

**BEYOND EVENT AND AFTERMATH: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF
EVERYDAY LIFE IN A KASHMIRI NEIGHBOURHOOD**

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Abstract

This thesis offers a lens to explore Kashmiri lives in a downtown Srinagar neighbourhood in their everyday context, within the overarching frame of occupation. It departs from accounting for violence as either episodic or eventful and concerns itself with ordinary people in their everyday and mundane lives, to show how violence can be gauged from the ordinary, and at the same time, how social life is lived in the everyday even as it acknowledges that the contours of this everyday are shaped by the larger social and political temporalities of the ongoing violence in Kashmir.

The thesis challenges the dominant narratives of ‘Kashmiris’ vs ‘the state’, the notion of a homogenized Kashmiri ‘victim or ‘resistor’ and the reduction of all ways of living into the rubric of ‘resistance’. It further departs from a focus solely on violent ‘events’ and their ‘everyday aftermaths’ and proposes that the categories of ‘eventful’ vs ‘non-eventful’ need to be problematized in the case of Kashmir. It locates violence, negotiations and social life within the conceptual category of the everyday where the event is not separated but interwoven into the everyday with a focus on re-inhabiting the world beyond the power/ resistance model; concerning fractured subjectivities and agentic subjects.

The thesis therefore not only offers a different framework to make sense of the ‘Kashmir conflict’, but also offers a different anthropological framework to understand the neighbourhood and the domestic. The neighbourhood and domestic here have been explored by taking a departure from literature focusing on space and spatiality and instead explored as a temporal category through the long curfew of 2016 and even through the virtual space mediated through technology. It takes as its subject *ongoing* life where life and death are not addressed via their literal meanings but at brinks of potentialities and hindrances; possibilities and non-possibilities; socialities and discords; collective subjectivity and individual subjectivity—

between different social actors, between individuals and community, between individuals and their families and even between the same individual over the course of time. It explores the continuities and linkages between life and death; between the eventful and the everyday; the ordinary and extra-ordinary; the intimate space of the home and the realm of the state, through the entanglement of the neighbourhood and the realm of the domestic with the ongoing violence. The neighbourhood and domestic are explored in the way the everyday tensions and boundaries are negotiated and renegotiated by men, women and children, in an everyday context, paving the way for contingent and temporal nature of solidarities, socialities, subjectivities, as well as the emergent fractures within the Kashmiri political community.

The thesis makes a methodological entry into the neighbourhood through the temporality of the curfew and foregrounds the necessity of looking at neighbourhoods through a temporal analysis, going beyond the spatial metaphor alone, as community ties and everyday socialities wax and wane through the imposition and relaxation of curfews, lockdowns and so on. Although the temporality of the domestic and neighbourhood is explored through the long curfew that disturbs the daily routines but it also gives an avenue to make sense of those routines and the tension and everyday labour that goes into sustaining them.