Mio, 1997). Some have studied the effects of metaphorical framings of political issues (Boeynaems et al., 2017). In this chapter, we primarily focus on the composition of metaphorical framings to capture the subversive role of this emotional structure embedded in the language of contention reconstructed by the Kashmiri youth narrators.

Jonathan Charteris-Black's (2009) conceptual model of metaphorical framing modifies Aristotelian notion on rhetoric by incorporating elements of ideology and myth, which characterise value systems of contemporary societies and form an essential component of present-day political communications (p. 99). As Charteris-Black says, metaphor has a political utility as it "is a persuasive aspect of discourse" which "mediates between conscious and unconscious means of persuasion – between cognition and emotion. It is therefore a central strategy for political legitimization" (pp. 103-114). Metaphor can "appeal to ethos, pathos and logos while simultaneously creating a myth and communicating an ideology." Although his model evaluates the leadership style of politicians, with a slight modification, it is a useful framework to study metaphorical framings in Kashmiri political narratives.

The Aristotelian conception of rhetoric has three dimensions: *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. The first one, *ethos*, relates to ethics, and this aspect works in terms of representing discursive intervener or messenger as ethically or morally right in her evaluation or presentation of an issue, actor or phenomenon. As Charteris-Black says, it shows that the messenger "has the right intentions" (p. 103). The *ethos* dimension of metaphor can be a basis on which policies, political adversaries, opponents, or *Other* can be evaluated (Ibid). The second dimension of metaphor, *logos*, refers to logical or reasoned argument and it forms "a central component of persuasion in political communication" (ibid., p. 108). The *logos* aspect of metaphor is effective in communicating a partisan political argument or roadmap because metaphors "provide cognitively accessible ways" of political communication (Ibid). However, metaphors are not necessarily received or interpreted in the same way by the intended audiences, as inherent bias may make them resonate only with

certain groups of people whose own politics or discursive position they reaffirm. Hence, as Charteris-Black argues, "metaphors therefore only reflect 'right' thinking from the perspective of the particular social group who benefits from their arguments" (p. 109). The third dimension of metaphor is *pathos*, which relates to emotions. The *pathos* aspect of metaphor in political contexts is referred to as 'sounding right' (p. 104). What pathos does is that it creates shared meaning and interpretation, evoked through metaphorical language (including humour) rather than explicitly stated. Where societies face a national crisis, military occupation, colonial subjugation or outside threat, *pathos* dimension of metaphor can provide the crucial morale-boosting effect, inspiring people or cadres for collective action (Ibid). Personification can characterise a particular situation or adversary (or Other) in positive or negative terms and thus providing "a potentially emotive and cognitively accessible framework for the evaluation of abstract political ideologies because it relies on pre-existent, culturally rooted stereotypes to communicate emotionally potent evaluations" (Ibid).

Having outlined the conceptual model of metaphorical framing which this chapter is going to utilise in the analysis of Kashmiri youth narratives, the following sections will specifically focus on the three salient metaphors that this thesis identified in the Kashmiri political discourses: paradise lost, wound, and prison.

Locating Metaphors in Kashmiri Political Discourses

Owning to their bi-lingual (even tri-lingual) competency, Kashmiris make use of numerous metaphorical expressions, deriving from Kashmiri, Urdu, and English languages. Spoken by over 5 million people, Kashmiri has a rich repository of metaphorical expressions, which the pro-resistance dissidents also utilise in their narratives. However, since many educated Kashmiris are more competent in writing in English than in Kashmiri, they prefer to publish their political narratives in English, though some also write in Urdu. Due to various factors, competency in written Kashmiri among Kashmiri youth is abysmal (Bhat, 2017). Responding to new political developments and events, they regularly innovate political metaphors. However, whereas the broader public can easily understand some of these new metaphorical expressions, some are directed at a niche audience and therefore are comprehensible to only those who possess adequate background knowledge. Take this short Facebook post that was published by a Kashmiri man on 17 February 2018: "Zainab. Asifa. 1947. S M Abdullah." To give a brief context: two girls, Zainab (7) and Asifa (8), were raped in January 2018. Zainab was from Pakistan and Asifa from the Jammu region (of India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir). While the accused in Zainab's case was tried and sentenced to death by a Pakistan court, Asifa's case took a curious turn when hundreds of Hindus in Jammu marched with Indian flags in support of the accused (Ahmad, 2018).

Some Kashmiris pointed out the contrast between the trajectory of the two cases. They argued that the public support for the men involved in Muslim girl's rape in Jammu vindicated the 1947 partition between Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan, and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the foremost Kashmiri leader who ratified the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India in 1947, was therefore proven wrong by history. Composed of just four words ("Zainab. Asifa. 1947. S M Abdullah"), this Facebook post, nevertheless, in its rhetorical context, was pregnant with metaphorical meanings. To a segment of the Kashmiri population, it conveyed a specific political message without going into the details.

Certain political metaphors remain in currency within a generation or two and over the time lose their earlier force or relevance. For example, after Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah signed the 1975 accord with the Government of India, a new metaphorical sing-song slogan was coined in Kashmiri, criticizing Sheikh and his party for what was seen by many people as 'surrender' of the right to self-determination movement: *Rai Shumari Barikh Doabbas/Aalav Babbas Mubarak* (trans. Plebiscite is buried/ congratulations to the Potato Feeder). *Aalav* (potato) *Babb* (older adult; also used to refer to a Sufi saint) was a moniker given to Abdullah for asking people, during the food-grain crisis in the early 1950s, to grow and eat potatoes for self-reliance. Rendering this popular metaphorical slogan in visual format, Kashmiri cartoonist Bashir Ahmad Bashir (aka BAB) drew a cartoon (Figure 15 below) for the Urdu daily Srinagar Times, showing an excited Abdullah approaching the chief ministerial chair, while leaving behind the grave of the Plebiscite Front, the pro-independence organisation Sheikh supported for nearly twenty years. In the speech bubble, the grave is shown speaking an ironic line from a 1951 Bollywood film song: "Meri Kahani Bhoolne Wale Tera Jahan Aabaad Rahe" (O! you who forgot my story, may your world prosper).[78]

Combining the metaphoric device (grave) and irony (specific song lyrics), BAB created a satirical cartoon that resonated widely in the political climate of the time of its publication.[79] However, the current youth generation of Kashmiris hardly uses or relates to this metaphorical sing-song (*Rai Shumari Barikh Doabbas/Aalav Babbas Mubarak*), as it was the innovation of and resonated with the generation mostly born in the 1950s and 60s, in their unique political environment, where rai-shumari was the famous slogan.

Nonetheless, one metaphorically-rich slogan of the Plebiscite Front period (1955 to 1975) has endured its political utility and is still used during pro-independence protests in Kashmir: *Jis Kashmir*

[78] The song, penned by lyricist Shakeel Badayuni, was taken from film Deedar. Till the late 1980s, Kashmir had many cinema halls which popularised Bollywood films and songs in Kashmiri culture.

[79] Interestingly, Sheikh Abdullah's lieutenant, Afzal Beg, justified the 1975 accord by couching his justification in a metaphorical remark, terming the 20 years of the Plebiscite Front as *Siyasi Awaara Gardi* (political wandering).

ko khoon se seencha woh Kashmir hamara hai (Kashmir that we irrigated with the blood, that Kashmir belongs to us).

Figure 15: BAB cartoon in Srinagar Times (1975?)

Like metaphoric slogans, metaphoric naming (or antonomasia) is also a common feature in Kashmiri political discourses, though such linguistic innovations often serve to subtly undermine or besmirch the public image of the pro-Indian politicians in Kashmir. For example, Mufti Syed, a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, is derisively called *Whisky* because he used to consume alcohol, a habit strongly unacceptable in Kashmiri Muslim society. Likewise, another pro-India politician, Farooq Abdullah, got the sobriquets, *Dhaand* (Bullock) and *Disco*, for his characteristic flamboyance and public antics. Originating from the state-backed militia group Ikhwan, which terrorised people in the 1990s, the Kashmiri word *Ikhwaen* (pronoun, adjective) is a loaded metaphorical term which some people use for a state collaborator.

In the sampled set of Kashmiri narratives from 2010 and 2016, various metaphors have been used, ranging from medical to physical to celestial. Though drawn from different source domains, these metaphors appear to have a pattern regarding their target domain. For example, the medical metaphor *Wound* is used with respect to the consequences of the armed conflict on Kashmiri body politic. Moreover, the other two metaphors, *Paradise Lost and Prison,* are also regularly made use of to express a similar idea. Though a diverse set of metaphors permeate Kashmiri narratives, for analytical purposes however conceptually associated metaphors were categorised under the three broader themes: *paradise lost*, *wound*, and *prison* (each of these shall be discussed in turn). However, whereas these three metaphors were identified in both set of sampled narratives, they were much more frequently and widely used in 2016 than in 2010.

The Paradise Lost Metaphor

> Agar firdaus bar roo-e zameen ast,
> Hameen ast-o hameen ast-o hameen ast
> (If there is a paradise on earth/it is this, it is this, it is this)

In popular historical accounts, descriptions of Kashmir are often varnished with the above-mentioned Persian couplet which talks of Kashmir's celestial attributes. Some say the couplet originated from the 13th-century Sufi poet Amir Khosrow, who lived during the Delhi Sultanate, others attribute it to Mughal Emperor Jahangir's love for Kashmir. However, Anubhuti Maurya (2017, p. 43) argues that:

> …the invocation of the imagery of paradise in the discussions on Kashmir was not simply a descriptive device, nor was it a continuation of the older imagination of Kashmir as a sacred land. Kashmir jannat nazir [paradise like] was a distinct literary and political imaginary which emerged in the late 16th century in the Mughal court and evolved over the 17th century. It was a discourse of authority, which informed institutions of governance and the spatial practices of the empire. In turn, these practices territorialised the Mughal empire in the region.

By the time Europeans started arriving in the nineteenth century, Kashmir became known as the 'Happy Valley' (Wakefield, 1879), a fabled, exotic land which bewitched the colonialists and travellers, for whom Kashmir presented itself as 'Venice' and 'Switzerland' of the East. In these European tourism imaginaries, which mirrored the orientalised representation of Kashmir, while the aesthetics of the landscape was spiritually elevating for the foreign traveller, the customs, habits and attires of its people were primitive; in some accounts, Kashmir and Kashmiris were regarded incongruent. Thus, as Rafiq Ahmad (2011, p. 176) notes, "A sense of paradise lost and bestowed on the wrong people became prevalent in European discourse about Kashmir".

Post-1947, the trope of 'Happy Valley' would be further reified through popular culture, especially by Bollywood films that portrayed Kashmir as an idyllic place of travel and romance where traditionally hospitable (and implicitly apolitical) people lived a simple, Arcadian life. Such cultural productions as films, postcards, photographs, literature eventually reconstructed Kashmir into a "territory of desire" from a territorial dispute and in this whole process Bollywood worked as a "major mechanism for mobilizing desire for Kashmir" (Kabir, 2009, p. 23). In a way, the European orientalist imaginary continued its legacy in the post-colonial space, where Indian colonial desire for Kashmir was preserved by employing the same methodology: tourism imaginaries and power of discourse.[80] So eventually "the 'tourismification' of Kashmir turned the postcolonial space into a space of 'epistemic violence'" (Ahmad, 2011, p. 180).[81] Whereas in the European orientalist

[80] In the post-colonial cartographic representations of India, Kashmir was depicted as the head of the anthropomorphically imagined territory. For the Hindu nationalists, Indian nation was a deity on whose head Kashmir sat like a crown.

[81] Ning Wang (2000, p. 197) describes tourismification as "a socio-economic and socio-cultural process by which society and its environments have been turned into spectacles, attractions, playgrounds, and consumption sites".

imaginaries, Kashmir as a paradise was lost because it was a heavenly place bestowed upon the wrong people (Kashmiris), for the Hindu nationalists, Kashmir, where Hindu religion once thrived, was lost to Muslims. That is why prominent Indian leader, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, would describe Kashmir as "a Hindu State situated in Muslim surroundings" (cited in Noorani, 2008), a view also endorsed by the largest Hindu nationalist organisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which, in its publication *Organiser* (6 Nov 1947), described Kashmir as a "fortunate land" where "At every step…lie our worship and a sacred place" and "If it goes, it will injure our feeling of pride and self-respect".

In the sampled Kashmiri narratives, the trope of Kashmir as a celestial entity paradise is quite prevalent. However, this *paradise* is redefined, as attached to it now is a sense of loss and nostalgia of a different kind. Continuing violence and political conflict have rendered the famed 'paradise on earth' into a virtual 'hell'. Hence, it is now regarded as a 'paradise lost', a metaphorical expression which entails mainly two political interpretations: one, that Kashmir has lost its sovereignty to outside power/s, and, second, that Kashmir has lost its peace, security and famed grandeur due to the continuous conflict. For example, the poem "Colours", published by a young student in Srinagar-based daily, *Kashmir Reader,* during the 2016 uprising, seems to capture this latter interpretation. In the opening stanza, she talks about "my garden of peace and love" and "the romantic aroma of flowers" and immediately follows with:

> What a curse descended on it?
> A night besieged my *paradise*,
> Avalanched down the ruinous stars,
> Wrecked the blooming bulbs,
> Razored the lofty, green trees,
> Crushed down the high-spirited mountains.

In this poem, the metaphor 'paradise lost' operates within a frame which acts to lend it a specific political meaning. Unlike the other interpretation, i.e., the loss in terms of loss of sovereignty to an alien power (which reflects a pro-independence discursive position), this type of metaphorical usage seems to avoid explicit ideological assertion. Thus, its rhetorical force is somewhat analogous to the common Kashmiri (metaphorical) refrain, which is often used with respect to the Kashmir conflict: *Kasheer gai yirvin naav* (trans: Things in Kashmir have gone awry; though in a literal translation, Kashmir is being compared to a sinking (*Yirvin*) boat (*Naav*)). This broad interpretative sweep of the *paradise lost* metaphor seems to absorb and coalesce different narratives on the Kashmir conflict and yet crystallise the basic view: that Kashmir is caught in a violent political crisis which urgently needs a resolution—the *topoi* of irresolution. It is one metaphor where competing discourses seem to interact. But as soon as attribution of blame starts—where actors and entities are shown as the cause for the loss of the paradise—it again becomes a site of discursive

contestation, with the pro-resistance dissidents laying blame at the state and its functionaries and the pro-state constituents chalking it up to the nexus of Kashmiri separatists and Pakistan.

In a more ideologically-oriented interpretation, one which aligns with the Kashmiri resistance discourse, 'paradise lost' would denote loss of sovereignty to outside power (in the present case, to India). Such specific usage comes under the purview of "oppositional speech acts", which carries a subversive intent (Johnston, 2005). For illustration, take this sentence in an op-ed piece published by a young PhD student in daily *Greater Kashmir* (Oct 2016):

> Let us take a cursory look at the nature of the present uprising and the lessons learnt from it only to move forward from saving this *paradise* from a descent into hell.

When read in the context of the article, a pro-resistance interpretation of the metaphor is discernible. Though overall, the article follows a detached tone, yet the choice of specific terminologies to frame the Kashmir conflict imply its pro-resistance discursive alignment. As, in the subsequent paragraph, he says, "The slogan of Azadi (freedom) symbolizes not just popular resentment and protest against the denial of democracy in Kashmir, but also 'Freedom' from Indian rule over Kashmiri land". In his stinging critique of the state and the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Malik Nazir (*Greater Kashmir* 20 July 2010) brings out the poignant irony of the paradise metaphor when he says, "He is paradoxical because he rules the most paradoxical state of the world— "the bloody heaven"".

Originating from the existing literature (John Milton's epic poem) and specific cultural productions, where Kashmir was portrayed as a paradisal entity, the metaphor of *paradise lost* qualifies as an intertextual metaphor. It derives from semiotic experience, be that stereotypes or cultural productions or scholastic learning, and is "motivated by the speaker's adaptation to a certain cultural structure or substructure, which provides specific imaginative resources" (Zinken, 2003, p. 509). Intertextuality of paradise lost is also evident in the way it has been used in other texts, including titles or leads in numerous media articles. A simple Google search with keywords 'Kashmir paradise lost' will furnish many articles and media items related to Kashmir conflict. For example, a 1991 book *The Wounded Paradise*; a 1996 photography collection *Kashmir: Paradise Lost*; a 2005 The Spectator review "Paradise lost in Kashmir" (of *Shalimar the Clown* by Salman Rushdie); a 2008 Outlook article "Reclaiming the Paradise Lost"; a 2011 photo essay "Kashmir: A Wounded Paradise" (*Al Jazeera*).

Pertinently, the *Outlook* article (Khan, 2008) mentioned above was written by a former Muslim federal minister of India, Arif Mohammed Khan, in response to the 2008 agitations, which was triggered by controversy over the grant of forest land to a Hindu shrine board in the Kashmir Valley. The controversy assumed sectarian colours, pitting the Kashmir and Jammu regions against

each other (Sengupta, 2008). In Kashmir, the agitation, however, soon turned into Azadi (independence) movement, mobilising some of the most massive political marches, which the government immediately suppressed by killing over 40 protesters and injuring hundreds of others (*The Hindustan Times* 10 February 2017).

Therefore, Khan's article deals with an intertwined situation: the sectarian tensions between the two regions and the political conflict in Kashmir, and gives a metaphorical interpretation where the *paradise* is sought to be reclaimed in its erstwhile 'glorious' form: as an abode of peaceful co-existence and harmony between different communities, characterising "centuries-old Kashmiri values" which, per the author, have now witnessed "a temporary setback" due to "the last two decades of violence and terrorism" (Khan, 2008). While implicitly acknowledging the basic view that Kashmir is witnessing a political conflict, the article, however, frames it in a subtle pro-statist narrative (Though the 'state narrative' is not an undifferentiated monolith, certain prominent state officials often invisible indigenous Muslim population and view Kashmir solely as a piece of territory, which is projected as an 'integral part of India'). Acknowledging the natives — "It was not just because of physical beauty, but also because of the peaceful Kashmiri way of life that Kashmir gained the reputation of being paradise on earth"— the article, nonetheless, attempts to appropriate identity and political will of Kashmiris by claiming on their behest that "there is every reason to believe that the ever-living influence of the rishis [Sufi mendicants] shall again assert itself to reclaim the paradise that Kashmir has lost".

In 2016, when the *intifada*-like uprising broke out in Kashmir and scores of youth were killed and blinded by the government forces and stringent curfews and strikes crippled civilian life, the metaphor *paradise lost* again gained currency in political discourses, as it received a new political meaning and resonance in the immediacy of the uprising. However, from the perspective of many Indians, who align with the maximalist state position on Kashmir, the *paradise lost* metaphor signifies the idea of loss of control over the 'object of desire' (Kabir, 2009), while for most Kashmiris the metaphor embodies the idea of an occupied homeland or an unpleasant strife-torn situation. This mainstream India view of *paradise lost* is articulated in the famous song "Khuda Se" from 2006 Indian film *Keerthi Chakra*.[82] The film has a marked pro-statist slant, where Kashmiri independence movement is negatively depicted, and it is this context (the storyline) which infuses a specific political meaning to the metaphor in the song.

> Khuda se mannat hai meri, lauta de Jannat wo meri
> Wo aman, wo chaman ka nazaara, O khudaya lauta de Kashmir dobara
> (I pray to God, return that paradise of mine/that scene of peace and garden/O God, return Kashmir once again)

[82] A Malayalam language film, *Keerthi Chakra* takes its name from the Indian military gallantry award known as Kirti Chakra (in Hindi).

In effect, the film's rendition of the metaphor reiterates the trope which frames the pre-1989 period (i.e. the period before the popular armed uprising) as 'peaceful'. Hence, the line "return Kashmir once again", a plea for return to the pre-1989 era, which the statist narratives project in a certain way: it is argued that, by and large, Kashmiris were content with the status quo and it was only due to Pakistan's 'proxy war' that Kashmir lost its peace. However, this metaphorical interpretation of *paradise lost* in the song differs from the dominant interpretation of it in the sampled narratives. Whereas from the perspective of the film, the paradise is lost due to one set of actors (i.e. the separatist militants and the Pakistan state), the authors of Kashmiri narratives see Indian state and the continuing 'irresolution' of the Kashmir conflict as the main factors responsible for it.[83] For example, in his article "Paradise is not Paradise till there is Peace" (*Rising Kashmir* 20 October 2016), PhD student Sheikh Irfan writes:

> There is a *hell* in the *paradise* from last 70 years. And now it started on 8th July after killing of Commander Burhan Wani.

A cursory reading of the above excerpt suggests that the metaphor is conceptualised within the purview of the consensual interpretation, i.e., the basic acknowledgement of Kashmir being a political conflict and in need of a political solution. When read in the context of the article where the excerpt is extracted, a radical departure from the consensual interpretation becomes apparent. In the article, the trajectory of the conflict is traced to the "last 70 years", and the actors to whom the *blame* is imputed are "bloodthirsty and vicious owners", while the "the paradise residents", who have been subjected to "bloodshed", are the victims. For Charles Tilly, 'reason giving' i.e. assigning credit and blame are fundamental social acts which we carry out in our everyday life concerning virtually all spheres (war, peace, economics, politics). As Tilly (2017, p. 390) says, "the great bulk of stories we hear and tell in everyday life convey their agents, causes, and effects in radically simplified ways: someone did something to someone else, and that caused some outcome". Seen within Tilly's framework of 'reason-giving', the above-mentioned narrative infuses a pro-Tehreek political meaning to the metaphor by utilizing it in a certain subversive manner, whereby the agents, causes and effects are outlined that give us a mental roadmap to locate the oppressor and the oppressed in the story, or to see who can be *blamed* to have caused the paradise to be lost.
Echoing the same sentiment, the 2010 article by Samreen Naqash (*Greater Kashmir* 30 June 2010) also evokes the metaphor of paradise lost to articulate a political message:

> It pains me deep, to see or hear about the continuing despondent situation in Kashmir. The once called as 'Paradise on Earth'; has been chained and bonded by inhuman laws and converted into a fortress,

[83] Irresolution here broadly refers to intractability or delay in political resolution of Kashmir conflict.

> wherein people have no say, no democratic right and can be mercilessly harmed, killed as if they were mere dummies.

Although the author, in an implicit manner, assigns *blame* on the state for the loss of the paradise—"here the scenario is totally different, as Kashmir has been declared an unstable state owing to the so-called 'security reasons', killing of innocent people no longer becomes illegal, questionable and no one is likely to be held accountable"—she does not explicitly name the actors involved, and resorts to nominalisation. Moreover, in her arguments, there is also a manifestation of what Stanley and Billig (2004) call ideological dilemmas, where "two sets of commonly shared values will appear to be rhetorical conflict", with people trying to "manage both sets rather than siding with one or the other" (p. 160). For example, the article begins with an affirmation for freedom— "For this freedom we are still striving hard. This struggle still continues for us every day and night"—but ends with an ambiguous conclusion, which essentially asks for "a peaceful strategy". It is not clear if the struggle referenced is the struggle of Tehreek or it is a struggle embodied in what she describes as "this strong hope that peace will Inshaallah prevail once again and my Kashmir shall be the same paradise about which I have heard from my parents."

Despite this ideological dilemma present in some cases, most other narratives deploy the paradise lost metaphor within the pro-Tehreek frame. In them, the state oppression, human rights violations, denial of justice and right to self-determination is viewed as the primary factors for the continuing political instability and bloodshed in Kashmir, even when few narratives also assign *fault* to the corrupt local elite.

The Paradise Lost Metaphor in Visual Formats

Responding to the 2016 uprising, 28-year-old Kashmiri artist and political cartoonist, Mir Suhail, reconstructed a poster of a 1964 Bollywood film *Kashmir Ki Kali* (Bud of Kashmir) to convey a political message. In the reworked poster (Figure 16 below), the beautiful actress, who plays the role of a Kashmiri flower-vendor in the film, is shown face scarred, carrying blood-marked surgical bandage around her eyes, while her lover watches her with a nonchalant expression.

The pockmarked, bandaged face of the actress is juxtaposed against an idyllic scene of the Valley, creating a sharp contrast and incongruity between the beautiful landscape and her scarred face. Through this poster, Suhail attempted to bring focus from the territory to the people of Kashmir. Because whenever Kashmir is talked about, especially in Indian civil society discourses, it is often the paradisiacal landscape which gets the privileged position, while as Kashmiris (and their experiences) are relegated to the background or completely ignored.

Figure 16: Poster artwork by Mir Suhail (Aug 2016) and (on the right) the original poster

In the context of the 2016 uprising and ruthless state crackdown through indiscriminate use of pellet guns and mass blinding of protesters, Suhail's poster sought to generate sympathy and understanding about Kashmir's reality by transporting wound of pellet guns onto the face of an Indian actress, whose wounded beauty is a metaphor through which to understand the situation of Kashmiris. In an interview with journalist Majid Maqbool (*The Wire* 17 August 2016), Suhail said he got the idea for the poster after watching 2012 Bollywood film like *Jab Tak Hai Jaan*. Suhail felt that Bollywood films on Kashmir do not accurately represent Kashmir, as "the beauty of the Valley is shown, but the people of Kashmir are reduced to stereotypes and background, minor characters".

Another Kashmiri artist, Suhail Naqshbandi, also visualised the *paradise lost* metaphor in his three digital paintings, where he juxtaposes a large pit (or mass grave) of crammed skeletons against picturesque tourist destinations of Kashmir, like Tulip Garden, Gulmarg, and Dal Lake. These mass graves lay under beautiful landscape, suggesting coverup of the violent reality behind a façade of beauty and joviality of tourism (Figure 17). This interpretation is textually indicated since the skeletons (symbolising Kashmiris killed in the conflict) are shown speaking in a crimson speech bubble: 'There is more to "paradise" than meets the eye'. The term *paradise* is kept within inverted commas, emphasising the irony of the word in the context of violent conflict.

In another remarkable image by artist Mir Suhail, a Kashmiri man is shown (Figure 18) on a hospital bed with only his bruised back visible. The bed is juxtaposed with a lush green meadow, pine trees and snow-clad mountain, and accompanying the image is a text, inscribed at top right, which brings out the irony of the situation and heightens *pathos* of its metaphorical language: *Incredible Kashmir 'If there is a heaven on earth, it is here, it is here'*.

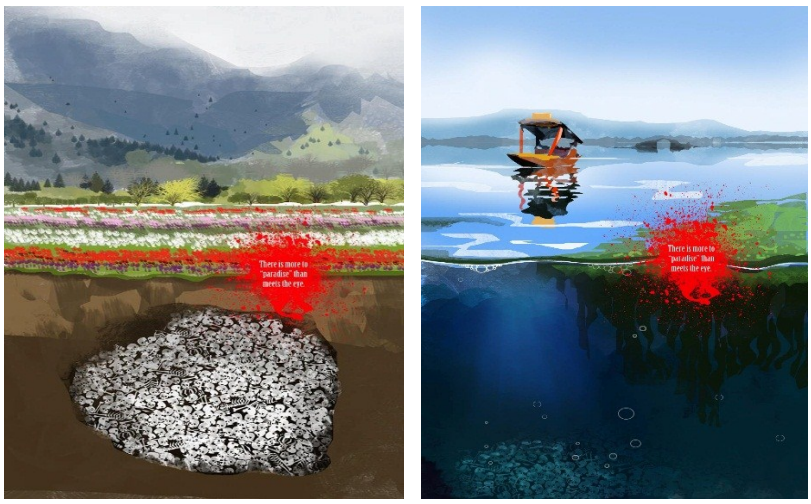

Figure 17: Suhail Naqshbandi's artwork (Facebook page)

The phrase 'Incredible Kashmir' is a play on the original tagline *Incredible India*, a flagship tourism campaign of the Indian government, and the couplet, the famous Persian verse which has historically aided tourism imaginaries on Kashmir. References to tourism is a subtle critique against the state's attempt to project tourism footfall as a measure of return to normalcy in Kashmir. For example, in one Naqshbandi cartoon (Figure 19), a bearded man (representing Hurriyat) is shown dispiritedly welcoming a backpacking foreign tourist with the words "Welcome to Paradise Kashmir!".

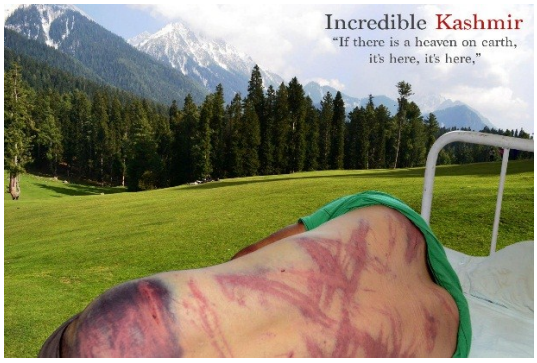

Figure 18: Mir Suhail artwork (2016)

Figure 19: Suhail Naqshbandi cartoon (December 2016)

In the background lay serried gravestones, burning houses and vehicles. Besides the graveyard is a small kid holding a white cane while sunglasses cover her eyes. She represents the young people who were blinded by pellets guns in the 2016 state violence. Here is the Paradise Kashmir from the perspective of a Kashmiri artist; it is a paradoxical paradise where violence and death is the reality for its inhabitants rather than what its poster card image is for the tourists: lush green meadows, gushing streams, and snow-clad mountains. Thus, through forceful pictorial depictions, the meaning of the metaphor paradise lost is inverted, redefined, and infused with pathos to

foreground a reality as seen and experienced by Kashmiris, and, through this redefinition, to garner empathy and solidarity.

The Metaphor Paradise Lost in Poetic Narratives

> My *paradise* is burning
> With troops left loose with ammo
> Who murder and rape
> Then hide behind a political shadow
> Like a casino
> Human life is thrown like a dice
> I'll summarize atrocities
> Till the resurrection of Christ
> Can you hear the screams
> Now see the revolution
> Their bullets, our stones

One of the famous rap artists of Kashmir, Roushan Illahi (alias MC Kash), produced a song 'I Protest' in response to the 2010 uprising where he also invoked the *paradise* metaphor. As is evident from the lyrics (above), the actor or entity, to once again use Tilly's 'reason-giving' framework, responsible for the *paradise lost* is the state and its armed forces, who are trigger-happy ('troops left loose with ammo') and whose crimes are covered up ('behind a political shadow'), and with whom Kashmiris have a contentious relationship within the revolution ('their bullets, our stones'). Many lyrical narratives from 2016, often reiterate this theme.

During the 2016 uprising, two overseas Kashmiri software engineers, Abdul Wajid and Ubaid Darwaish, set up an innovative online platform called *Last2Lines* as "a medium to express and register a peaceful campaign/protest using two lines of poetry". Each couplet was added by a new contributor with the last line in each couplet ending with 'when last did I cry'. By ending September 2016, over 250 individuals, mostly youth, contributed some 632 lines, making it one of the longest (collectively composed) poems in Kashmir. For the young creators of the Last2Lines platform, the initiative was "…going to be a tribute to the [Kashmir] cause" (Bhat, 2017). In this long poem, at least 25 contributors employ the *paradise* metaphor; 15 of them using the term *paradise* and the rest using its synonym *heaven*. So again, the dominant frame is the same: the Indian state as oppressor and the Kashmiri people as oppressed. Barring few cases, where the tone of defiance and resistance is apparent, most of the couplets seem to operate within the purview of the *pathos* dimension of metaphor. Due to the unprecedented event of mass blinding of young protestors in 2016, many authors made references to eyes and blindness (Waheed, 2016).

> The dwellers of this *paradise* are prisoners to a vicious hell; did you wonder?
> How awful is to have eyes and not be able to see: When last did I cry? (a female contributor)

> In the tourney of tyranny, my eyes went dry.
> A *paradise lost* to be a caged colony: When last did I cry? (a male contributor)

So, as the above discussion shows, the paradise lost metaphor—deployed in a range of narratives forms, from textual to visual—has been internalised in the political discourses on Kashmir, because it embodies a widely-felt representation of the Kashmir conflict as a land of famed beauty turned into the site of bloody conflict. Moreover, due to the inherent ambiguity of the metaphor, it tends to allow actors of different ideological leanings to deploy it in their narratives; thus while being a site of convergence, it also acts as a site of discursive contestation.

The Wound Metaphor

Wound, a medical metaphor, in its specific usages, can foster a sympathetic (or positive) image of the aggrieved party. As the *wound/s* are not only *historical* but also *open*, *living*, and *festering*, this metaphor can also signify a testimony of long-standing oppression of the people on whom wounds are inflicted; a wounded body or entity also metaphorically embodies the idea of having been deceived or a crack caused due to a broken trust or relationship. In Urdu language, wound (*zakhm*) is very significant and quite recurrent metaphor, which virtually every writer utilises to either articulate the idea of love-pain or unrequited love (*dil ke zakhm*: wounds of heart) or, as in the poetry of revolutionary bards Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Ahmad Faraz, expresses the trials and tribulations of a political struggle. Similarly, in the Kashmiri language, wound (also called *Zakhm*) metaphorically expresses a psychological pain or inner turmoil. In Latin, as Susan Sontag (1998) explains, the word 'Plague' also means wound and this word "has long been used metaphorically as the highest standard of collective calamity, evil, scourge". For faithful Christians, the wound metaphor embodies a religious signification (Crucifixion of the Christ), and among Muslims (especially Shias), the wounds of the Karbala martyrs form an integral part of the religious discourse, where wounds signify moral uprightness, sacrifice, and obedience to God.

In Kashmiri narratives, wound metaphor seems to be deployed in mainly two ways: as a signifier of Kashmir as a tangible entity (for example, "Kashmiri is…a living wound") or as consequences, either political, physical, or psychological ("Bearing all our historical wounds, we march again"). By rendering a phenomenon from abstract to experientially tangible, this metaphor generates an effect of sympathy, a positive evaluation of the self as against the other, who is the cause of the *wound/s*. Writing in *Rising Kashmir* (20 July 2016), Baseera Rafiqi evokes the wound metaphor a couple of times in her article "Everything is not Okay in Kashmir", a scathing critique of the state for its human rights violations and a plea for a political resolution of the conflict. Her discursive position is aligned with Tehreek, and as such the metaphorical wounds she refers to embody the pain and suffering inflicted by the state on the people of Kashmir.

> There is blood everywhere, tears, anger, and our society is deeply *wounded*, these *scars* may never heal and with such approach to the problem by our so called governing body these *wounds* are becoming deeper and deeper with each passing day (female, journalist)

Arguing in a similar vein, Majid Maqbool's article "Kashmir Protests: What Do They Want?" (*Counter Currents* 19 August 2010) invokes the wound metaphor as an embodiment of collective memories:

> On the ground people speak about the brutality unleashed by the 'security forces' in their respective areas. All these memories have become a festering wound, which is refusing to heal.

When Irfan Mehraj uses the wound metaphor in his long essay "Diary of a Scarred Week" (*Raiot* 6 August 2016), he infuses it with a profoundly political meaning by embedding it in a deictic field as a non-corporeal collective experience of Kashmiris. However, his conceptualisation of the wound metaphor is relatively dynamic. Utilising the first-person plural, Mehraj first talks about "our wounds" (representing collective experience) and then, in the same paragraph, he mentions "the wound", which signifies a converging site of solidarity and resistance, a solemn experiential thread which unites a collectivity by congealing it politically.

> *Our wounds* are similar, and this similarity unites us. The *wound* becomes the site of a political expression. During the funeral of Burhan, held in absentia at Nowhatta last night, we were all *wounded*. The *wound* was *open* and *raw* and *still fresh*. The open *wound* of Kashmir cried out in unison… 'Hum kya chahtey… Azadi'

In certain cases, the three metaphors interact and complement each other, or by using them in proximate space in a text, they are linked in a context. Such examples are especially found in poetry or narrative titles. Take for instance this quatrain of Saleem Saghar (2017), an Urdu poet from south Kashmir's Pampore town:

> *Perun ki yeh zanjeer rahe ghi kab tak*
> *Sar par tere shamsheer rahe ghi kab tak*
> *Yun wadiy-e Kashmir rahe ghi kab tak*
> *Zindan ki tasveer rahe ghi kab tak*
> [how long shall this manacle remain/how long shall your sword dangle over the head/how long shall the Valley of Kashmir remain like this/How long shall it remain a picture of prison] (author translation)

In this quatrain, the uncertainty which the conflict has created in Kashmir or within Kashmiris is depicted as prison-like condition, where people are tied in manacles, and a sword of the state hangs over their heads. As the poem progresses into another stanza, this prison-like, painful condition of Kashmir/Kashmiris is further heightened with pathos when the poet talks about "the account-of-pain, a picture-of-grief/interpretation of a blood-stained dream/what is called as the paradise on earth, has become a specimen of Inferno". In the arrangement of the metaphors that Saghar (2017) marshals to create a haunting representation of Kashmir, we find how the three metaphors

(paradise, wound and prison) come into play to give us a picture of a blood-stained paradise which is prison-like.

A few other examples, where we can find this close association of the metaphors is Malik Nazir's article (mentioned above) entitled "The Bloody Heaven" or young Kashmiri photojournalist Showkat Shafi's photo essay entitled "Kashmir: A Wounded Paradise" published in *Al Jazeera* (Shafi, 2011). In Kashmiri political discourses, such expressions galore, where the irony of Kashmir's changing fortunes are emphasised: from a paradisiacal abode of beauty into violent conflict and heavily militarised occupation. Kashmir is often depicted as a wounded, bleeding or burning paradise. Writing in popular youth-oriented website *Youth Ki Awaz*, Junaid Rather says in his article "Why I think Kashmir Celebrates Martyrdom (16 August 2016):

> What would you call Kashmir, if not an absolute death of democracy and mockery of human rights at all levels across religious faiths, or perhaps it is a *living wound* – the by-product of the rage and blindness of totalitarian system that has nearly destroyed what was once synonym of *paradise* in poetry and literature of the world, and is rewriting itself with its own blood.

In Rather's interpretation, negative evaluation of the state emerges, since the state is assigned the *blame* of causing the wound in (or to) the paradise the state has turned Kashmir into a 'living wound'. The state is depicted as a totalitarian system which is blind and aggressive. The wound which has been inflicted by the state needs medical/international attention. Thus, by the end of the article, Rather asks India to acknowledge that Kashmir is 'a disputed territory' and start a dialogue to resolve the conflict. His is a plea for a closure of the wound through a negotiated settlement.

A similar motif runs through many couplets in the Last2Lines poem, where it appears the *wound* metaphor (along with the associated terms bruise and scar) is being employed to evoke the emotional aspect (pathos) of the metaphorical language. In one example, it is "our soul" which is said to be "bruised and wounded" and "full of scars". Unlike Rather's example, where Kashmir is personified as a *living wound*, here the author anthropomorphise an abstract entity (soul). However, this animate entity (soul) is also ascribed a collective identity by using possessive pronoun *our*, which, in the context of the poem, is undoubtedly a reference to Kashmiri collectively. So, not merely the corporeal body of this collectivity is wounded but its very soul. It is a profoundly emotional expression which evocatively expresses a political grievance and at the same time affirm a separate national identity; and yet, does all this by concealing its subversive content. Use of 'us' and 'them' (or 'we' and 'they') plays a significant role here in terms of not only heightening collective self-awareness but also marking a boundary between the in-group and the out-group through the deictic expressions.

> *Bruised* and *wounded*, our soul is full of *scars*.

Hearts wail, dry as desert an eye that cannot see. When last did I cry? (male contributor)

In his *Greater Kashmir* article "Curfewed Kashmir" (2 October 2010), Ikhlaq Qadri also denounces the state for its human rights abuses and censures the pro-Accession groups, who are said to have "ruined our lives". After arguing for safeguarding the movement, Qadri questions the protest methods advocated by Tehreek leaders and asks for a change in the resistance's modus operandi so that people do not suffer. This hopeful optimism returns gradually after sketching a gloomy picture in the very first paragraph of the article, where, evoking the wound metaphor, he writes:

> Uncertainty has engulfed the present situation. There is no vision, mission and goal. It seems to be lost in the dust of the time. Every eye is moist. Every heart bleeds. Souls bruised. There is an everlasting sorrow. There is pain everywhere.

The Wound Metaphor in Visual Formats

Figure 20: Mir Suhail (15 Apr 2016)

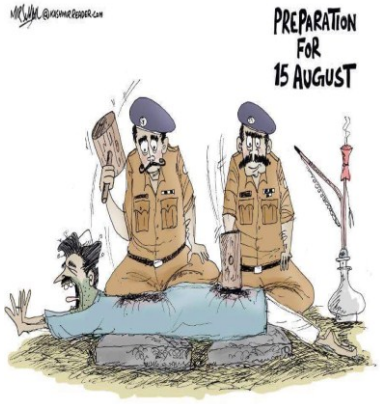

Figure 21: Mir Suhail (Aug 2016)

Figure 22: Malik Sajad (July 2010)

In visual formats, Kashmiri artists and political cartoonists often depict Kashmir as a wounded place (Figure 20) or show Kashmiris in an injured state (Figure 21 & 22). In the image below (Figure 23), the metaphorical *wound* is visualised in the shape of a bloodied map of erstwhile independent Jammu and Kashmir on a human palm. From this cartographically-shaped *wound,* blood is dripping as ink, as cuticle of the third finger is drawn as a pointed nib. This image was published in *Greater Kashmir* (2 Oct 2016) with an article titled "Poetic Pain, Bleeding Landscape: Creative Responses to the 2016 Uprising".

Like BAB cartoon of 1975 (discussed above), the creator of this image also draws upon the Urdu literary milieu. Admittedly, Naqshbandi's inspiration behind this drawing was an Urdu couplet by poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz:

> Mataa-e-lauh-o-kalam chin gayee to kya gham hai
> Ki khoon-e-dil mein dubo li hai ungliyaan maine
> [Though they have stolen my paper and pen, I don't grieve. I dip my fingers into my heart's blood]
>
> (English trans. Lazard, 1998, p. 11)

Figure 23: Suhail Naqshbandi's cartoon (Oct 2016)

In this cartoon, the bleeding wound is shown as the source of ink with which the artist would continue to write and represent the political situation of Kashmir. Invocation of the expression "they stole my pen and paper" is a subtle reference to government's communication blockade during the 2016 uprising when the internet was suspended or curtailed for months together, an English daily was indefinitely banned, and distribution of other newspapers was stopped (*Catch News* 3 October 2016). Using dark humour and incorporating a local metaphor, Figure 6 above shows a Kashmiri man being pounded by two policemen. Inscription at the right top corner says it is "Preparation for 15 August", the Independence Day of India, when the security in the Kashmir Valley is tightened, and commuters frisked and harassed by the armed forces. The local metaphor is infused into the scene through the setting of traditional Kashmiri cooking scene at weddings: the Kashmiri man, whose head is drawn in the map of Jammu and Kashmir, is lain on two flat stone slabs and pounded by policemen with a traditional wooden mallet. In Kashmiri language, meat pounding is called *Daggun*, but it is also a metaphorical reference to somebody getting a beating.

While Kashmiri cartoonists often mock the state, they also train their sarcasm at the pro-Tehreek constituency sometimes. For example, in a July 2010 cartoon, published in daily *Greater Kashmir*, young cartoonist Malik Sajad satirises Hurriyat leaders and their competitive relationships. He shows a wounded Kashmiri man on a hospital bed (Figure 22 above) flanked by two Hurriyat leaders (who are donning traditional karakul caps). These leaders are shown competing for the condemnation statement which is supposed to be issued by Tehreek leaders on the killing of a Kashmiri.

Interlinked to wound is a medical metaphor 'healing', as it can be regarded as an aspect of the 'source domain' of the wound. At the conceptual level, wound and healing interact and assume a dialectical relationship: wound needs healing. Drawing from this understanding, one can appreciate the efficacy of the *healing* metaphor in the manifesto of the pro-Accession People's Democratic Party (PDP) that came to power in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002, riding on the slogan of 'Healing Touch'. While unclear what it meant in substantive terms, the slogan became a much talked about a phrase in the media throughout the mid-2000s. Nonetheless, the slogan, at that time, seemed to have at least helped PDP in connecting with a sizable voter population, who were experiencing war fatigue due to the lingering armed conflict that had left devastating consequences in its trail. For example, in August 2003, Mufti Muhammad Syed, the then chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, said: "When we had suggested the *healing touch policy* long ago, many parties including the BJP objected to it. But, today, there is a national consensus, and even the Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh] has advocated it during his Srinagar visit" (*The Daily Excelsior* 30 August 2003). For some people, the idea of 'healing touch' assumed that people who had suffered in the long years of the armed conflict needed justice, 'peace with dignity', and respite from the heavy-handedness of the state forces. In the state government's rhetoric, creating reconciliation in the region and rebuilding the distressed civil society was dependent on healing the "moral and historical wounds" (Bhan, 2014, p. 5).

However, as the rhetoric hit its practical limitations, the same slogan was thrown back at the PDP and used by oppositional groups, especially from the resistance, in satirical and sarcastic critiques against the party for failing to live up to its promises and kowtowing to New Delhi. For example, in one of the cartoons (Figure 24 below), PDP's Mehbooba Mufti (who was the chief minister during the 2016 uprising) is shown holding a cage in which a wounded Kashmiri lies dead (or almost dead), and she is telling the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, "Strike his wounds with some balm".

It is a sarcastic comment on her party's famous 'healing touch' slogan (associated term 'balm' is used here to trigger the connection). In the context of brutal state repression in 2016, this cartoon subtly hints at the irony of that slogan by positioning Mufti herself as the cause of wound/s, as she is shown wielding a medieval weapon of torture in her hand. Saiba Varma (2018, p. 138) argues that deriving from the 'healing touch' rhetoric, certain medical and humanitarian interventions (and discourses) in Kashmir can be read as part of the non-militarised aspect of the counter-insurgency. So, when Kashmiri dissidents subvert the political meaning of the 'healing touch' slogan, they also, by extension, counter the state's appropriation of the wound metaphor, which the state mobilises in the counter-insurgency discourse of 'winning hearts and minds'.

Figure 24: Suhail Naqshbandi cartoon (7 Oct 2016)

Ultimately, use of the wound metaphor in Kashmiri narratives points to the link between emotions and politics, as emotions can induce feelings of national belonging and have significant implications for political movements (Goodwin et al. 2001). In Kashmiri political discourses, such metaphorical framing appears to embody the emotions that certain pro-Tehreek narratives seek to convey: because a wounded body represents a victim/oppressed, by underlining Kashmiri victimhood through a wound metaphor the Kashmiri narratives seek to humanise and decriminalise their political expressions.

The Prison Metaphor

The Indian state has deployed approximately 500,000 security personnel in Jammu and Kashmir. Through draconian laws like the Public Safety Act, it jails political activists regularly and imposes substantial restrictions on political rallies. So, being a heavily militarised region, with stifling political environment, the metaphorical conceptualisation of Kashmir as a prison and Kashmiris as prisoners appears to be primarily borne out of this situation. For example, writing in daily *Kashmir Times*, Syed Tajamul opens his article "I am a Stone Pelter" (13 October 2016) with these words:

> I am from the world's most 'militarized zone' and 'world's most beautiful prison' known as "Kashmir".

Moreover, the police and armed forces often restrict civilian movements in Kashmir; they dot every village and district; army camps act as an omnipresent network of surveillance and coercive control (Junaid 2013). Perhaps, this was the reason, *Curfewed*, an associated expression to the *prison* metaphor, acquired a particular salience in Kashmiri political narratives after the publication of Curfewed Night, a memoir of Kashmiri journalist Basharat Peer. He had himself borrowed the title from a poem by noted Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali: "the city from where no news can come is now so visible in its curfewed night" (Ali, 2009, p. 178).

Mainly for the 2010 and 2016 narratives, the cycle of constant curfews and restrictions appear to form the backdrop of the 'communicative situation', where the *prison* metaphor became an

appropriate linguistic choice and inspired its frequent use in the youth narratives. Because, as Kovecses (2009) says, use of certain metaphors is spurred when the prevailing circumstances heighten awareness of their conceptual domain. In 2016, curfews and restrictions likewise induced a sense of imprisonment (conceptual domain). Frequent usage of the *prison* metaphor in the *Last2Lines* poem also corroborates this hypothesis, since the poem was composed during the period of curfews, strikes, and communicative restrictions. In 2016, strict curfews were imposed in all ten districts of the Kashmir valley after the killing of Burhan Wani. Continuing for 51 days until August 29, 2016, curfews and restrictions became intermittent afterwards. The spell of curfews in summer 2016 was as the longest ever in the history of Kashmir (Shabir Ibn Yusuf, 2016).

However, the idea of *prison* is expressed in different ways by different individuals. Whereas the target domain in some instances is geopolitical entity Kashmir, in other cases it is a more abstract phenomenon which is being metaphorically framed. For example, in the following lines, prison is being conceptualised in terms of an abstraction rather than a physical entity, and this abstract idea appears to be a metaphorical reference to a sense of restriction on the freedom of speech or the suppression of collective political will, which is being kept behind the 'bars' of state control.

> *We* are caged from inside, how on outside will *we* be free? / How many years behind these *bars*, when will *they* set this *prisoner* free? When last did I cry?

In prose narratives, the straightforward metaphorical analogy of Kashmir as a prison is quite apparent, where, with a certain irony, Kashmir is described as "a beautiful but a painful dungeon" or "the world's most beautiful prison". Likewise, in some couplets in the Last2Lines poem, a metaphorical reference to Kashmir is made by comparing it to a physical entity, prison, where one sees "oppression" and "darkness" and where "no bird is free". In a prose narrative, metaphorical constructions "we are trapped" as "entrapped souls" assumes a situation in which not only an individual but a whole collectivity is implicated, and to come out of it they must get organised and resist.

> When one is *trapped* by his stringent survival needs, the only way out for these *entrapped souls* is to educate, agitate and organise, to defy and protest.

In this instance, the *ethos* (ethical) and *logos* (reasoned argument) aspect of metaphorical language is being evoked. Because, for the 'entrapped' collectivity to break from the 'trap', collective action not only becomes ethically permissible but logically unavoidable. It again reveals a dynamic interaction of the aspects of metaphor. An idea of entrapped collectively entails a metaphorical interpretation where the national collectivity, because it is imprisoned, is politically aggrieved. In this metaphorical framing, the opposite entity, who enforces this situation, is thus the culprit in the story. Although this culprit is not explicitly named, its identity becomes obvious in the context.

Moreover, again, in these instances use of deictic expressions mark a relational boundary, where the political collectivity 'we', who are inside the jail and thus oppressed, get formed in opposition to the opposing collectivity 'they', who control the jail or are immune from it. This discursive formulation effectively creates a dichotomous relationship between Kashmiris and the Indian state which is also strikingly captured in Mir Suhail and Suhail Naqshbandi's cartoons. Moreover, unlike *paradise* and *wound*, the prison metaphor is manifestly political, as its very name indicates an aspect of state control. Perhaps, that is why its metaphorical usage is frequent in the dissident narratives or 'oppositional speech acts'.

In his *Greater Kashmir* article "Rendezvous with a 'stone'" (19 July 2010), Ishfaq Ahmad anthropomorphises a stone and makes it into a narrator, who excoriates the state and "demagogic leaders":

> The Machiavellian and cavalier attitude by Indian forces has made every valleyite irascible and anguished. It has piled up an inexpressible resentment within the people that cannot be cured by the airy promises like 'healing touch', and demagogic leaders like many around causing discontent and despair only. People of Kashmir have become miserable prisoners imprisoned in their own land; the paradise has taken a shape of dungeon where its inhabitants struggle to penetrate in order to witness the life of freedom.

In the excerpt above, the author employs all the three metaphors (or their aspects) which are under discussion to describe the intractable political situation in Kashmir. Even though in 2010 there was a coalition government of National Conference and Indian National Congress in IJK, he sarcastically talks about "healing touch", a PDP slogan, and calls it "airy promises" which cannot cure "an inexpressible resentment within the people". It means his critique encompasses all the pro-Accession political parties in IJK and not the government of the day alone. Mention of demagogic leaders is not specific though. Whether it is a reference to pro-Accession or pro-Tehreek politicians is unclear. In the last sentence, he evokes the metaphor of paradise and prison and describes Kashmiris as "miserable prisoners imprisoned in their own land" and Kashmir as "the paradise" which has been transmuted into "a shape of dungeon". The primary actors who are *blamed* for bringing in this undesirable situation are the Indian forces with their "Machiavellian and cavalier attitude".

Similar framing is discernible in Shams Irfan's article "In the Dark Alley" (*Greater Kashmir* 5 August 2010), where an unnamed young boy is in a dialogue with the narrator in a fictional dream. In the concluding paragraph of the article, after a tension-filled conversation between the two, we get to read:

> And before he could fade away in the darkness of night [it is night now] he turned towards me, with his eyes fixed on mine, he said "No doubt, they have caged us in like a herd of sheep but still India cannot fetter our souls and aspirations" and he vanished in the silence of night or maybe it was the darkness; I can't tell.

At the heart of this article is the issue of stone-throwing protests during the 2010 uprising and killings of young boys. Through a fictional dream, thus, Irfan seeks to unpack the psychology of a stone-thrower, to underline the political context where stone-throwing is embraced as a mode of protest by young men of Kashmir. Moreover, like most of the youth narrators, Irfan also ascribes blame to the state and to "oppression and humiliation" inflicted on young Kashmiris, who feel they are "caged" but are defiant in the way they feel that "India cannot fetter our souls and aspirations". Here, instead of only projecting victimhood of the subject by mapping metaphorical prison on to his condition, the narrator goes a step ahead and emphasises the insurgent agency of the victim, who retains a hope of possibility to overcome the prison, or who through his belief has psychologically transcended the prison.

Prison Metaphor in Visual Formats

Figure 25: Suhail Naqshbandi

Figure 26: Mir Suhail

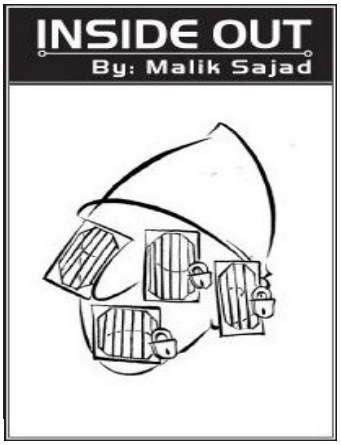

Figure 27: Malik Sajad (Aug 2012)

Figure 28: Mir Suhail (2016)

Figure 29: Suhail Naqshbandi (2016)

In all the cartoons above (Figures 25-29), the unifying theme is the prison. However, they describe different aspects of the metaphor as it applies to the political situation in which Kashmiris find themselves. In the first cartoon (Figure 25), published in daily *Greater Kashmir* on 13 July 2016, a woman is shown sitting outside her home talking to a man, and her house is within a cage while outside of it mobiles phones are dancing in excitement. In the speech bubble the woman is saying "Phone traevikh yellih, asi kar travan" (Phones have been released, when shall we be freed?" It is a comment about the continued curfews in the summer of 2016 which kept the civilian population

in the Kashmir Valley confined to their homes for a long period. In the second cartoon (Figure 26), published in daily *Kashmir Observer* on 23 Sep 2016, a prison is shown developing cracks as a hand (representing the police) drops prisoners after prisoners into it. Transcription at the top right says, "PSA in Kashmir". The cartoon points to state's reckless use of Public Safety Act against political activists and protestors in Kashmir; the state has arrested so many people under this law that there is no place left in the prisons to hold more. Unlike in Figure 25, the prison in Figure 26 is used in its literal sense.

Comparatively, Malik Sajad's cartoon (Figure 27), published in *Greater Kashmir* on 16 August 2012, is purely and profoundly metaphorical, as it shows an archetypical Kashmiri man (wearing a coned cap, a sartorial item associated with the Kashmiri peasantry) whose eyes, ears and mouth is locked behind bars; he can neither see nor hear nor speak anything. His freedom of expression is completely locked down by the state. The next cartoon (Figure 28) depicts the scene in the run-up to or during India's Republic Day on 26 January. Ingeniously, the cartoonist has kept caged Kashmiris (who are the public) between the letters Re and Day, to bring out the irony of the situation: that Republic Day is celebrated by caging the public of Kashmir. The last cartoon (Figure 29), published in *Greater Kashmir* during the 2016 uprising, shows a parrot (representing the then chief minister Mehbooba Mufti) who is repeating the same word "Vajpayee Ji!". It is a reference to the former Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose name was frequently invoked by the chief minister Mufti whenever she would talk about a dialogue process between New Delhi and Kashmiris. Since the right-wing regime of Narendra Modi had a more hard-line approach towards the independence movement in Kashmir, Mufti referenced Vajpayee's name to suggest to the Modi government to initiate diplomacy on the lines of former BJP Prime Minister. However, the caged pigeon (representing Kashmiris) is cooing "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!". So, what the parrot is saying is not what the caged pigeon is asking for, and here very subtly the incompatibility between the people and the chief minister (or the state) is highlighted in the cartoon.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the discussion focused on the metaphorical framings in Kashmiri political discourses. Three metaphors, which are often used in Kashmiri discourses, were identified: *paradise lost*, *wound*, and *prison*. The paradise lost metaphor appears to entail a consensual interpretation, while the prison metaphor seems to be more situational, i.e., it is prompted by prolonged curfews, strikes, and militarisation. Lastly, the wound metaphor expresses Kashmiri political subjectivity in a distinctly emotional way, as this metaphor is embedded in affective cultural practices. Overall, *pathos* aspect suffuses the metaphorical framing of Kashmir, which appears to be a discursive response to traumatic experiences of the conflict as well as an instrumental use of affective linguistic device to gain sympathy and solidarity for the political cause. Since metaphorical language

has potentially humanising effect, it can subvert efforts of the state to criminalise Kashmiri political expressions, which remain overshadowed by hegemonic statist discourses.

We can appreciate the importance of metaphors for the Kashmiri self-determination movement or Tehreek in the context of Lindekilde's (2014, p, 203) argument that social structures and strain does not inevitably give rise to collective grievances and claims "but come into existence partly through processes of interpretation, discursive practices, and active meaning-making". Analysing the role of metaphors in Kashmiri political discourses, we saw how the discursive practices of metaphorical framings act as effective (and affective) representational vehicles, and how they potentially shape what Mannheim (1927) calls "partisan integrative attitudes" by fostering a sense of aggrieved/oppressed nationality. However, the emergence and pervasive use of the three metaphorical framings (paradise lost, wound, and prison) is closely linked to the unfolding of a particularly grim and hostile situation in Kashmir in the last thirty years. At least 50,000 people have died in the armed conflict, and thousands have been tortured, disappeared, raped, and arrested. Curfews and restrictions have become a norm, and the public spaces have been densely militarised. Freedom of expression and free assembly remain severely curtailed, and political dissent criminalised. So, as the generations born in the 1980s and 1990s have grown up in this political environment, their unique experiences and exposure to the armed conflict during their formative years has become an integral part of their collective memories, and the three metaphors seem to embody those effectively.

Stuart Hall (1996, p. 4) says, identities are created not without but within the representation. Accordingly, locating patterns within the youth political narratives, this chapter shows how the metaphorical framings of Kashmir deployed by the new political generation of Kashmiris are informed by their distinctive generational consciousness, which is forged by the long-drawn conflict and the discourses about it and the social practices through which such discourses are reinforced. For the new political generation in Kashmir, these three metaphors seem to embody accurate representations, as they encompass almost all the realms of their unique experiences related to the conflict. The paradise lost represents a sense of loss and nostalgia about their famed homeland being mired in a seemingly intractable conflict; wound represents the memories and experiences of the last thirty years of bloodshed; and, prison represents the current stifling political environment. We can discern these readings of their metaphors in the context of the whole narrative (article, essay, or poem), because metaphors in themselves do not convey clear political message, but do so within (or with the aid of) the frame constructed by the text in which they are embedded, and the rhetorical context in which they are uttered. For example, in the political/rhetorical context of the 2016 uprising, a narrator in the *Last2Line* poem writes: "bruised and wounded, our soul is full of scars/hearts wail, dry as desert an eye that cannot see. When last

did I cry?" Here we know the general context of the verse is the uprising (or the Kashmir conflict), but the specific context is unprecedented eye-injuries caused to Kashmiri protestors by Indian security forces. However, the specific plugs into the general, with the former gaining moral depth through a sense of historicity provided by the latter.

Ultimately, these metaphorical framings of Kashmir have been forged in a historical context, and they allow Kashmiri youth narrators a creative space for dissent. As an evocative idiom, metaphorical framings enable them to effectively (and affectively) express political grievances as well as counter statist narratives. Through these metaphorical framings, they also affirm a sense of political community, based on common suffering. They condense the collective memories of the new political generation into compelling frames, whose recurrent use becomes a signifying practice in the formation of a separate political identity. Since metaphorical language helps the dominated to disrupt power relations by subverting the hegemonic representations, its usage in narratives also points to the dynamics of political agency. This aspect is powerfully illustrated in Mir Suhail's artwork (figure 18), where we see a bruised Kashmiri body disrupting a scene of serene beauty, which the statist narratives use to project normalcy in Kashmir. It is these meanings, often subtly evoked, that infuse a moral substance and emotional force to the Kashmiri resistance discourses, since emotions as much move people as material interests. Though to what extent does metaphorical framings help in envisioning a coherent political future is a question which needs further probing. Of course, the empirical data in this chapter was taken from a limited demographic sample, but, as Mannheim (p. 307) argues, within generation-units it is often a small group which develops compatible articulations and representation of the experiences which are indicative of their social and historical location, thereby finding resonance among the larger cohort.

Nevertheless, while imagery, metaphor and other linguistic forms and devices operate at the surface level and hence are easily discernible, political narratives also contain within them subtle aspects which can be located by taking a holistic view of the political discourses within a society. In the Kashmir case, these subtle aspects of narratives are strategic or pragmatic ways in which arguments of the self-determination movement are presented, and Tehreek in general framed by enforcing certain silences. In the next chapter then we shall analyse what these silences in the Kashmiri youth narratives are and for what purposes are they enforced or maintained.

Chapter 7

Twin 'Silences' in the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Introduction

This chapter seeks to locate 'silences' within the Kashmiri youth narratives. Certain silences are involuntarily maintained in fear of the state prosecution, and certain silences are voluntarily enforced to make a political movement appear coherent and unified. In the Kashmir case, silences in the narratives manifest in skipped references to those aspects which otherwise dominate the Kashmiri discursive landscape. Within Tehreek there are differences between those who favour a sovereign Jammu and Kashmir and those who want the state to join Pakistan. Also, the political rhetoric of some pro-Tehreek organisations is informed by Islamist vocabulary, a part of which is also sometimes used during street protests. So, ideological differences and use of religious idioms in political discourses are two important aspects of Tehreek on which most of the Kashmiri youth narratives appear to have maintained a 'silence'. And, it is these twin silences which this chapter attempts to investigate, to see why and to what purposes these silences operate or are enforced within the Kashmiri political discourses. To fully appreciate these 'silences' in the Kashmiri youth narratives, the chapter first provides a brief theoretical context and a broad outline of the main features of the Kashmiri youth narratives. Following this, there is a detailed discussion on the twin 'silences' within these narratives, i.e., the absence of references to ideological debate within Tehreek and the absence of religious idioms.

Narratives and Identity

American sociologist Margaret Somers (1994, p. 624) argues that "social action can only be intelligible if we recognise that people are guided to act by the structural and cultural relationships in which they are embedded and by the stories through which they constitute their identities". Narratives are pivotal to identity, and Somers calls for a narrative approach to identity formation. However, stories or narratives need to have some degree of coherence and structure to be intelligible. For political narratives intelligibility is an essential prerequisite for them to have resonance among adherents and potential audiences. Which implies that, inevitably, not all details and facts would find their place in political narratives but only those who are deemed necessary, or who have consequences—cultural or political. In other words, while certain aspects of social experiences are voiced, certain others are not voiced, or they are consigned to the realm of 'silences'. However, the process of silencing operates at two levels: one, societal norms may restrict explicit public expression of certain themes and topics. Second, there might be a tacit (or evolved) understanding within a social group to express a political position ideally within certain parameters

or in a certain modulated language. Thus organised, such political narratives give a coherent shape to the political movement of which they are part. By evading ideological contradictions and dissensions within, coherent political narratives seek to preserve or promote internal unity within the movement, though the need for a coherent political narrative might be determined by external factors as well. Furthermore, key terminologies of contentious language are often polysemic which endows them a certain degree of ambiguity due to which they become "modular and therefore available for repetition" (Tarrow, 2013, p. 15). It is perhaps this feature of the ambiguity of certain political terminologies that allows different ideological groupings to make use of them for their political ends while maintaining a political and organisational distance.

Salient Features of the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Given that IJK is an active conflict zone, the youth in Kashmir are enmeshed in competing political ideologies and discourses. So, everyone who writes on political issues must have a discursive position in relation to the Kashmir conflict. The discursive position is the ideological basis from which individuals "participate in and evaluate discourse" (Jager & Maier, 2009, p. 49). In the sampled narratives, the Kashmiri youth differ in how they frame the Kashmir conflict. While in most of the cases, a pro-Tehreek stance is discernible, some narratives however also display an unclear position. For example, out of the 83 articles from 2016, 60 (72.28%) exhibited pro-Tehreek discursive position, while as 22 (26.50%) displayed ideological ambiguity. The dominant frames in these youth narratives were 'political' (with sub-themes like resistance, state terror, identity, international intervention, political history, conflict resolution etc.), though some also employed 'human rights' frame.

Alignment with an ideological position can be expressed in many ways. For example, predication strategy allows for discursive characterisation of social actors, actions or phenomena. An author can ascribe agency to specific subjects or endow attributes or properties to specific nouns. As an illustration of a pro-Tehreek discursive position, here is an example from the sampled youth narratives:

> It is an undeniable fact that Kashmir is a disputed territory whose people have to fight for their rights and stand for their freedom against India and this freedom has always been suppressed by the presence of army in Kashmir.

Sometimes, the Kashmiri youth use figurative language or allusion to express their political stance. This discursive strategy might be a stylistic choice or an outcome of self-censorship.[84] Some

[84] Too much use on metaphorical language is also problematic, as some people take cover behind it and do not make their political stand clear. For example, in a scathing editorial 'Poets are Missing', the Rising Kashmir newspaper wrote during the 2010 uprising: 'Poets in Kashmir are being hired to sing paeans for politicians and political groups, but they never volunteer to say a word in response what befalls the common people. There is scant mention of the sufferings in our literary works and even if someone dares to reflect the true picture he tends to hide behind the

narrators might self-censor their content due to their professional or institutional location; for example, people working in a government department would like to avoid using the explicit collective action frames or contentious language of Tehreek to avoid angering their superiors. In most of the narratives, the state and its forces embody oppression or are described as perpetrators of injustice, while as Kashmiris are represented as the victims of historical crimes, both in physical (human rights abuses) as well as political terms (denial of plebiscite or conflict resolution). While talk of injustice pervades the Kashmiri youth narratives, there is also an affirmation of a separate political identity. The assertion of a distinct Kashmiri identity runs through most of the youth narratives. This discursive strategy effectively creates a dichotomous relationship of us-vs-them, and becomes instrumental in creating what William Gamson (1992) calls 'oppositional consciousness.' For Gamson, oppositional consciousness is a precondition for a collective action to emerge, and he lists identity, agency and injustice as the three basic elements of a collective action frame. Potentially 'oppositional consciousness' acts as a counter-narrative to resist subordination to state's hegemonic narrative on identity.

However, interestingly, while victimhood and identity are a prominent theme in the youth narratives, hardly any narrator expresses an unambiguously pro-Indian or pro-Pakistan position. Most of them appear to skip the question of political ideology. By political ideology what is meant here is pro-autonomy, pro-Pakistan and pro-independence positions, which are vigorously articulated, asserted, and contested in everyday political discourses in IJK. In the Kashmiri youth narratives, however, there appears to be silence on this aspect, as the youth narrators hardly broach the ideological debate. Though, recently, discussion on the question of political ideology was sparked by certain events to which we shall come back later.

Silences on the Ideological Conflicts within Tehreek

Ideologically speaking, Tehreek is not a unified movement. It is internally divided into two main ideological camps: pro-independence (represented by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) and pro-Pakistan (represented by Tehreek-e-Hurriyat). Nevertheless, despite ideological differences, these two camps sometimes complement each other. Especially, since the last decade or so, Tehreek groups have maintained a certain level of issue-based unity. In 2015, when the IJK government announced its plan to set up colonies in Kashmir for ex-servicemen, the JKLF and Hurriyat resisted the move under a joint campaign. Likewise, during the 2016 uprising, Tehreek leaders across the ideological spectrum worked together under the unified banner of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL).[1] However, in comparison to the pro-Pakistan constituents of

weighty metaphor and the abstract similitude. Like always, our poets are silent over what is happening in Kashmir now.' The silence of the renowned Kashmiri poets was mainly with respect to the ongoing crisis and state repression about which they had maintained a silence (Rising Kashmir 17 August 2010).

Hurriyat, the JKLF is organisationally a weaker party. Whereas Hurriyat has substantive support—externally from Pakistan and internally from influential Islamist organisations and armed groups like Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)—the JKLF faces difficulties in many aspects. Its opponents have misrepresented its avowedly secular republican agenda as contrary to Islamic principles. Within the conservative, but influential, sections of the Muslim society of IJK, such misrepresentation has undermined the position of JKLF. More importantly, after the JKLF gave up arms in 1994, it lost influence which it had during the late 1980s as a pioneering rebel group. Because the gun has an important narrative role within the specific context of the Kashmir conflict, the active, but pro-Pakistan, rebel group HM has the upper hand over the JKLF. In the last decade, the combined organisational force of Hurriyat and HM has helped to propagate the pro-Pakistan ideology among a considerable number of the Kashmiri youth—though this is yet to be substantiated as recent reliable surveys on political attitudes do not exist. During the street protests, it has become a norm to wave the Pakistani flag, which some mourners also put on the bodies of slain rebels during their funerals. Such imagery and spectacular public performance have contributed to the propagation of pro-Pakistan ideology among the Kashmiri youth.

On the other hand, anyone who publicly espouses a pro-independence stance is either ridiculed, abused or branded as agency's man. The Kashmiri expression 'agency hundh nafar' means the person is working on the behest of Indian intelligence agencies. For example, a postgrad political science student at the University of Kashmir, Harun Lone, was trolled after his pro-independence article was published on Turkish media outlet TRT on 5 July 2018. Many pro-Pakistan supporters in IJK believe that the idea of independent Jammu and Kashmir is a ploy by the Indian state to undermine the UN Resolutions, which give only two options to the people of the disputed region: to join India or Pakistan. They think the choice of independence is pushed by the Indian intelligence agencies to destabilise the political movement of self-determination in IJK. The pro-Pakistan supporters in IJK deridingly call the people with pro-Independence ideology as 'Indipindi', a spin on the word independence. That is why Maqbool Bhat, the founder of the JKLF, is often dubbed by them as an 'Indian agent'. Though, ironically, pro-Pakistan leaders and organisations in IJK also observe the death anniversary of Bhat on 11 February every year and pay tributes to him.[85] For example, on 8 February 2018, Syed Ali Geelani, one of the staunchest proponents of the pro-Pakistan position in Kashmir, called Bhat a 'Shaheed' (martyr), "who has a special status in the freedom struggle of Kashmir". For Geelani, Bhat is a hero of "the Kashmiri nation" and "the first soldier of the struggle" (*Greater Kashmir* 8 February 2018).

[85] Maqbool Bhat was hanged in Delhi's Tihar Jail on 11 February 1984.

This contradiction within Tehreek is common knowledge in IJK, and yet in the English narratives of the Kashmiri youth, there are very few references to ideological rifts. The youth narrators avoid expressing an unambiguous ideological position. It is either because they do not want to enter into an ideological debate which could aggravate the conflict within Tehreek or this omission is due to the factor of inherited repertoires. Both seem to be plausible explanations.

A Factor of Inherited Repertoires

Every political struggle has a history of protests and narratives. When making claims and undertaking contentious performances, they produce repertoires, which tend to solidify over time, giving successive generations a ready-made template to derive from. As Tilly and Tarrow (2007, p. 23) argue, "Repertoires draw on the identities, social ties, and organisational forms that constitute everyday social life…In the course of contending or watching others contend, people learn the interactions that can make a political difference as well as the locally shared meanings of those interactions". Some changes may occur to inherited repertoires, but they usually happen at the margins. Repertoires usually mean available modular protest methods.

Nevertheless, protracted movements can also foster modulated language of resistance, which can crystallise into a discursive repertoire, by incorporating new events and experiences. However, for such a language of contention to endure and successfully diffuse, it must resonate "with culturally familiar concepts" (what Tarrow calls *symbolic resonance*) and be able to adapt to changing circumstances (which Tarrow (2013, p. 17) calls *strategic modularity*).

Understanding a discursive repertoire of a political movement requires historical analysis, to trace the genesis of the terms and phrases, myths and metaphors which eventually shape the linguistic 'deep structure' of that movement (a historical overview of different framings of the Kashmir conflict is discussed in Chapter 3).

The earlier dominant frame on Kashmir—in which referendum was presented as a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kashmir conflict and contributor to the world peace—gradually emerged as a virtual template in the political discourses which the successive generations of Kashmiris inherited and reconstructed in the light of their times and experiences. As the discourse of plebiscite had a backing of international law and diplomacy of the time (especially the Security Council Resolutions), demanding referendum was not a radical or extremist position within the context of the world politics. Since the audience/addressee for the demand of referendum was the world community, including the Indian state—which was repeatedly reminded by Tehreek activists of her pledges of honouring democratic principles—it was an appropriate diplomatic language which lent pro-Tehreek political discourses intelligibility and legitimacy. So, there was a more

extensive parameter of the global cultural environment which pro-Tehreek narrators had to negotiate and required them to use internationally accepted language.

Prevalence of such a modulated (diplomatic) language in the post-2008 Kashmiri youth narratives indicates that it has been inherited through a discursive repertoire of Tehreek. That the youth narrators assume an international audience when they write political pieces on Kashmir becomes evident in many articles where the world community is referenced in one way or another. In some cases, even direct appeals are made to the global community, as can be observed in the following three excerpts taken from three different articles:

> To register my protest I make a humble pray to the United Nations and Human Rights Organization to impress upon India to stop use of force on innocent Kashmiris.
>
> While the world silently watches, the paradise is being turned into 'country of blind'. How could anyone expect such blinded and traumatised children to hold books and computers in their hands?
>
> Kashmir waits for the world to see with open eyes, the massacre of its children. It waits for the world powers to step in to put an end to the atrocities of armed forces.

However, as Kashmiri historian Idrees Kanth (2018) shows in his research, the discourse of self-determination or plebiscite was mired in ambiguity right from the beginning, as the leading proponents of the idea, such as the Plebiscite Front organisation, were ideologically divided, with some members strongly favouring accession with Pakistan and others aspiring for independence. This division, however, reflected the general trend in IJK: a large section in the Srinagar city harboured pro-Pakistan sentiments, while the people in the rural areas had differing political views—although a vast majority supported Sheikh Abdullah almost unconditionally.[86]

What plebiscite really entailed was never spelt out by the political leadership of the time. It was perhaps the reason why the popular categories like rai-shumari (plebiscite) and Azadi (freedom), though vigorously and persistently used by the people of IJK, remained largely unclear terms; people in IJK were unable to endow a consistent and coherent meaning to these slogans, because their political leadership could not articulate a clear political roadmap for Tehreek. Kanth believes that Sheikh Abdullah might have instrumentalised the plebiscite discourse to leverage his politics with the Indian government, foreseeing that if indeed a referendum were held, the majority of the people in Kashmir would likely vote for Pakistan, something he did not favour. Nonetheless, despite ambiguity around the terms like Azadi and plebiscite, these became a rallying cry throughout the 1960's—because if anything people in Kashmir were united by a common anti-India feeling, which these slogans embodied. Later, as a popular armed uprising broke out in the

[86] Despite compromising on plebiscite issue in 1975, Sheikh Abdullah remained widely respected political leader. Kanth argues that public support for Abdullah was for his person and not necessarily for his politics. Abdullah had become a cult personality, who was revered for his pro-proletariat work since 1930's.

late 1980s, the slogan of Azadi assumed some degree of concreteness. In the pro-Tehreek narratives, self-determination and Azadi became the keywords, which acquired new urgency in the light of widespread human rights abuses and traumatic events produced by the violence and brutal military crackdown against the uprising. Although Azadi, at the most basic level, meant freedom from Indian rule—at least for a clear majority—a considerable section also believed that self-determination would lead to IJK's accession with Pakistan. However, if the available surveys are to be believed then the majority of people—at least in the Kashmir Valley—desire an independent Jammu and Kashmir state.[87]

Eventually, the processes of social, cultural and political changes accompanied by the armed insurgency and counter-insurgency engendered new narratives, myths, and metaphors, which concretised a cultural structure from which the frames employed by the Kashmiri youth drew their meaning. While the Kashmiri youth introduced new frames, they also brought to prominence the ones that had remained dormant or in abeyance (like the 'sell-out' frame of 1975) and modified those which they inherited. So, it was a dialectical process through which the dormant frames were activated, and the existing ones modified.

Events that Provoked Debate on Political Ideology of Tehreek

In May 2017, Zakir Rashid Bhat (aka Zakir Musa), a close associate and successor to iconic rebel leader Burhan Wani, issued an audio statement in which he severely criticised Hurriyat. Bhat contended that Hurriyat leaders should desist from calling Tehreek a political struggle:

> If this is a political struggle, then why have you people been using the mosque for politics? Then you should hold a protest on the roads if this is a political struggle. Why have you been using the pulpits of the mosques for a political struggle?

Coming from a top militant leader of HM, Bhat's statement created shockwaves in the political landscape of IJK. It was something unprecedented. Immediately disassociating itself from Bhat's remarks against Hurriyat leaders, the HM issued a statement and said that the organisation deems such comments as "unacceptable".[88] The HM leadership reiterated that their struggle was indigenous and political and had no global agenda. Soon, Bhat quit the organisation and became head of a newly created outfit called Ansar Gazwat-ul-Hind. In another audio-message released in September 2017, Bhat directed his criticism at Pakistan, whom he accused of betraying Kashmiris at the behest of the US. He asserted that his struggle was not for nationalism or democracy or secularism but to establish an Islamic authority "where no innocent is tortured". Dismissing the

[87] The Outlook magazine poll of 1995 said over 70% preferred independence option and only 19 percent wanted union with Pakistan (*Outlook* 18 October 1995). More recent survey published by Chatam House in 2010 showed that between 75 to 95 percent people in Kashmir preferred independence (Bradnock, 2010, p.15).

[88] In a later statement, Bhat clarified that "I have not said anything against a particular person or Geelani *sahab*. My talk about hanging people has nothing to do with Hurriyat as I had talked about those moderates who support a secular state" (Ahmad, 2017).

world opinion, he also said: "We are not waging the jihad so that United Nations or other international community support us" (*New Indian Express* 1 September 2017).

Being part of the new age militancy, which enjoys widespread support in Kashmir, and having been a close associate of Burhan Wani, Bhat immediately gained popularity among the youth population of IJK after becoming the successor of Wani. So, his words mattered. That is why when Hurriyat responded to his accusations, their tone was mild and conciliatory. In a statement in response to Bhat, the Joint Resistance Leadership (composed of Hurriyat and JKLF) said that "The freedom movement is in a crucial stage" and any discord within the resistance camp "would give Indian government a chance to sabotage the movement" (Ahmad, 2017). Nonetheless, a rift was already created, and it spilt over to the social media, where opinions were divided over Bhat's approach. Many young Kashmiris were uneasy with his stance. Some called him an 'Indian agent', while others backed his message and anti-Pakistan rhetoric. Effectively, within Tehreek emerged a third front, which dismissed both nationalism of the pro-independence ideologues and irredentism of the pro-Pakistan supporters. Perhaps, no other event brought such sharp focus (and generated discussions) on the internal fissures within Tehreek than Bhat's open reproach against Hurriyat and Pakistan.

In contrast to Bhat's Islamist rhetoric, Mannan Wani, a PhD scholar turned HM militant, voiced a more moderate opinion concerning the political ideology of Tehreek. In his two letters, published on 16 July and 13 September 2018, Wani framed Tehreek as a political struggle, did not use religious idioms, derived mostly from the discursive repertoire of Tehreek, and sought to reach out to the international community.

> Our case is crystal clear, and let nobody feel confused. This is the leftover of partition and India has to go. It is the people of Jammu and Kashmir who will determine their future course of society. Our question has never been of being fit in a culturally diverse India, it has fundamentally been of our dignity and right to stand for own selves. A compromise on dignity creates slaves and in slavery there is no dignity. Our battle has an international recognition, and even the use of gun is justified for seeking the right to self-determination as per the principles of United Nations, which India is a signatory of. We have morality, history, people's support and legal international basis on our side.

As can be observed, Wani's language is informed by political philosophies of thinkers like Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X—whom he quotes at beginning of the letter—and he argues within the framework of morality, history, and international legal principles. At one place he says, "We respect the freedom of all to choose their own religion. We are neither chauvinist nor fascists. We call for universal brotherhood". Clearly, Wani's message is the polar opposite to Bhat's shrill rhetoric, which appears to be received propaganda of the transnational Islamist networks which young men like Bhat have access to via the internet. Wani is steeped in politics, which he learnt and practised as a student activist at Aligarh Muslim University before joining HM in January 2018. He understands the importance of narratives and international solidarity. That is why, unlike Bhat, he

is careful with his language and framing of Tehreek, and counters the status quo arguments like that of young Kashmiri bureaucrat Shah Faesal, who, in his Indian Express article (28 December 2016), had asked Kashmiris to "abandon false hope and macabre heroism and work towards a dignified exit from the conflict". When Wani's first letter was published on a local news agency *Current News Service*, the IJK government immediately got it removed and registered a police report against the organisation. However, two months later, Wani published another letter, in which he gave reasons for his joining the militant ranks. Taking screenshots of the letter—lest the government again takes it down—, it was widely circulated and shared by many Kashmiri youths, who praised Wani for cogently articulating what they also wanted to say. If Tehreek has been what Asef Bayet (2017) would call a "revolution without revolutionaries", Wani letters filled the gap by providing satisfactory intellectual articulation of the movement through his revolutionary ideas. However, what lent credibility to Wani's ideas was that he was not an armchair intellectual rather an underground rebel who had sacrificed his career and comforts and faced a sure death—this positionality of Wani ran against David Devadas' characterisation of pro-Tehreek Kashmiri narrators as careerist elites.

Much before Bhat's audio-messages and Wani's viral letters, Tehreek's political ideology had been interpreted by Indian journalists and academics, most of whom viewed the political movement of self-determination in IJK as an outcome of improper post-colonial institution building. Some foregrounded the fact of the multi-ethnic character of IJK to argue against the demands of the self-determination movement, though they also advocated substantive political autonomy within the parameters of the Indian constitution. For example, in her 2002 article "Colours of azadi" (*The Hindu* 12 October 2002), Indian academic Navnita Chadha Behera proposed:

> A new class of political leadership has emerged from the [IJK] Assembly elections which must now try to segregate the political and territorial dimensions of the demand for azadi and work towards safeguarding the political rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

This line of argument and interpretation of the self-determination movement in IJK would be repeatedly expressed by Indian journalists and scholars at least until 2008 when the presumed 'return of normalcy'—measured based on tourist footfall and voting percentages—was ruptured by the mass civilian uprising.[89] As the third anti-India intifada erupted in 2016, the status quoist arguments lost their credibility in light of the relentless youth-led revolt and state repression against it. Though in the context of the post-2008 political uprisings pro-Tehreek Kashmiri narrative established itself globally, the ideological debate within Tehreek remained unresolved. Some Kashmiris kept asserting a nationalist position, some argued for Pakistan, and some tried to find a

[89] Though, Shah Faesal, in his December 2016 *Indian Express* article, also repeated many of the tropes, including of ethnic-diversity of IJK to advocate the status quo ante in IJK. He asked if the self-determination movement has 'factored in sub-regional and diverse ethnic aspirations?'.

middle ground by eschewing the discussion altogether and instead affirmed the right to self-determination, which was a unifier.

Nevertheless, the debate on the political ideology of Tehreek remained alive at margins. Although, both the pro-independence and pro-Pakistan supporters used the word Azadi and self-determination, what it meant in substantive terms was never spelt out. Both the groups embraced and interpreted them in their own ways. These terms united them; however, explaining them divided the people. So, explaining was usually avoided, resulting in continued ambiguity. Yet, the common denominator between the two groups always has been their desire for the end of Indian rule over IJK. Collective action frames of Azadi and self-determination were thus negotiated frames which developed on the basis of collective wisdom, through social dialogue and contestation between groups and disseminated via media discourses.

In the post-2008 period, as large swathes of people got politically mobilised, commentators in IJK once again began outlining the meaning of Azadi. In his 2009 article, "What does Azadi Mean?" (*Greater Kashmir* 21 May 2009), columnist Firdous Syed asked:

> Although word Azadi stimulates the fading spirits, what does Azadi ultimately mean is yet to be fully defined? Is Azadi an idea of change or simply a struggle for the end of Indian rule in Kashmir? Idea of Azadi excites us, but are we aware of ideals of Azadi also? It seems to be the worst irony that three generations have sacrificed tens of thousands of lives in pursuit of Azadi, we are yet to fully embrace the ideals of Azadi.

By ideals of Azadi, Syed meant unity of purpose, sense of justice and responsibility towards the environment. In this article, he spoke in both abstract and practical terms, focused on social reforms as well as political coherence regarding common agenda of Tehreek, something that was lacking due to a schism among different groups. In his later column, published on 14 August 2010, Syed advocated a middle path, saying:

> Slogans of secular independence or accession to Pakistan have the potential to divide the public opinion, only cry for Azadi meaning Right of Self Determination unites Kashmir.[90]

Syed's article provoked a debate in the pages of influential daily newspaper *Greater Kashmir*, with many readers sending letters in response to his piece. One reader, namely Riyaz Ahmad Bhat, wrote on 17 August:

> Undoubtedly people here want *Azadi* and not Pakistan. But observing August 14 as *'yawm-i- istiqlal'* does not mean that we are celebrating the independence day of Pakistan. Geelani has made his stand clear

[90] The context of this article was the 2010 uprising during which Syed Ali Geelani had called on people in IJK to celebrate the Pakistan Day on 14 August. Syed argued that this will create 'unnecessary controversies' and will be counterproductive because India will use it to misrepresent the Kashmir struggle: 'Clubbing Kashmir with Pakistan only serves India's interests. It has been trying hard to malign the struggle as extension of Pakistan. The call to observe Pakistan's Independence Day means fixing a wishful goal which can only contribute to the crisis'. (Syed, 2010).

> that people of Kashmir want right to self-determination.

Next day, on 18 August, another reader, namely Aijaz Hussain, said in his letter to the editor:

> We must not forget that Kashmir is nothing more than a contiguous Muslim majority region of Pakistan which has gone to the wrong side of the great divide of 1947. Delinking Pakistan from Kashmir issue is a disservice to the Kashmir cause fraught with fatal consequences.

Yet, in response to Aijaz Hussain's letter, a reader, Afsheen Azad (25 August 2010) asserted:

> Ask any youngsters who are fighting on the streets, what they want and you will get the answer. It's true that Kashmiris out of emotions were wishing to accede to Pakistan, but times have changed and so has the generation. UN Resolutions have no meaning, Indian promise of plebiscite dumped deep under, Pakistan occupying 1/3rd of Kashmir, and so on. Times have changed and so has the thinking. Kashmiris neither want to become a part of a nation [Pakistan] which is Islamic for only namesake nor of that nation [India] which in the name of secularism is the most communal in practice. Kashmiris are fighting for their own identity, which they never had the opportunity to possess!

If many Kashmiris in academia tried to articulate a nationalist line, those in the media tend to exhibit a more pro-Pakistan position. However, in the post-2008 Kashmiri youth narratives, the majority of the narrators seem to take a middle path, using the unifying cry of Azadi and right to self-determination and glossing over the dissension within Tehreek to frame the political movement as a coherent resistance against the Indian occupation or a struggle for political justice. Some Kashmiri scholars sought to push the ideological debate beyond the established binaries and nation-state model. For example, in his 2016 essay, "Azadi is not a state, but struggle" (*Kashmir Ink*. 10 February 2016), Kashmiri anthropologist Mohamed Junaid, emphasised that "Azadi is a process of seeking and thinking-through. It is not a state, but a struggle against the idea of state. It is resistance against domination, without a desire to dominate in turn". It was an idealistic framing of Tehreek or its ideals, but a close reading of Junaid's essay still show a Kashmiri nationalist slant.

In the wake of the 2016 uprising, the ideological debate resurfaced once again. On 18 May, Mohammad Saquib published an essay entitled 'Kashmir's competing political narratives' on a local web portal. He argued that the idea of independence was pushed by "many quarters" and a "visible attempt is being made to highlight that option, and there is a deliberate and conscious effort to hide or completely ignore a vast constituency within J&K that believes that the future of Kashmir after its independence from India lies with Pakistan". Around the same time, two young Kashmiri scholars published an essay within the purview of the ideological debate of Tehreek. Entitled "The Politics of a Struggle", the essay was carried by a Kashmiri web-portal *Wande Magazine* on 22 May 2018. In this essay, Yasir Bashir and Iymon Majid made a case for the pro-Pakistan position in IJK, by tracing it to the Pakistan movement during the British rule that had a direct bearing on the internal politics of Jammu and Kashmir, where, according to the authors, "not only did [the Muslims of the state] imagine a country for the Muslims of Indian subcontinent but they saw

themselves as part of it". The pro-independence ideologues immediately countered their arguments. In the tradition of Kashmiri nationalist scholars, Harun Lone, a postgraduate student of political sciences, wrote a short essay entitled "A Rising Tide of Kashmiri Nationalism"—published by Turkish outlet *TRT World*—in which he strongly advocated for an independent Jammu and Kashmir. He was trolled on social media by the opponents.

Since the discussions on the ideology of Tehreek increase the rift within the movement and in some cases also threaten friendships, most youth narrators prefer to remain silent on this aspect. But, it is the argument of this thesis that this silence is also strategic in the sense that these narrators seek to bring some level of coherence and consistency within the political agenda of Tehreek, to present a clear case to the international community. As mentioned in the beginning, very few youth narrators in the sampled narratives have taken an unambiguous pro-Pakistan or pro-Independence position.[91] And yet, as illustrated above, the ideological debate is carried on between these two central positions at the margins, even when, overall, a silence prevails on this aspect. This silence is enforced to achieve consensus so that political mobilisation becomes possible, and by couching the debate of Tehreek in the broader discourses of self-determination, this silence takes the focus away from the ambiguities of interpretation that the concept of self-determination creates concerning the specific situation of IJK. However, apart from silence on the ideological conflict, there is also an absence of religious idioms in most Kashmiri youth narratives, despite religiously-informed language being ubiquitous in the protests and pro-Tehreek literature and pamphlets. We shall turn to this aspect in the next section.

The Absence of Religious Idioms in Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Born Muslim and being part of a Muslim majority region, Kashmir youth narratives expectedly would have some references to Muslim history, or the youth narrators would instrumentally use 'religious discourses' in their political narratives. However, based on a close analysis of the Kashmiri youth narratives, it appears that they mostly employ a 'secularised language' in their accounts. By 'secularised language' what is meant here is the noticeable absence of references to faith-informed discourses. As an illustration of a typical political narrative where religiously-informed discourse is deployed, here is Syed Arshad Hussain Kashani writing in *Greater Kashmir* (25 June 2010):

> To take Kashmir out of miseries should be as per Islamic lines as we are Muslims and it is our fundamental duty to follow Islam completely (Al-Ahzab-36). This is our duty from Allah which is to be respected above any issue. If we fight for the right of UNO and ignore duties of Allah, the disaster is inevitable. What Kashmir is and where Kashmir should be is above the guidelines of UNO; UNO has

[91] This also became evident in the Al Jazeera interview (22 November 2018) of the top militant commander of HM, Riyaz Naikoo, who, in reply to a very specific question: 'What are your demands? Do you see Pakistan as part of what you want?', said rather vaguely: 'We consider Pakistan as our ideological and moral friend. Pakistan is the only country which has consistently supported our cause and raised the concerns of Kashmiri freedom struggle at international forums'.

> double standard, clearly exposed as East Timor, Palestine etc clearly vouch for the same. Islam guides and protects us better than UNO.

That Kashmiri youth narrators use a 'secularised language' in their political discourses on the Kashmir conflict becomes evident in the sampled articles from both 2010 and 2016. Although terms like Muslim are invoked in relation to Kashmiri identity—by fewer than 10 per cent narrators—hardly anyone employs an explicitly faith-informed language to make a political argument about the Kashmir conflict (see the word-tree figures 30-33 below). However, when we read pro-Tehreek literature in Urdu, especially by pro-Pakistan leaders, religious discourses are liberally used to bolster political narratives on the Kashmir conflict. For example, Syed Ali Geelani, a veteran pro-Tehreek politician, who heads the influential Tehreek-e-Hurriyat organisation, often quotes from Islamic scriptures and Muslim poetry both in his speeches and written work when he talks about the Kashmir conflict and Tehreek.

Geelani's 23-page booklet titled 'Tehreek-e-Hurriyat aur Jawanan-e-Millat ke Naam!' (For Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and the Youth of the Nation), is replete with Islamic scriptural verses and poetry of Muslim philosophers and poets. The political narrative within this small booklet is peppered with at least 14 quotations from the Islamic scriptures and 15 poetic verses. Addressing the youth of Kashmir, Geelani cites from poet Muhammad Iqbal's poem 'Tollu-e-Islam' (Resurgence of Islam) to tell them what an idealised life of youth should look like:

Masaf-e-zindagi me sirat-e-faulad paida kar
Shabistan-e-mohabbat me harir o parniyaan ho ja
Guzar ja ban ke sail-e-tund-rau koh o bayabaan se
Gulistan raah me aae to juu-e-naghma-khvaan ho ja
[On the battle-field of life adopt the nature of steel/In the bed-chamber of love become as soft as silk and painted brocade/Pass like a river in full spate through the mountains and the deserts/ If the garden should come your way, then become a melodiously singing stream.][92]

At another place in the booklet, Geelani asks the Kashmiri youth to safeguard and preserve the memory of "great and exemplary sacrifices" rendered by thousands of people in the path of "a legitimate and truthful cause" of the right to self-determination.[93] And here, once again he varnishes his rhetorical argument with an Iqbal couplet:

[92] The literal meaning of Ahle-e-Kalisa is 'people of the church'. But in the context of the poem, it could also mean 'Other' or others. It could also be a reference to Britishers who ruled over Indian sub-continent when the poem was composed.
[93] Syed Ali Geelani is ideologically associated with Jamaat-e-Islami, a religio-political organisation established in the 1940's. Poet Muhammad Iqbal's poetry, due to its Islamic orientation and critique of the western civilisation, holds a pre-eminent position in Jamaat's narratives.

Un Shaheedon Ki Diyat Ahle-e-Kalisa Se Na Mang

Qadar-o-Qeemat Mein Hai Khoon Jin Ka Haram Se Barh Kar

[Don't go asking Others worth of these martyrs/ Their blood is precious than the temple of Mecca].

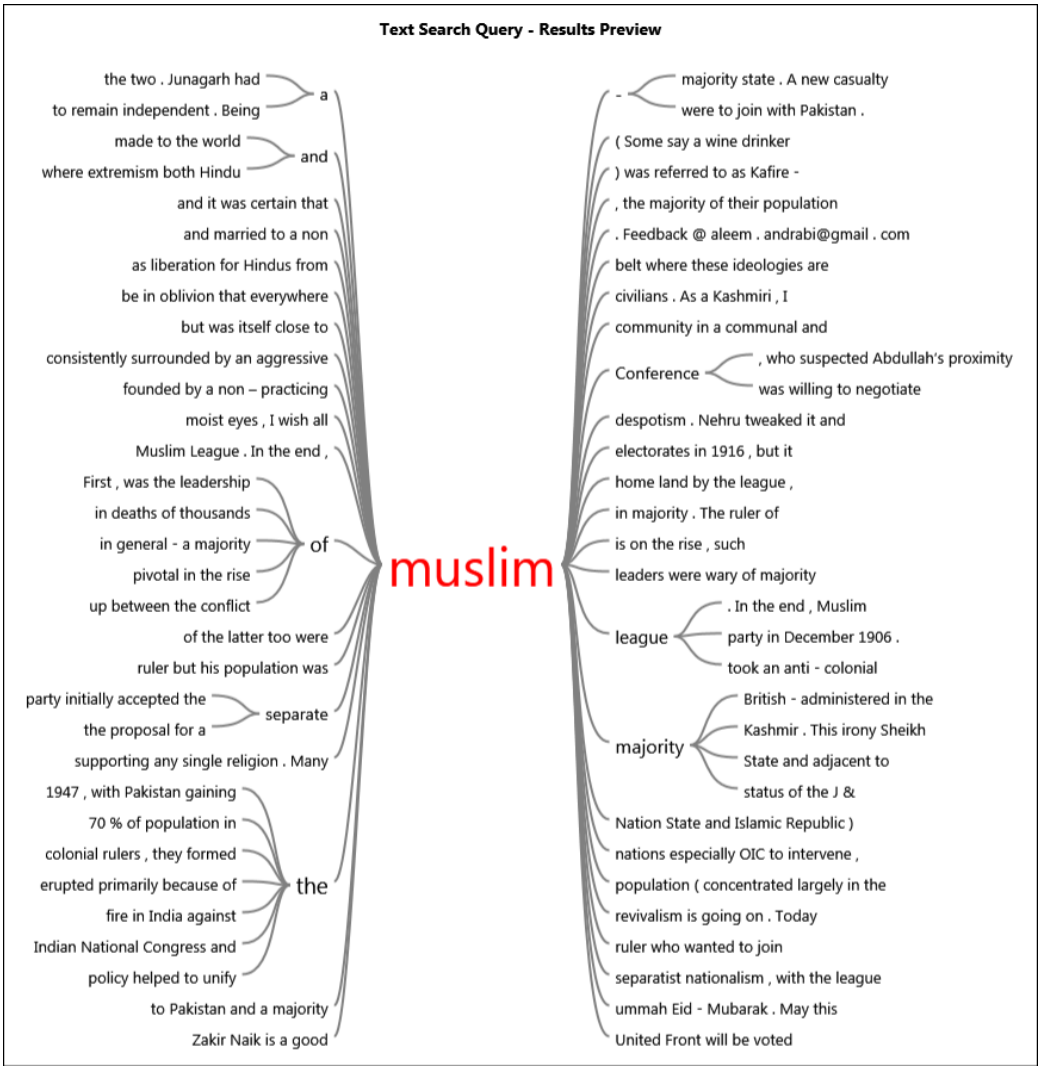

Figure 30: References to the word Muslim in the 2010 narratives

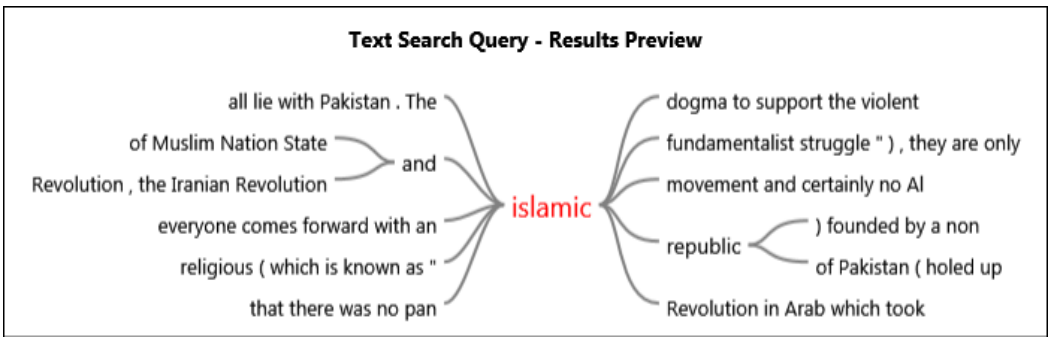

Figure 31: References to the word Islamic in the 2010 narratives

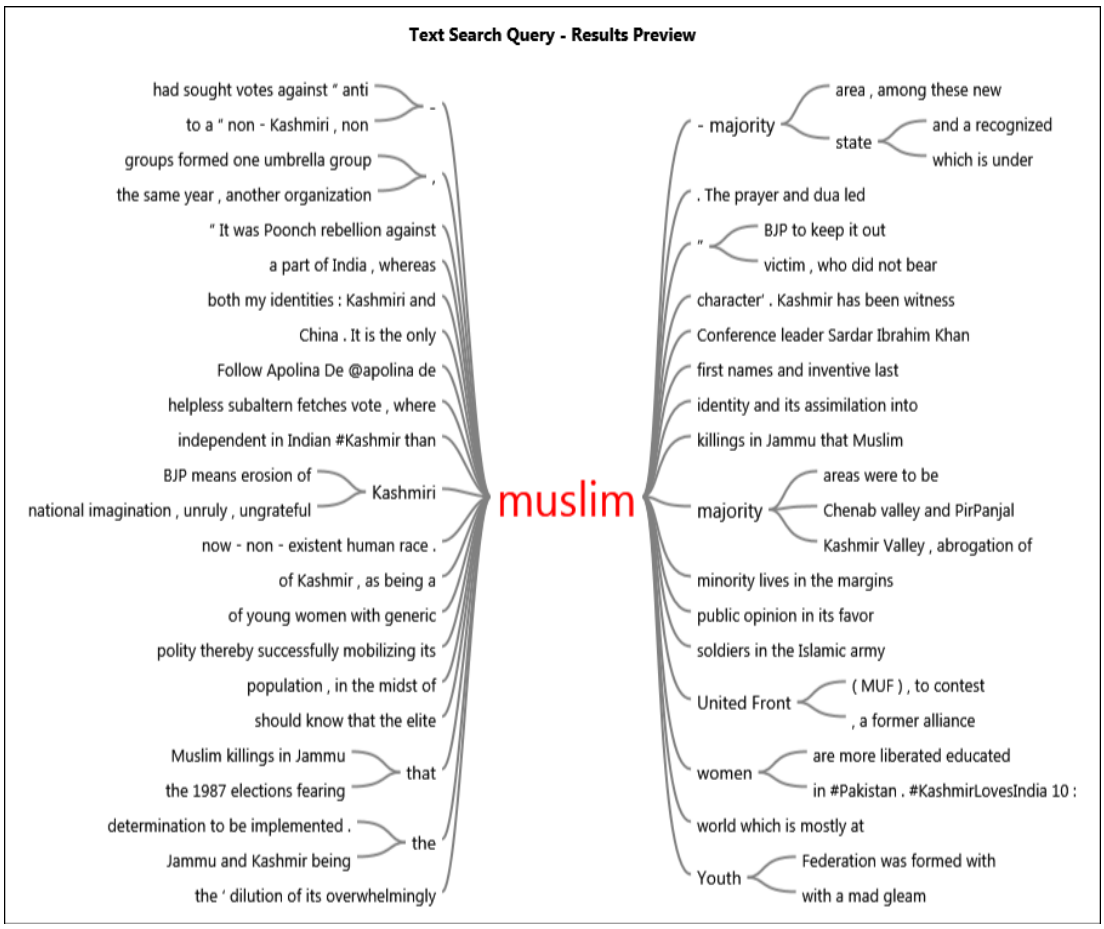

Figure 32: References to the word Muslim in the 2016 narratives

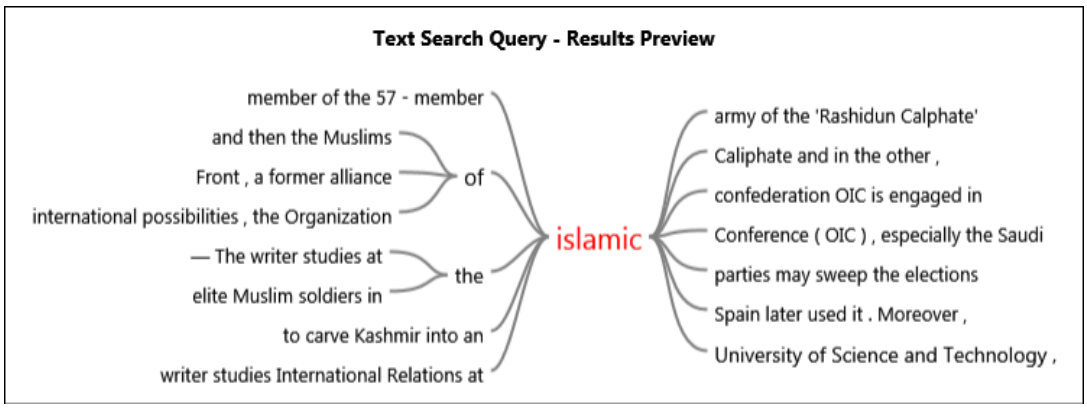

Figure 33: References to the word Islamic in the 2016 narratives

Although there is a dearth of polls which could credibly show religiously-informed political attitudes among Kashmiris, one survey conducted in 2012 does point to growing religiosity among the Kashmiri youth. The survey reports that a "clear and perceptible trend emerging from the study is that the youth in Kashmir is turning to Islam in many ways though the scale of this phenomenon varies considerably across its different manifestations" (Behera, 2012). Further commenting on the phenomenon, the report goes on to say that these results 'raise some troubling questions about the slow albeit steady penetration of the Islamist discourse amongst the Kashmiri youth'. However,

the survey also reports that the majority of the Kashmiri youth espouse a pro-Tehreek cause, with 25% providing a clear vision of an independent and sovereign Jammu and Kashmir within the pre-1947 borders. But only a tiny proportion (6%) talk about Islamic rule.[94]

So, the survey prompts the question: why certain political narratives on Tehreek and the Kashmir conflict informed by religious discourses (and used by influential pro-Tehreek leaders) have not found their way into the Kashmiri youth narratives, despite growing religiosity in Kashmir? For example, in the nine articles in the sample where any reference to Muslims or Islam was made, only in one instance was 'religious discourse' used to make a political statement:

> Some among them believe that I am afraid of their forces and because of that, I cover my face. It is not fear. One should know that the elite Muslim soldiers in the Islamic army of the 'Rashidun Caliphate' used to cover their faces using the 'Kufiyyah; (An Arab scarf that is usually worn around the neck or head)'. Then the forces of 'Salah Ad Din', the Abbasids and then the Muslims of Islamic Spain later used it. Moreover, presently apart from us (Kashmiri's) the rebels of Philistine also use it for covering their faces while fighting with the occupiers.

In most other cases, where religiously-informed references were made, it was mainly regarding the Muslim identity of Kashmiris and how that factor plays out in the political arena. For example, in these two excerpts taken from two separate articles, the Muslim identity of Kashmiris is contextualised in the post-colonial politics of India.

> In the Indian national imagination, unruly, ungrateful Kashmiri Muslim youth with a mad gleam in their eyes chase a mad dream called azadi on the streets. They are wicked children, at best, irrationally idealistic, at worst, miscreants out to create law and order problems.

> The partition pact allowed the people to decide their future on the basis of Two-Nation theory, i.e. Hindu majority areas were to be a part of India, whereas Muslim majority areas were to be assimilated to newly-born Pakistan. The place of Kashmir, as being a Muslim-majority area, among these new nations, was hotly debated.

The absence of religious discourses in the Kashmiri political narratives thus raises the pertinent questions: what necessitates this silence? And, is this silence incidental or strategic?

Narratives and the Parameters of Cultural Environment

Every story has an intended audience, which C. Wright Mills (1939, p. 672) characterises as the generalised other. Mills argues that our thinking and social communication of that thinking is determined by this generalised other, which is "a focalised and abstracted organisation of attitudes of those implicated in the social field of behaviour and experience". So, For the Kashmiri youth narrators, their immediate (Muslim) community—of which they are a part, and which is implicated in the conflict—is their primary audience or the generalised other. Nevertheless, given that the

[94] Furthermore, the survey reported that while 4% youth wanted merger with Pakistan, 'The single largest category was of 54% of youth, who wanted azadi', though understating of this ubiquitous term differed among the respondents. Around 17% also preferred self-rule as an option (pp. 32-33).

subject matter they deal with is a political conflict, it could be assumed that the larger world community is also their intended audience, whose solidarity or support is what they seek to gain. And, because they have this more extensive international generalised other in mind, it is natural for the Kashmiri youth to use the English language as a medium of communication. But, this line of argument cannot be made without a caveat: that not everyone necessarily proceeded with such aims and intentions, because saying that one of the objectives of the Kashmiri youth narrators is to seek solidarity from the world community is to assume that they all align with the pro-Tehreek discursive position. That is not the case, as the analysis has so far demonstrated: out of the 83 articles from the year 2016, 60 (72.28%) showed pro-Tehreek discursive position, but 22 (26.50%) also exhibited ideological ambiguity. Therefore, what can be true for the 72 per cent narratives may not be necessarily true for the rest. And yet, instead of resolving the puzzle, these statistics further complicate it.

Granted, that the narratives with 'unclear' or 'ambiguous' discursive position had no intention to seek the world solidarity for Tehreek—because they did not seem to align with the pro-Tehreek discursive position and hence need not to employ a 'secularised language'—why is then that religiously-informed discourses are still absent in the youth narratives in general?

One of the plausible explanations could be that most of the sampled youth narrators may not be subscribing to the religiously-oriented ideas espoused by certain pro-Tehreek leaders, who employ religious discourses in their political narratives on Kashmir. Even if some of these youths do subscribe to such ideas, they might be mindful of the negative image which religiously-oriented political narratives have globally, especially since 9/11. Hence, they avoid the use of religiously-informed language in political narratives. In other words, silence in terms of not using religious discourses in political narratives might be strategic, because it might alienate the international audiences. It was the reasoning provided by at least one of the sampled authors in an e-interview with this researcher. He said:

> Most of the writers prefer to try not to include it [religious discourses], primarily because of international political games being played around Islam, how Islam and terrorism have been made synonymous. Secondly, they haven't read Islam through its scriptures and narrations.[95]

Nonetheless, it would be simplistic to argue that this kind of 'silence' is just strategic. Because, such strategic-ness must be located within the broader milieu in which it has evolved and must operate, or which determines or shapes it. Besides, it is also important to consider the societal and global context in which the Kashmiri youth operate and write their political narratives and the social and cultural forces that influence them.

[95] Author's interview with New-Delhi based Kashmiri research scholar on 12 May 2017.

Like people in an active conflict zone, the Kashmiri youth are also enmeshed in different and competitive political narratives. However, they must negotiate not only a discursive position viz-a-viz the Kashmir conflict but also a sense of self-identity by aligning with those narratives which, as Karl Mannheim (1927, p. 188) says, are "a more or less adequate expression and interpretation of the experiences peculiar to [their] social location". Therefore, identifying and aligning with certain narratives would entail reproducing the same stories, though inflected by individual experiences. Margaret Somers (1994) argues that we should not see narrative merely as a representational aspect of experience instead it is through stories that one's social being is constituted. Critiquing the tendency among some scholars to explain social action from the narrower angle of interest or rational choice, Somers (p. 624) emphasizes on what she calls *narrative identity* approach, which posits that "social action can only be intelligible if we recognize that people are guided to act by the structural and cultural relationships in which they are embedded and by the stories through which they constitute their identities – and less because of the interests we impute to them'. And yet, it has to be recognised that while narratives constitute an individual's *sense of being* and determines thought and action but this sense of being can be reconstituted over time, because "the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of *time* and *place* and *power* that are constantly in flux" (p. 621). This feature endows certain fluidity to social categories.

When stories are told and exchanged within political and cultural matrices, they need to be structured and coherent. This coherence can be brought about by selectively appropriating certain aspects of collective experiences while underplaying or evading others. In other words, while some aspects are emphasised others are 'silenced'. Here we can conceive of such 'silences' as an aspect of narrative structuring—which may be conscious or unconscious—in terms of selective appropriation to present a particularised version of reality.

However, silences in narratives can be distinguished between 'being silenced' and 'being silent' (Fivush, 2010). In the former case, certain societal norms or power dynamics may determine what is to be 'voiced' and what needs to remain 'silent'. And, in the latter case, it could be a tacit understating among individuals and groups to stay 'silent' about certain things. Here Rhys Williams' (2004) conception of boundedness and resonance becomes relevant. Williams' central argument is that social movements negotiate their existence within the boundaries of "cultural environment" which has both facilitative as well as restrictive effects on them. The idea of *boundedness* postulates that social actors and groups, who align with a movement, encounter specific parameters of action which governs (or regulates) their public speech and narratives. Such public articulations (lectures, talks, messages, articles etc.) have two elements: intelligibility and legitimacy. What is said (or written) in public should be universally understandable, at least to the existing and potential

adherents of the movement—what is said at special meetings, drawing rooms, or private conversations may be different, though. And, while relaying a political message publicly (in written or spoken word), it must accommodate to what is generally considered a legitimate language, for it to have resonance among the larger audiences of the society (Williams, 2004, p. 103).

The parameters of 'cultural environment' which public expressions should negotiate may force social actors and groups to adjust their political messages (or narratives), and this could even mean strategically adopting "cultural expressions that originated with their rivals in order to achieve a place in public life" (Ibid). Such strategic adjustment of the political narrative is fraught with certain risks though, as this might lead to differential interpretations by the audiences. As Williams (p. 104) says, "social movement expressions, to the extent that they do become authentically part of the public cultural repertoire, do not stay the sole symbolic property of the groups who first used them. They become open for rival interpretation and potential transcendence in meaning". It is what also happened with the slogans of Azadi and self-determination, which, though originating in the aftermath of the 1947 Partition, come to be interpreted differently by contending groups and entities in IJK.

Moreover, a considerable number of Kashmiri youths are English-knowing. They are also the first generation of digital natives. Their worldviews are shaped not only by cultural and political forces at home but also by globalisation and the related advances in communication technologies. Their 'generation style' is thus informed by vast social and cultural changes that have occurred in their times where they have had various new phases of experience.[96] Thus, operating at a global level, unlike the previous generations, the contemporary Kashmiri youth have internalised languages of globalisation (e.g. human rights and liberal discourse) through their interaction or exposure to the internet. That is not to say that at global level communication (on the internet), only secular language operates. The social media has allowed religious views to thrive, besides facilitating promotion of right-wing and extremist political culture. In Kashmir too, it has helped in the diffusion of discourses of political Islam, which has found adherents among the Kashmiri youth.[97] But, the argument here is that due to global hegemony of liberal democratic ideology, secularised political narratives are more acceptable and legitimate at the global level in comparison to political

[96] In this regard, Mannheim (1927, p. 189) says: "When as a result of an acceleration in the tempo of social and cultural transformation basic attitudes must change so quickly that the latent, continuous adaptation and modification of traditional patterns of experience, thought, and expression is no longer possible, then the various new phases of experience are consolidated somewhere, forming a clearly distinguishable new impulse, and a new center of configuration. We speak in such cases of the formation of a new generation style, or of a new generation entelechy".

[97] IJK branch of Jamaat-e-Islami organisation has long been propagating the ideology of political Islam in Kashmir, and in the last decade the communication revolution enabled it to influence many more young people in Kashmir. Moreover, new Islamic organisations have also emerged in the last two decades, whose agenda however differ from Jamaat, and some of them are even seen as aligning with the state.

narratives couched in religiously-informed language. As Ali Harfouch (7 February 2018) says in his essay "Between Left and Right":

> The hegemonic nature of modern and postmodern narratives […] not only provoke a defensive posture (from the Muslim subject) but also furnish the Muslim subject with the language (and thus the horizons) of those counter-narratives.[98]

And yet, there is another aspect that can be explored to understand the 'silence' of religious discourses in the Kashmiri youth narratives. For example, can it be said that religiously-informed political language, though abound in certain pro-Tehreek political literature, is not used by the Kashmiri Muslim youth because, potentially, such narratives lack cultural resonance in Kashmir? That may not be the case either, because Kashmiri society, by and large, is 'religious'. However, that is not to say that it is not 'secular'. Kashmir is as a secular society but not in the same way as France is, as the meaning of 'secular' in the context of South Asian societies is qualitatively different. For example, in France, secularity (or Laïcité), theoretically speaking, means strict separation of religion and politics and freedom of expression to the extent that religion can be publicly criticised and ridiculed (King, 2004). In South Asian societies, secularism is mainly understood as harmonious co-existence between different sects and religious groups. In Kashmir, the term 'Kashmiryat', which is the tradition of religious syncretism, typically embodies this idea of South Asian secularism. However, it is not to say that 'religious discourses' would resonate in only 'religious' societies. In nominally secular United States, many social movements instrumentally use 'religious discourses' to endow their political messages (or frames) with certain moral substance because such religiously-informed discourses have wider receptibility in many parts of that country. As Williams (2004, p. 107) says, use of religious discourses in political narratives can be useful for movements because "religious expressions have an inherent note of challenge in their content, simply because they do not take the world-as-it-is as an ultimate value. There is a transcendence built into a religious worldview that can relativize any societal arrangement".

Over the past decade or so, Kashmiri society is said to have become more religious, though not enough empirical evidence is available to make this claim with full certainty. If mushrooming of mosques, watching religious channels, and the large attendance at religious events can be taken as a measure, then Kashmir indeed has become more religious. So, considering this growing religiosity among Kashmiris, especially among the Kashmiri youth—as also indicated by the 2012 survey cited above—saying that religiously-informed political narratives would lack cultural resonance in Kashmir does not seem to hold. Therefore, while analysing 'silences' in the Kashmiri youth

[98] For the Muslim youth, negotiating the hegemonic global narratives involves adjusting their language and political resistance by eschewing references to their religion, since, as Harfouch argues, "The Muslim is only welcomed as a Muslim when his or her commitment to Islam is grounded in a liberal discourse. And for the left, Islam is welcomed only insofar as it is reduced to a "culture" and embraced only as such".

narratives within the framework of boundedness and resonance, the parameters of the cultural environment—in which boundedness and resonance operate—needs to be expanded beyond Kashmir. Political narratives produced by the Kashmiri youth, then, must be understood within the broader historical context. Notably, the audiences (the generalised other) implicit in the political narratives should be taken into consideration.

Interestingly, on popular communicative platforms, like Facebook, religiously-informed political narratives seem to be more readily used by the Kashmiri youth. Perhaps, the 'cultural environment' differs between the domains of conventional and social media. In the former, certain permissible parameters are imposed externally by the editors, and since it is a public platform, messages are strategically framed. In the latter, which is instant communication with mostly familiar and likeminded people, the permissible parameters are vaguely set, or largely self-governed. What is posted for 'public' and shared with 'friends' only depends on a user's positionality and how that user has nurtured her public image. Therefore, while 'secularised language' is a preferred choice in the narratives published in the conventional media, use of 'religious discourses', however, seems to be more prevalent in the social media domain.[99]

As an illustration, we can take an event that took place on 13 June 2017 in the Kashmir Valley. In the evening of that day, a series of guerrilla attacks were launched on Indian forces by the Kashmiri armed rebels, injuring at least eleven soldiers and two policemen. In an instant reaction to these attacks on social media, Kashmiri youths posted their comments. A common theme in some of these comments and posts on Facebook and Twitter was their reference to the battle of Badr, an important event in the history of Islam. For example, a young Kashmiri journalist posted on Twitter, "On the eve of Battle of Badr, rebels rattle Indian forces across #Kashmir".[100] Another young Kashmiri journalist wrote, "Six attacks within hours in #Kashmir in commemoration of seventh-century Muslim battle".[101] The 13th June 2017 corresponded to the 17th day of Ramadan, which marks the anniversary of the battle of Badr, a decisive war between the armies of Prophet Muhammad and the dominant tribe of Quraysh in 624 AD. This fight ultimately established the leadership of Prophet Muhammad over all other Arab tribes.

Thus, by invoking Badr, these Tweets deployed Islamic history to subtly endow the guerrilla attack of 13 June with religious connotations. Likewise, such religious discourses were also deployed by Zakir Musa, a young Kashmiri rebel, who, in an unprecedented move, asked the political leadership of Tehreek to desist from calling Kashmir movement a political struggle. Bhat spoke against

[99] In a related study, Shahnaz Khalil Khan (2015, p. 349) argues that religion as a category "does not take a prominent position in CyberKashmir as a whole, or in [Kashmiri] women's discourses generally". Though, some women organisations in Kashmir do mobilise religious frames "in a performative way".
[100] Tweeted on 13 June 2017 at 6:48 PM (IST).
[101] Tweeted on 13 June 2017 at 10: 32 PM (IST).

territorial nationalism by basing his arguments on Islamic rulings. Bhat's pronouncement catalysed a heated debate online, with many criticising his stance and some supporting him. His comments unexpectedly opened the discussions on the ideological position of Tehreek, something which pro-Tehreek leaders had somehow held in abeyance or not engaged in for some time. Interestingly, religious discourses, due to their flexible interpretations, were mobilised to both criticise Bhat and support his stance. Although another rebel Manan Wani also invoked religion in his letters, unlike Bhat's exclusivist message and shrill rhetoric, he emphasised on universal brotherhood:

> We must adhere to the values of Islam which encompass all spheres of life. Islam offers teachings for welfare and justice based state. We respect the freedom of all to choose their own religion. We are neither chauvinists nor fascists. We call for universal brotherhood, while communalism is the tool of our occupier'.

Conclusion

Political narratives of the Kashmiri Muslim youth present a particularised representation of the Kashmir conflict. Kashmiris, as a collectivity, are represented as the aggrieved party, who have faced historical injustices and oppression from the state. The conflict in IJK is framed by youth authors both as human rights issue as well as the question of political justice, and they stress that to resolve the conflict honouring the right to self-determination is essential. These political narratives of the Kashmiri youth, however, enforce 'silences' on two aspects of the Kashmir political discourses: ideology and religion. Regarding the ideological silence, what is meant is the skipping of the debate on the political ideology of Tehreek. The common political stand which invariably all pro-Tehreek leaders have maintained publicly is that Jammu and Kashmir state is a disputed territory and people of the region should be given the right to self-determination. This common political stance allows pro-Independence JKLF and largely pro-Pakistan Hurriyat to work together. The same political stand is almost invariably reiterated by the youth narrators, who eschew debate on ideology and instead use the unifying language of Azadi and self-determination. In other words, while the right to self-determination is maintained as the principled position, there is a 'silence' on the question of ideology. Regarding the religious silence, what is meant is the absence of religious discourses or idioms in the political narratives, otherwise commonly found in pro-Tehreek literature in Urdu language and during street demonstrations. Since, in the globalised world, discourses of liberal democracy are hegemonic, the Kashmiri youth must adjust their language of contention according to the values of the dominant system so that their narratives are acceptable at the global level. Ultimately, the twin silences observed in the Kashmiri youth narratives seem to be strategic, though this strategic-ness must be contextualised. The Kashmiri youth narrators appear to use a modulated political language, which they have inherited from the discursive repertoire of Tehreek. The 'secularised language' of their narratives seems to be a result of their interaction with globalisation and their hope of redemption through international solidarity.

In a way, the minimal or no use of religious idioms or use of modulated secularised language of many political narratives—at least in the sampled accounts from 2010 and 2016—point to a tacit understanding, social wisdom, and experiential knowledge among the youth narrators. So that Tehreek is not misrepresented in front of the international community, whose support and solidarity the narrators deem important, the twin 'silences' complement each other to produce a coherent, consistent, and legitimate narrative of Tehreek.

Conclusion

In the last decade, Kashmiri youth have starkly marked their presence and appeared as a distinct and autonomous political subject, dominating the discourses on Kashmir. The Indian state also recognises their decisive role in the contemporary phase of the Kashmiri self-determination movement or Tehreek. However, there have been attempts by the state to create a narrative which de-emphasises the political nature of the youth protests and instead focus the talk on issues such as scholarship, unemployment, drugs, economy and social development. Kashmiris challenge and subvert such narratives through varied ways and mediums. So, as much Kashmir is a site of political conflict it is also a site of discursive contestations. However, what role are Kashmiri youth playing at the discursive plane and to what effect? These are the broader questions which this thesis attempted to address.

This thesis examined the Kashmiri youth narratives produced in the last decade, offering a systematic exploration of the subject. It looked as how Kashmiri youth represent the Kashmir conflict, subvert the hegemonic discourses, reproduce the language of contention to critique and destabilise the existing political order and affirm a separate political identity. Locating the Kashmiri youth generation in their specific historical, political and cultural context, and systematically analysing their political discourses, this thesis illustrated how the youth narrators draw on available resources of history, language and culture to forge a collective narrative, how they affirm their political subjectivity by deploying different discursive strategies. It showed that while variations exist across cases, most of the youth narrators expressed a discursive position which, directly or indirectly, aligned with Tehreek.

This thesis employed the generational perspective (Mannheim, 1927; Edmunds and Turner, 2002; Eyerman, 2004) and identified the discursive patterns in the youth narratives which underlined a unifying political attitude, though expressed differently by different narrators. The youth narrators have reconstructed the language of contention which bears the imprint of their generational consciousness. Ultimately, offering a grounded and personally intimate accounts of the Kashmir conflict and the life under the militarised occupation, the youth narrators have, cumulatively, forged a subversive narrative structure which challenges the hegemonic discourses and claims of the state on Kashmir and its assimilationist project, as well as its negative propaganda against the self-determination movement in IJK.

If collective identity is sharing of cognitive, moral and emotional bond with a broader community, practices and institutions, the underlying themes (or *topoi*) of the youth narratives then act as the discursive link which connects Kashmiris as an imagined community and where their personal identities converge into a shared status. Politically, it is the *topoi* of 'irresolution' and 'the tripartite

dimension' of the Kashmir conflict upon which the political identity of Kashmir (and, by extension, of Kashmiris) seems to hinge. It is perhaps these prevailing *topoi* in the youth narratives that foster this sense of being in a state of protracted transition or being stuck betwixt and between, neither a fully independent country nor a normal constituent unit of a state. And, perhaps, it is this interstitial condition of uncertainty or irresolution which makes Kashmiri youth malleable to varied political projects and differing political ideas.

Finally, in theoretical terms, this thesis suggests that while social movements can mobilise people through the processes of frame alignment (Snow and Benford, 1988, 2000), successful diffusion of social movement frames will depend on their transmission through generations if a movement must endure. Collective action frames create oppositional consciousness (Gamson, 1992), but the language of contention, which relates to the social and cultural resources through which a social movement preserves itself (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007), must reproduce itself through a new generation, because it is an indispensable part of the processes of social interactions through which political actors are constituted and symbolic boundaries marked between different sets of entities involved in contention (Tarrow, 2013, p. 16). So, how we know if the collective action frames of a resistance movement have been successfully transmitted? Locate their diffusion in the narratives of a new generation.

Unobtrusive Resistance Through Narratives

While the post-2008 uprisings prompted state responses like increased incarcerations and brutal clampdown on protestors and dissidents, there were also discursive responses to these events and their aftermath from the Kashmiri youth, especially those who came from the educated strata of the society. The Kashmiri youth narrators responded to and captured the political crisis in textual as well as visual forms, and their narratives were published, broadcasted, and exhibited through different mediums and channels at various places and venues. Through their discursive representations (*decision* or *intervention* in Badioun terms), the Kashmiri youth narrators foregrounded their generation's perspective on the Kashmir conflict and wrote, unlike the mainstream Indian media, positively about the political dissidents and Tehreek in general. While, to a large extent, the mainstream Indian media and state discourses tried to criminalise the people who participated in the uprisings, the Kashmiri narrators humanised them and endowed them with political agency. These youth narratives drew upon the experiences of the prevailing political situation in IJK and offered a grounded representation of Kashmir; they also draw from received discursive repertoires of Tehreek to reconstruct the language of contention.

Effectively, this flurry of discursive activities, primarily carried out by English-speaking young narrators itself was a sort of an event within the larger post-2008 *Event*; it was a revolution within a revolution. This youth-led discursive event was a gradual process of affirmation, whereby Event

was framed as an Event and not what the state tried to term it: mob violence, law and order problem, or orchestrated unrest. It was an intervention at the discursive level and a kind of unobtrusive resistance against state's ideologically-motivated framing of the resurgent Tehreek.

The Formative Experiences and Influences

The post-2008 Event was massively wide-spread, politically intense, and of a longer duration, and occurred at a time when a large mass of young Kashmiris was coming of age—by 2011, over 30% population of Kashmir was between 15-30 years old. So, for the youth generation in IJK, those born in the 1980s and the 1990s, the post-2008 Event was a primary, immediate, and personal experience of the Kashmir conflict. It was during the resurgent Tehreek that a critical mass of young men and women realised their position as subjects of a conflict zone, gained understanding and significance of the received narratives about the tumultuous 1990s—about which they had only heard from elders, or retained a vague memory and vicarious understanding. Whereas, hitherto, their idea of Tehreek was distanced, since they were too young to witness and understand the turmoil of the 1990s, recurring protest episodes since 2008 became part of their proximate memory and informed their writings and art. In this regard, Marianne Hirsch (2012) says that those generations who are not witness to collective trauma can inherit memories of those events via 'postmemory', which involves mediated stories, images and behaviours passed down from the generation of witnesses and survivors to their children. That means, for the contemporary youth generation in IJK, 'postmemory' forged a link with the traumatic events of the 1990s through mediated stories and investment in aesthetic projections. The post-2008 Event not only vindicated that postmemory, but personalised it.

Yet, the youth generation is also historically located in an epoch of rapid social, cultural and political changes, which have influenced their worldview and political orientation. Unlike the previous generations, the contemporary generation is digital natives—which has empowered a lot them. Besides, the post 9/11 discourses about Muslims and the wars and conflicts in the Middle East have also affected Kashmiri youth, who share the anxieties and concerns which other Muslim youths around the world confront. So, their political socialisation owes as much to the post-2008 Event as to the global changes, and together these influences have shaped them into what Ruth Milkman (2017) calls "new political generation".

How to Understand the Kashmiri Youth and their Political Subjectivity

Some scholars attribute frequent occurrences of conflicts to the phenomenon of a youth bulge, which is a situation where a country has a bulk of the young population. Since every country or region has limited resources, a growing young population can have an adverse effect by putting a strain on its resources and institutions, which may not be able to cope with their demands. If grievances of the youth population are kept unaddressed, it may lead to political violence. In the

case of the Arab Spring, large youth population was a factor in the uprisings, and the same understanding makes some commentators in India to link the post-2008 political mobilisations in IJK to the issue of youth bulge and unemployment. However, this thesis argues that even if this is partially right, suspension of democratic rights, heavy militarization of the civilian spaces, daily harassment of the local population at the hands of the Indian security personnel, unaccountability of the local political elite and government bureaucracy all contribute to the accumulation of political grievances among the Kashmiri youth. Even then, these are all symptoms (even imperatives) of the militarised occupation and not the sole reason for the youth revolt in IJK.

Kashmiri youth are framed in contradictory terms in the dominant state and media discourses. On the one hand, they are a great human resource for the nation-building project—as embodied in the young Kashmiri IAS officer like Shah Faesal, who is projected as a youth icon worth to be emulated by other Kashmiri youth. Yet, they are a problematic group (especially stone-throwers) who needs to be either punished or assimilated through the policy of 'engagement'. This dual framing of Kashmiri youth is a result of their proactive participation in anti-India political dissent, which the India state tries to label as criminal, deviant, or anti-national by projecting it as something externally orchestrated.

Nevertheless, between these two categories—the aspiring bureaucrat vs the anti-state activist—there are Kashmiri youths with a range of career aspirations and political orientations and behaviours. Many of these youths engage in unobtrusive anti-India resistance by writing narratives, of which there are broadly two types: popular and critical. The popular narratives are by orientation journalese, rhetorical and mostly descriptive, while as academic scholarship informs the critical narratives. As a significant section of the IJK population witnessed socio-economic mobility largely due to the wide-ranging land reforms of the 1950s, it resulted in more parents sending their kids to schools. Although private schools used English for a long time, the language was introduced as a medium of instruction in government-run schools in the early 2000s. Within decades, a critical mass of English-knowing young population developed in IJK who became instrumental in widely disseminated the narratives of Tehreek during the communication revolution and social media boom; they published in a range of media outlets around the world, as illustrated in this thesis.

Circumventing the state censorship on conventional media in IJK, some enterprising Kashmiri youth also created a relatively independent, web-based communication structure, which became an outlet to express dissent and political subjectivity. It was this alternative media ecosystem where a large chunk of Kashmiri resistance narratives thrived and circulated globally.

As mentioned already, the post-2008 Event (and its aftermaths) and the concurrent global changes like communication revolution and conflicts in the Muslim regions have shaped political

subjectivity of the youth generation in IJK. It is by locating this youth generation within its specific historical, political and social location that we can gain a nuanced understanding of their political behaviour, both street protests as well as dissent through narratives. In terms of their historical and political location, the Kashmiri youth are enmeshed in the political discourses and culture which developed gradually since the 1950s, first institutionalised by the Plebiscite Front and the organisations which later emerged from it, such as JKLF and Hurriyat.

As JKLF organised a guerrilla army and launched a war of attrition against Indian rule in the late 1980s, Indian state responded with a brutal crackdown and engaged in severe human rights violations against the civilian population, who faced collective punishment. In 1993 was formed Hurriyat, some of whose members had previously been associated with the Plebiscite Front. It would be Hurriyat which largely defined the politics of Tehreek ever since. As a peaceful movement comprised of over 20 political parties, Hurriyat made heavy use of general strikes (*hartal*) and demonstrations to pressurise the Indian government to resolve the Kashmir conflict. Although negotiations were held on some occasions in the last thirty years, nothing concrete emerged from those negotiations. Adamantly staying away from electoral politics, Hurriyat continued to rely on contentious performances like general strikes, demonstrations, and memorandum submissions to pressurise the Indian government, which, however, refused to entertain the demand of referendum and stressed on 'territorial integrity', saying borders cannot be changed.

The Indian state believed it could defeat Kashmiri Tehreek through the carrot-and-stick policy. It was essential for the state to attract the rebellious Kashmiris to preserve the status quo ante, so the state employed the rhetoric of liberal democracy and held regular elections as a political process. However, the state's rhetoric of liberal democracy did not match the ground realities, which created what Paul Staniland (2013) calls the paradox of 'normalcy'. When Kashmiris attempted to use democratic means to express their political will and demand political justice, the state immediately repressed them through varied means. Even when articulating through democratic and peaceful means, Kashmiri demand for political justice seemed to India a threat to the status quo and its geostrategic objectives. The political interests of the people of IJK and the Indian state were thus incongruent and ran against each other, generating a paradox which sustained instability and unrest in IJK. Extensive militarisation and increased state control over public spaces further exacerbated the situation. Corrupt political elite helped Indian state to entrench its control over the region, so the state allowed corruption to lure people who were willing to collaborate with it. A vicious cycle sustained itself, generating more grievances and anger among the people.

For the youth generation in IJK, this intractable political situation was simply frustrating. Neither was the political conflict dying nor was the desire for a referendum being honoured nor was the state winding down the coercive security apparatuses it had established in the disputed region. Add

to this Indian far right's Islamophobia and shrill rhetoric against Muslims of IJK, and its stated aim to change the demographics of Kashmir. These factors combinedly created a situation where people began revolting once again when the political opportunity emerged in the late 2000s.

In 2008, when under a right-wing Hindu governor of IJK a large tract of forest land in Kashmir was transferred to a Hindu shrine board, Muslims in Kashmir resisted it, fearing demographic change and dilution of the self-determination movement. The agitation of 2008 soon turned from an anti-land transfer protest to an anti-India movement, and the two-month long agitation and following protests events (2009, 2010 and 2016) brought the youth generation of Kashmiris to the streets, and in the process initiated them into Tehreek. They witnessed killings of demonstrators, large-scale arrests and repression through which India state wanted to quell the civilian uprisings. Around the same time, the communication revolution happened and provided them with a relatively freer platform through which to share their stories, express political subjectivity and connect with other Kashmiris and the global audiences and ideas. When they wrote about the recent political events, they also invoked history and employed the received collective action frames of Tehreek, which they felt vindicated considering the post-2008 Event.

Since the early 2000s, a considerable number of young Kashmiris had enrolled in different Indian colleges and universities. The number of university graduates had also increased substantially. In the left-leaning and politicised campuses, they cultivated allies and solidarity groups and expressed their political stand on Kashmir with relatively lesser restrictions than in Kashmir. The traumatic events and experiences and narratives assimilated back home informed their political articulations; some talked about self-determination, while as some couched their articulations in human rights language. In contrast, on the campuses of IJK students' union remained banned. They faced surveillance and state repression, so those who engaged in student politics operated mostly clandestinely. Status of Kashmir as a state of exception became increasingly visible to the Kashmiri youth.

Arguably, if the contemporary Kashmiri youth generation was politicised and initiated into the discourses of Tehreek, it was chiefly through the dramatic eruptions beginning with the 2008 agitation that ruptured the situation of imposed normalcy in IJK. Spontaneous demonstrations disturbed the purported return of normalcy—imposed externally through military might and buttressed by the dominant narratives aligned with the status quo—when the direct action of people exposed the real nature of the relationship between India and Kashmir as an occupying state and the occupied people. It was a moment of clarity, which took time to build up. However, once it happened, the adaptive attitude of people to the 'normalised situation' changed and led to a proactive mass political assertion, which rendered the status quoist narratives ineffectual. For the politically indifferent or undecided, the dramatic eruption brought clarity to the dark political

environment by revealing the actual political mood of the Kashmiri society at large. Among many young Kashmiris, the post-2008 dramatic eruptions induced a psychological transformation, turning them from being politically passive to politically active, as exemplified by the cases of Huzaifa Pandit and Hina Arif, who said that "my paintings changed from the landscape, and I started painting the victims, and it [paintings] started to reflect the conflict, and slowly it became part of my existence".

However, besides living under a coercive and stifling militarised administration at home, the Kashmiri youth also faced anxieties that global Muslim youth confronted. The complex world of geopolitics had a direct bearing on the internal politics of IJK. Global Islamophobia misrepresented Muslims by viewing them as a monolith and underplaying their diversity and differing cultures and history. Mainstream Indian media, including Bollywood, plugged into the global Islamophobic wave and misrepresented the political struggle of the right to self-determination in IJK. Ultimately, this fostered a sense of siege among Kashmiri youth, who began to see India as part of the nexus of the powerful entities of the world who were at war with the Muslims. Influenced by such framings, some of the Kashmiri youth got attracted to extremist worldviews or exclusivist ideologies and organisations, where they felt a sense of brotherhood.

And yet, within the same generation, a certain cohort, who though also witnessed and experienced the same set of traumatic events and episodes of unrest and violence, did not take the path of resistance but the path of collaboration, grudging resignation, and passive cynicism. Some youth also took a middle path, a path of what Watts (2006) would call the "representative contention" (i.e. a form of social movement activism which operates within the framework of state institutions).

A Nuanced View of the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

Regarding their discursive intervention, the Kashmiri youth narrators incorporated specific subversive terminologies (for example, "occupation") into the political discourses, terminologies which have allowed them to construct pro-Tehreek frames to understand Kashmir situation and carry out political dissent. Some of these youth narrators studied outside IJK, exposing themselves to different strands of thought and social movements and their narratives—and here we can see the importance of networks in how ideas flow and adapt to local situations. It was mainly due to the English-speaking youth writers (and digital natives), who gave a firm grounding to the contention language of Tehreek, by providing interpretation and representation of the experiences of the new politicised generation and taking it to the broader audiences.

Whereas journalist David Devadas characterises Kashmiri narratives as "orchestrated" and thus do not acknowledge the political agency of local narrators to be reliable storytellers, this thesis presents empirically-grounded and nuanced analyses of the Kashmiri youth narratives. While, it is

undoubtedly true that most of the youth narratives analysed in this thesis were penned by post-graduate students and professionals like journalists, engineers, and lawyers, there was, however, variations in discursive positions and how they framed the Kashmir conflict. Although the pro-Tehreek position was predominant, not every narrator was explicitly clear or unambiguous. Analysis of the two sets of youth narratives taken from two sample years 2010 and 2016, showed that about 72 per cent of articles were pro-Tehreek in their discursive position. However, some narratives also exhibited ideological ambiguity: 22 per cent in 2010 and 26 per cent in 2016. Similarly, out of the 85 articles from 2010, 13 narrators alluded to a pro-Tehreek position, and nine had an implicit pro-Tehreek slant. Some narrators maintained deliberate ambiguity, which allowed a room (or political opportunity) for those who were hesitant to employ the resistance language explicitly. Moreover, whereas four articles showed a clear pro-independence discursive position, an equal number had a pro-state (or the status quoist) discursive position—one among these four was pro-autonomy, and another was implicitly status-quoist.

About 67 per cent articles in 2010 and over 81 per cent in 2016 employed the political frame, while as 27 per cent articles in 2010 and only 14 per cent articles in 2016 used the human rights frame. In the 2016 narratives, the political themes included: resistance, state terror, identity, international intervention, political history, conflict resolution, and so forth. In the 2010 narratives, while some articles had human rights as the central theme, the discussion also touched upon Tehreek, though human rights received primary importance than the political movement. Following were the main sub-themes which operated under the primary themes in the 2010 narratives: human rights (12), political (8), resistance (6), and conflict resolution (5). Minor themes in the 2010 narratives were: history (6), democracy (2), economy (2), social critique (1), media critique (1), and leadership (1). In the 2010 narratives, the conflict resolution frame operated as the primary frame in at least five articles, while as the resistance frame appeared in only one article, though it was present as a secondary frame in not less than 12 articles. Moreover, the conflict resolution frame was present as a sub-frame in five articles, while the resistance was also present as a sub-frame in at least six articles. Difference between a secondary and a sub-frame is that while the former operates parallel to the primary frame, the latter is like a sub-theme.

In contrast to 2010, the term 'occupation' appeared in at least 17 articles in the 2016 narratives, with 13 articles invoking the term as a clear political stand against Indian control over IJK. It seems that gradually many more Kashmiris have started using the term 'occupation' or its variations to describe the Indian rule over IJK, though out of fear or inhibition many still do not use it as freely. On social media, however, the term is extensively used. Unlike the conventional media, which is dependent on the state for advertisements and hence easily come under pressure, the alternative media has relatively little at stake and hence allows the word occupation in the narratives.

Incorporation of the term occupation in the Kashmiri political discourses is significant. It demonstrates influences of globalisation, the discourses of other social movements and critical scholarship. Importantly, the term occupation subverts the dominant inter-state or institutionalist understanding of the Kashmir conflict, because, unlike other terms, occupation asserts an absolute pro-Tehreek position and allows for little narrative manipulation through euphemistic words like dispute, issue, or problem. Ultimately, it changes the terms of debate on Kashmir.

Discursive Strategies in the Kashmiri Youth Narratives

The Kashmiri youth narrators employ different discursive strategies to frame the political events in IJK and the Kashmir conflict in general. Besides using allegory or allusion, they also make use of certain metaphors to conceptualise the political situation in IJK. This thesis identified three key metaphors: paradise lost, prison, and wound, and examined their role in Kashmiri political discourses. For example, a youth author writes in August 2010, "on the ground people speak about the brutality unleashed by the 'security forces' in their respective areas. All these memories have become a festering wound, which is refusing to heal". Metaphorical framings of Kashmir are both textual and visual, as illustrated by the works of Kashmiri cartoonists. The Kashmiri youth narrators utilise the figurative language to express their political subjectivity, as it allows a creative space for contentious talk and navigating different sorts of censorship.

Nevertheless, these metaphors are also open to discursive contestations. For example, while the status quoist narrators deploy the metaphor of paradise lost as some nostalgic rumination on the pre-1990s IJK, which is framed as a peaceful period when the people of the disputed state were purported to be content with the status quo. However, this reading of the metaphor contrasts with Kashmiri nationalist view of it, where paradise lost is understood as a loss of sovereignty to the outside power, India. The other two metaphors, prison and wound, are embodiments of political grievances and pain that people in IJK have experienced in the last thirty years of bloody armed conflict.

Linguistic devices, such as metaphor, are easier to identify and analyse. But, there are other discreet aspects in the narratives. This thesis explored unifying, albeit imperceptible, threads that run through the narratives. One of the threads identified was the element of hope. In the overall structure of a narrative, we can find pragmatic intent of the narrator. Which entails looking for social, cultural and political objectives and agenda in the narrative by identifying its narrative direction, its arguments and interactional goals. Everything said in a text has its meaning in the rhetorical context, and there can be different frames present within a text. Majority of the Kashmiri youth narratives had a counter-hegemonic orientation, but that did not manifest only in overt and covert use of pro-Tehreek collective action frames. The element of hope was a unifying, though an unobtrusive, thread that bounded the Kashmiri youth narratives in terms of infusing them with

a certain ideological coherence and emotional force. Hope is a psychological attraction toward a desired outcome, and it acts as a positive emotion through which the aspirational aspect of Tehreek is sustained in discourses. Hope induces a positive anticipatory approach toward an uncertain future and sustains motivation to engage in hopeful ideas and imaginings.

From the generational perspective, the element of hope has an instrumental value for Tehreek, whose continuity depends on the hope in the next generation and that the struggle will ultimately bear fruit. It is a point of convergence for different political visions, be that pro-independence, pro-autonomy, or pro-Pakistan, as all these visions are future-oriented, premised on a hope that a political breakthrough or some event will cause their arrival.

The Kashmiri narrators construct their counter-hegemonic or subversive frames by setting up a deictic framework through which the protagonists of the Kashmir conflict are positioned. The discursive process of inclusion and exclusion entails using linguistic forms by which to convey belongingness or otherwise of certain actors or ideas. Using first-person plurals (we, us, our), narrators create a sense of group identity and mark off the boundary between insiders and outsider. This marking off is achieved through deictic constructions. When a deictic statement is made, there is a speaker and a set of reference points which are positioned in relation to the speaker. Nearly $3/4^{th}$ narrators in 2010 and $4/5^{th}$ in 2016, have utilised the pronoun 'we' in their narratives and this 'we' is positioned in opposition to Indian state and its functionaries (including the armed forces). Through this linguistic construction, the Kashmiri youth narrators create a binary of us vs them to assert a distinct Kashmir identity and, by extension, counter assimilationist agenda of the statist narratives.

When we analysed the Kashmiri youth narratives under Charles Tilly's framework of reason-giving, i.e. who gets the blame for the continuation of the conflict and who is assigned as a victim, it was the Indian state and its armed forces who were invariably held responsible. Indian armed forces are seen as an oppressive entity who engages in systematic human rights abuses against Kashmiris. In contrast, Kashmiris are *credited* with resisting the state and surviving its repression and violence. In this discursive construct, the state is the oppressor and the people of IJK, especially Muslims in the Kashmir Valley, are the oppressed. This motif is discernable in the majority of the youth narratives, which seem to shape a consensual paradigm where Indian state's intransigence and insincerity to address the political problem is shown as the leading cause of the conflict. For example, writing in July 2016, a Kashmiri narrator says, "our hearts mourn but we do not give up. We have been there in those cold winter nights when our bodies were made to crawl on the snow[…]We have been there when our youngsters were massacred. We have been there to rescue them from the barbarity of this occupation".

In the Indian mainstream discourses, Indian armed forces are regarded as 'the saviours of the nation' and respectfully called 'our jawans', who cannot be questioned. So, from the Gramscian commonsense perspective, patriotism is best demonstrated by unconditionally supporting 'our jawans', who are *credited* with protecting the borders and territorial integrity of the nation. All *blame* lies either with Pakistan or Kashmiris, who engage in "anti-national" activities. However, in the Kashmiri narratives, this mainstream Indian 'commonsense' is subverted, and the Indian armed forces are criticised and assigned *blame* for oppression in IJK. If the institution of the Indian army becomes a site of ideological contestation and nationalist projection, the majority of the Kashmiri youth narrators are then 'anti-national'. Unlike Indian liberals, they not only criticise the Indian army but also regard them as an alien entity. Here subversion of the state's assimilationist project becomes starkly discernable.

Moreover, there is another unobtrusive unifying element in the Kashmiri youth narratives, which this thesis describes as 'silences'. This thesis argued that twin silences are enforced in the Kashmiri youth narratives: ideological and religious. Most of the Kashmiri youth narrators avoid talking about of the ideological disagreements within Tehreek, and they also do not use religious idioms despite the case that religious discourses are heavily used during street protests or in pro-Tehreek literature in Urdu—though mostly by older authors. Skipping ideological debate allows Kashmiri narrators to present a coherent and unified voice of Tehreek, while as a modulated secularised language is diplomatically better and acceptable at the world stage, where liberal discourses and western values are hegemonic.

Since this study primarily focused on the narratives of an educated cohort of Kashmiri youth, it has its limitations. However, future research can address this issue by incorporating the narratives of the non-elite youth cohorts, whose views can be obtained either through a focus group method or semi-structured interviews. Another limitation pertains to lack of engagement with oral traditions and social media. Incorporating these diverse forms and mediums of narratives into the study would certainly improve the analysis and may provide some new insights for further theoretical conjectures. But again, that is the work for future research, which can explore new theoretical connections and nuances in the context of the present theme.

To end with, through empirically and theoretically grounded analysis of political discourses, this thesis shows the significance of the Kashmiri youth narratives in the contemporary phase of Tehreek. A nuanced analysis of the youth narratives provides vital clues about the thinking of the new political generation which underline the recent political mobilisations and violence in IJK. In the last decade, the Kashmiri youth narrators have expanded the reach of their representation of the Kashmir conflict, by writing for a range of publications; they have also explored networks and cultivated allies and solidary groups around the world. While framing the Kashmir conflict and

significant political events and issues from their generational perspective, they have used different discursive strategies (such as metaphor, allegory, deictic framework, perspectivisation). Although their emphases might differ and some of them may show ideological ambiguity, most of the Kashmiri youth narrators, however, reaffirm Kashmiri political identity, subvert hegemonic statist representations of Kashmir, and ultimately reinforce the inherited language of contention. Furthermore, through their optimistically-oriented narratives, they also sustain the hope of political redemption.

There is a notion that Kashmir is 'a complex issue'. The two dominant perspectives—interstate and institutionalist—contributes to this discourse of complexity, which is presented as the reason for the Kashmir "issue's" intractability. But, what such characterisation often overlooks is the everyday realities produced by the securitised administration and pervasive militarization, which has brutalised an entire generation and fostered conditions which increase the state of vulnerability of Kashmiri youth. So, in moving beyond these narrower perspectives—which are premised on the interstate and intrastate theoretical models—this thesis has tried to bring focus to the indigenous experiences of the conflict and militarised occupation, which has inflicted huge emotional and material costs on the local population and shaped their political culture, modes of resistance, and narratives. It highlighted the social realm where autonomous political subjectivity of Kashmiri youth and their insurgent consciousness is prominently at play. If discourses shape our modes of being and influence human actions and behaviours, the examination of the local narratives thus paves a way for an informed and constructive dialogue about the internal dynamics and processes which sustain the Kashmir conflict.

This thesis argues that the Kashmiri youth generation is the locus of the political transformation and change, which manifests itself in the way their actions and narratives have shifted meanings and understandings of the Kashmiri self-determination movement and led to the formation of new kinds of ideas and forms of politics. From a broader perspective, these findings also present an empirical and epistemological challenge to the essentialist ideas of nationalism by showing how identity narratives sustain themselves over time without falling into an essentialist or primordialist trap. This again relates to the dialectical relationship of subjectivity with prevailing social, economic and political configurations. The heterogeneous ways by which Kashmiri youth express their national identity shows its varied salience for them. So, while the cyclical rhythm of the language of contention performs and mobilises the 'nation'—and fosters a relatively cohesive sense of national identity—there is however manifest variation in such performances, which is linked to different positionalities of the narrators. In that sense, this thesis contextualises the performance of nationalism by tracing its intricate workings and complexities in political discourses and intergenerational reproduction. Specifically, its findings relate to the notion of 'everyday

nationalism', since the thesis looks at the expressions and representations of national identity from-the-below, in terms of youth narratives that are part of the civil society discourses. One of the modalities of practising nationalism in the everyday sense is talking *about* and *with* the nation, so examining these modalities is a way to identify the occasions where nation 'comes to matter in certain ways at particular times for different people' (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008, pp. 539-40).

Eric Hobsbawm (1990, p.10) says that while nationalism, because it is interconnected with economic, political and administrative conditions and requirements, is created from above, yet to fully grasp its workings and meanings it must be evaluated in relation to 'the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people'. So, everyday expressions of national identity are contrasted with elite-driven nationalism. But, if the idea of nationalism is, as Ernest Gellner (1983) says, 'primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent', then does the fragmented understanding of nationhood of ordinary people in the realm of everyday (which is the emphasis of the scholars of everyday nationalism) in any way imagine the nation outside the framework of this basic principle? Furthermore, Brubaker et al (2006) say nationhood is a pervasively salient category in the political realm and only intermittently so in everyday life. But, how are we to conceptualise the narratives of Kashmiri youth which appear in media, and are produced in the specific context of the Kashmir conflict? Are these youth narratives and the medium of their dissemination part of the political realm or quotidian life? We can say that there is a thin line between the two realms in the context of Kashmir because it is an active political conflict, and acknowledging that would mean reconceptualising or contextualising the idea of 'everyday'. As already discussed in Chapter 2, the state of crisis is chronic and pervasive in situations of prolonged conflicts, where disorder becomes ordered. Finally, if by 'everyday' is meant a space where nation or national identity is expressed and represented in mundane social interactions, rituals and practices (Knott, p. 3), then that realm should also include media discourses because they are part of the quotidian domain of the modern life, and from this perspective, the political narratives of Kashmiri youth are part of the everyday. Thus, as acknowledged by Knott (p. 8) that current research on everyday nationalism is predominantly focused on the West, this thesis outlines a case study from the global south to be further developed by the future researchers of the field.

In the larger picture, in its historical becoming, the Kashmiri autonomist subjectivity has taken a quantum leap in the post-2008 period, where an entire youth generation has been politicized due to multiple factors, and this generation qua politicised generation has inscribed a nationalist ideology on the Kashmiri body politic. So, if it is true that at different historical epochs, societies express distinct political tendencies or orientation, it can be argued that in the post-2008 period, the Kashmiri society, especially its youth generation, has markedly been *Tehreekified*, manifesting in the way they write about Kashmir. The language of contention of the Kashmiri youth narrators

has emerged out of structural factors. It appears to also bear the imprints of globalised discourses, such as human rights discourse. So, while Kashmiri youth are producers of their language of contention within their local political context, their interactions with a gamut of different actors and processes have also played their part in shaping it. In a way, while they are the primary authors, the political discourses that they have reproduced are co-authored, and while they have inherited the dissident language of Tehreek, by inscribing upon it their unique experiences and memories of the conflict, they have also consolidated it. Ultimately, this thesis argues that, in such wide use of the language of contention by the contemporary youth, we trace the successful generational transmission of Tehreek at the discourse level.

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Appendix

The domain www.onlykashmir.com was blocked in 2011, so when it was eventually released the founder Bilal had to change its domain name into www.onlykashmir.in. He claims he lost quarter a million Facebook followers of the old site (author's interviews).
Kawoosa was a 10th standard student in October 2009 when he founded JandK Now (author interview).
The Kashmir Dispatch was started by a group of Kashmiri youths in 2010. One of the founders said in his emailed response to this researcher that they are "not in a position to give out [further] details". (author interview; email correspondence)
The Kashmir Dispatch Facebook page has been removed at least 3 times since 2010. The last removal was soon after Burhan Wani's killing on 8 July 2016. (author interview)
Alternate Kashmir's current editor is journalist Huma Riyaz. Between Nov 2017 and August 2018, its editor-in-chief was 27-year-old Khanday Imtiyaz, who is director of an NGO called Global Youth Foundation.
On 10 February 2015, Tawseef Lone, the founder of the Authint Mail, explained in his article "The untold story of Authint Mail", how was the web-portal started: "AM started silently on Feb, 09th 2013, with no expectations or fanfare. Our first news report was about the secret execution of 2001 Indian parliament attack convict, Afzal Guru. It was a silent day, three people were working, Kashmir was reeling under suffocating restrictions, and yet a small 600-word story started the journey. We honestly had never expected the response we received that day; we hit 100K page reads that very first day, and since we have never looked back. When the last hand-written letter of Afzal Guru reached its final destination, we unexpectedly and anonymously received a photograph of it, that story alone brought our servers to its knees, we hit 200K for just that story as we were the first to publish it".
The Authint Mail claimed that before October 2013 hacking of its website, "We were growing faster than we had ever anticipated and our team was also expanding, mind you all without advertisement. We were hitting 3 million page reads a month and growing".
Varmul is the Kashmiri name of the Baramulla district in north Kashmir and, as the name suggests, *The Varmul Post* publishes news mainly related to that area.
Free Press Kashmir was launched by Reuters Thomas correspondent (1995-2003) in Kashmir, Sheikh Mushtaq, in 2010 and registered in 2011. However, a young journalist Qazi Zaid took over as owner in 2016 and re-launched it in 2017.