

Dissertation

**Diagnosing Conflict: An Examination of the Rise of Militancy in
the Kashmir Valley (1947-1989)**

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*in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in
Contemporary India*

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Abbreviations

AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
JKLF	Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

Johan Galtung (1996) analyses the presence of conflict through what he conceptualizes as ‘the diagnosis-prognosis-therapy triangle’. Drawing parallels with the medical discourse, the dichotomy between peace and violence is equated with health and disease:

One condition for peace is probably an equitable relation; but there may also be violence if something goes wrong within the single actor. Likewise, a condition for health is a stable equilibrium of key parameters of the human body. And yet one cell or a colony of cells may go wrong (1996: 1).

Galtung compares states characterized by conflict and violence with illness or disease, needing diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy to be restored to a healthy or peaceful condition. Diagnosis focuses on identifying the problem and analyzing its symptoms; prognosis is the prediction of the course of the illness; therapy refers to intervention seeking to restore the subject to a healthy state.

This paper, limiting itself to the diagnosis stage of Galtung’s triangle, applies the concept to the rise of militancy in the Kashmir valley, focusing on the years 1947 to 1989. The period chosen traces the changes in the valley from independence and partition of the subcontinent to a distinctly militant phase in 1989.¹ It explores the question ‘what and why is the

¹ The year 1989, ‘marked the real beginning of the insurgency’ (Schofield 1996: 237), as militancy in Kashmir came to ‘acquire a qualitatively new terrorist character’ (Puri 1993: 58). The year witnessed a series of political murders including National Conference member Muhammad Yusuf Halwai, and retired Justice Neelkanth Ganjoo. In the same year, the JKLF kidnapped Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The condition of her release involved the freedom of five jailed

problem?’ (Galtung 1996: 27), examining the various proposed causes for violence in the valley.

Evoking the analogy of the medical discourse, the diagnosis of an illness is often complicated by a difficulty in identifying the underlying cause as the body reacts through a varied display of symptoms. This paper will seek to address the underlying cause of militancy in Kashmir by exploring five specific hypotheses that attempt to explain its prevalence.

H1: Positive correlation between the erosion of democracy and the rise of militancy

H2: Positive correlation between the spread of Hindu nationalism and the rise of militancy

H3: Positive correlation between the religious appeal of Islam and the rise of militancy

H4: Positive correlation between the intervention of Pakistan and the rise of militancy

H5: Positive correlation between rising unemployment and the rise of militancy

The above hypotheses will be examined through an engagement with primary and secondary sources, and a series of interviews conducted on the prevalence of militancy in the valley. It should be noted that sources often represent their own biases as ‘every analyst is wittingly or unwittingly a protagonist who in varying degrees favours Kashmiri accession to India or

militants. The acceptance of this exchange ‘was a major, much-publicized boost for the JKLF in particular, and militancy in general’ (Bhattacharjea 1994: 261).

Pakistan, Kashmiri independence, or some other alternative solution.’² This paper will attempt to address the views presented in sources representing different traditions. The focus of the paper is the valley and not the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir as it is in this area that the militancy has been most pronounced.

Galtung (1996) refers to the system falling out of its ‘well state’ and showing symptoms of an ‘ill state’, referring to the prevalence of violence and conflict, whether direct or indirect. The Kashmir valley is in an ‘ill state’. Over twenty years of insurgency has resulted in roughly 47,000 deaths in Kashmir, with the All Party Hurriyat Conference figures placing this estimate at a 100,000.³ The aim of this paper is to attempt a correct diagnosis of the cause of violence in Kashmir – by identifying which hypotheses are most reflective of the root cause, and which are more characteristic of its symptoms. It is on the basis of a correct diagnosis that prognosis can adequately chart the course of illness and therapy produce effective results.

The Background

In an effort to reflect on the causes of violence in the valley, the background pertaining to the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian Union needs to be elucidated. The contested accession has some explanation in the differing conceptions of Indian and Pakistani

² Thomas (1992: 4)

³ Reuters. (2008, November 21)

nationalism, with the former based on a secular and democratic state, and the latter embodying the logic of the two-nation theory through a separate homeland for Muslims.⁴

In light of the independence of the subcontinent and its partition in 1947, the princely states were placed in the position of deciding to accede to India or Pakistan, keeping in mind territorial continuity and the religious affiliations of the people. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was placed in a unique position, contiguous to the territory of both the Indian Union and Pakistan, and with a Hindu Maharaja ruling over a Muslim majority population. The abeyance in deciding which union to accede to was reflective of Maharaja Hari Singh's desire for an independent state.

Jammu and Kashmir's significance can be demonstrated through the controversy surrounding the Radcliffe Award, which awarded to India the eastern part of Gurdaspur district despite its Muslim majority, making available to the Indian State road access to Jammu without which 'India could certainly never have fought a war in Kashmir.'⁵ The Pakistani position was that Lord Mountbatten influenced Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Boundary Commission, in this decision so as to give India an advantage in the bid for Kashmir, thereby questioning the neutrality of the Boundary Commission's demarcation of the Dominions of India and Pakistan.⁶ From the above it can be ascertained that leaders in both India and Pakistan were aware of the strategic importance of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the events that played out in the state need to be considered in this light.

⁴ Ganguly (1997) details this further when arguing that Kashmir's significance therefore was not limited to territorial claims; it was central to the differing conceptions of nationhood articulated by India and Pakistan.

⁵ Birdwood (1956: 74)

⁶ For further details on the Radcliffe Award see Bhattacharjea (1994: 112-115), Schofield (2000: 33-39), Akbar (1991: 98)

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir erupted in clashes following the revolt in Poonch, which was joined by ‘tribesman’ from across the border.⁷ Those subscribing to the official Pakistani view maintain that the movement in Kashmir was an indigenous articulation of discontent,⁸ whereas the Indian perspective states that the dissension in 1947 was due to Pakistani infiltration and did not reflect the mandate of the people.⁹¹⁰ Though it is not within the purview of this paper to elaborate on the political background of the Kashmir dispute, it is worth noting that conflict is rarely as simple as nationalist renderings seem to suggest, as the next section that specifically analyses violence in Kashmir will demonstrate.

It was in such a situation that Maharaja Hari Singh appealed to the Indian Union for help. Mountbatten insisted that the state must legally accede to India before military units could be sent.¹¹ He also suggested that the accession be temporary, till law and order be restored, so that the will of the people could be determined. With this provision included, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession to India on October 26, 1947.¹² Following the break out of a full-scale war between India and Pakistan, the Indian government decided to approach the United Nations in January 1948. The United Nations mounted the pressure resulting in a cease-fire, and reiterated the need for a plebiscite to determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir. In 2010, a plebiscite has still not been held.

⁷ An account that details the Pakistani support of the uprising in 1947 is Major-General Akbar Khan (1970)

⁸ See Rahman (1996: 2), Mattu (2002: 36)

⁹ See Mehta (1992: 394), Padgaonkar (1991: 21-24), Surjeet (1991: 45-49).

¹⁰ Additionally, see Behera (2006: 26 - 27) who argues that the Muslim League miscalculated the developments in Poonch. The border areas of Jammu where the Muslim Conference had a sufficient base supported accession to Pakistan, whereas the Kashmir valley, a National Conference stronghold, did not support the rebellion.

¹¹ Lamb (1991: 135-136) draws attention to what he considers a discrepancy between the signing of the Instrument of Accession and the landing of Indian troops in Srinagar – thereby equating the Indian forces with the tribal raiders as intruders. Bhattacharjea contends this view (1994: 142-143).

¹² The date of the signature ratifying the Instrument of Accession is controversial. For details see Jha (1996), Lamb (1997).

Since Independence, Kashmir has been a bone of contention in India-Pakistan relations with two of the three wars having been fought specifically over Kashmir (1947 and 1965), in addition to hostilities in 1999. The call for 'azadi' (freedom) in the region has gained increasing prominence as the people contend with violence at the hands of the militants, brutalities carried out by the Indian armed forces, repressive governments, prolonged periods of curfew, disappearance of family members¹³, in addition to economic hardship. In reaching any effective solution to the Kashmir problem, an adequate analysis of its causes is essential.

The Hypotheses

This section looks at some of the key explanations that have been postulated in relation to the rise of militancy in the Kashmir valley and explores their validity in terms of a 'root cause'.

In identifying this, the cause most directly contributing to the alienation of the Kashmiri people will hold foremost relevance, as militancy cannot be a phenomenon caused solely from above, and in explaining its rise the sentiment of the Kashmiri people needs to be accounted for. As stated by Nehru, 'If the average Muslim feels that he has no safe or secure place in the Union then obviously he will look elsewhere.'¹⁴

The question of the alienation of the Kashmiri people is linked to whether the people of the valley wanted to accede to India in the first place? It is not necessarily in the interest of this paper to detail the debate surrounding the 'will of the Kashmiri people' at the time of partition, as whether it was pro or anti-India, or undecided, militancy as a phenomenon only

¹³ Official Indian figures place the number missing at 3,400 (The Dawn 2009, 18 August).

¹⁴ Nehru's letter to Maharaja Hari Singh dated 1 December, 1947, quoted in Bhattacharjea (1994: 170)

took its roots over three decades later in the 1980s.¹⁵ The question can then be rephrased as ‘why did insurgency only raise its head in the 1980s?’ In this respect, when the word sentiment is used in this paper – it refers to the process of a changed sentiment that erupted in militancy in the 1980s following close to forty years of relative peace. The ‘root cause’ that the paper tries to identify is one that best explains this.

H1: Positive correlation between the erosion of democracy and the rise of militancy

In October 1947 the state of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India under very special circumstances. The Instrument of Accession handed over to India the state’s foreign affairs, defense, and communications. This condition was then legally adopted in the form of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which gave the Centre limited powers to make laws for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The link between the gradual erosion of this autonomy and the rise of militancy has been detailed in various accounts.¹⁶ The failure of democratic processes can be discussed in terms of the following: increasing centralization of the Indian State, the deliberate suppression of any opposition, and state repression.

Increasing centralization on part of the Indian State can be seen in a few key instances. In 1953, Sheikh Abdullah, leader of the National Conference and the first Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, was dismissed following the defection of three National Conference Ministers who challenged his leadership in the Cabinet. Abdullah was then arrested on the vague pretence of a meeting with a Pakistani emissary. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad who

¹⁵ For positions that advocate the pro-India sentiment of the Kashmiri people in 1947 see Puri (1993), Bhattacharjea (1994); for the alternate view that suggests that Kashmir would have acceded to Pakistan had the people’s desires been taken into consideration see Mattu (2002), Rahman (1996), Lamb (1966, 1991, 1997)

¹⁶ Engineer (1991), Puri (1993), Bhattacharjea (1994), Ganguly (1997), Behera (2000), Bose (2003), Quraishi (2004)

replaced Abdullah ‘had no hang-ups about autonomy and saw the relationship with India as an arrangement to get maximum financial assistance for the State, with a percentage for family and friends.’¹⁷ The period thereafter saw increasing erosion of the constitutional safeguards that protected Jammu and Kashmir’s autonomy. In 1954 the Centre’s right to make laws for the State was extended. In 1965, the office of an elected *sadr-i-riyasat* was replaced by that of Governor, a nominee of the President of India, enabling the Governor to dismiss governments and declare ‘President’s rule’ at the insistence of New Delhi. In 1974 the Kashmir Accord reiterated that the state of Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of the Union of India, with Article 370 bearing no resemblance to its original form.

New Delhi deliberately curbed any dissension, equating notions of anti-government or pro-Independence with an anti-national stand. The policy of curbing all dissent falls in line with an ideology that views ‘national interest [as] more important than democracy, and as Kashmiri politics revolved around personalities, there was no material for democracy there.’¹⁸ In 1955, Mirza Afzal Beg formed the Plebiscite Front, raising the issue of the ‘will of the Kashmiri people’. Beg was charged with being anti-national and accused of fomenting plans to bring about a violent overthrow of the government. In November 1958, Sheikh Abdullah who had been released in January earlier the same year was rearrested on charges of provoking riots and harboring plans of a merger with Pakistan.¹⁹ In both cases, the arrests were arbitrary and the allegations never proved.

The challenge to Kashmir’s autonomy was again demonstrated during Ghulam Sadiq’s regime (1964-1971), when Bakshi who threatened to dislodge the government through a no-

¹⁷ Bhattacharjea (1994: 205)

¹⁸ Bose (1997: 39)

¹⁹ The arbitrary arrest of Sheikh Abdullah was an indication of New Delhi’s growing suspicion of any activity independent of its sanctions. For instance, Abdullah was arrested in 1965, on his return following a meeting with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai in Algeria (Bhattacharjea 1994: 225-226).

confidence motion was arrested. The complete disregard of the democratic process coupled with integrationist policies adopted by Sadiq, brought the opposing Plebiscite Front and the pro-Pakistani Awami Action Committee on a unified platform.²⁰ In 1984 Farooq Abdullah was dismissed by Jagmohan who had been appointed Governor, with G. M. Shah replacing Abdullah as Chief Minister.

Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal signaled the message that even if the Kashmiri people did not wish to remain within India, they would not be allowed to secede, whereas the dismissal of Farooq conveyed the message that even if the people wished to remain a part of India, they would not be free to choose their own government (Puri 1993: 34)

The ruling faction of the National Conference cannot be acquitted from its hand in deliberately curbing any strains of opposition.²¹ For instance, the 1958 and 1962 elections were widely perceived as having been rigged, with the National Conference winning a large number of seats unopposed.^{22,23} The complicity between the Congress and the National Conference was formalized in 1986 when Farooq Abdullah extended his hand to Rajiv Gandhi to form a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir - an act 'widely perceived as a total capitulation to the Centre'²⁴ and increasingly discrediting the National Conference's commitment to protecting the interests and autonomy of the state.

The blatant rigging of the 1987 elections seem to have proved a final nail in the coffin, paving the way for anti-government voices to seek redressal through non-electoral means.

The Muslim United Front, a broad coalition of Islamic groups including the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, *Ittehad ul-Musalmeen*, and *Ummat-e-Islami* contested the 1987 assembly elections, appealing

²⁰ See Behera (2000: 124-125)

²¹ For a critique of the politics of the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah see Bazaz (1950).

²² See Bose (2003: 74-77) for the 1957 elections: of the 43 Kashmir Valley seats contested by the National Conference, 35 were returned unopposed.

²³ See Verma (1994: 118)

²⁴ Behera (2000: 155)

to voters on the basis of resisting political interference from the Centre. The popular perception was that these elections were rigged to usher in the Rajiv-Farooq coalition, adding to the disillusionment amongst the people.²⁵ Says journalist Mir Abdul Aziz ‘[the people said] we were trying to change the political framework by democratic and peaceful means, but we have failed in this. Therefore we should take up the gun.’²⁶

A third element of the erosion of democracy can be identified in the excessive government repression that has led to allegations of human rights violations on the part of the state. A brief examination of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958 throws further light on state and military repression. The Act empowers military personnel to arrest without warrant, to destroy shelters suspected of harbouring absconders ‘wanted for offenses.’²⁷ These provisions can routinely be misused to harass and intimidate innocent civilians. It is suggested that abuses connected with the AFSPA, such as extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, and disappearances, have fuelled public anger and resentment against the State, permitting the rise of militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir.²⁸

Although many accounts detail the role of the erosion of autonomy in explaining the insurgency in Kashmir, the counter view, most prevalent in official Indian accounts, argues the opposite: that hard measures needed to be taken to control the situation in Kashmir. In an interview with Jagmohan, governor of Jammu and Kashmir 1984-1989 and 1989-1990, a defense for the position adopted by New Delhi comes through.²⁹ Referring to Article 370 as a ‘bogey’, Jagmohan argued that the discourse surrounding the link between Article 370 and the sentiment of the Kashmiri people is largely a tool used to propel anti-government

²⁵ see Puri (1993: 53), Behera (2000: 158), Schofield (1996: 231)

²⁶ As quoted in Schofield (2000: 138)

²⁷ Chenoy, Pinto, and Iqbal (2000)

²⁸ Human Rights Watch (2008)

²⁹ Author interview with Jagmohan in New Delhi, April 2010

grievances: 'Article 370 is not in any way beneficial to Kashmiris; it is being exploited by politicians who have projected it as a statement of Kashmiri identity'. In Jagmohan's view, the Indian constitution has adequate provisions to protect the interests of minorities, and extending measures such as the arbitration of the Supreme Court, bringing elections under the purview of the Election Commission, and guaranteeing Fundamental Rights to the Kashmiri people will only better guard their interests. It is the weakness of the government of India for 'not being assertive enough', appeasing the politicians in the valley and letting them use the 'bogey' of a Kashmiri identity being threatened, that best explains the cause of the problem in Kashmir in Jagmohan's analysis.

Whether one agrees with Article 370 being necessary to safeguard the interests of the Kashmiri people or not, the fact does remain that India made a commitment to respect the autonomy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as detailed in the Instrument of Accession. It is the inability to have carried out this commitment that clearly had an impact on the people of the State. New Delhi's intervention in Kashmir was not limited to the extension of Fundamental Rights and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. It moved in to the rigging of elections, the arbitrary dismissal of popularly elected governments, and arrests of leaders on vague pretenses. In such a situation, where the democratic door for anti-government voices was shut off, it is possible that many of these elements took recourse to the separatist route.

In asking the question 'why did insurgency only raise its head in the 1980s?' the role of the erosion of democracy in the State cannot be overlooked, whether one locates this erosion in explaining the change from a pro-India sentiment to one that came to be increasingly distrustful of India, or whether one argues that the sentiment was never in favour of India in the first place. Sajjad Lone, leader of the People's Conference, articulates this in the statement that 'Pakistan's offer of the gun was always there, the sentiment unfavourable to

India was always there, what was new was the rigging of elections and the message that the only way to stay in power was to please New Delhi'.³⁰ Mehbooba Mufti, President of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party, echoes this point when stating that at the time of independence along with those who did, there were voices that did not agree with the State's accession to India, and it is in addressing these that process of democracy should have set in; instead, its failure to do so only contributed to the spread of an anti-India sentiment.³¹

It would perhaps be correct to note that in 1947, along with factions that identified with the concepts of secularism and democracy as promised by India, there were those that found an appeal in the logic of an Islamic State. The causes of insurgency in the valley can to a large part be attributed to the Indian state's failure in addressing the interests of the former by failing to protect the institution of democracy, and its failure in curbing the skepticism of the latter by failing to dispel the notion that the state of Jammu and Kashmir would not get a fair deal in India.

H2: Positive correlation between the spread of Hindu nationalism and the rise of militancy

The role of Hindu nationalism leading to a compromise of the values of secularism has been identified by many as a significant factor contributing to the rise of militancy in Kashmir.³² In understanding the appeal of communal politics in the State of Jammu and Kashmir it is essential to reflect on the dynamics of a Hindu majority Jammu, a segment of which came to feel increasingly insecure in a political arrangement dominated by the valley based National Conference. The Praja Parishad movement in Jammu following the state's accession to the

³⁰ Author interview with Sajjad Lone in New Delhi, March 2010.

³¹ Author interview with Mehbooba Mufti in New Delhi, April 2010.

³² Bhattacharjea (1994), Behera (2000), Engineer (1991), Chopra (1991)

Indian Union is reflective of these insecurities, with the Parishad demanding the abrogation of Article 370 and full integration with India. Behera (2000) writes, ‘the boundaries of Kashmiri identity had become confined to the Kashmiri speaking people of the valley, especially Kashmiri Muslims, and did not even claim to represent the political interests of Jammu and Ladakh.’³³

The projection of a distinct Kashmiri identity focused around the Valley and embodied in the political mandate of the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah played its part in alienating the people of Jammu and Ladakh. The relationship between New Delhi and Srinagar was replicated between the Valley and Jammu, as in both cases the former tried to push forth its conceptions of nationalism, overlooking the various strains of identity that existed within their region. As New Delhi tried to absorb Kashmiri identity into its fold of a modern ‘Indian’ nation state, Srinagar articulated the identity of a ‘Kashmiri’ as a Kashmiri speaking Muslim from the Valley. In the Constituent Assembly Jammu had only 29 of the 75 seats, and only 1 representative from Jammu formed Sheikh Abdullah’s five-member Cabinet, despite Jammu constituting about 45 percent of the population of the State.³⁴

It was this insecurity that political opportunists tried to capitalize on by playing up the communal card, with the Bhartiya Jana Sangh formed in 1951 echoing the Praja Parishad’s criticism of the special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Following the Delhi Agreement of 1952, the Praja Parishad and the Jana Sangh led agitations in Jammu with cries of ‘two constitutions, two flags, two Heads of State in one country will not be tolerated.’³⁵ In

³³ Behera (2000: 94)

³⁴ Varshney (1992: 212)

³⁵ See Bhattacharjea (1994: 194)

reference to the Parishad agitation, Sheikh Abdullah said it ‘literally poured cold water on the efforts of the National Conference to rally Muslim support for India for all these years.’³⁶

The Resettlement Bill, which gave any Kashmiri citizen or his descendent the right to return to Kashmir, was met with hostility in Jammu, which feared loss of land and property. In an effort to capitalize on the Hindu vote, national parties such as the Congress did not resist playing up the communal card. Indira Gandhi’s speeches in Jammu leading up to the 1983 elections made constant references to the Resettlement Bill and roused up the card of Hindu insecurities in a Muslim majority state. Tavleen Singh writes, ‘the theme in Jammu was to persuade the residents that it was really a part of Hindu India and had therefore, been neglected by Muslim Kashmir.’³⁷

If the Congress felt that its main political threat in Jammu was the BJP and Hindu nationalism, in the Valley it sought to undermine the appeal of the National Conference, ignoring the strains of religious extremism in the process.

[The Congress] legitimized religion’s politicization for electoral ends, opening the floodgates for more conservative and rightist political parties to enter the arena of state politics. More significantly, it had the effect of popping up Kashmiri’s Muslim identity as a counterweight to the secular Kashmiri identity, little realizing that religious identity in the Kashmiri context always nurtured extra territorial loyalties to Pakistan and in the long run would pose a much more serious threat to the Indian State. (Behera: 2000: 141-142)

In this context it is interesting to note, that the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, an organization with distinctly religious overtones was not banned for questioning the state’s accession to India,

³⁶ As quoted in Varshney (1992: 213)

³⁷ Tavleen Singh (1995: 25)

whereas the Plebiscite Front, though secular in its character, was banned from the 1972 elections onwards.³⁸

The National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah were not exempt from catering to communal loyalties in a bid to secure their own political ends. Following the Hazratbal agitation of 1963 – when a holy relic believed to be the Prophet’s hair went missing – Sheikh Abdullah in an effort to appeal to the emotional Muslim masses recited Koranic verses in his political speeches. Additionally, leading up to the 1977 elections, Ulemas were brought into the National Conference’s campaign.³⁹

The politicization of the Kashmiri Pandit community can also be understood in the light of Hindu nationalism. With the ‘second democratic upsurge’⁴⁰ political participation came to acquire a more mass character. Privileged sections that felt vulnerable to the encroachment of a political space hitherto dominated by them came to identify with the Hindu nationalist discourse. In the case of Kashmir for instance, Hindu nationalist parties like the Bhartiya Janata Party criticized the policy of appeasing the state’s Muslims, and stressed on the need to protect the interests of the Pandit community.⁴¹ In 1989, following the eruption of violence, the politicization of communities on religious lines resulted in many Kashmiri Pandits leaving the Valley as fundamental groups increasingly targeted a fear campaign against them.

Religious nationalism can be best understood in the context of a vicious cycle. If the Hindu politicians in the State portray the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir to India as essential to protect the interests of a Hindu minority in a Muslim majority state, it contributes to separatist forces that play up the insecurities of the Muslim minority population in a Hindu

³⁸ Behera (2000: 141)

³⁹ Ibid, p. 143-144

⁴⁰ See Yadav (2000)

⁴¹ For details see Duschinski (2008).

majority India, and vice versa. Amitabh Mattoo, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jammu, points to the fact that it is also in the interest of the Indian state to promote multiple voices and contending rivalries; as long as there is a divergent opinion in the state of Jammu and Kashmir it is 'not easy to talk about what Jammu and Kashmir wants.'⁴²

Though the spread of Hindu nationalism undoubtedly contributes to the politicization of communities on religious lines, there are two questions to ask in reference to its contribution to the rise of militancy in the Valley. First, did the spread of Hindu nationalism play a defining part in the alienation of the Kashmiri people? Second, does it explain 'why insurgency only raised its head in the 1980s?' In regard to the first question, Sajjad Lone feels that the impact of Hindu nationalism is not discernable; 'Had Babri [referring to the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the communal riots that followed] not happened, would Kashmiris have been more amenable to India? The answer is no.'⁴³ The role of Hindu nationalism seems to be opportunistic. With the politicization of communities, religion is often used by competing elites to serve their own political and economic interests.⁴⁴ This process, which intensified in the 1980s as additional groups came to be politically mobilized is perhaps more relevant to explaining, in part, the timing of the insurgency in the late 1980s as opposed to accounting for the alienation of the people since 1947. In other words, the alienation of the Kashmiri people was a process that was already set in motion, the spread of Hindu nationalism introduced the angle of a vicious cycle where the politicians played on the insecurities of minorities not getting adequate representation in the political system.

⁴² Author interview with Amitabh Mattoo in New Delhi, April 2010.

⁴³ Author interview with Sajjad Lone in New Delhi, March 2010.

⁴⁴ For arguments that detail the role of vested interests in the perpetuation of Hindu-Muslim conflict see Brass (2003), Wilkinson (2004).

H3: Positive correlation between the religious appeal of Islam and the rise of militancy

The Pakistani position, an outcome of the logic of the Two-Nation theory, contends that the problem in Kashmir can be traced to the religious affiliation of its people, who if given the opportunity, would accede to Pakistan.⁴⁵ According to this, 'New Delhi's view of the uprising and the nationalist movement as a law and order problem, reflects a basic inability to grasp the transformative character of Kashmiri nationalism as it relates to these external forces, including a resurgent Islam.'⁴⁶ This position is challenged by the official Indian view, which maintaining that Sheikh Abdullah's acceptance of accession was reflective of the will of the people, locates the insurgency not in the appeal of Islam but in the intervention of Pakistan and the introduction of extremist elements from across the border.

Additionally, various accounts refer to the concept of *Kashmiriyat*, articulated as the syncretic identity of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, characterized by communal harmony and a distinct culture.⁴⁷ It is argued in these accounts that a major factor preventing the 'eventuality' of Kashmir to Pakistan is the uniqueness of Kashmir.⁴⁸ This unique identity found no commonality with the strain of Islam represented by Pakistan, echoing more similarities with the secular, multi-ethnic vision of the Indian nation. In this view, the appeal of Islam has a limited impact in the region as *Kashmiriyat* embodies a very different conception of Islam, which influenced by Sufism finds a greater parallel in secular traditions. A retired government official stated in an interview that 'Pakistan's focus on Islam did not work in the Valley as the people do not identify with the Pakistani strain of Islam. Had Pakistan allowed the movement in Kashmir to remain a civil movement it might have

⁴⁵ See Mattu (2002), Rahman (1996), Rizvi (1992: 50), Akhtar (1991)

⁴⁶ Pasha (1992: 373)

⁴⁷ For accounts that refer to a unique Kashmiri identity embodied in the principles of *Kashmiriyat* see Engineer (1991), Puri (1993), Battacharjea (1994).

⁴⁸ Puri (1993: 9)

been successful.’⁴⁹The fundamentalist strain in the Valley is explained in terms of external influences and in contradiction to the principles of *Kashmiriyat*, the erosion of which is then outlined as a factor contributing to the alienation of the people.

A useful account that challenges the concept of *Kashmiriyat* is Chandralekha Zutshi’s (2004), which argues that the term gained prominence in the nationalist discourse as a concept constructed to promote visions of a shared cultural past, looking at Kashmir’s history through ‘rose tinted glasses... [where] religious communities lived in harmony since time immemorial’⁵⁰

Kashmiriyat did not emerge *ex-nihilo* from the soil of Kashmir; it was a product of the collusion of Kashmiri and Indian majoritarian nationalisms, both of which needed to obscure the inherent contradictions in their logic and rhetoric. (2004: 258)

Zutshi’s account points to the various ambiguities and overlaps in Kashmiri identity, questioning a primordial conception of identity and locating religious belonging in relation to nationalism. For instance, the use of Lal Ded’s poetry to argue in defense of a shared syncretic Kashmiri cultural past characterized by religious tolerance, is questioned by Zutshi who points to an ‘anachronistic reading of the Kashmiri mystic tradition, which was revived and popularized, significantly, in the 1930s and 1940s by proponents of an emergent Kashmiri nationalism.’⁵¹The work also explores the public discourse in the valley on the city’s shrines – pointing to the fact that shrines play a key role in the social life of other regions in the subcontinent as well and that the practice of shrine worship does not necessarily imply the existence of a unique Kashmiri Islam. Zutshi argues that it was in the movement against the Dogra state that a nationalist conception of Kashmiri identity came to

⁴⁹ Author interview with a senior intelligence official of the Government of India in New Delhi, March 2010.

⁵⁰ Zutshi (2004: 2)

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 22

be formulated, as the leadership sought to bring under its wing divergent religious, regional, and class identities. In this context *Kashmiriyat* came to extol the uniqueness of Kashmiri identity. Kashmiri identity is viewed as a modern construct facilitated by the improvement in communications and technology that made the public space accessible to a vast number of people.⁵² *Kashmiriyat* in such an understanding is the deliberate selection of cultural fragments from an imagined past that would enfold both the Pandits and the Muslims.⁵³

The position of Kashmir representing a unique form of Islam that was based on religious tolerance and assimilation, and therefore distinct from the fundamentalist Wahabi influenced strain of Islam in Pakistan is rubbished by Sajjad Lone, who dismisses the concept of *Kashmiriyat* as a ‘complete hype,’ arguing that the Wahabi element of Islam is as alien to Pakistan as it is to Kashmir.⁵⁴ B. G. Verghese, author of *A Jammu and Kashmir Primer: From Myth to Reality* (2007), corroborates this point when stating that the Wahabi influence does not intrinsically belong to the culture of Pakistan.⁵⁵

If Kashmir does not represent a specifically unique tradition of Islam, what was the impact of the appeal of the religion on the rise of militancy in the Valley? Those who advocate the existence of *Kashmiriyat* would argue that this impact is limited. For instance, Balraj Puri, author and Founding-Director Institute of Jammu and Kashmir Affairs, states ‘the influence of pan-Islamism on the Kashmiri was very limited as the very strong Kashmiri identity superseded any Muslim identity.’⁵⁶ As argued above however, *Kashmiriyat* itself is a

⁵² Zutshi’s work falls in line with the constructivist tradition on the formation of identities as a modern phenomenon. For other accounts that represent this tradition see Pandey (1998) and Freitag (1992).

⁵³ Nyla Ali Khan (2009).

⁵⁴ Author interview with Sajjad Lone in New Delhi, March 2010.

⁵⁵ Author interview with B. G. Verghese in New Delhi, January 2010.

⁵⁶ Author interview with Balraj Puri (via telephone) from Jammu, April 2010.

twentieth century construction, and the impact of the religious appeal of Islam should not be dismissed by simple virtue of the so-called uniqueness of the Kashmiri Muslim.

Two significant international developments can be highlighted in connection with the appeal of Islam: one, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and two, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Iranian Revolution added to the pan-Islamic concept, as a revolution conceptualized on religious terms was successful in overthrowing Iran's monarchy. The withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan demonstrated the success of the Mujahideen in defeating an occupationary force. This was followed by the break up of the USSR in 1991 – leading to the idea that 'if the Soviet empire could disintegrate, there was nothing special about Indian unity.'⁵⁷ The end of the Afghan war is described by Jagmohan as 'the most crucial issue' in explaining the militancy in the region: 'The money that the CIA had poured into the ISI for the effort in Afghanistan was now diverted to insurgency in Kashmir, and a feeling of fighting for Islam aroused much frenzy.'⁵⁸

The inroads made by Islamic fundamentalism in the Valley predated the above two developments, with the *Jamaat-i-Islami's* electoral success in 1972 and its increasing support base. The organization initiated a process of setting up Islamic religious schools (madrasas).⁵⁹ Although Sheikh Abdullah ordered the closure of these schools in 1975, the impact of the move was limited as the schools continued to function under relabeled categories. This facilitated the appeal of contemporary developments in the Muslim world, such as the Iranian Revolution, and later, the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan, on an

⁵⁷ Author interview with Amitabh Mattoo in New Delhi, April 2010

⁵⁸ Author interview with Jagmohan in New Delhi, April 2010.

⁵⁹ See Verma (1994: 74)

entire generation of educated Kashmiri youth.⁶⁰ In this context, Jagmohan describes the schools as a ‘feeding ground for the militancy that later on came [to the valley].’⁶¹

This is not to suggest that pan-Islamism has some sort of primordialist appeal to the Kashmiri Muslim. The point is that while the cause of alienation may not have any religious origins, the articulation of discontent has come to occupy a religious expression. In this context, developments in the Islamic world that challenge oppression and demonstrate victories impacted the psyche of the ordinary Kashmiri, who was already reeling under a system that was characterized by the erosion of democratic institutions and practices. It also must be reiterated that many accounts arguing in defense of a distinct Kashmiri identity dismiss the impact of developments in the Islamic world on the false assumption that Kashmir was insulated from these developments by *Kashmiriyat*, as it implies the existence of a unique form of Islam.

A related question is why did insurgency in the valley acquire a religious character?⁶²

Ganguly (1997) identifies four factors that seek to explain ethno-religious mobilization in the valley. First, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is divided into districts that produce a religious dimension, with a predominantly Muslim valley, Hindu Jammu, and Buddhist Ladakh.

Second, there has been a lack of integration between Muslims in the valley and the rest of India, owing to which grievances in the region are expressed not in national terms but as a regional sub-community. Third, the failure of secular politics as a channel of discontent fuels

⁶⁰ See Behera (2000: 140-143)

⁶¹ Author interview with Jagmohan in New Delhi, April 2010.

⁶² According to Mridu Rai (2004) the reason why the protest in the valley took on a religious idiom can be located in the very recent formation of Jammu and Kashmir State in which regional patriotism had very little salience in binding its subjects, and that governance only involved a select group of people. Rai identifies a lack of resources available to the Kashmiri Muslim from the Dogra state in encouraging the turn to the spiritual realm of Islam to address their needs.

ethno-religious mobilization. Fourth, the role of Pakistan in transforming an unstructured movement into a coherent struggle organized on religious lines. Therefore, the religious dimension of insurgency in Kashmir is not a direct implication of a primordialist appeal of Islam. Rather it acquired an Islamic character as a religious identity asserted itself due to factors such as the limited appeal of the National Conference outside the Muslim dominated valley, the lack of integration of the State with the rest of India, the erosion of democratic channels, and the role of Pakistan that introduced Mujahideen elements in the struggle.

H4: Positive correlation between the intervention of Pakistan and the rise of militancy

A strain amongst the official Indian perspective contends that insurgency in Kashmir is largely a function of Pakistan's meddling. Pakistan's role is identified in infiltrations from across the border, in providing refuge to those masterminding terrorist operations, and in supporting terrorist activities through material and financial incentives.

The divergent views on the role of Pakistan in contributing to the Kashmir crisis emerge in the understanding of the background of the state's accession to India and the disturbances that followed. In the period between independence of the subcontinent and Jammu and Kashmir's final accession to India, a major development was the revolt in Poonch, a Muslim majority town in the Jammu district adjoining Pakistan. Pakistan portrayed this revolt as an indigenous uprising against Dogra oppression, as the spate of communal violence that had followed partition soon flowed into Jammu. In Pakistan's view the violence was resultant of an organized attempt by the Dogra Maharaja to drive out Muslims.⁶³ The Indian view on the other hand attributed the trouble in Poonch to Pakistani intervention, arguing that infiltrators

⁶³ See Lamb (1991: 122- 123), Alexander (1953:7)

from across the border were wrecking havoc. Karan Singh writes, 'intelligence reports ... spoke of large-scale massacres, loot and rape of our villagers by aggressive hordes from across the borders.'⁶⁴ According to the Indian perspective, the Kashmiri people's resistance to the Pakistani infiltration is indicative of their 'disapproval of Pakistan and gratitude towards India'⁶⁵, that the will of the Kashmiri people was to accede to India and trouble in the Valley can be directly attributed to Pakistan's meddling.

The Pakistani position also contends that Sheikh Abdullah was little more than an Indian 'stooge': 'he had no *locus standi*; he was a nonentity, he was a quisling boosted by the power of the Indian Congress Party.'⁶⁶ This view challenges the Indian position, which points to the acceptance of the Instrument of Accession by Sheikh Abdullah as representative of the will of the Kashmiri people on grounds of being their most popular leader.⁶⁷

New Delhi's suspicion of Pakistani intervention in the Valley can be judged by apprehensions surrounding the Resettlement Bill of 1982, as it 'aroused fears that Pakistani sympathisers and agents could cross the border and create trouble in the valley.'⁶⁸ It must also be noted that a significant degree of the suspicion surrounding the role of Pakistani intervention were used to generate propaganda in the valley to exert the Centre's wishes. For instance, during a 1983 cricket match in Srinagar between India and the West Indies, supporters of the *Jamaat-i-Islami* waved green party flags – an event then used by the Government to suggest that Farooq Abdullah, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, had lost his hold on the administration. The year 1984 began with the warning against anti-

⁶⁴ Karan Singh (1982: 54)

⁶⁵ Varshney (1992: 195)

⁶⁶ Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan, former Prime Minister of the 'Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir', as quoted in Schofield (2000: 129).

⁶⁷ See Bhattacharjea (1994: 167)

⁶⁸ Schofield (2000: 129)

national activities, with New Delhi accusing Farooq Abdullah of patronizing secessionist forces. It is suggested that Jagmohan's appointment as governor of Jammu and Kashmir in 1984 had the specific purpose of the dismissal of Farooq Abdullah.⁶⁹⁷⁰ It was the deliberate strategy of the Congress government to use the labels of 'secessionist' and 'anti-national' against its political opponents, evoking the allegation of Pakistani sympathies in this context. Therefore, Farooq Abdullah's meeting with JKLF activists in 1974 was taken as conclusive proof of his anti-national leanings, whereas younger brother Tariq Abdullah who was a Pakistani national till 1975 and had represented Pakistan's interest in Kashmir at the United Nations, was 'welcomed as a defender of secularism and nationalism when he joined hands with the Congress.'⁷¹

This is not to suggest that Pakistani intervention played no role in the problem in Kashmir. First, Pakistan provided refuge to terrorist activities, as Amanullah Khan who founded the JKLF spearheaded his movement taking refuge in Pakistan, from where he recruited supporters from the Valley.⁷² In 1990, Indian intelligence reports identified forty-six camps in the Pakistan part of Kashmir, described as 'safe houses' used for imparting training and providing refuge to militants.⁷³ Second, Pakistan provided material and financial assistance to terrorist groups. For instance, it is common belief in New Delhi that the *Jamaat-i-Islami's* activities in the valley were funded from across the border.⁷⁴ Though Pakistan officially denies these allegations, the Indian government's position maintains that the Pakistani hand in the problem in Kashmir is an undisputable fact, with the eruption of violence in 1989 being

⁶⁹ See Bhattacharjea (1994: 246-247)

⁷⁰ For Jagmohan's analysis of the Kashmir Problem and a defense of his actions, see *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (1991)

⁷¹ Behera (2000: 153-154)

⁷² Schofield (2000: 139)

⁷³ Lal Khan (2005: 167)

⁷⁴ Author interview with a senior intelligence official of the Government of India in New Delhi, March 2010.

traced to a 1982 plan of General Zia-ul-Haq (President of Pakistan 1978- 1988) to ‘train Kashmiri youth to launch an armed crusade in the valley.’⁷⁵

Pakistan’s role in Kashmir can explained through a reference to the following statement:

The Pakistani military’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had, during the 1980s military regime of General Zia-ul Haq, acquired vast resources and autonomy as the nodal agency coordinating the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)- sponsored war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. By 1989 Soviet forces were on their way out of Afghanistan and the ISI was in a position to focus on the new war in Kashmir, Pakistan’s sacred national cause since 1947. In an unexpected windfall for the ISI, sizeable numbers of youth from Indian Kashmir were, for the first time since 1947, prepared to take up arms against Indian rule. (Bose 2003: 125-126)

The above statement would indicate that Pakistan definitely had an interest in Kashmir, which was given greater focus with the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan as Pakistan now turned its attention toward the Valley. However, it is important to note that since independence, it was the first time that Kashmiri youth were willing to accept the offer of arms from Pakistan in their grievances against the Indian State. Pakistan’s role in creating this alienation is limited; it played the role of an opportunistic spoiler in capitalizing on a sentiment that already existed. As stated by Mehbooba Mufti, ‘militancy in Kashmir is sustained not because people are trained across the border, but because the locals support them.’⁷⁶ This is corroborated by Sajjad Lone who says, ‘the Pakistan factor might be there, but if you did not have rigged elections, a mute media acting as spectators, and all round *goonda raj*, Pakistan’s role would not be of significance.’⁷⁷ In other words, the current insurgency in Kashmir was not the result of Pakistani instigation. Once underway, however,

⁷⁵ See Schofield (2000: 140), Subrahmanyam (1990)

⁷⁶ Author interview with Mehbooba Mufti in New Delhi, April 2010.

⁷⁷ Author interview with Sajjad Lone in New Delhi, March 2010.

‘Pakistan became a vital source of moral and practical support to the Kashmiri Muslims in their struggle to secede from India.’⁷⁸

H5: Positive correlation between rising unemployment and the rise of militancy

Various accounts locate the rise of insurgency in the valley to forms of economic deprivation, most often articulated in the rise of a new educated class that was faced with the lack of employment opportunities.⁷⁹ This analysis argues that with the guarantee of free education up to the undergraduate level, the number of people eligible for employment far exceeded the job opportunities available, especially as development was not given adequate attention. The focus of this argument is on the economic development of the state. For instance, of the National Investment in the public sector amounting to rupees 86,000 crores over a forty-year period, Jammu and Kashmir was accorded a share of only 0.03 percent.⁸⁰ According to this view therefore, the lack of development in the state led to a paucity of employment opportunities, providing militant groups with ample recruiting space.

Militancy... is the [result of the] despair of a small select group of young people who form a new but disinherited middle class... a class trained in schools and colleges set up after independence to become salary earners in government, large industry and trade. In other words, this is a class that was trained to wield power but denied the opportunity to do so. The denial of political rights is only a small part of their dispossession. (Jha 1991: 35)

The argument suggests that while the per capita income of Jammu and Kashmir is comparable to a state like Punjab, the difference is that income generated in the former is concentrated in the hands of small owner run establishments, with the vast majority seeking salaried employment which is in short supply in the valley. The few salaried jobs that are

⁷⁸ Khan (2005: 118)

⁷⁹ See Khan (2005), Jha (1991), Soz (1991), Prakash (2000).

⁸⁰ Soz (1991)

available are dominated by Pandits and outsiders, with Kashmiri Muslims being concentrated at the lower end of the pay scale.⁸¹ While Muslims constitute 65 percent of the population of the state, their share is only 13 percent in central government jobs, less than 6 percent in the gazetted services, and 1.5 percent in the nationalized banking sector; while a large number estimated at 100,000 during 1987-1988 remained unemployed.⁸²

Lal Khan (2005) locates the grievances of the educated unemployed youth in their alienation as they identified neither with the elite nor with the bureaucracy, finding an outlet for their frustration in the political-religious organizations that were emerging the late 1980s. Khan refers to the grant-loan ratio in Jammu and Kashmir, which at 30 percent in the form of grants, and 70 percent as loans was unfavourably different from other States such as Himachal Pradesh that had a ratio of 90 percent as grants and 10 percent as loans.⁸³ This implies that Jammu and Kashmir has to repay a large proportion of the money it received from the Central government. The money that did make it to the State had to contend with the corruption rampant in the valley, as the administration siphoned off a large part of the funds meant for development work into their own pockets. Khan argues that neither the Indian bourgeoisie nor the Centre invested significantly in promoting industries in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, with 'only two measly government sector units with investments of Rs. 5 crore and Rs. 50 lakh.'⁸⁴ The Centre's investment in the region was concentrated largely on roads and communications, with the purpose of facilitating the movement of troops and weapons.

⁸¹ Jha (1991: 34-37)

⁸² Soz (1991: 38-41)

⁸³ Also in Soz (1991).

⁸⁴ Khan (2005: 124)

Khan describes the economic relationship between India and Kashmir as reminiscent of an oppressive colonial system where exchange was characterized by non-reciprocal interests, pointing to the fact that imports into Kashmir were four times greater than its exports to India.⁸⁵ The insurgency in Kashmir is explained through the fundamental contradictions of Indian capitalism, as economic growth does not translate into social and human development. This contradiction arises as capitalism and laissez-faire policies encourage the growth of market forces with minimal state intervention. The role of the state takes on a more repressive form as it seeks to deal with inequities in the distribution of wealth. According to Khan, it is 'this status quo that is the root cause of the conflict in Kashmir.'⁸⁶

A similar view is detailed in the account of Siddhartha Prakash (2000), who argues that the agricultural growth in post-1947 Kashmir benefitted only a minority of the population. This, coupled with the lack of industrial development, resulted in a paucity of job opportunities. The discrepancy between the jobs available and the existing demand contributed to the alienation of the Kashmiri youth, which in turn, paved the way for the rise of militancy in the valley.

The argument that economic unemployment contributes to the rise of militancy has various loopholes. Sajjad Lone asks 'where in the ranks of militants are the educated unemployed?' Lone points to the fact that most militants had a 'humble background' with JKLF leader Yasin Malik being the son of a bus driver with limited education, adding that 'if you look at the top hundred or so militants who first went for training, you will not find very high levels of education.'⁸⁷ A senior intelligence official with the government of India also dismisses the role of the educated employed, adding that Kashmir's economy was comparable to the more

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 125

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 188

⁸⁷ Author interview with Sajjad Lone in New Delhi, March 2010.

prosperous states in India, reflected in the fact that very few Kashmiris migrated from the valley. He states, ‘if the people were economically deprived to the extent to being pushed to pick up the gun, one would wonder why there are such small figures for migration out of the valley?’⁸⁸ In this context, Mehbooba Mufti draws attention to the fact that unemployment is an issue in various states in India, and by no means unique to Jammu and Kashmir as ‘the lack of development can precipitate things, but it cannot be the reason [for conflict].’⁸⁹

The Diagnosis

In addressing the question ‘what and why is the problem?’ (Galtung 1996: 27) two factors become important: one, explaining the cause of the alienation of the Kashmiri people, and two, locating what best explains the timing of the insurgency. Any conclusive answer to ‘what and why is the problem’ in Kashmir needs to take into account both these aspects. In 1947 Kashmiri public opinion represented voices that supported the accession along with voices opposed to it. What is of relevance is *what* factors contributed to the emergence of an anti-Indian voice as the dominant strain and *why* did this articulate itself in a violent form in the late 1980s?

The erosion of democracy in its link to the rise of militancy is able to answer both aspects of the question. New Delhi increasingly interfered in the affairs of the state of Jammu and Kashmir by failing to guarantee the autonomy on the condition of which the State had acceded to the Indian Union in the first place. It increasingly meddled in the electoral and political processes of the State, and responded to the growing anti-government sentiment by unleashing a repressive state machinery that curbed any semblance of freedom that the people

⁸⁸ Author interview with a senior intelligence official in New Delhi, March 2010.

⁸⁹ Author interview with Mehbooba Mufti in New Delhi, April 2010.

might have still had left. This denial of democracy to the Kashmiri people is the ‘single greatest block to the process of Kashmir’s emotional and political integration with the rest of India.’⁹⁰ The erosion of democracy is additionally relevant to understanding the timing of the insurgency in the late 1980s, as a series of political miscalculations led up to the period. These included the arbitrary dismissal of popularly elected leaders, such as Farooq Abdullah in 1984, and the rigging of elections, including the 1987 assembly elections.

A brief look at the other hypotheses would indicate that the erosion of democracy (H1 hypothesis) is the best fit in addressing the two specific aspects of ‘what and why’, namely the alienation of the Kashmiri people and the timing of the insurgency. The spread of Hindu nationalism (H2 hypothesis) is more relevant to the second aspect than to the first, as the 1980s witnessed sections hitherto uninvolved in the political process becoming more active. The electoral process introduced the element of political competition for votes as politicians appealed to community identities and played up the communal card in the effort to do so. The rhetoric that accompanied political campaigns in Jammu and Kashmir can be interpreted in this context. The role of the appeal of Islam (H3 hypothesis) is also limited in explaining the first aspect, as the Muslim majority valley was characterized by forty years of relative peace before the insurgency took root. Developments in the Islamic world such as the Iranian revolution and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan undoubtedly contributed to the timing of the insurgency as it emboldened the Kashmiri people that oppressive regimes could be fought in the name of Islam. Similarly, Pakistani intervention (H4 hypothesis) is more suitable to explaining the timing of the insurgency rather than its cause, as in the late 1980s the funds and material made available to the ISI could be diverted to Kashmir in the aftermath of the Afghan war. Finally, Unemployment (H5 hypothesis) itself cannot explain the insurgency as it is not a unique phenomenon to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and

⁹⁰ Puri (1993: 53)

while the unemployed youth might have provided a recruiting ground for militant organizations, the question that needs to be addressed is why they felt the need to pick up the gun against the Indian state?

While the diagnosis does point to an erosion of democracy as being a primary cause for the problem in Kashmir, the purpose is not to underplay the role of the remaining four hypotheses. Causal analyses will always be flawed if it reduces its explanation to any one factor, and as demonstrated above, each of the five hypotheses played a role in the rise of insurgency in the valley, particularly in explaining its timing. However, the erosion of democracy can be identified as the most significant in the diagnosis, as it effectively answers the question of ‘what and why is the problem?’ relating to the question’s two aspects: the alienation of the Kashmiri people and the timing of the insurgency.

In trying to restore the ‘ill state’ of Kashmir back to its ‘health’ (Galtung 1996: 1) the foremost concern is in addressing the sentiment of the Kashmiri people, echoed in *‘hum kya chahte azadi’* (what we want is freedom). This conception of *azadi* is perhaps most adequately represented in the freedom to elect representatives, the freedom to be critical of the government, and the freedom of press and public speech.

Conclusion

In light of the nuclearization of both India and Pakistan, the Kashmir dispute has taken on a new dimension. Pakistan might be encouraged to initiate low-intensity conflict, including support to terrorism, believing that the chances of all out retaliation by India are reduced due

to nuclear deterrence,⁹¹ but there is always scope for miscalculation and miscommunication in the event of a crisis between the two countries.⁹² For any effective resolution to a dispute, an understanding of its context is essential. As long as the Indian position attributes the cause of the insurgency in Kashmir solely to Pakistani meddling, and as long as the Pakistani view maintains its faith in the appeal of transnational Islam, the context to the Kashmir problem gets obfuscated. This paper argues that the foremost dimension of concern in regard to the Kashmir dispute is the dilution of *azadi*, in the erosion of democracy that has given the Kashmiri people little option other than the recourse to armed resistance.

Evoking Galtung's diagnosis-prognosis-therapy triangle (1996) the point to note is the necessity of an accurate diagnosis, in leading to a correct prognosis, and more importantly to effective therapy. If the context to the Kashmir dispute is not correctly understood, any efforts to resolve the crisis will be unsuccessful. Galtung writes that inaccurate therapy, in the form of intervention that has not correctly identified the cause of a problem, risks making the system worse. This is of increasing salience in a nuclear South Asia where Kashmir continues to be a point of contention between India and Pakistan.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated that the principal cause in explaining the rise of militancy in the Kashmir valley can be identified in the erosion of democracy, through processes such as the increasing centralization of the Indian State, the suppression of opposition voices, and State repression. The erosion of democracy can best answer the question 'what and why is the problem?' (Galtung 1996: 27) specifically in explaining the cause for the alienation of the Kashmiri people and the timing of the insurgency in the late 1980s.

(Word Count: 10,010)

⁹¹ Ganguly (2008).

⁹² Kapur (2008).

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