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Kashmir: The Idea and its Parts

The contours of the Kashmir disputed map convey the idea of a spatial continuum, making it seem as if those who live within the contours of the former princely state inherently share some kind of bond, rather than simply having come to live side by side under the same ruler as the result of territorial conquests. As Winichakul Thongchai notes on the differences between pre-modern and modern maps as representations of spatial reality in his work on the making of Siam as a nation, that ‘boundary lines must exist *before* a map’ because maps refer to an existing reality.[[1]](#endnote-1) The map of the Kashmir dispute also expresses an idea that this region is a politically integrated territory rather than a collection of loosely administered areas. In his seminal work *Mapping an Empire*, Mathew Edney points out that the mapping of British India through the Great Trigonometrical Survey served as the key ‘to the conceptual consolidation of a pre-existent India’.[[2]](#endnote-2) Similarly, it can be said that the mapped configuration of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and its continued reproduction as a unit (albeit partitioned between India and Pakistan by a discontinuous line) over multiple decades demonstrates an essentialist understanding of the disputed territory. The unity conveys an idea of territorial contiguity that overlooks the fragments and fissures of the princely state that was fully never administratively integrated but rather shared an economic and political centre in the Kashmir Valley.

During Chitralekha Zutshi’s presentation of her book *Kashmir’s Contested Pasts* at the University of Srinagar in October 2013, a student asked the author why, despite the name ‘Kashmir’ being in the title, her work only focused on the Kashmir Valley instead of considering ‘the entire Kashmir’.[[3]](#endnote-3) The student explained that, given the title, he had expected the book to also address the historical experiences of Gilgit, Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, among others. Zutshi answered that her interest was the Valley and its interrelations with other locations; it was not her intention to take ‘the unit’ of the princely state as a preconceived spatial container that delimited her scope. Instead, she explained, her focus was on the ideas and historical debates surrounding the making of Kashmir, which have centred on the homonymous Valley. The question posed by the student illustrates a common misunderstanding based on the map of Kashmir: that the name ‘Kashmir’ embraces all of the territories included in the former princely state, not just the Kashmir Valley. This view implies the existence of a degree of Kashmiriness in all of the territories—‘Kashmiriness’ understood as a spatial relationship with the Kashmir Valley, not an identity.[[4]](#endnote-4) It also implies that the former princely state had a degree of territorial integrity, even though it was not a sovereign territory in the modern sense.[[5]](#endnote-5) The principle of territorial integrity did not apply to the princely state because it suffered territorial modifications made by the British colonial power. However, India and Pakistan, which have controlled the divided parts since 1948, have continued to refer to that principle in their own attempts to make territorial claims over the LoC.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Although no one in the subfield of Kashmiri studies would equate territorial enclosure (the political entity of the princely state) with nationhood (Kashmiriness), until now there has been little effort to explain the disconnections among the various territories in terms of their different historical trajectories.[[7]](#endnote-7) The answers to the questions of what is (and what is not) Kashmir and what it means to be (or not be) part of Kashmir can underscore the circumstances in which different groups articulate diversity. This articulation occurs within a specific spatial framework, which in this case is mainly the state. By adopting a border perspective the state-making process (in terms of the internal integration of India and of Pakistan) becomes problematized, because this frame of reference not only grasps a ‘neglected history’ that responds to a socio-spatial field of enquiry but also allows for the rethinking of how social groups are studied and the conceptualizations that result from such approaches.[[8]](#endnote-8) A detailed historical account would be necessary for this exercise, but is beyond the scope of this work.

This chapter sketches the main historical processes of territorialization that led to the formation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly underlining the strategic, geographical, and economic factors. The first section explores the making of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as the result of an intertwined process of British colonial frontier policy and the formation of a political and economic centre in Srinagar (and to some extent Jammu) by the Dogra rulers or maharajas. The second section describes how this process of territorial appropriation and the associated economic exploitation of resources and people in specific locations created differentiated contexts that influenced the position of local actors toward ongoing events at the time of Partition. The third section deals with the difference between the territorial claims and the actual policies of territorial control by India and Pakistan (and some nationalist groups) to territories across the LoC. Each of the disputing parties resorts to the argument of the territorial integrity of the former princely state while simultaneously pursuing policies of state integration of the territories under their control. Finally, I refer to the specific context of the Kashmir Valley, in which the popular opposition to the integration process in India has developed over the years into a struggle for the Valley as a disputed or a ‘normal’ part of the Indian state.

**Making the princely state: fixing borders and building a power centre in the Kashmir Valley**

The Kashmir dispute is the direct outcome of the political events that led to the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947 and the specific developments in its northern corner, the western Himalayas. However, its modern roots can be traced to one hundred years earlier. On 16 March 1846, the British representatives of the East India Company signed the Treaty of Amritsar with the Dogra ruler Raja Gulab Singh, in which the latter purchased and took control of the Kashmir Valley. Raja Gulab Singh hailed from a family ruling in Jammu that had until then been in a vassal position to the Sikh Empire.[[9]](#endnote-9) He had conquered the territories of Ladakh and Baltistan in 1841.[[10]](#endnote-10) Based on these historical events, the local scholar Hussain Abadi, who hails from Skardu, has argued, ‘Baltistan was occupied finally in 1841; the conquest took place first in 1840 but people revolted. The kingdom of Jammu, under Lahore’s suzerainty, expanded its borders to Baltistan. Kashmir [the Valley] had nothing to do with Jammu because the latter was under the direct government of Lahore under the Sikhs’.[[11]](#endnote-11) Abadi maintains that these various layers of suzerainty are important for highlighting the different historical trajectories of Baltistan and Ladakh, despite attempts to link the fates of these territories with that of the Kashmir Valley.

After the creation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, British colonial officers and Dogra rulers moved to establish authority along the northern borders, west of the Indus river, in what is today part of Gilgit (including the territories to the east of Hunza and Nagar). The Dogras enforced their power in these areas by establishing garrisons and forts, which were maintained by a military force and a few officers from the central administration such as agents and district commissioners.[[12]](#endnote-12) Their military control facilitated the activities of small Sikh and Hindu communities motivated by the economic opportunities provided by existing trading networks.[[13]](#endnote-13) However, power was decentralized and local rulers exercised authority by collecting taxes and dealing with matters of justice. Some of them, such as the Muslim rajas of Khaplu in Baltistan, employed Hindu clerks (such as *munshis* or accountants) within their administrations.[[14]](#endnote-14) The elderly people I spoke to in Baltistan and in the border areas of Ladakh described Dogra rule as ‘brutal’ and ‘oppressive’; taxes were paid, but no improvements were introduced to these areas, and the use of forced labour (*begār*) by the administration for porterage purposes became widespread.[[15]](#endnote-15)

It is important to point out the distinction between ‘Dogra’ and ‘Kashmiri’ in the emic perspective: the people I interviewed in the various locations where I carried out fieldwork used the two terms to highlight different things. ‘Dogra rule’ referred to the fact that rulers were from elsewhere and stressed the Hindu religion, while the term ‘Kashmiri’ was more ambivalent. Sometimes the term ‘Kashmiri’ indicated a ruler from the Valley who exercised power locally (i.e., a ‘Kashmiri’ as an outsider and a colonizer), and on other occasions ‘Kashmiri’ was identified with the ruler and his administration. The latter use implies, wrongly, that the Hindu identity of the ruler was extended to his administration, and this was expressed by Muslim interviewees as a sign of differentiation, and thus as indication of the alien (non-Muslim character of his rule). These interviewees apparently did not reflect on the fact that Muslims were also part of the Kashmiri administration. The accounts of people in the border areas between Ladakh and Baltistan underscored the oppression inflicted by the ruler, which was equally suffered by Kashmiris of the Valley, particularly rural peasants, but also the alien character of this power that was exercised from a distant place.[[16]](#endnote-16)

The historiography of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Kashmir has shed substantial light on the gradual development of the Valley as a centre of the political and economic power of the Dogra ruling elite, who were supported by an administration dominated by Kashmir Pandits (an educated local elite of the Hindu religion), (Hindu) Dogras from Jammu, Punjabis (Hindus and Sikhs), and a tiny section of local Muslims.[[17]](#endnote-17) The majority of the Muslim peasantry, however, lived in hard conditions. Socio-economic transformations in the first decades of the twentieth century allowed access to education for a significant number of Muslim lower middle-class people in the Valley. This class, along with other groups, began to organize politically and articulate their demands to the authoritarian and feudal government in the 1920s and 1930s.[[18]](#endnote-18) In framing their cause as an oppressed group, Muslims from the Kashmir Valley used identitarian language based on religion and ideas of modern state territoriality. However, they also articulated their demands in terms of justice based on the alien nature—that is, coming from outside the Valley and therefore considered superior—and authoritarianism of the ruler.

The making of modern Kashmir after 1846 was the result of two intertwined territorialization processes: the British frontier policy toward what is today known as an area at the intersection of South and Central Asia, and the formation of a political and economic power centre in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu. The prosperity of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu rested on their fertile soil and agriculture, manufacturing industries (such as shawls and handicrafts), and location along larger trading networks. Despite the limited number of access routes to the Valley, Kashmir was far from an isolated area.[[19]](#endnote-19) However, the Dogra rulers, together with the British, maintained control over the mobility of both the peasantry and foreigners. Fostered by the British, the making of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir can be seen as an attempt to bring the frontier territories under ‘state’ control while also reorganizing the markets along emerging economic centres.

Once the princely state was formed, its domestic territorial organization followed a centre–periphery model in which geographical criteria were determinant. Political and economic power became concentrated in the relatively flat and better connected lands of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu plains while the sparsely populated and less accessible surrounding mountain regions became secondary markets, subservient in many cases to the economy generated around the main urban centres.[[20]](#endnote-20) Leh was a node for the *pashm* (cashmere, raw material from fine goats’ hair used in the Kashmir shawls) trade to the Valley and for secondary trading routes leading north to Yarkand, Khotan, and the neighbouring Baltistan and east to various locations in Tibet. Through the building of roads, people living in formerly isolated and vulnerable areas in Baltistan, Kargil, and Shina-speaking villages such as Dras became gradually incorporated into the economy of the princely state as a labour force, working mainly as porters or transporting loads on horses.[[21]](#endnote-21) This process of inclusion of the former ‘frontier territories’ occurred through indirect rule, which preserved local feudal power structures. While in the core territories of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu place-making irremediably involved new sections of the society becoming gradually engaged in the political process, in the sparsely populated peripheral areas this was prevented by military control and the preservation of feudal forms of power. The *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladak* of 1890 describes the ‘outlying governorships’ of Gilgit, Baltistan, and Ladakh in the following way:

Each is under a governor (Gilgit is at present under two joint-governors), who corresponds directly with the Maharája, and who apparently has considerable independence in internal matters. The countries thus administered are of military occupation; and the State demand is light, because the people would probably resist a heavy one. In Baltistán the land is taxed pretty heavily; the revenue must exceed one and a half lakh. The governor resides at Skardu. In Ladakh there is a governor who must be chiefly at Leh, because he is a joint commissioner under the commercial treaty of 1870.[[22]](#endnote-22)

Ordinary people in the mountain valleys were deprived of any political agency because they were considered incapable of political subjecthood.[[23]](#endnote-23)

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the British colonial administration gradually imposed its own ideas of territoriality over the Dogras in the northern frontier. The western Karakoram was unknown to the colonial power, and Gilgit town served as the base for access to these regions.[[24]](#endnote-24) The maharajas of Kashmir sought to expand their influence northward and eventually clashed with British interests around what is today Gilgit, including several petty fiefdoms such as Hunza, Nagar, Ishkoman, Yasin, and Punial.[[25]](#endnote-25) The reasons for such disagreements were related to the gradual framing of a British frontier policy for Central Asia by the British, guided by political developments in the neighbouring region of Xinjiang as a result of the weakening of the Manchu dynasty and increasing Russian influence.[[26]](#endnote-26) The British did not trust the expansionist adventures of Ranbir Singh, the maharaja of Kashmir at the time; to limit such activities, which had the potential to endanger British dominance, the colonial power sought to exercise control over the then-peripheral areas.[[27]](#endnote-27) There was a lack of knowledge about these territories and this was addressed through the local surveying led by different European, mainly British, and native explorers as part of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India to measure the Indian subcontinent land.[[28]](#endnote-28) Moreover, colonial policy oscillated between indirect control and more active involvement in the northern frontier, which affected relations with Kashmir. An example of this is the establishment of a short-lived Agency in Gilgit (1877–1881) meant to gain influence and loyalty over the rulers of the surrounding petty fiefdoms; the agency was abruptly cancelled because of political differences but re-established in 1899 with similar purposes.[[29]](#endnote-29) At the same time, the British favoured territorial fixation with neighbouring powers, such as viewing the boundary pillars erected at the Karakoram pass in early 1890s as those marking the limit of the Indian Empire.[[30]](#endnote-30)

Another element that is important for understanding the making of Kashmir is the purchase of the Valley by the Dogras. Article 3 of the Treaty of Amritsar refers to the transfer of the territories to the maharaja Gulab Singh and his male heirs for a sum of 75 *lakh* rupees, and Article 10 states the maharaja’s commitment to recognize British supremacy by the payment of an annual tribute consisting of ‘one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed, six male and six female and three pairs of Cashmere shawls’.[[31]](#endnote-31) This historical episode is of enormous importance in the contemporary narrative of Kashmiri nationalism because it is often compared to how the maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession to India in October 1947 without any consideration of the people’s sentiments. The selling of the Valley to the Dogras was often cited in conversations during my fieldwork in the Valley to justify the idea that Kashmiris have never been able to decide their own future; others have always done it for them. Being ruled by an outside, and thus a colonizing, power is a continuous determinant in the articulation of the nationalist narrative, although it has received surprisingly little attention in comparison with ethnic and religious identity markers.[[32]](#endnote-32)

The princely state was an internally complex entity: Jammu and the Kashmir Valley were under the direct control of the maharaja and its administration, while the annexed areas of Ladakh and Baltistan—later jointly administrated under the Ladakh Wazarat (province)—and (in intermittent periods) the Gilgit Wazarat were indirectly administered.[[33]](#endnote-33) Moreover, Gilgit was initially unified by the British under the Gilgit Agency in 1877–1881; it was reappropriated by the British in 1889 and was then governed by a dual administration under the British and the Dogras. In 1935 the Gilgit Agency, covering a territory that extended southwards to Bunji, was leased to the British for an initial period of 60 years; with their withdrawal from the subcontinent, this lease terminated on 1 August 1947.[[34]](#endnote-34) The Gilgit case shows how the British colonial power, with the agreement of the ruler of the princely state, repeatedly altered the territorial integrity of the princely state. There were also a number of other internal territorial discontinuities such as the status of the Poonch *jagirdar* (fiefdom)which, according to Snedden, had a sort of semi-independent status until 1936.[[35]](#endnote-35)

At the time of Partition, the area of the princely state beyond the Valley and Jammu was held together through minimal administration and a military presence in specific locations. The centres of government and administration in Srinagar and Jammu were located in the most populated areas, where wealth was accumulated. The other territories could be described as peripheral, at least in the cases of Ladakh and Baltistan, because they were economically and politically dependent on communication with the centres.[[36]](#endnote-36) While an incipient democratic culture advocating representative politics had developed in the Valley in the 1920s and 1930s, this was lacking in the mountain areas of Ladakh and Baltistan. After the creation of a legislative assembly, restricted electoral processes occurred in the Valley, while candidates from territories such as Baltistan were simply nominated and normally belonged to the rajas’ families. The Gilgit Agency, controlled by the British until 1 August 1947, was administered by a Political Agent who co-opted the local traditional leadership. The British also drew legitimacy in the area from the recruitment of a loyal local paramilitary force, the Gilgit Scouts, who were tasked with guarding the frontiers. Its soldiers were from the local nobility, and military enrolment provided a source of income and prestige in a context of limited economic opportunities.

Influences that could have brought social change to the mountain areas—such as modern education—were restricted. As an indicator, while in the 1930s and 1940s there were already a significant number of Kashmiris from the Valley and Muzaffarabad areas studying in Aligarh Muslim University (a popular destination for Muslim students from Kashmir), only one person from Skardu, Ghulam Wazir Mehdi, is known to have obtained a degree (in law) in this institution during this period.[[37]](#endnote-37) Migrants from Baltistan were usually involved in unskilled or semi-skilled petty labour, normally in public work as coolies,[[38]](#endnote-38) in the territories of the princely state and in other places such as Simla and Lahore.[[39]](#endnote-39)

These experiences show that the princely state was far from being a homogeneous entity. In the state-making process there was a hierarchy of places that were to some extent functional in terms of the processes of capital accumulation—mainly the Valley and Jammu, which benefited intermediaries in locations such as Leh and Gilgit, while the mountainous areas continued to be deprived. This context helps explain why events were very localized and shaped by conditions in the immediate neighbourhood, rather than a wider, more orchestrated reaction to the Partition process.

**Partition and the importance of taking sides**

The domestic context of the Kashmir Valley in the years preceding 1947 and during Partition has received a great deal of attention from historians.[[40]](#endnote-40) However, accounts of developments in the northern and north-eastern parts of the princely state at the time have been limited to the narration of political events, specifically how local groups in Gilgit and Baltistan reacted to the Partition of the subcontinent and political events in the Kashmir Valley, and how those affected described the events in areas such as Zangskar.[[41]](#endnote-41) These works demonstrate that local circumstances differed considerably from place to place. For example, in mid-October 1947 the Kashmir Valley was invaded by peoples from the Tribal Areas and the Frontier (in today’s Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or KPK), backed by members of the Pakistani army who, on the basis of Muslim solidarity, wanted to prevent the Muslim-majority state from becoming part of India. Rather than welcoming them as liberators, however, many Kashmiris organized to repel the intruders, who were responsible for looting, rape, and destruction; the incident triggered India’s intervention and the ultimate accession of the state to India.[[42]](#endnote-42) Meanwhile, in Gilgit, a rebellion escalated from late October 1947 and spread in a north–south direction, reaching Skardu in early 1948 and continuing further south that year. The main group behind this revolt was the aforementioned Gilgit Scouts, the local paramilitary force created by the British.[[43]](#endnote-43) The Scouts developed an agenda of liberating the territory from the Dogras and were supported by a variety of local militias, including groups from neighbouring Chitral (in today’s KPK province of Pakistan).[[44]](#endnote-44) As yet, the historiography of Kashmir has not been able to clarify the possible interrelations between these two developments.[[45]](#endnote-45)

At first glance, the events taking place in different locations of the state show various agendas at work. On the one hand, there was a force, manifested in the Dogra administration, which was interested in preserving or perpetuating the territorial boundaries of the princely state; on the other hand, the continuation of the princely state was questioned by groups on its northern periphery. In this context, religious affiliations were only one among a number of mobilizing factors: as religion per se does not explain the opposition to the Pathan invasion in the Kashmir Valley, nor was the Gilgit rebellion primarily framed in terms of religious considerations. Key actors and groups reacted to local conditions differently in the attempt to improve their positions in a context of political uncertainty where spatial references were unclear. One key element was the positioning of local rajas, who exercised power locally and also oppressed the peasantry. For example, oral accounts suggest that the raja of Khaplu (and possibly also that of Kharmang) was not very sympathetic to Pakistan, as he was a close friend of the maharaja of Kashmir.

During interviews and informal conversations with older people in Baltistan and in the border villages on the Indian side in which we discussed the local context during 1947–1949, references to ‘Pakistan’ were quite vague, though Islam was mentioned as a motivation for those who had moved from the Indian to the Pakistani side, and India was associated with ‘Hinduism’. There was a consensus of negative views of the ‘maharaja period’, generally associated with the exploitative character of the administration. One old man in the village of Turtuk, a peasant probably in his seventies, recalled that once in his childhood he had seen an officer of the maharaja on a horse, who had come to his village to collect taxes. He stated that the rulers in Srinagar had done nothing for them, and he compared that situation with the present context (at the time of the interview) of being part of India, when many facilities were provided in the village and there were government jobs available.[[46]](#endnote-46)

Header Shah, who lived through the events of the liberation war in 1947–1949 and who was around 90 years old when I interviewed him in 2010, narrated the siege of Skardu and the later advancement of the local platoons and fighters (helped by other cadres from Gilgit, Nagar, and Chitral) towards Leh.[[47]](#endnote-47) I asked about the participation of Pakistani soldiers in the episode and what, according to him, were the main reasons for which these guerrillas, with support of the population, were fighting, that is, to join India or Pakistan. He mentioned that as the militia advanced towards Leh, there were initially no Indian forces, and when (probably Ladakhi) forces came, the local guerrillas had to retreat as far as Brolmo (a village some 20–30 kilometres north-west of Kargil; this means that they had to give up Kargil). According to his account, no regular Pakistani soldiers were there at the time; it was only after the first Political Agent in Baltistan arrived that forces were dispatched to the border area. As for why people became involved in the fighting, he said that ‘they were not thinking about any of this [joining India or Pakistan]. We wanted to get rid of the Dogras.’

These testimonies indicate that the disintegration of the former princely state led to a power vacuum that was ultimately filled with the accession of Gilgit and Baltistan to Pakistan. Admitting that religious sentiments may have had an influence on the preference for joining Pakistan, there is little doubt that the bureaucracy of the new state was ambivalent about how to integrate the area. Further developments suggest that Pakistani officials were considering the merger of Baltistan and the Frontier (s*arhad,* today Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or KPK) or with Azad Jammu and Kashmir and used tricks such as sending local men to Peshawar to present them as representatives of the popular support for this merger with the Frontier.

Certainly Indian nationalist movements were well known and active in the Valley at the time, compared to the limited local influence of the Muslim League in their demand for the new entity of Pakistan.[[48]](#endnote-48) However, at the time of Partition the main experience of authority by those living in smaller towns and villages in the relatively remote areas of Zangskar, Baltistan, and the Gilgit Agency was that of the respective local rulers and the Kashmiri officers—and in places such as Baltistan and Gilgit the population was not happy about it.[[49]](#endnote-49) Hence, local narratives in these territories question the broader account of joining India and Pakistan and present a more uncertain view about the future territorial setting. They emphasize the importance of fighting against a regime perceived as tyrannical, among other more personal motivations, rather than mobilizing in favour of a state about which they had little knowledge. In other words, the context of political uncertainty made it possible for several actors to exploit the situation but, at first, ideas about India and Pakistan were vague and probably remote from local experiences of belonging.

**Territorial integrity and transformation of the border space**

The Kashmir dispute is still considered a concern about the territorial integrity of the former princely state. This notwithstanding, territorial changes in the colonial period and the revolts against Dogra rule in Mirpur and Gilgit at the time of Partition raise serious doubts about the survival of the former entity. The princely state disintegrated in the aftermath of Partition. However, the criterion of territorial contiguity has continued to prevail in the way India and Pakistan frame the dispute.[[50]](#endnote-50) The discourse on solving the Kashmir question has continued to be about the preservation of the entity of the princely state.

Following India taking the matter to the United Nations (UN) on 21 April 1948, the UN issued Resolution 47, one of whose clauses recommended that a plebiscite be held (this was initially suggested by Jawaharlal Nehru).[[51]](#endnote-51) The UN’s recommendations and involvement until the early 1960s did not open up the question of partitioning the state. In this framing, the diverse aspirations of the various territories that were part of the former princely state but did not necessarily want to continue to be, such as Gilgit and Baltistan, were subsumed into the greater narrative of the desire for control over the Kashmir Valley.[[52]](#endnote-52) India’s and Pakistan’s aspirations about gaining control over the Valley contributed to the idealization of this specific place and ignored the diversity of local sentiments in the various territories. In this new geopolitical scenario, the external borders of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir gained prominence because India, Pakistan, and those supporting Kashmiri independence were all claiming the entire former entity.

On the ground, however, the disintegration caused by Partition materialized in the ceasefire line, known as the LoC after 1972. The armed conflict started in late October 1947, with fighting lasted until mid-1949 in the areas near Kargil. After that, people in the recently divided areas continued to move back and forth for a while, looking for a new place to settle due to fear in their native location, maintaining their usual routines (visiting relatives, tending their fields or grazing grounds that fell on the other side of the border), searching for missing relatives, or simply continuing their businesses. Local accounts suggest that this was a dramatic period, as recalled by a man in his late eighties whom I interviewed in Skardu in September 2009. Mr. Haji Khan was a former salt and wool trader from a village near Kargil in Ladakh who moved to Skardu in 1949. He had become a relatively wealthy man due to his trading business, but things had changed in the course of Partition. The Gilgit Scouts and other local guerrillas and platoons from Baltistan and Chitral took control of the Kargil areas in 1948 but later had to retreat further north following the ceasefire of 1 January 1949. Mr. Haji Khan then decided to move to the Pakistani-controlled area because he feared for the future of his only son and also because the leaders of the Scouts had warned him of the risk to his family once the Indian army gained control of the area. His family had collaborated with the liberation forces, giving them food supplies including wheat and animals. His parents, however, believed that things would remain the same whether they lived under a Pakistani or an Indian government:

I moved from my village with my wife and son to the Nubra Valley and then I entered in Khaplu by traversing the Chorbat Valley. The Government was providing rations for us. Then, I came to Skardu in 1949. After the division, I came to know that the Indian army took my parents to Saspol as prisoners [for their role as collaborators]. The soldiers said they would forgive them upon the condition they stay there and not return to their former village, to which my parents agreed. In Saspol there was a bridge and two Indian companies of fifty soldiers were posted at both ends. One of the officers told my parents, who were accompanied by two of my sister’s children, to cross the bridge. They stayed there one day in the middle without moving. Finally, the officers said that since they had collaborated with the Pakistanis, they were not forgiving them and opened fire from both sides.[[53]](#endnote-53)

The ceasefire line gradually became more militarized, but some people could still move around, particularly those living in the recently established border areas who knew the mountain passes. The insights I gathered from those living near the LoC between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Kashmir Valley and between Baltistan and Ladakh indicate that it was still possible to cross the border until the early 1990s, but thereafter it became very risky.[[54]](#endnote-54) The border has enforced separation over time and new spaces have been created. Under international law, the status quo concerning the Kashmir dispute is to be maintained until a solution is reached, and the UN Military Observer Group (UNMOGIP) in India and Pakistan is responsible for monitoring the ceasefire. The reality on the ground, however, is that this status quo does not exist, because circumstances have changed.

Over time, the governments of India and Pakistan have followed different strategies to integrate the areas under their control.[[55]](#endnote-55) After independence, the National Congress (INC)-led Indian Government became immersed in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking integration of the territories as part of the republic through Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The Delhi Agreement of 24 July 1952 envisioned the possibility of granting this region a semi-independent status, but the government in New Delhi gradually sought to equate Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian states in terms of administration. Despite this apparent integration, administrative differences persisted for decades inside Jammu and Kashmir that evidenced its precarious political context. For example, Ladakh remained closed to the outside world until the mid-1970s.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Pakistan’s dealings with the Kashmir areas under its control, known at present as Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK, have revolved around two contradictory issues: the need to administer the territories already held, while at the same time persisting in the claim to the whole princely state. On the one hand, the Pakistani authorities opted to maintain the status quo of these former parts of the princely state, with the view that a plebiscite would be held according to UN resolutions. This meant the continuation of the colonial administration in Gilgit-Baltistan until the early 1970s. This path was also followed to a lesser extent in AJK despite the fact that it has its own constitution as a semi-independent state. On the other hand, the Pakistani administration had to respond to the immediate need to administer these territories, implying a gradual challenging of the alleged status quo.

Furthermore, Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK were territorially discontinuous and lacked significant historical interactions. No direct road linked these territories either. The leadership of the Pakistani Government in Karachi had little knowledge about the situation in the north-east and initially sought to integrate Baltistan into the then-North-West Frontier Province. Later, Pakistan placed Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK under the administration of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas. Header Shah, who personally witnessed the events in Skardu after the area came under Pakistan’s control, referred to an episode in which the first Political Agent in Baltistan, Behran Khan, took the fingerprints of some local men so that he could submit a petition in their names reflecting popular support for joining the *sarhad* (the Frontier province). For this purpose, the agent organized the flight in an airplane to Peshawar of eleven local men from several places in Baltistan. Header Shah was one of those men. According to his testimony, once in Peshawar, the men were meant to present heroic testimony of what they had done in favour of joining Pakistan by liberating their territory from the Dogras and promote the idea of their region joining the Frontier.[[57]](#endnote-57) However, the men were never informed about this latter intention. At the same time, the Azad Kashmiri Muslim Conference leader Chowdary Ghulam Abbas unsuccessfully approached the representatives of these northern territories to join AJK.[[58]](#endnote-58) Both of these episodes provide evidence that the Pakistani Government was unsure about what to do about the political status of Gilgit-Baltistan: had the area become part of the Frontier province, its former legal links with the princely state would have been severed.

Contrary to the official narrative of maintaining the status quo of the Kashmir-related territories, the Pakistani governments in the first two decades after independence gradually took different legal approaches towards AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. Whereas AJK was recognized as a federal territory with its own constitution, though controlled by Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan was governed from the centre, maintaining the British colonial policy until 1973, when Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s reforms granted the area limited self-administration and removed the judicial and tax powers that local rulers had exercised until then.[[59]](#endnote-59) Bhutto’s reforms also introduced an important change in the citizenship status of the residents of Gilgit-Baltistan by suppressing the ‘Subject rule’. The Subject rule legally bound individuals as subjects of the princely state, as it applied to those who were ‘State subjects’ of Jammu and Kashmir before 1947, and was continued in AJK and Indian Kashmir. The measure recognized the fact that the Pakistani Government maintained that some parts of Gilgit-Baltistan—notably the various sub-districts of Gilgit such as Hunza and Nagar—had acceded to Pakistan, whereas other territories (presumably Baltistan) were disputed. The removal of the Subject rule implied a change from the commitment ‘to maintain the status quo’ because it altered the relationship of membership between people and a territory (Kashmir), and did not propose an alternative.[[60]](#endnote-60) After its lifting, some parts of the Pakistani citizenship acts were implemented—for administrative purposes and for the processing of passports—but people were denied basic rights, such as participating and being elected in the Pakistani general elections, and the right to appeal to the High Court of Pakistan.

Interestingly, until the early 1970s the Indian and Pakistani governments made similar differentiations in the administration of their respective territories. They distinguished between AJK and the Kashmir Valley, territories with some degree of formal self-government, and those in the ‘remote’ north-eastern corners, such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh, which faced more intense intervention (administrative and military) by the central governments.[[61]](#endnote-61) The control of Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan in the first decades after Partition shares some features with colonial rule in terms of restricting access to the frontier areas. As mentioned above, Ladakh was closed to international visitors until the mid-1970s.[[62]](#endnote-62) Similarly, until the early 1970s Gilgit-Baltistan was ruled under the colonial Frontier Crimes Regulation (FRC), a legal instrument also applied in other Tribal Areas of Pakistan.[[63]](#endnote-63) Remote, economically backward, and ‘culturally diverse’ (i.e., tribal), the territories of Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan were considered vulnerable and therefore unable to attain self-administration.[[64]](#endnote-64) Geographical values that function as knowledge about places—such as the prominence of the more populated and economically important broad valleys (Kashmir), plains (Jammu), and adjacent mountains (AJK) compared to the sparsely inhabited and almost ‘barren’ high mountain regions—may have proved determinant in the creation of this distinction.[[65]](#endnote-65)

Over the years, India and Pakistan have gradually incorporated Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan respectively, granting them various degrees of autonomy in running their own affairs. As mentioned, Gilgit-Baltistan has been granted its own regional government and administration, but its status differs substantially from the provinces of Pakistan. Similarly, Ladakh saw the creation of the Autonomous Hill Councils in Leh in 1995 and in Kargil in 2003. The demands to become a Union Territory initially came from the Buddhist-majority areas of Leh district, which wanted to be ruled directly from Delhi rather than from Srinagar. Despite the different local contexts of Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh, people living in both territories are similarly reluctant to be associated with the *masla-e-Kashmir* (‘Kashmir issue’). In the interviews I undertook in Gilgit-Baltistan, respondents were eager to deny any relationship with AJK or with the ongoing conflict in the Kashmir Valley, underscoring their different historical and cultural trajectories. Other scholars such as Ravina Aggarwal and Mona Bhan have pointed out similar views in Ladakh concerning the dominance of Kashmiri nationalism over minority groups in the state.[[66]](#endnote-66) In Ladakh, the situation is aggravated by the schism between the less developed Shia Muslim-majority area of Kargil and the Buddhist part of Leh. Despite the fact that in Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh there is sentiment favouring closer ties with Pakistan and India, respectively, these countries have been reluctant to agree on territorial modifications that would further alter the unity of ‘Kashmir’.

Moreover, the ‘opening’ of these two marginalized territories to the wider world has been based on an emphasis on development. The developmental approach appears to be a way to augment the ‘old’ with the ‘new’ at a gradual pace: to keep traditions and ‘ethnic’ distinctions— relevant to the conversion of these territories into popular tourism spots—while improving people’s living conditions by granting them access to modern facilities such as running water, power, education, and healthcare. Development activities are supported by both state and local administrations, and NGOs have played a notable role in introducing notions of ‘sustainability’ and environmental concerns that have accentuated different developmental paths compared to other Kashmir territories. For example, the revitalization of the once-renowned tourist industry in the Kashmir Valley is expressed in numbers, that is, in drawing in as many tourists as possible.[[67]](#endnote-67) Tourism in Ladakh, on the other hand, is formulated in terms of the quality and preservation of a fragile environment—though Leh has become a large bazaar, and its surroundings are as crowded as Srinagar—and respect for local lifestyles and nature. Similarly, social diversity serves to attract travellers to Gilgit-Baltistan but, significantly, such plurality is absent in the tourism brochures advertising trips to AJK.[[68]](#endnote-68) The development process contributes to the gradual integration of the less conflict-prone border territories into the realm of the nation, constituting a form of spatial peripheralization within the state borders.[[69]](#endnote-69)

After the division of the princely state, the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir experienced political instability because of the weakening of its autonomy. Differences arose between the main political party dominating the local scene—the National Conference (NC), which amalgamated the autonomist sentiment and was led by the charismatic leader Sheikh Abdullah[[70]](#endnote-70)—and the INC ruling in New Delhi, led by Jawaharlal Nehru and, after his death, by his daughter Indira Gandhi.[[71]](#endnote-71) Over the course of decades, the central government developed an interventionist policy in Jammu and Kashmir to maintain its ultimate control over the state. This involved sometimes supporting Sheikh Abdullah’s opponents, at other times dismissing NC governments, and even occasionally siding with this charismatic leader when it was beneficial. The centre’s meddling in the affairs of the state continued with Sheikh Abdullah’s successor in the NC, his son Farooq, during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi in the second half of the 1980s.[[72]](#endnote-72) Finally, in 1990 Farooq Abdullah resigned as chief minister due to widespread violence and President’s Rule was imposed in Jammu and Kashmir suspending the state’s special autonomy and being directly ruled by the central government through the Governor.

This history of political interventionism by the Indian state led to a lack of institutional legitimacy that affected the development of the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir.[[73]](#endnote-73) According to Widmalm’s analysis, the evolution of Kashmiri nationalism into a widespread violent movement differs substantially from other Indian states with strong regional historical and cultural identities such as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Political forces in those states also demanded decentralization and pluralism. However, Widmalm notes, unlike these other Indian states, Jammu and Kashmir’s (or more specifically the Kashmir Valley’s) location as part of India was challenged from the very beginning in the political discourse. This challenge lasted at least until the NC dropped the demand for a plebiscite in 1975, but by then it had been appropriated by other forces that distanced themselves from the party, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). State interventionism in Kashmir can be understood as part of the project of taking over the borders, as in the case of the north-eastern states, and of extending the state’s control over people whose loyalty to the state is questionable. As Paul Brass observes, ‘The center’s interventionist policies in the north-eastern states of Assam, Nagaland, and Mizoram, and in the north-western state of Jammu and Kashmir also contributed to, if they did not directly cause, the intensification of violence in those areas and the rise of a secessionist movement in Kashmir.’[[74]](#endnote-74) Interventionism by the central government was crucial in triggering conflict in the peripheries and favoured the emergence of autonomist and separatist challenges from the margins of the state. This phenomenon, however, has to be contextualized in terms of a nascent Indian democracy preoccupied with building its own demos and insensitive to the accommodation of dissent. In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, interference by the central government was coupled with the gradual alienation of a section of the society from the established political parties that competed in the political arena. The constant rigging of elections and the forging of political alliances for and against the hegemonic NC, depending on the state of relations with New Delhi, became common practices in Kashmir’s so-called democratic process.

In this respect, the 1987 elections, the last before the current conflict began, marked a turning point in the political development of the state. Electoral rigging prevented any possibility that the discontented voices who sought to participate in the democratic process through an umbrella organization called the Muslim United Front (MUF) would be able to articulate their views in the legislative assembly. Shortly after the election, members of this coalition and a number of youths opted to cross the LoC to receive military training in AJK and then return to launch an armed struggle. In the beginning, the insurgent movement was led by the militant branch of the JKLF, a secular leftist organization, whose main cadres were mainly from the lower middle classes, but there were also other groups, such as the Hizbul al-Mujahideen, which had a pro-Pakistan, Islamist modernist orientation.[[75]](#endnote-75) As has become widely known, Pakistan’s intelligence services had a hand in mobilizing the youth and used them according to their own calculations. They favoured the mushrooming of organizations supporting the merger of the entire Jammu and Kashmir within Pakistan, as well as militant groups that could cause the maximum harm to India’s democracy. Groups such as *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, which has become more active in the Kashmir scene since the mid-1990s, illustrate the case of infiltrating Islamist organizations to perpetrate attacks not only in the Kashmir Valley but also in India’s mainland.[[76]](#endnote-76)

With the eruption of violence in the late 1980s and widespread chaos in the Valley, the Indian Government reacted by suspending the autonomy of the state, administering it directly from the centre through the governor under the President’s Rule. Elections were held again in October 1996, but the emergency rules remained in force, including the massive deployment of paramilitary forces to suppress the unrest. The extraordinary powers granted to the armed forces under the AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) have resulted in a regime of impunity characterized by innumerable cases of documented human rights violations against civilians.[[77]](#endnote-77) Estimates since 1989 put the number of victims between 41,000 (claimed by Indian Government sources) and 70,000 (claimed by Kashmiri human rights organizations), of which some 20,000 were civilians; these numbers do not include an additional few thousand who have disappeared.[[78]](#endnote-78) Pandit organizations estimate that some 670 Kashmiri Pandits have been killed, and some 80–90 percent of this community abandoned the Valley in the early 1990s.[[79]](#endnote-79) Some of them were threatened, while others left in what seem to have been organized operations by the Indian administration to give an identitarian character to the conflict.[[80]](#endnote-80) At the time of writing in 2018, the presence of security personnel in the Valley is still overwhelming.

The militarization of the Kashmir Valley, as Kazi has demonstrated, was not only meant to deal with security (of borders and the curbing of militancy within) but also to carefully monitor civilians.[[81]](#endnote-81) The militarization has essentially been an occupation of urban and rural space. The paramilitary forces have barracks in specific locations that have been deemed strategic, have taken over hotels, post offices, and village areas, and have erected their posts next to schools and hospitals. This ‘security establishment’—elements of the army, intelligence agencies, and the police—has been responsible for creating a context of social degeneration and suspicion. By using militants who have surrendered or renegades as part of counter-insurgency operations, and by developing their own interests in the conflict, these security actors have ended up acting as gangsters and themselves becoming a source of insecurity. This latter point is illustrated in Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark’s *The Meadow,* an investigative journalistic account of the kidnapping of six foreign tourists in 1995 by a group named *al-Faran*. *Al-Faran* was linked to Pakistani Sunni fundamentalism and its intention was to bring the conflict to international attention, as well as to force the release of well-known militants in Indian jails.[[82]](#endnote-82) Although the Kashmir police were closely monitoring the militants and kidnappers at some stages and could have intervened, the data provided in the account suggests that this was not in the interests of the Indian security and intelligence agencies. The latter, according to the narration, seemed to be more keen to show the brutality of the militant groups to the international media. This investigative report provides a good depiction of the stateless character of the Indian state in Kashmir, which acts like just another gang or militant group among the many militant groups operating in the Valley, pursuing its own interests.

Militarization in the Kashmir Valley has coexisted with political normalization since 2004, when the India–Pakistan dialogue process that resulted in the opening of the LoC for the first time since Partition, although in a very limited way, was initiated. The relaxation of the border regime aimed to transform the conflict-prone character of the Kashmir Valley into a more conciliatory and peaceful one. At the time, the number of violent attacks had significantly diminished compared to the 1990s.[[83]](#endnote-83) As a sign of normalization, travel to the Kashmir Valley was encouraged by both state and Indian authorities, as evidenced in a number of schemes such as holiday bonuses and incentives for bureaucrats, relatives of members of the security forces, and others. Furthermore, the development of the tourism industry called for major interventions in the Valley for the building and upgrading of infrastructure, with the intention of making Kashmir an all-season tourist destination.

The oft-heard slogan ‘going back to normal’ that became popular afterwards is generally understood as returning to the pre-insurgency context of the 1980s. This means returning to a period when manifest conflict was absent. However, as one of my interviewees, an artist of Kashmiri origin residing in Delhi, pointed out when I asked him whether the situation was improving after the dialogue process: ‘The situation there was never normal. What is normal? There is a dispute. The tourism business is clearly to make Kashmiris dependent on it for their income. It is like the carrot and the stick: either you behave or we will cut the flow.’[[84]](#endnote-84) Other people with whom I spoke expressed similar views, both those who sympathized with the Kashmiri cause and those who did not—including a businesswoman in her mid-sixties from a long-established Dogra family living in Srinagar who related the increase in ‘tourism’ to the ‘good behaviour of Kashmiris’ (in this case, read as Kashmiri Muslims), meaning that they were behaving better so they were getting tourists. The policy of normalcy, which attempts to maintain that the Kashmir Valley was once a ‘normal place’, constitutes an attempt to depoliticize the dispute by transforming people’s interactions in a place, thus transforming the Kashmir space. The idea is that Kashmir, with all of its own cultural and landscape singularities, is a ‘normal’ state of the Indian Union. In other words, normalization is a form of territorializing the borderland to convert it into an integral part of the state’s space.

**Conclusion**

Representing the Kashmir dispute in the form of a map—as the territory of the former princely state torn between India and Pakistan—conveys the idea of a pre-existing cohesive territorial entity that never was. Maps of the princely state and those depicting the disputed territories between India and Pakistan reinforce the idea of territorial contiguity and cultural and social homogeneity over fragmentation and disruption. The Jammu Dogras ruled the princely state for a little over a century and were able to develop a degree of connectivity through communication and economic networks that linked the different territories with the centre in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu. However, they ruled by maintaining significant differentiation between recently conquered areas and their core territories of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu. While indirect rule and feudal forms prevailed at the time of Partition in what is now Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh, the articulation of a popular political mobilization in the early decades of the twentieth century, through political clashes and negotiations with the Dogra rulers, resulted in the emergence of limited spaces for political participation. The fact that the term ‘Kashmir’ refers to the dispute between India and Pakistan and to the nationalist struggle in the Kashmir Valley has often led to an idea of a consolidated colonial entity that serves as the framework against which present developments are examined, highlighting the criteria of territorial contiguity—the territorial integrity of the former princely state over its partitioned history—and the region’s multiethnic character, against which the aspirations of Kashmiris from the Valley are considered. These perspectives privilege the state-making process resulting from decolonization from a centre–state point of view rather than examining the territorialization processes that took place in these territories during the colonial and postcolonial periods, which can help in understanding local people’s differing perceptions of the whole Kashmir question.

1. Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 56. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Zutshi, *Contested Pasts*. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Not to confuse with *Kashmiriyat,* an ideological construct which refers to harmonious Muslim–Pandit relations from a historical perspective. During my fieldwork in various sites, and mainly in the Kashmir Valley and AJK, I noticed that people did not engage with this concept. Ankur Datta also questions the ideology of *Kashmiriyat* in his study of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu. *Uncertain Ground*, 116–117. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The historian Mridu Rai refers to a territorialization of sovereignty after the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846 by which the East India Company tried to restrain the authority of Dogra rulers in territories of the Punjab and at the same time favoured the concentration of all power in the figure of the maharaja. *Hindu Rulers,* 30–31, 54–57. Moreover, Daniel Haines, in this study of the conflict over the waters of the Indus river that arose after Partition, shows how India and Pakistan related control over water with control over territory. *Rivers Divided*. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. On the principle of territorial integrity in the contemporary sense, see Elden, *Terror and Territory*, 139–170. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Scholars working on the disputed territories have normally emphasized its social diversity in relation to the articulation of a political identity vis-à-vis Pakistani, Indian, and Kashmiri nationalism. However, this identity-based explanation undermines the territorial aspect which is the matter of contention. There are some exceptions in anthropological works which examine this point from a more ‘localized’ view. Cabeiri deBergh Robinson addresses this by asking who is a ‘refugee’ in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, *Body of Victim,* 59–64. Mona Bhan also problematizes this disconnection by analysing the ‘transborder’ condition of the Brokpa, *Counterinsurgency,* 5–7, 28–33. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Van Schendel, *Bengal Borderland,* 363–369. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Almost three decades earlier, in 1819, the Kashmir Valley had passed from the rule of the Afghan Durranis to the Sikhs. On the formation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir: Lamb, *Kashmir,* 7–9; Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging,* 46–48; and Rai, *Hindu Rulers,*18–79. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Janet Rizvi, *Ladakh,* 81–87; Hussain Abadi, *T­­­­­­­­­­ārīkh-i Baltistān*, 167–177. For an interesting essay on Baltistan’s historiography and its ‘becoming part of history’ under the Dogras, see Bredi, ‘L’uso delle fonti’. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Interview with Yousuf Hussain Abadi, Skardu, 8 August 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. On this policy of fortification led by the British but also followed and supported by the Kashmir Army, see Kreutzmann, *Wakhan Quadrangle*, 50–53. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. The social plurality that emerged in those places is reflected in the description by the British officer and explorer Reginald Schomberg as cited in Kreutzmann, *Wakhan Quadrangle*, 207. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Descendants of the former raja family of Khaplu confirmed this point. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. I only came across a positive view of this period in discussion with a middle-aged man in Baltistan, who underlined the infrastructural transformations carried out by the last maharaja in the 1920s and 1930s. These initiatives were connected to the national building process. MacDonald, ‘Push and shove’; Bray, ‘Transport *begar*’. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Although written as a personal account of the event, the Kashmiri politician Prem Nath Bazaz provides an idea of the harsh conditions faced by ordinary people in the princely state, *Inside Kashmir,* 61–66. See also Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, 65–68. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, Ch. 2; Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan Caravans,* 50–55. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, 179–209; Lamb, *Kashmir,* 85–99. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Zutshi, ‘Rethinking Kashmir’s history’, 599. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Faggi and Ginestri, ‘Rete dei bazar’. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan Caravans*, 253–255. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. India Quarter Master General’s Department, *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladak,*118. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. See for example the description provided by the colonial agent Major William Brown, *Gilgit Rebellion,* 8–10, 24–25. Although this is the view of a colonial officer, it provides an idea of the administration of these territories. Major Brown describes the peasantry as greedy/selfish and lacking in political loyalty (p. 259). [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Snedden, *Understanding Kashmir,* 92–93; Alder, *British India’s*, 30–31, 106. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. The eastern territory of Chilas and Astore, south of Bunji, were also part of this process of incorporation. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Lamb, *Kashmir*, 19–23. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Lamb, *Kashmir*, 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Alder, *British India’s*, 106–107; Kreutzmann, *Wakhan Quadrangle,* 52–80. Alder’s book focuses on British frontier policy and Russian competition while Kreutzmann’s provides a more detailed account of the role of native explorers in this process of gathering knowledge and the general policy of control of the frontier and safeguarding the loyalty of local leaders through apanage. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Adler, *British India’s*, 100–159. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Lamb, *Kashmir,* 26; Alder, *British India’s*, 279–280; Chohan, *Gilgit Agency*. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Cited in Bazaz, *Inside,* 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See Bazaz, *Inside*, 58. This idea is also mentioned by Mridu Rai when she relates ‘the declining relevance of Kashmir’s Muslim subjects to the Dogra state’s for legitimacy’, in *Hindu Rulers,* 294. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Which parts of the Gilgit Wazarat were under the Dogras was not always clearly defined. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. On which territories included the Gilgit Agency and the lease area, see Snedden, *Understanding Kashmir,* 118–119; Lamb, *Kashmir*, Ch.3 and Ch.4; Chohan, *Gilgit Agency*, 203–211; Kreutzmann, ‘Boundaries and space’, 280. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. The first Dogra maharaja, Gulab Singh, had granted his younger brother the Poonch *jagir*, a territory that enjoyed significant autonomy as a sort of enclave within the princely state. Snedden, *Understanding Kashmir,* 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Exceptions to this case could be Hunza and Nagar, whose rulers or Mirs had developed room to maneuver due to their strategic position and relations with the former Eastern Turkistan (Kashgar and today’s Yarkand). In fact, the Mir of Hunza (and that of Nagar) signed for the accession to Pakistan. The Poonch *jāgirdār*, in present AJK, also represents an exception because its economy depended on the recruitment of soldiers for the British Indian Army and at the time of Partition, popular discontent with the maharaja led to an uprising which triggered the conflict. On the Poonch uprising, see Snedden, *Untold Story*, 41–46. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. In an interview with the sons of Ghulam Wazir Ahmed, they mentioned that their grandfather took his child to Chitral to attend school because at the time there were no possibilities for education in Baltistan. After studying in Aligarh, he became politically active and was the local leader of the Pakistan Muslim League and later held administrative positions in Baltistan. Although he is known as the first person from the area to study in Aligarh, I gathered oral accounts that suggest that there was at least one other student some decades earlier from the area of Khaplu. Apart from these students receiving modern education, there was a fair stream of pupils from eastern Baltistan who attended madrassas in northern India, such as Deoband. Others, mostly Shia and Nurbakhshi, received training in Iraq and Iran. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. MacDonald, ‘Push and shove’, 291. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. In her book *Imperial Simla*, Pamela Kanwar makes reference to Muslim coolies from the Kashmir Valley working in Simla in the beginning of the twentieth century through Kashmiri contractors. Some of them were from Ladakh; the author describes them as ‘Shia Muslims from Kargil’. Although not formally cited, Baltis were also part of these groups, 180–181. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Specifically, the works by Lamb, *Kashmir*; Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*; Rai, *Hindu Rulers*; and Snedden, *Understanding Kashmir,* Part 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. On Baltistan, Abadi, *Tārīkh-i Baltistān,* 210–227; Mahajan, *Debacle in Baltistan*; on events in Gilgit, Sökefeld, ‘Colonialism to postcolonial’; and on Zangskar see, Gutschow, ‘Being Buddhist’. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Whitehead, *A Mission*. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Sökefeld, ‘Colonialism to postcolonial’. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Chitral was a princely state formerly linked to Gilgit until 1901, when the British merged it with the newly formed North-West Frontier province. People I met in Baltistan, including a few men who lived through Partition, mentioned that these militias were constituted by locals (Baltistanis), and people from Rondu, Gilgit, and Chitral. I never came across specific evidence that ‘Pakistanis’ (representatives of the army) were involved in the initial fighting. On Chitral, see Kreutzmann, ‘Kashmir and the Northern Areas’, 212. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Snedden makes a reference to this point by assuming that they were two separate developments, *Untold Story*, 45. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Interview, Turtuk, 21 July 2012. In my interviews with ordinary villagers on both the Indian (Kargil and Chorbat La areas) and Pakistan sides (Skardu and Khaplu), *sarkāri* (‘government jobs’) were often mentioned as a sign of integration into a polity, in the sense that having a government job means that the state is taking care of people. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. I had two long interviews with Haider Shah on 25 and 26 March 2010 at his home in Skardu. The interview, in Balti language, was carried out with the help of a translator. As with many Baltis, Header Shah migrated during his youth to Simla, Jammu, and Sialkot in search of work. He was working as a shop assistant in Sialkot when the events surrounding Partition began. Though not without difficulty, he managed to return to Skardu to reunite with his family. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Ian Copland, ‘Princely states’, 54–55. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. The insights gathered from people in Baltistan often expressed criticism of the Kashmiri rulers, but avoided discussing the role of local rajas. This can partly be because, unlike the alien nature of former Kashmiri officers, raja families are members of the local society, enjoy social recognition, and participate in politics. The raja of Skardu at the time of Partition was supportive of Pakistan, and in this sense there was no major disagreement with the wishes of the ordinary people revolting against the Dogra rule. Ordinary people, however, often saw local rajas as oppressors. An interviewee from a village near Khaplu recalled during a discussion over the abolition of the raja rule by Z.A. Bhutto in the mid-1970s: ‘How we could not be happy about that? Before [the Bhutto reforms] we had to cultivate the land and give one third of our harvest to the raja family. This was a great burden on us. When the raja rule was abolished, we became free of this obligation.’ Interview, Skardu, June 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. As early as 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru was already reflecting on this issue concerning the differences between the Kashmir princely state and Jammu and the possibility that Kashmir should go to Pakistan in a note to Sheikh Abdullah on the Kashmir accession: ‘In fact, Jammu and Kashmir have to hold together. If Jammu is separated, Kashmir goes. If Kashmir goes, Jammu’s position becomes precarious and the conflict does not end. Statesmanship therefore requires that Jammu and Kashmir should go together’. From *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* 322–330. Quoted in A.G. Noorani, *The Kashmir,* 178–179. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. United Nations, ‘Resolution 47’. Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 107, 113, 114. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Kabir, *Territory of Desire.* Kabir limits her analysis of artworks to India’s desire for the Kashmir Valley but the main argument that ‘representation in modernity constructed Kashmir as a territory of desire’ (p. 209) can be extended to the way in which not only India, but also Pakistan and Kashmiri nationalism, have framed political discourses on the region. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Interview with Mr. Haji Khan, Skardu, 4 September 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. I refer to the crossing of ordinary civilians. Militants and some people continued to go back and fro in the Kashmir Valley and AJK, but at the expense of their own lives. Border crossing between Kargil and Ladakh after 1990s was only anecdotal. This notwithstanding, the LoC has been quite successful in impeding movement. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Both India and Pakistan are administering the provisional territories under their control and the United Nations Military Observation Group, UNMOGIP, still monitors the ceasefire along the LoC. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines,* 97. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Interview, Haider Shah, Skardu, March 2010. This account coincides with the view that officers in the Pakistani Government believed that these territories could be better administered from the Frontier. See also Snedden, *Untold Story*, 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Snedden, *Untold Story*, 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Kreutzmann, ‘Kashmir and the Northern Areas’, 209–210; Mato Bouzas, ‘Mixed legacies’, 873. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. The inhabitants ceased to be subjects of the Jammu and Kashmir princely state but did not become Pakistani citizens. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. The legal-political context of Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan within India and Pakistan are different but some features are shared by both territories. Much against the interests of Ladakhi leaders, Ladakh territory has been administratively preserved as part of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, whereas Gilgit-Baltistan formed its own that was entity directly controlled from Islamabad under the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (at present the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan). [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Ravina Aggarwal points out that after Nehru’s visit to Ladakh three major conceptual frameworks followed in the policies dealing with the territory, namely: its strategic importance for India’s territorial integrity, the area’s backwardness, and its cultural diversity as linked to India’s plural traditions. *Beyond Lines,* 38–39. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. For an understanding of the implications and mechanisms under which the FRC evolved and its application to the territories in the North-West Frontier of British India, see the excellent article by Hopkins, ‘Frontier Crimes Regulation’. On the case of Gilgit-Baltistan, see Kreutzmann, ‘Kashmir and the Northern Areas’; Sökefeld, ‘Colonialism to postcolonial’. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. A different issue is how this cultural diversity or tribalism has been re-appropriated by social groups in these areas to access resources. On Ladakh, see Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines*, 11–13. On Gilgit-Baltistan, see Kreutzmann, ‘Kashmir and the Northern Areas’, 213–214. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Aggarwal has described the production of Ladakh’s territory as ‘barren’ in India’s imaginary through films, *Beyond Lines*, Ch. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines,* 7–9; Bhan*, Counterinsurgency,* 68–69. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Helen Pidd, 16, ‘Kashmir desperate’. Tourism figures are important because they are connected to discourses of political normalization in the Valley. The obsession with numbers even makes its way into Bollywood films, such as in the case of *Haider,* a film that attempts to show the conflict from a local perspective by adapting Shakespeare’s *Hamlet.* Just before the closing credits of this film, probably as a sort of relief for the spectator, information appears on the large numbers of tourists visiting the Valley in recent years. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. In general, AJK suffers from the fact that some of its potential tourist attractions, such as the beautiful Neelum Valley, are located near the LoC and within sight of the Indian army. However, in my interactions on this topic with the Pakistani administration and the AJK tourist department in Muzaffarabad, I noticed that foreign tourism is not particularly welcomed. For an account of the Neelum Valley, see Evans, ‘Kashmir: a tale’, 40–43. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Mato Bouzas, ‘Securitization and development’. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Sheikh Abdullah rose as a political figure in the opposition movement to the authoritarian maharaja of Kashmir which gained prominence in early 1930s. The movement demanded representative politics and addressed the discrimination towards Muslims at all social levels. He became the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in March 1948 but was dismissed by the Constitutional Head of the State in 1953 and put in jail until 1964. His position was taken by one of his dissident ministers Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Upon his release, the central government acted to prevent him from contesting elections by banning the political organizations which supported him. However, in 1974 he reached an agreement with the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by giving up the demand for a plebiscite to be held in Kashmir. The alliance with the Congress Party took him back to power until his death in 1982. He was succeeded by his son, Farooq, following the tradition of South Asian family political dynasties. Although Farooq was never jailed, he became part of the same political game with the central led-Congress Party when his views differed from those in New Delhi and in 1984 he lost power to his brother-in-law. He later resigned after a second term in office in 1990 in the context of the mounting repression by Indian paramilitary forces in Kashmir and would not return to power until 1996. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. There was a brief interregnum after Nehru’s death in 1964, when the party was led by Lal Bahadur Shastri, until 1966, when Indira Gandhi won the elections and assumed power. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. For an understanding of the relationship between the NC and the Congress-led governments that ruled India during most of this period (except during the Janata Party interregnum of 1977–1979), see Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative,* 45–75. For a perspective focused on the figure of Farooq Abdullah, see Singh, *A Tragedy.* [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative*, 124–125. This author compares the case with Tamil Nadu, where the central government adopted more conciliatory approaches through concessions and allowed a level of political dissent. Focusing on Indira Gandhi’s period in government and acknowledging the pluralist tendencies in India’s federal system, Paul Brass also underlines the interventionism of the central government into the states through centralization measures that ‘nationalis[e] political issues’. *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* 154–155. In the same way, Nirvikar Singh points out the role of India’s central government institutions in encouraging conflict in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir by stressing identity divides. ‘Cultural conflict in India’, 345–346. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 318–319. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Over the years, the Kashmir armed struggle has been characterized by its factionalism. Armed groups mushroomed and split from the main organizations, some were created by Pakistani or Indian agencies for various purposes, and others were formed as part of a reorientation of aims within the fundamentalist organizations in Pakistan that also operated in Afghanistan. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. On the history of Laskhar-e Taiba, see Zahab, ‘’Door of paradise’’, 133–158. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Duschinski, ‘Regimes of impunity’, 117–121. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Jacob and Naqshbandi, ‘41,000 deaths’. These figures by government sources are an indication. Earlier in 2008, Indian authorities estimated 47,000 deaths as a result of nearly two decades of insurgency. Sayeed and Cameron-Moore. ‘India revises’. The estimated death toll provided by militant organizations is higher than that given by government sources. However, human rights groups in Kashmir such as Jammu Kashmir Civil Society Coalition (JKCSC), which have documented the violence in the Valley, locate the number of deaths around 70,000. See for example the report, JKCSC, ‘Facts under ground: a fact-finding mission on nameless gravesn& mass graves in Uri area’, 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. See Bashir, ‘670 KPs killed’. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. For a specific account on the condition of the Kashmiri Pandits during the conflict, see Evans, ‘A Departure’, 19–37. Evans discusses the case of the Pandits’ exodus from the Valley and suggests that there has not been Government involvement. For a different view, see Rai, ‘Making a part inalienable’, 250–278, 272–273. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Kazi, *Between Democracy.* [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Levy and Scott-Clark, *The Meadow*. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. See the annual reports of the Ministry of Home Affairs on violent episodes in Jammu and Kashmir, https://mha.gov.in/documents/annual-reports. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Interview, Delhi, October 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)