Presenting an alternative theoretical framework on Kashmir in the context of print media: From Ethnonationalism to Civic Nationalism

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Abstract

This work challenges the mainstream media's notions of presenting the region of India-administered Kashmir and enables one to view the culturally diverse, shifting frontier through a different lens. The paper challenges the representation of Kashmir in the mainstream national and international print media, which serve as an instrument and power's pedagogical tool for the public. The media is used to shape people's imagination and elicit certain political or apolitical positions as well as reinforce predispositions and behaviours according to agenda. Hence, the media's perspective needs to be examined closely. This work replaces the framework of ethnonationalism, which contours the media's representation of Kashmir, with an alternative framework of civic nationalism, which will bring about a different understanding of the region for the public. This framework not only unravels the conflict from twelfth century onwards, but also illuminates historical reasons for the present-day conflict, which is a vital component in conflict resolution. Unpacking the theory of Civic Nationalism and presenting evidence of Kashmir's diversity by delving into the heterogenous region's social, economic, cultural, and political spaces, the paper aims to unravel this comprehensive framework which counters the hegemonic, pedagogical national and international medias' narratives on the conflict. The authors

not only attempt to enliven aspects of the region's social history and contextualise/reframe the oppressed people's movement for self-determination from the Civic Nationalism framework, but also decode the present-day conflict by unravelling its root causes.

Keywords: *Kashmir, ethnonationalism, civic nationalism, self-determination, pedagogy, social history, hegemony, media, culture, region, conflict resolution, India*

From the late 1940s onward, the former Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has remained a space of contestation between three nuclear powers – China, India, and Pakistan. Since the Cold War, the literature on Kashmir in mainstream print media has revolved around social and economic processes, securitisation, human rights and direct confrontation/conflict between the three superpowers (Lawrence, 2014; Lamb, 1997; Snedden, 2015; Zutshi, 2012; Rai, 2004 & Ali et al., 2011). Over decades, international NGO reports, journalistic writing and academic research have mostly delved into analysing Kashmir from an ethnonationalist theoretical framework to explain the processes and events that take place in the conflict region (Ganguly, 1996; Bose, 2005; Gill et al., 2021).

The global print media's misrepresentation of the conflict in Kashmir has often operated in connivance with the ruling dispensation because the global media's hegemonic representation of Kashmir's historicity, or lack of it, is entwined with the respective State's version of the subcontinent's history (Boga, 2020). The use of media as a pedagogical tool in the hands of the powerful, both nationally and transnationally, has shaped and reshaped the representation of Kashmir at various points in time according to agendas. Media contours the public's opinion and politics, leads them to choose their positions on issues and reinforces their predispositions. One could then say that media becomes an instrument that moulds

the public's political behaviour which aids the governing classes to maintain their hegemony over the society. This contribution to public "knowledge" *en masse* may be viewed upon as an instructive or a pedagogical contribution with aims of either manufacturing consent, obfuscating issues, demonising or proliferating propaganda to consolidate hegemony. However, if representing an issue by this intellectual institution of society is tainted, it contributes to a lopsided understanding which conceals reality. Most importantly, challenging these hegemonic pedagogical media narratives entrenched in power, that are disseminated nationally and internationally, enables an understanding of the conflict in Kashmir from a wholistic and a politically driven perspective. For example, while the Indian media represent the Indian State as a victim of "terror", the Pakistani media projects Kashmiris as India's victims, while maintaining a silence on the political stalemate in the conflict for which both the countries are responsible (Boga, 2018). This, among several other factors, leads us to believe that the global media is not critical of its country of origin, but protects it by distracting the audience, presenting the human rights aspect of the dispute, while downplaying its political aspect, thereby absolving the state of the responsibility of the conflict's resolution. Within that context, the national media too demonises and stereotypes dissenters to justify State violence and builds an unfavourable opinion about them amongst the public (Boga, 2017). Thus, a counter-hegemonic approach which challenges this continuous, biased, circuitous and powerful representation is required to illuminate the conflict region from a distinct perspective. Here, the media, with its reach and capital, serve as a case study to visibilise the aspects that influence the representation of the region in the public sphere. One could then say that a counter-hegemonic representation also challenges the capitalistic nexus between the media and the State, making the framework of civic nationalism an anti-capitalistic framework. It also unites people over commonality in terms of people's suffering, instead of segregating those seeking freedom globally.

As far as the public is concerned, media serve as a measure of authority and has effects on a mass scale because people believe in the authority of media discourse in countless contexts and they act based on these beliefs (Couldry, 2000). Schreiber (2007) explains that the capacity to evaluate the intentions of the public and to send "signals" to manipulate these intentions induces better co-operation and better individual and group outcomes according to vested interests of the ruling class. This manipulation by the media ends up reducing conflicts against Empire and enables hegemony through transnational commercialism, profit-driven and advertising-supported enterprises and programming (Pal, 1997). For all media organisations – partisan or mainstream – the key is to expand their influence and resources by expanding and deepening their audience to establish a hegemonic control (Entman, 2007). Therefore, a country's mass media should not be confused as being exclusive of the country's social system and behaviour patterns (Ugboajah, 1976). Throughout history, the control of socialised communication by ideological and political authorities and the elite has been a key source of social power (Entman, 2007). That is why intellectual institutions of the State such as newspapers, periodicals and clubs not only as a channel which links the elite to the masses, but also as a mode of communication within the educated class (Ugboajah, 1976).

Governments are subject to the political contradictions within the nation-state, including the prevailing social struggles over resource distribution and political power among social classes, as well as whatever co-operation or contestation exists among the ruling elite (Artz & Kamalipour, 2003). The logic of the market, too, dictates that centralising or globalising firms need and seek political support for their advances (Herman & McChesney, 1997). The power of media hegemony is in its participatory effectiveness — second-tier capitalist media owners, protected and bolstered by their own nation-state politicos, advance the policies and practices of capitalist globalisation through culturally familiar representations (Artz &

Kamalipour, 2003). So, when national governments adopt market-driven policies of deregulation, privatisation and commercialisation, they become complicit in the dismantling of public enterprises, including the media and culture, or at the very least regulating away viable public media and cultural independence. This reaffirms the fact that collective structures of the public which are based on consent and commonality are usurped by structures of hierarchy and power. Resultantly, as a consequence of neoliberal revolution, in the U.K., Western Europe and Russia, it was working people's institutions which became accomplices to their own dispossession as they underwent "redefinition according to the demands and pressures of supra-national actors" (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992: 133). Thus, the establishment of the hierarchy of power is confirmed with transnational corporations dictating terms to compliant nation-states comprising politicians, regional corporations and/or elites, who in turn control the media. This capitalist hegemonic process contoured by various levels of power – global, regional and national – and engineered for the purpose of mind control, eventually shapes mass opinion on issues that are important to the public.

In India's context, the growing corporatisation of the Indian media is manifest in the manner in which large industrial conglomerates are acquiring direct and indirect interest in media groups and there is also a growing convergence between creators/producers of media content and those who disseminate the content (Thakurta, 2012).

> The present form of journalism being practised in India is not free but embedded journalism. And that's the form of journalism that corporate want as it helps them get a monopoly to do what they want or run the country in their own way. The primary motive of such corporate houses is to have a country head who has little concern or regards for the Indian law or the constitution and cares only about the profit of investors. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Mukesh Ambani now owns 70 per cent of the Indian Media houses," explains Pankaj Shrivastava, founding editor of *Media Vigil* (Abbas, 2018).

In India, where the global media has become one of global capitalism's defining features and a necessary component of neoliberalism instituted by Western power, it has reorganised regional power elites as a new transnational class, where investor-rights agreements are mislabelled as "free trade agreements" and costs and risks are socialised and profit privatised (Herrmann & McChesney, 1997; Chomsky, 2001, 2003, 153). Corporations more and more design not only the economic sphere but also shape legislation and policy affecting all levels of government, and with limited opposition, with the benefits flowing to the rich and the powerful not only in political processes but all facets of life and governance (Giroux, 2005: 2). This gives rise to authoritarianism, sectarianism and militarism, bringing into question the validity of democracies.

In India's case, imperial footprints of the colonisers have shaped the nature of its relationship with the world, with economics and exploitation as the central driving force behind global liaisons. Therefore, in this scenario, one cannot undermine the importance of "good press" by the hegemonic power to nurture exploitative relationships that empower the local elite and make them thrive. Countries that align themselves to these transnational power structures reap the benefit of strengthening the local ruling elite or corporates that own the media. And if the national media – an intellectual institution charged with scrutinising the actions of the state in a democratic nation – has lost its moral bearings, who remains to hold the State accountable for its actions? (Bhattacharjee, 2014). For this reason, the media in any country needs to be analysed by taking into account its ability to hold the State answerable. Hence, an uncritical valorisation of the State by the media indicates the hidden symbiotic relationship between the two (Boga, 2018).

Post-liberalisation, the veiled global state-military-industrial complex made India one of the largest importers of weapons in the world and United States of America, the largest exporter. Cold War divisions transformed as the global "War on Terror"

forged new geopolitical alliances, where violence was directed towards a certain group of people worldwide, depending on the resources they owned. This direction of violence has been justified and legitimised by the perpetrator nations under the garb of protecting "national interests" and combating "terror", enabling them to play defensive victims during invasions. Taking a cue from the western countries, India too has joined the bandwagon to play the victim of pan-Islamic terror, and subsequently militarise, introduce anti-Constitutional laws and securitise, while actually targeting political dissidents in all parts of the country (Boga, 2018). This process emulates the Western public discourse, where those who oppose established orders are terrorists and state terrorism is a category virtually never employed, unless it refers to the Communist bloc (Schlesinger, 1981).

Before India's economic "liberalisation" in the 1990s, international print media such as USA-based *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine, UK-based newspaper *The Guardian* and Pakistan's newspaper *Dawn* presented the Kashmir conflict as multi-dimensional with various hidden and visible stakeholders, but Indian national print media such as *The Times of India* and *India Today* magazine only *portrayed* a pro-state version, highlighting the ethnonationalist perspective. For example, mass uprisings and state violence in the region are misinterpreted through nationalistic and security prisms after stripping the dispute *of* its historical context (Boga, 2018). With such partisan reportage, one is unable to form an accurate reading of the conflict, thereby preventing its resolution. For the purpose of this study, the authors posit that an ethnonationalist framework may be understood as a framework which dictates that a nation consists of people and social units that are basically similar to each other, and it is produced by a shared collective conscience (Calhoun, 2002). Imposing homogeneity upon the population, this framework demands magnification of one identity revolving around either religion, sect, tribe, race or caste, which takes precedence over the rest, guiding human actions in daily life while eroding the region of its rich, multicultural diversity. This manufactured

construct by power/State further helps secondary power-wielding mechanisms such as the media to homogenise, stereotype and vilify/demonise a particular group of people and alienate them from the public in order to justify State violence and entrench a culture of impunity that encourages cycles of violence. The effect of this framework on the media hence becomes the subject of study. This will be elaborated upon in detail with the help of examples in the following sections.

In contrast to ethnonationalism, the framework of civic nationalism offers another explanation about the formation of national communities. This framework encompasses "equal rights bearing citizens in terms of social, political, economic and cultural, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of patriotic practices and values" (Ignatieff 1993: 7, 8). In other words, characteristically, different societies will have a complex division of labour, considerable variation among individuals, and constituent groups formed on different principles (Calhoun, 2002). This democratic framework encourages diversity and seeks to unite people irrespective of their religion, ethnicity, culture, class, tribe, caste and sect. This makes it a framework that is anti-capitalistic in nature as it unites the public on issues that arise from inequalities within a post-neoliberal setup. So far, there is hardly any work on Kashmir in the fields of journalism or academia that employs the theory of Civic Nationalism for explaining the societal processes which led to the emergence of a socially cohesive community or even the efficient functioning of various components of its cultural structures, leading to a culture of civic resistance against all invaders over centuries. The authors of this article attempt to use this framework and the concepts associated with it to analyse Kashmir from an alternative perspective, a departure from the portrayal of the region by mainstream hegemonic national and international print media that shape the public imagination while introducing people to such shrouded regions of protracted conflict.

One must set aside the framework of ethnonationalism and examine civic nationalism to understand and explain the functioning of various institutions, values, and symbols of Kashmir's community and re-present it as a diverse and multi-cultural region. This view serves as a counter to the hegemonic media's narrative on the region which portrays it simply as territorial conflict between three major powers, an ethnonational conflict or a human rights issue. Such portrayal renders invisible the militaristic and hegemonic role of the state and demonise/criminalise dissenters in contested spaces (Giroux, 2005). The lens of civic nationalism aims to reframe the narrative surrounding the political agency of those that struggle for self-determination in Kashmir by re-presenting the political conflict. Here, the people's perspective on the cause of the conflict that the State invisiblises is foregrounded. Contradistinctly, the national media's hegemonic narrative, enables the State to justify its violent action against unarmed dissidents seeking self-determination. To begin to understand this, let us first discuss the universal aspects that exist in every human society and scrutinise the elements that influence various aspects of community culture that go into the making of civic nationalism.

Origins of various aspects of community culture

Anthropologists state that every human being performs functions in daily life not only by nourishing and reproducing, but also by maintaining certain physical conditions such as ventilation, temperature within a definite range, a sheltered and dry place to rest, and safety from the hostile forces of nature, of animals, and of man. Humans use various tools and implements to fulfil the social reproduction process which entails uses and destruction – that is consumption of goods, food production and preparation, manufacturing clothing, building materials, as well as means of transportation. All these imply the necessity of "a constant renewal of the cultural apparatus" (Malinowski, 1939: 9). Furthermore, Malinowski (1939) explains that human beings do not

act in isolation, instead their actions and basic needs are expressed in drives, desires, or emotions that are culturally moulded. Among humans, the satisfaction of every organic need is achieved in an indirect, complicated and roundabout manner as they acquire resources from their surroundings through a culmination of processes of culture. Within that context, the authors of this paper emphasise that culture is constituted by economic and legal institutions, education, and political organisation of the public. And economics means systems of production, distribution, and consumption, which serves as an organised method of 'social control'. Every cultural activity, too, is conducted through mutual co-operation and/or systemisation. This means that "man must obey rules of conduct: life in common, which is essential to co-operation, means sacrifices and joint effort, the harnessing of individual contributions and work to a common end, and the distribution of the results according to traditional claims" (Malinowski, 1939: 13). From this vantage point, let us now explore the intricacies that go into the making a diverse region.

Before we provide an analysis of various aspects of the culture in Kashmir which led to the formation of its own distinct community culture or way of life, we present a background on the intersectional concepts of nation, colonisation, ethnicity and culture, and their influence on identity in different frameworks. Like other regions of the world, this shifting frontier also birthed the culture of fulfilling tasks of social reproduction. However, unlike Europe, colonisation stalled cultural progress in Kashmir. If we study the literature on State and nationalism of the region in a modernist sense, there seems to be a paradigm shift in terms of conceptualisation of the notion of State, nation, and community with the arrival of capitalist colonialism. Prior to that, the South Asian subcontinent and the Ottoman Empire experienced an emergence of State and national community, and subsequently, other aspects of culture for accomplishing social metabolic reproduction in the framework of Civic

Nationalism (Amin, 2014). Only with the emergence of imperialist countries such as England, France, Spain, Portugal and Holland as dominant global powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ethnonationalist frameworks were weaponised to govern colonised spaces. The emergence of the nation-state led to the organisation of various facets of a colonised society and its institutions on the principle of Vertical Co-operation, which demands the acceptance of an individual as part of organisation, along with his/her inequality or a hierarchal order of collectives (Filimon & Campaña, 2014). The spread of education by the modern state and the use of intelligentsias who were also central to the rise of both forms of nationalism which led to a strengthening of the ethnonationalist framework which was instrumental in propagating an ideology rooted in the imperial administration's imagining of a nation-state (Anderson, 2006). Krishna (1999: 207, 211, 221) too exposes the relationship between nation and ethnicity and the imposition of what he refers to as "the fiction of homogeneity" while elaborating that "the arrival as a nation-state is coterminous with the exorcisation of all forms of identity barring the unitary sense of nation":

> … a close look at the practices of nation building reveal that both nation and ethnicity share a logic that seeks to align territory with identity (the belief that every territory is ideally inhabitable by a singular identity); moreover, both nation and ethnicity opportunistically feed off each other as they seek to define themselves in contradistinction.

If we study governance and cultural configurations in the pre-World War II era, all the industrialised countries such as USA, Japan, UK, France and Germany's social economic structures were organised on the principle of Vertical Cooperation (Riggs,1994; Theodore et al., 1995). Various aspects of culture like norms, values, institutions in the economic, social and political realms were organised on the basis of an ethnonationalist framework (Tishkov, 2000; Amin,

2014; Pyle, 1973; Marx, 2002; Gessier, 2005). However, an ethnonationalism form of a collective system, which is based on belief in the common genetic or biological descent of the group, transformed into a hegemonic form of organisational structure of social system worldwide. In other words, ethnonationalism may be understood as a movement or countermovement of certain groups of society such as elites and the ruling class whose goals are to maintain hierarchical structures of order, status, honour, or traditional social differences or values. Sometimes, privileged groups also "directly advocate, and usually cause, the perpetuation or increase of economic or political inequalities" (Lo, 1984: 3). Such mechanisms of maintaining a hegemonic control of a population can therefore be understood a strategy of power that helps in controlling the public.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, social movements began to emerge from other sections of society such as the workers, peasants and oppressed communities along with the civic form of collective structures. This gave birth to various frameworks, symbols and values which enabled societies to function on democratic and egalitarian principle. For example, at the time of the French revolution and Paris Commune, France implemented such a framework for functioning of society (Rosenberg, 2012). In contemporary social sciences, most scholars who are working on the questions of community, nation and State, accept that every society and civilisation is not only constituted by social forces which try to organise society either on the basis of ethnonationalism or civic nationalism for completing social reproduction processes. However, both forms of the collective structures are deeply rooted in their respective societies, forming long-lasting and persisting traditions and ways of thinking in every culture and civilisation (Jaskulowski, 2010). In short, we have a category of nationalism, that is civic nationalism, which goes hand-in-hand with democracy

and a just society model; then, there is ethnonationalism which tends to be authoritarian, exclusionary, and based on Machtpolitik.

Generally, a nation can be characterised as a community, a definite community of people and in the present times, it is not racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people. For example, the present Italian nation consists of Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. Similarly, Gauls, Romans, Britons and Teutons make up the French nation. Similarly, other nations constitute people of diverse races and tribes (Stalin, 1913). A common civic culture and ideology, along with their contradictions, emerge from historical processes within these communities giving rise to various constituents of a nation such as territoriality, political and legal institutions and citizenship rights. It is crucial to note that culture has developed differently in pre- and post-capitalism and it plays an important part in any society. Moreover, concepts of territories not only possess formal and universalist dimensions, but when we apply concepts such as boundary or frontier, it becomes particular in nature (Kaufman & Zimmer, 1998). Thus, a common territory becomes one of the common characteristic features of a nation. Besides the characteristics mentioned above, they are other constituents of a nation. The prerequisite for a nation is an internal economic bond which performs the task of welding of the various parts of the nation into a single whole. Thus, a common economic life or economic cohesion becomes another important characteristic of a nation.

Delving deeper, one may suggest that nations not only differ with each other in material conditions of life, but also in terms of biopsychology or spiritual complexion, which manifests in the peculiarities of any national culture. This aspect sees its development as consequence of dissimilar conditions of social metabolic reproduction processes. In addition, they are other factors such as material conditions whose importance in formation of a nation takes precedence

over people being bound by a common language, which is another intrinsic feature. For example, England, America and Ireland, despite using English language, are three distinct nations. As a result, one may suggest that a nation's national character is not something which is fixed in nature, contrarily it is quite dynamic as it is constantly modified because of changes in the conditions of life. Therefore, its existence sees its origins at every given moment. It's also made its impacts on the physiognomy of the nation. Thus, a common psychological make-up, which manifests itself in a common culture, is one of the characteristic features of a nation (Stalin, 1913). If political and legal institutions are able to evoke the necessary emotional attachments and loyalties from a given population, then, just like national character and economic institutions, they should be seen as historically evolved instead of merely invented or constructed (Stalin, 1913). Therefore, one may conclude that a nation is an "imagined community", which is a historically constituted community of people, which sees its emergence based on a common territory, economic life, psychological and language; and all these constituents witness their manifestation in a common culture which is in a constant state of flux and regulated by some form of governing power structure (Anderson, 2006). These imaginations, rooted in power, function to operationalise ethnonationalist frameworks, that strengthen and propagate similar ideas and philosophies through values, culture, politics and economics with help from the media.

Dialectic of countermovement and social movement

In the West, nationhood spurred mass social upheaval and organised working people's movements, triggering a crisis for the privileged section of society in the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries. As a result of capitalism, the clergy and the aristocratic classes witnessed the dominance of the working class or were challenged by a new class that emerged with new modes of production. Pressure from the organised reformist and revolutionary working people's

movement forced big industrialists and property owners to counter the mass movements using the Vertical Cooperation structure which was visible in economic, political, cultural, social, and spiritual spaces. The privileged groupings of industrial capitalists also enlisted allies in other sections of the population to counter this movement which challenged them. For example, the French Right based itself on the upper classes of French society, on sections of the petty bourgeoisie and on groups of workers who had been duped by them, whereas the socialist workers and large masses of the petty bourgeoisie fought for republicanism and democracy. Similarly, in Germany and England, the early-twentieth century saw the displacement of a traditional liberalism by nationalist and imperialist forces. In Germany, the imperialists formed an alliance with the army, the church and the intelligentsia (Rosenburg, 2012). The ideology which one refers to as "fascist" in present times, was based on an ethnonationalist framework, which exerted a strong influence on the people and had already fairly widespread throughout Europe in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because of the decline of social forces worldwide, as well institutions and organisations based on civic nationalism, the ethnonationalistic form of organisation, which was essentially authoritarian and hierarchical, became an alternative model of cooperation and a method to consolidate and multiply power by the ruling classes globally.

In the post-Cold War era, countries like India and Pakistan that were decolonised witnessed mass movements and formation of new governments which were struggling to organise their societies on the principle and goal of a civic framework. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and global acceptance of neoliberalism, civic nationalism was almost replaced worldwide. To this day, struggles against civic nationalism and ethnonationalist frameworks are still taking place. However, in the last decade, globally, the ethnonationalist form of cooperation has steadily been on the rise.

Making of a Region

The classic understanding of the formation of regions shows that regions are spaces that are sufficiently distinguished by environments and their characteristic traits. In medieval times, it was boundaries of rivers, deserts or large bodies of water which impeded migration and transportation and led to the formation of various aspects of culture. Regional Studies has its own theories about formation of regions – its Relational Approach affirms that regions are formed out of a combination of relations and connections much of which may take shape from elsewhere and they may be viewed as space or an open and ongoing production, rather than fixed expression of territory (Massey, 2005). Regions may also be conceived as spaces of interaction with their own particular culture with shifting frontiers and the pattern of their growth may be inconsistent and may transform over time, economically and socially. Thus, one may understand social relations as consequences of social, economic, cultural, and political processes that stretch beyond regions, impacting them and their surrounding areas in diverse ways. Nevertheless, to say that regions are merely the outcome of such constructs that contain in some way the very political relationships that invented them is not enough. Thus, a region needs to be presented as an important entity in economic, political, social, and spatial processes (Lagendjik, 2007). This brings us to our region of study, Kashmir.

Emergence of Kashmir as a region

Since Kashmir historically sits at the crossroads of South, Central, and East Asia, it can be studied as a region where inter-cultural interactions, composite socio-economic institutions and practices, multiple imperial influences alongside the indigenous came to produce a distinct form of economic, political, and social culture (Zutshi, 2012). The present region of India-administered Kashmir has an ancient history and culture. In the past, as consequence of its natural endowments and location attracted travellers and traders from the world

over. For example, Greek settlements at Semthan discovered by the Archaeological Survey of India belong to early centuries of the Christian era when this region was ruled by Kushanas dynasty had trade relationships as far as Rome. To ease trade, most coin-issues were modelled on the pattern of Roman coins (Jamwal, 1994).

Similarly, Kashmir's culture is constituted by people who came to the region as invaders, immigrants, interlopers and their descendants from present day Iran, Afghanistan, central Asia, India and Tibet (Snedden, 2015). To this day, Kashmir's connection to ancient civilisations is visible in its cultural practices, which have been assimilated into the lives of its inhabitants over centuries. Settlements in Kashmir bear names of historical personages or religious customs from 2,000 years ago. For example, Ashmuqam, a hamlet in South Kashmir, has followed its culture of celebrating the ancient Iranian Fire Festival. De Terra (1942) explains that this ritual traces its antecedents to the presence of ancient Indo-Scythian kings who ruled over a vast empire between Kashmir, Southern Afghanistan and Central India. The inhabitants of Kashmir Valley have also absorbed influences from various religions. Culturally, Kashmir's peoples have traditionally looked northward to Central Asia and Tibet, rather than south to India. Over centuries, Kashmir continues to be a product of diverse overlapping cultural, social, political and economic relations that stretched across space in ways that showed little or no respect for regional boundaries that were imposed by various regimes (Allen & Cochrane, 2007).

Contrarily, most social scientists, journalists and researchers continue to apply fixed notions of ethnicity and territoriality, i.e., an ethnonationalist framework, for describing, interpreting and analysing social processes and events in the region, while ignoring its inter-connectedness to other cultures which are currently reflected in its socio-economic, political cultural spheres, preventing

them from providing a comprehensive understanding of reality of the multifaceted shifting frontier. For this reason, this paper employs the Civic Nationalism Framework for understanding and explaining the societal processes and phenomena which occur in this diverse region. Let us now examine the social history of the region of Kashmir.

Civic Nationalism (Vertical Cooperation form of collective structure) in Kashmir

In the twelfth century, the South Asian subcontinent was in crisis just as it was around the sixth century when the Indo-Gangetic plain saw deurbanisation of society as consequence of an arrangement of collective societal structures on a Brahmanical understanding of society. Just like the rest of South Asia, Kashmir's ruling class was unable to provide security to its subjects against invaders. By the twelfth century, after becoming allies of invader tribes such as Turks, Pashtuns, Mughals, the Indo-Gangetic plain's privileged social grouping, made up of priestly and warrior classes, accepted divisive Brahmanical culture and values.

When Islam entered Kashmir in the twelfth century, there was insecurity of life and property thanks to a feudal administration under the Hindu rulers, leading to a paralysis of trade, agriculture and commerce which saw a reduction of material consumption which is required for social metabolic activities. In Kashmir, the first conversion to Islam occurred in the ruling class when Rinchen, a Tibetan Buddhist prince from Ladakh who wanted to convert to Shaivism, was refused by the orthodox Brahmins of the kingdom due to his caste difference. Rinchen then took the name Sultan Sadr-ud-Din, marking the beginning of Muslim rule in Kashmir (Schofield, 2003). However, the arrival of Islam failed to bring any social or economic cohesion for the downtrodden community. It is important to note, whenever a privileged social grouping tries

to organise a society, not based on *acculturation*, but through *assimilation*, this leads to social conflicts.

After Rinchen died, Shah Mir took control and founded the first Muslim dynasty to rule Kashmir, which lasted for 700 years (Ali et al., 2011). In 783/1384, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, a saint from Iran arrived in Kashmir with his followers, urging the reigning Sultan Qutubuddin to popularise the Sharia. At the time, the number of Muslims in the region seemed to be insignificant and a large number of non-Muslims formed the main prop of the government. Hamadani addressed himself to the task of reforming the sultan than converting non-Muslim subjects who were separated from a scholar like him by the barriers of language (Khan, 1997). Up to the late fifteenth century, in order to avoid religious persecution, forced conversions took place under rulers such as Sultan Sikander (Khan, 2005).

The expansion of ethnonationalism into institutions and other cultural apparatuses only brought more chaos to society. Amidst this turmoil, a new spiritual-culture order of the Rishis emerged in Kashmir. In 1420, as consequence of implementing benevolent or welfare system by king Bud Shah. The order was founded by spiritual leader Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, better known as Nund Rishi, who was inspired by mystic poetess Lal Ded. This Rishi order combined Buddhists renunciation with Shaivite asceticism and traditional Sufism (Schofield, 2003). Most importantly, the Rishi movement was based on the principle of universally accepted human purposes in contrast to ethnocentricity of the Hindu and Muslim rulers' creed. As Rishis believed in love of humankind, the movement's leaders stopped forceful conversions of non-Muslims into Islam. This made their sect popular among all sections of the community. Sufism not only promoted the practice of tolerance in society, but also empowered citizens through its teachings to raise a voice against social

injustice in the society. The Rishi spiritual cultural movement with a welfarist quality within the monarchy, brought both social cohesion and economic growth to Kashmir. In a sharp contrast, if we compare fifteenth century Western Europe to Kashmir, countries such as Portugal and England whose governing and privileged classes organised the functioning of state structures based on ethnonationalism.

Just like the spiritual culture arena, Kashmir also saw cumulative adaptation in economics, language, music, architecture, and art along with other aspects of culture. By the fifteenth century, in the economic sphere, the emergence of the welfarist regime started by Bud Shah, was continued by other rulers who succeeded him. For example, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin organised trips to Central Asia for his subjects to learn bookbinding, woodcarving, carpet, and shawl-making, thereby laying the foundations for Kashmir's indigenous industry. Similarly, other industries witnessed influence from Persia. Just like culture, one can trace foreign influences in the Valley's architecture and its copper industry to this day. The Persian and Central Asian elements were not superimposed, rather they were incorporated and assimilated with the indigenous elements to produce their own unique categories. New technology was also used for making production implements, which were used in agriculture and industry (Bamzai, 2007; Pal, 1973).

Trade has always remained an intrinsic part of Kashmir's society. Accounts reveal that Kashmir had trade contacts with Persia and Greece even before the advent of the Kushanas. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Kashmir expanded its trade in walnut, cedar wood, woodworks, and shawls to other parts of Asia (Rahman, 1989). Similarly, in terms of language, Kashmiri language has been classified as belonging to the Bardic groups of Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages; although containing numerous elements

adopted from Sanskrit, it does not belong to the Sanskritic group (Pacholczyk, 1979). Another example that displayed Kashmir's distinct cultural heritage was its music. *Sufyana Kalam* or *Sufyana Musiqi* is Kashmiri classical music, which is different from the music of the Indian subcontinent, as it contains many foreign elements. Islamisation put Kashmir in the radius of the Near East culture, dominated by Persian elements, and an acceptance of Buddhist and Hindu philosophies also influenced the music.

It can be said that Kashmir exalted its refinement into becoming a highly evolved diverse culture, fortifying its positions due to trade with various regions of world. Exposure to other cultures and assimilating practices from ancient civilisations elevated Kashmir to higher culture. While Western countries saw the emergence of mercantile capitalism which was based on ethnonationalism, Kashmir had societal structures which adapted institutions, values and spiritual philosophy based on principles of universalism. In this region, Civic Nationalism and economic growth complemented each other till the arrival of the Mughal regime.

Economic subjection under Mughals

Unlike the core regions of the Mughals' territory that were a part of the Indo-Gangetic plain, Mughals' rule brought materials and enhanced knowledge production. Unfortunately, for Kashmir, their reign introduced ethnonationalistic practices to divide the unity of the erstwhile governing class. Consequently, the region experienced a deterioration in terms of materials and cultural progress. Historian Bazaz (2002) describes the Mughal governors as tyrannical, barbarous, and uncultured, and mentions that they encouraged Hindu-Muslim and Shia-Sunni factionalism from the beginning of their rule. Mughals civil servants, who administrated the country, reorganised its trade, shawl-making and agriculture (Ali et al., 2011). The regime used social

cleavages for consolidating their rule. For example, certain privileged social groupings of the community such as the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits were provided with better opportunities which elevated their social positions from the public (Schofield, 2003). Thus, one may posit that with the advent of the Mughals began the Gallicisation of the population or an elite, marking a perfect and painful illustration of profound depth to which colonialisation went in pursuits of its ends (Gendzier, 1976). This construction and cultivation of a community by the colonists further entrenched the occupation and gave rise to a collaborator class.

By the eighteenth century, Kashmiris invited Ahmad Shah Durrani, ruler of Afghanistan to end Mughal rule in Kashmir (Ali et al., 2011). However, Afghan rule further led to Gallicisation of collective structures which were operating in the society. For example, privileged social groupings such as the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits, the Muslims Sayyids and the Pir families became the traditional governing classes and provided the revenue management system during the Afghan, Sikh, and Dogra rule (Zutshi, 2003). During the Afghan rule, it was not just the subjugated Muslim majority, but even nobility and merchants were asked to surrender their wealth to the first Afghan governor or face death. Due to this, the peasantry avoided cultivating the land for fear of exactions, leading to a complete degradation of their economy (Zutshi, 2003).

Colonial Modernity in Kashmir
The Sikhs purchased the province of Kashmir from the British in 1846 when Maharaja Ranjit Singh entered a treaty with the British, whereby the imperialists agreed to abstain from interference in territories south of the Sutlej River (Rai, 2004). Ranjit Singh began his campaigns to conquer principalities north of the Sutlej, expelling the Afghans from Multan, Deja Rat and Kashmir (Zutshi, 2003). Just like previous regime, the Sikh rule did not unite the

privileged social grouping of the society. Unlike the Mughal, or the Afghan rule, Kashmir underwent sudden changes in terms of conceptualisation of its national identity which was based on inculcation of a powerful sense of 'self versus the other' among individuals, as well as communities. Unlike the Mughals, the Sikhs practiced biased policies towards the Hindus (Rai, 2004). This further fractured the already divided oppressed majority community. The first Anglo-Sikh war in Kashmir resulted in a victory of East India Company which acquired Kashmir in 1846 as a part of the treaty of Amritsar, but hurriedly sold it to the Dogra ruler of neighbouring Jammu (Ali et al., 2011).

Ethnonationalism, Kashmir and the process of "Gallicisation"

Under the Dogra reign, Kashmir was ruled by a governing structure that was feudal, communal, and hierarchal in nature. Not only did the peasantry and the artisans suffer high taxes because of the *jagirdari* system, a corrupt and oppressive state bureaucracy staffed by the Dogras and Punjabis (non-Kashmiris) and practice of *begar* or forced labour. This form of governance not only brought immense suffering for common people, but it also alienated the privileged social grouping that participated in bureaucracy and military affairs. The Dogras continued the process of Brahaminisation of public spaces and polity.

To draw legitimacy of his rule from Brahmanical framework, Maharaja Gulab Singh initiated the construction of temples throughout the state and established religious trust such as the Dharmarth to funnel the funds to the minority Hindu community. This was also the beginning of the rise of the Hindu Right Wing backed by the State. "Gallicisation" of Kashmir communities which started in Mughal era experienced more social fractures. Although the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits were excluded from upper echelons of the bureaucracy by the Dogras, they continued to exercise control in the countryside through revenue

assessment and collection (Zutshi, 2003). Consolidating their positions within the state on the grounds of religion, the Pandits aligned with the dominating power structure against the Muslim majority. This marginalisation brought on by the structural violence in the spheres of political economy and culture inculcated in both the elite Muslims and the common people a distinct Kashmiri identity, where Muslims subjects felt oppressed by foreign invaders irrespective of their religion. Centuries later, this sentiment continues to play a significant role in identity formation and the subsequent demand for self-determination for the Kashmiris.

In this context, Kashmir's socio-economic conditions and religious factors produced a specific identity, which set the natives apart from India and other Central and South Asian nations. Lawrence (2014) emphasises that it should be remembered that had it not been for their conservative nature, Kashmiris would have been blotted out as a distinct nationality by their strong superiors, that is, the Mughals, the Afghans, the Sikhs and the Dogras. This period is crucial as it inculcated a sense of collective victimhood and foregrounded a conscious awareness of exploitation by foreign invaders, irrespective of their religion. Therefore, it can be said that Kashmir's political problems are rooted in regional processes and denial of political rights and equality and not in religion. This explains their demand for self-determination after the formation of their collective identities after they got access to education outside the princely state decades later.

In the twentieth century, access to modern education in other parts of British India by the Kashmiri youth played a key role in the formation of a political movement for self-determination. It was the youth and the oppressed peasants that led the struggle to end the Dogra rule in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. In the post-colonial era, similar to other regions of South Asia such as

Bengal, India's partition affected the people residing in these frontiers. After India's independence in 1947, Kashmir despite being a Muslim-majority state allegedly chose to be a part of the Indian union (Lamb, 1997). This time, post-independence, it brought the Muslims elites, who had been side-lined during the Dogra reign, back in power, uniting the governing classes. In the same period, unlike other parts of India, the impact of the social movement which was rooted in principles of universality and social justice became responsible for the land reforms in Kashmir.

On the cultural front too, the situation and the nature of the global political economy along with geopolitics, demanded that the newly founded Indian union put its welfare principles into practice. However, in the 1980s because of the changes which occurred in the global political economy and geopolitical configurations, the Indian union's political economy and its governance structure tilted towards an ethnonationalistic framework. This had an impact on Jammu and Kashmir and consequently, ethnonationalist politics once again percolated to the region through its governance structures. While ethnonationalism brought prosperity to the Western countries, it had an adverse impact on Kashmir. Due to its location and natural endowments, the rise of ethnonationalism based on religion and caste, based on a populist movement resulted in "Gallicisation" of its community. With the rise of ethnonationalism in the region and the subsequent withdrawal of the State in the governance of economic activities in late 1980s, mass migration of the privileged section of the community to other parts of India began. Here, the media played an intrinsic role in carving out a grand narrative revolving ethnonationalism about the protracted conflict in the national and global imaginations. We now move on to analyse the different perspectives of the national and international media that stemmed from the geopolitical positions of their respective countries at the time.

Analysis of Media Discourse on Kashmir

Over decades, both the international and national media on Kashmir have been influenced by the overarching geopolitics. Viewed as an extension of the country of their origin, the media has been a vital mechanism effectively used by power to shape public opinion, globally and nationally. The media, which operates on the basis of a nexus of international political economy, is employed by powerful states to spectacularise, misdirect, conceal, hyperise and misrepresent ideas, depending on the geopolitical climate and power's need to protect, expose and further agendas. Therefore, the media's agenda-setting capability is heavily dependent on the motives behind it. For example, During the Cold War years, closer to home, India's proximity to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resulted in critical reportage on Kashmir by American publications like *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine from the late 1940s to the 1970s. Whereas, a few years after India's liberalisation in the 1990s, the fall of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the September 11th attacks, the same publications altered their stance drastically on the conflict in Kashmir (Boga, 2018). It is vital to note, why media's relationship with power becomes more distinct in regions of conflict. It is because of the State's need to control the narrative emerging for that space, as the handling of conflict reflects on the State's image internationally and in the eyes of the public, domestically. Therefore, the state protects itself from public scrutiny through the media by manufacturing, facilitating and intensifying conflicts through distortion, so that state power is able to expand and hegemonise. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) elaborate on the central role of ideas in relations of power, be it as discursive formations, hegemony, ideology or the production of subjectivity. Maintaining hegemonic power through dominant media narratives enables the State to control political dissidents and portray itself as the victim.

Transformations in the twentieth-century world map led to India's emergence as a prominent nerve centre of unbridled capitalism (Kaur, 2020). By the 1990s, several changes took place in the of global political economy and adoption of collective structures for functioning of community and regions, bringing social chaos to Kashmir. Giroux (2005: 2) describes neoliberalism as a "virulent and brutal form of market capitalism", and outlines its negative political, social and economic effects on society. This upheaval and an iron-fisted governance to control the dissenting public led to a mass movement in support for either independence or a merger of Kashmir with Pakistan or India. With this background, the authors attempt to analyse international and national media news and other editorials which appeared in the traditional mainstream national and international print media from 1990 to 2020. According to Laclau (1977), there is a space of conflict that is a different and specific form of contradiction situated at the level of social formations that put the people in conflict with those in power.

While features such as propagandisation of the hegemonic and statist narratives of the conflict and exclusion of witness accounts or the people's perspectives are hallmarks of the national media; international publications have their own drawbacks and function taking into account trade relationships and geopolitical alliances, according to Boga's (2017) research on the coverage of Kashmir by the local, national and international print media from 1990 to 2010. For example, despite *The New York Times'* (1992) admission that its critique of India in Kashmir was 'muted for policy reasons' in the context of India's neoliberal capitalist economy, its coverage in the early 1990s presents a grassroot-level depiction of the conflict and prompts follow-up stories despite the state's communication blockade of the region. However, from the 1950s to the mid-1990s, American publications' grassroots-level coverage of Kashmir may have been informed by the Cold War politics which demanded a critique of

India due to its proximity with USSR (Boga, 2018). For example, from the mid-60s, *The New York Times* (1964) had depicted Kashmir's reality and portrayed a critical view of India's mismanagement of the political upheaval in the region, Prime Minister of Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah's incarceration and even had referred to India and Kashmir as two separate countries. Even earlier, *Time* magazine (1957) had reported on the political upheaval in Kashmir in an article titled, "Kashmir: India Grabs It", emphasising the nature of the illegality of the Indian occupation of Kashmir.

Later, reportage in the early 1990s was set at a time when the strategic relationship between United States of America and Pakistan was set in the post-Cold War milieu and India's proximity to Russia threatened the two. Geopolitical alliances played a crucial role in the international publications' stances vis-à-vis Kashmir, often attributed to the Cold War divisions between nation states between 1990 to 2000. In an analysis of international and national print media from 1990 onwards, Boga (2017) found that national newspapers like *The Times of India* (1990) presented partisan or statist perspectives on 'newsworthy' incidents such as Kashmir's Gaw Kadal massacre, which occurred on 20 January 1990 in, Srinagar, an urban location. Residents had organised a protest march against the State when they were shot by the Indian Army. Official figures stated that 28 people were killed and at least 100 injured in the firing. Different publications have reported different casualty figures for the massacre and have held different state forces responsible for the killings. However, witnesses reported the death toll was much higher (Dalrymple, 2008). *The New York Times* (Crossette, 1990) presents a holistic understanding of the incident by mentioning that "if the death toll is confirmed, the violence would be the worst reported in Jammu and Kashmir" and that "35 [were] shot by the Indian Army", but it also provides a historical context by exposing the root of the conflict by stating that the violence for the independence of Kashmir started

in 1947 when India gained independence. The newspaper's portrayal of the conflict presents the Indian State as using violence against a people seeking self- determination. Compared to the prompt international press, *The Times of India* (1990: 1) carries a lengthy front-page story that is continued on an inside page, titled, "35 Die in Srinagar as Police Fire on Rampaging Mobs", two days after the massacre despite having a bureau in Kashmir. While *The New York Times* (Crossette, 1990) criticises the Indian Army for the massacre, the national paper blames the local police, in a bid to exonerate the central forces while placing the blame on the state government.

In the early 1990s, just after India's liberalisation, most liberal international publications were still using the civic nationalism framework which foregrounded people's perspectives as opposed to unidimensional ethnonationalist state perspectives to understand, interpret, and describe social events in Kashmir. One might posit that the civic nationalism framework, which encompasses an alliance of oppressed and working classes, challenges or counters not only the effects of capitalism and neoliberalism but also the notion of a modern state. The framework also enables the public to understand their collective identity in terms of processes, as a body, from a wholistic perspective. Post-neoliberalisation in India, the nexus between mainstream national print media, capital and state became more evident. Kaur (2020) states that "New India" was a theatre in which the popular name for the postreform, techno-friendly, high-consumption entrepreneurial nation encountered the elite that governed the world. In 1990s, mainstream newspapers like *The Times of India* allied with neoliberal capital and the national state apparatus and, instead of fulfilling its role for spreading universalistic values in a democratic society, it became a weapon for spreading a statist version of reality and was easily monitored (Boga, 2018; Kaur, 2020). It is significant to point out that there was a nexus between the Indian State and the Indian media, both in India and

Kashmir, since the late 1940s (Boga, 2020). Interestingly, Kaur (2020: 197) sheds light on the changes that came about in the national publication due to the country's economic transformation:

> The newspaper, the group's core product, was reinvented in the early 1990s along with the liberalization of markets to appeal to a new aspirational class. Over the years, the *Times of India*'s content has come to be primarily known for its colourful supplements filled with images of beautiful people and their enviable lifestyle. The editorial space in the paper has shrunk, allowing ever more space for advertisement revenue. Its quest for more revenue has even led it to innovate a new genre called advertorials in which companies can place advertisements framed as editorials.

With an aim to strengthen geopolitical alliances and trade relationships with India, in 2008, not only Indian national newspapers, but even international publications started employing ethnonationalistic perspectives of reality in Kashmir. For example, *The New York Times* (Associated Press, 2008) sources portrayed the Amaranth land dispute of 2008 in an article titled, "Land transfer to Hindu sites inflames the Kashmir's Muslims", where instead of highlighting the problem of the Amaranth land dispute in a constitutional framework, the publication portrays the issue through a divisive ethnonational framework. In a similar vein, *The Times of India's* (Pandit, 2008:1, 6) front-page headlines states "1 killed in Amaranth protests" and mentions the names of the injured Hindu pilgrims but does not name the injured Muslim locals or the dead protestor. Falcone (2018) refers to victims ignored by the media as 'unworthy victims'. Similarly, the UK's newspaper, *The Guardian's* (Rahman, 2008) coverage of Amaranth land row comments on "Muslim hard-liners" who complained about "Israel like settlements of Hindu to change the demography of Muslim dominated Kashmir". After India's liberalisation and a reconfiguration of the Cold War geopolitical alliances, both the national and international media on Kashmir analysed and evaluated social phenomena and events on the basis of an

ethnonationalistic framework, presenting the tripartite protracted political conflict as a Hindu-Muslim dispute. In that sense, the mainstream national and international media converged in bid to serve their material interests, reported events and social processes which suited the interest of neoliberal capital and privileged social groupings (Boga, 2018). It is crucial to note that India's geopolitical alliances were reconfigured after the Cold War and new relations with the West were established after the country's liberation in the 1990s. India's consequent proximity to the United States and Britain, the 9/11 attacks, the Mumbai attacks and the burgeoning arms trade between the West and India have been responsible for the shift in this stance of reportage which witnessed a convergence between the ethnonationalistic Indian media and the capitalist global media (Boga, 2017). Contradistinctive evidence is evident when we analyse the international media in the early 1990s when the use of words such as rebels, subversives, protestors and dissidents portrayed the Kashmiris as India's victims. But this changed from the mid-1990s, when the language of the media changed, and these terms were replaced with Islamic militants and terrorists with India being portrayed as a victim of pan-Islamic terror (Boga, 2018). This ethnonationalist framing of the conflict, first as a Hindu-Muslim dispute, and then as an Islamic fundamentalism import, deprived the Kashmiris of their political agency and misrepresented the struggle for self-determination that had been rooted in the Civic Nationalism frame for centuries. This suggests how diametrically opposite the violence in a region of conflict is depicted, depending on global geopolitics and the media's location. While state terror is ignored by the national media, the international media acknowledges it in varying degrees – much more in 1950s than the mid-1990s – depending on the geopolitical climate of the era. The effect of India's liberalisation in the early 1990s, along with the September 11th attacks, the "War on Terror" and the Mumbai attacks consolidated Kashmir's position in connection with pan-Islamic violence around the world. During this phase, Islamophobia spread by

the hegemonic countries through their media propelled India to seek the position of a victim of terror, along with the West. This made it possible for India to join hands with Western war economies, enabling it to be part of the expanding global military-industrial-media-state-corporate complex. In neoliberal states, a symbiotic relationship between media and power exists, with power often using media, transforming it into a tool for the powerful. This is more pronounced and entrenches regions in conflict so that the capitalist state weaponises the media and uses it to coerce and regulate economic, social, cultural and political spaces to control its citizens non-violently (Boga, 2017). In another example of the growing defence ties, *India Today* (Unnithan, 2010: 36-43) carries an article on India's defence procurement and war preparedness around the conflict in Kashmir, quoting former high-ranking officers who reiterate India's dire need for up-to-date weaponry for insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and to defend itself from Pakistan and China. The article mentions the Mumbai attacks and how urban combat counter-terrorism equipment worth rupees 600 crore was proposed for fast tracking but had not yet yielded results (Unnithan, 2010: 36-43).

In another example, *The Times of India* (2010: 4) pegs the Cyclic Uprising of 2010 that was referred to as the Second Intifada in the Valley on the three murders that the national newspaper referred to as "fake encounters" by the Indian army on 4 June 2010 (Roy & Kak, 2013). The national media's collective refusal to present such crimes as murders proves their allegiance to power or the State. Anchored to a nationalistic view that entails being "loyal" to the army by not questioning them, this media practice promotes cycles of violence and cultures of impunity for the perpetrators while deeming the victims unworthy. The short story (2010: 4) titled, "Fake Encounter: JKLF Holds Hunger Strike", localises the strike by Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front leader to two areas, even while there was unrest in the rest of the Valley over the three

murders for many months. Underplaying the duration and nature of violence fortifies the State's perspective of the Valley being peaceful, barring a few "Pakistan-sponsored miscreants". Over decades, the national media has not only ignored or misrepresented cyclic mass uprisings in Kashmir but has also legitimised the State's response of violence by stereotyping the protesters or pro-freedom leaders as Pakistan-sponsored terrorist elements. Since the 1990s, the national media has circulated and hyperised the ethnonationalist notion that the Kashmiri independence struggle, which has clear legal and international standing, represents a Pan-Islamic terrorist movement funded by Pakistan. This summary aids in camouflaging the State's militaristic use against dissidents and helps in concealing the atrocities being perpetuated against Kashmiris from the public gaze, both nationally and internationally. The accusation places the onus of responsibility on Pakistan, an assertion that the world is ready to accept the present political environment tainted by Western-generated Islamophobia (Hussain, 2002).

Even American publications like *Time* (Thottam, 2010) represented the 2010 state violence in which 124 street protestors were killed by the security forces as the third consecutive year of a mass uprising after a precursor of violence, one might contend that it has decontextualised the uprisings from the larger seven-decades-old conflict and presented the political violence superficially – depoliticised and dehistoricised. This posture, in sharp contrast to *Time's* scathing reportage of Kashmir from 1950 to 2000, may align with the burgeoning Indo-American defence relationship, especially after the September 11th attacks and the Mumbai attacks, which *Time* referred to as India's 9/11, uniting both nations in the West's "War against Terror" and elevating India's position in the region where it could not only play victim with supranational powers but position itself against Kashmiri Muslims, stereotyping like the West (Thottam & Bhowmick, 2010; Boga, 2017). This ethnonationalist depiction

misrepresents the Kashmiris' struggle for self-determination while decontextualising the centuries-long struggle for equality and independence. This indicates how publications alter their stance depending on the geopolitics of the era and that representations (ethnonationalist frame) are influenced by the perspectives of the State. Placing political violence and dissidence against a backdrop of historicity illuminates all dimensions of the conflict and prevents demonisation and stereotyping of those who rise against the State for their basic rights and freedom. The significance of a framework propagated through the media thus has a direct impact on the national and international perceptions of political movements worldwide. Hence, it is essential to highlight the social history and the place it within the civic nationalism framework to accurately contextualise protracted political conflicts. Emphasising the significance of social history, Laclau (1981: 59) observes that it "is deeper than our instruments allow us to conceive and beyond what our political strategies can direct".

Conclusion

> *"What do you want with these special Jewish pains? I feel as close to the*
> *wretched victims of the rubber plantations in Putamayo and the blacks of Africa with*
> *whose bodies the Europeans play ball… I have no special corner in my*
> *heart for the ghetto: I am at home in the entire world,*
> *where there are clouds and birds and*
> *human tears." ― Rosa Luxemburg*

The quote above encapsulates the essence of the concept of Civic Nationalism, where people of the world are united in their suffering and resistance. The media, as a pedagogical tool weaponised by the ruling elite, divides society and otherises the oppressed and working classes, to benefit both State and non-state actors/corporates/ corporations in furthering their agendas and to control public perception as well as intellectual institutions, while maintaining hegemony within the post-neoliberal system of capitalism. Henry Giroux (2005: 14) too

recognises neoliberalism as a "powerful public pedagogy and cultural politics" for dismantling the collectives, as well as public institutions because the media enables the elite to secure consent from the public to produce capital. After all, pedagogical practices are linked to material relations of power as we have explained in the sections above.

Analysis reveals that over decades, both international and national media anchored in the geopolitical positions of their respective countries presented repetitive, spectacular, and lopsided coverage to incidents to exaggerate and emphasise the ethnic divisions of Kashmiri society. From the 1960s to the mid-1990s, foreign publications used the Civic Nationalism Framework and accurately reported Kashmir's struggle for self-determination – what the authors term as "community resistance" in a fight for equality and freedom. Contradistinctively, from the mid-1990s to 2010, India's neoliberal policies gave rise to an Ethnonationalist Framework which percolated to the media. Governing power, while alienating other communities from the Muslim-majority within the region, also criminalised political dissent and misrepresenting the freedom struggle on national and international platforms through media. Media, which are a pedagogical tool for the public at multiple levels construct and reconstruct ideology, culture, values and concepts alters and replaces previous systems of understanding, goals and values.

Media's pedagogical function was contradistinctive in the period before and after India's liberalisation in the 1990s. Earlier, the State structure, along with the media worked for collectives, post-liberalisation the same structure worked for private markets, leading to commercialisation of the media, along with other modes of wielding power and control. Within this context, the authors lay bare the heterogenous nature of the Kashmiri population and unravel its social history, while displacing the populist Ethnonationalist Framework and

superimposing it with the Civic Nationalism Framework. Within the framework of civic nationalism, a people's perspective replaces the State's narrative of the cause of the conflict while highlighting the diversity of the frontier region and illuminating the motive for self-determination. One could thus posit that the struggle for self-determination in Kashmir is grounded in the larger anti-imperialist struggle, thus making the framework of civic nationalism an instrument against capitalism.

The modern Indian State and its geopolitical allies, with the help of their medias at multiple levels, have played a pedagogical role for the public, both at national and international levels by forcing the centuries-old Kashmiri struggle for self-determination into an ethnonationalist framework. Illuminating the heterogenous region's social history counters these mega-narratives in both the national and the international medias and challenges their hegemony. This enlivens a shrouded aspect of the region and helps one to understand the present-day conflict in Kashmir from a framework of civic nationalism, while highlighting its civic resistance against foreign invaders over centuries.

Acknowledgements

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