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Kashmiri Muslims – the Historical Consciousness and Memory in the Era of Modern Technology

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Abstract

The Valley of Kashimir is a region which has been shaded by the conflict for decades and it is still far from resolution. Actually, it seems we observe its new phase in which the dispute spreads on the virtual space. The historical and social consciousness of the Kashmiris, formed on the occupational background, is a significant if not the most crucial element constituting the Kashmiri Muslim Identity. For last 20 years, local press popularized the claims to preserve tradition and language, or to write down history, which is believed to be presented falsely in the official narration. A need is uttered out loud to change the direction of the Kashmiri discourse which shall be based on oral history or other testimonies from the inside of the conflict reality. The increase in the interest in protecting the unique syncretic cultural heritage is visible in various activities of young generation of Kashmiris, both on the subcontinent and in diaspora. Currently, the main field for their grassroots initiatives became the Internet. By enabling a relatively free flow of information and wide accessibility, it became the space for building and maintaining the historical consciousness of the Kashmiri people. Websites such as "Lost Kashmiri History" and „Kashmir Lit" present how modern technologies serve for the memory preservation.

    In this paper I would like to present briefly the content of the abovementioned websites. Focusing on the seer idea of their existence, I will try to answer the question what constitutes the historical consciousness of nowadays Kashmiri Muslims. The aim of this research shall be an attempt to present the hardships behind writing about history

in conflicted regions such as Kashmir and reflect upon the Internet as a solution to that problems.

Key words: Kashmir, memory studies**,** identity, modern technology in culture.

Кашмирские мусульмане – историческое сознание и память в эпоху современных технологий

Аннотация

Долина Кашмира является регионом, который был затенен конфликтом на протяжении десятилетий и все еще далек от разрешения. На самом деле, кажется, мы наблюдаем его новую фазу, в которой спор распространяется на виртуальное пространство. Историческое и общественное сознание кашмирцев, сформированное на профессиональном уровне, является важным, если не самым важным элементом, составляющим идентичность мусульман Кашмира. За последние 20 лет местная пресса популяризировала заявления о сохранении традиций и языка или о записи истории, которая, как полагают, ложно представлена в официальном повествовании. Громко говорится о необходимости изменить направление кашмирского дискурса, который должен основываться на устной истории или других свидетельствах изнутри конфликтной реальности. Повышение интереса к охране уникального синкретического культурного наследия проявляется в различных видах деятельности молодого поколения кашмирцев, как на субконтиненте, так и в диаспоре. В настоящее время основным полем их инициатив на низовом уровне стал Интернет. Обеспечив относительно свободный поток информации и широкий доступ, он стал пространством для построения и поддержания исторического сознания народа Кашмира. Веб-сайты, такие как «Затерянная история Кашмира» и «Кашмир Лит», представляют, как современные технологии служат для сохранения памяти.

В этой статье я хотел бы кратко представить содержание вышеупомянутых сайтов. Сосредоточив внимание на прозорливой идее их существования, я попытаюсь ответить на вопрос, что составляет историческое сознание современных мусульман Кашмира. Целью данного исследования будет попытка представить трудности, связанные с написанием истории в конфликтных регионах, таких как Кашмир, и подумать об Интернете как о решении этих проблем.

***Ключевые слова*:** Кашмир, исследования памяти, идентичность, современные технологии в культуре

Introduction

Kashmir is a region whose inhabitants have been living in the shadow of Indo-Pakistani conflict for 70 years now, since the British left the subcontinent and both republics came into being, splitting the former Princely State of Kashmir into two parts. As a result, the provinces of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir (districts of Muzaffarabad, Poonch and Mirpur) fell under Pakistani administration and Jammu, Ladakh and the Valley of Kashmir under the Indian one[1]. This last part, situated along the river Jhelum, in the shadow of the Pir Panjal Range and main Himalayas, with its capital in Srinagar, has caused a particular interest of both sides. Inhabited mostly by Muslims, it is also where the recent escalation of 2016 happened, which demonstrated that the dispute is still far from resolution. Although settled in a specified place on the Earth, the Kashmiri conflict seems to be stepping into a new phase in which it goes beyond the real space to enter the virtual. The historical and social consciousness of the Kashmiris, formed on the occupational background, is a significant if not the most crucial element constituting the Kashmiri Muslim Identity. For last 20 years, local press popularized the claims to preserve tradition and language, or to write down history, which is believed to be presented falsely in the official narration. A need is uttered out loud to change the direction of the Kashmiri discourse which shall be based on oral history or other testimonies from the inside of the conflict reality. The increasing interest in protection of the unique syncretic cultural heritage is visible in various activities of Kashmiris placed both on the subcontinent and in diaspora, in the cyberspace.

Websites such as "Lost Kashmiri History" and „Kashmir Lit" are representative examples of such an endeavor. These are moreover one of the few sources on Kashmiri history available to Western scholars. In this paper, I would like to discuss them in the context of cultural identity in a modern, networked society. To begin with, some views on the role of modern technologies in culture will be provided. Secondly, I will shortly introduce the Kashmiri background behind the example websites. Then, there will be a brief reflection upon writing about history of conflicted regions, with particular

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[1] Since 1962 also China administers the eastern region known as Aksai Chin.

stress on memory studies. Following the content of Kashmir Lit and Lost Kashmiri History websites will be presented and an attempt to describe the historical consciousness of nowadays Kashmiri Muslims made. Basing on that, some conclusions will be drawn as regards the preceding issues. Those will hopefully allow to answer a more general question whether an analysis of virtual content is a worthwhile method of conducting a research within cultural studies.

Modern technologies and culture

Modern technologies have become an inseparable part of people's lives almost everywhere on the Earth. Therefore, as a human attribute, they entered and very much influenced the social discourse, including culture studies. The role of those tools in the social context is definitely multidimensional. As a film theoretician, Bill Nichols notices, "a tension can be seen to exist between the liberating potential of the cybernetic imagination and the ideological tendency to preserve the existing form of social relations" (Nichols. 2001).

However, it seems that social relations has undergone a significant change in recent decades. As noticed by Zygmunt Bauman, nothing is solid and unchangeable anymore. For him, the current *fluid modernity* we live in, challenges sanctity of the old, which results in unbinding of social relations, which isolates people from each other. Thus, people feel more and more unsafe and uncertain of any purpose. The original understanding of a community and its principles are being destroyed, as common good is no more existent. The meaning of time and space also alters, to a degree when the value of time almost disappears (Bauman, 2006). This seems as apt as ever, thanks to the rapid growth of social media. The Internet, unlike previous media, such as books or TV, is uniquely abstract because of its cybernetic character, which means that it not only preserves the information but also converts it. Besides, the saved data do not convey a unilateral message of a monolog type but rather trigger an exchange of communicates. To put it straight, it is much more an active than a passive medium, which is partly thanks to the computerization of cultural activities (Binkley, 2001). Currently, the growing popularity of social media enhances the culture of

participation. Everyone is free and encouraged to express their opinions and take part in group activities. The Internet is now not only a means to spread information about the upcoming events, but where some of them actually 'take place' as well. Take for example live music streaming with no audience on site or journals and magazines which are released only as e-publications. According to Nichols, the process of absorption and feedback has replaced the reproducible instances of entrepreneurial capitalism followed by ubiquitous occurrence of events (Nichols, 2001). The virtual world, instead of representing the already known social practice, presents us with its new form, which is a simulation of life and social relations. A full representation of an individual is never possible there, as the computer medium eliminates some part of their humanity (Binkley, 2001). Nevertheless, it is very easy to create own image and change it according to circumstances. Most of the nowadays social scientists agree that identity as such is something unstable, under constant process of (re-)creation. But in the cyberspace, new identities are being adopted even more freely, which disturbs the individual feeling of balance (Nichols, 2001). Virtual communication brings also an illusion of control by erasing the possible risk associated with a real face-to-face meeting (Binkley, 2001). Therefore, paradoxically, it brings people closer to each other by eliminating the emotional and special distance, at the same time empowering their alienation. Certainly, there are much more ambiguities and contradictions in the virtual world's nature.

For instance, the Internet allows an uncomplicated access to huge resources of global content, impossible to collect in any existing library and constitutes an incomparably creative space. Thus, it opens a new field for artistic activity for those, whose opportunities are limited in the real world. Everyone can become and author or artist and it is for the readers to decide, not a publisher commercially dependent. However, such loads of information make it difficult to distinguish between what is reliable and of value.

As Bauman states, one of the features of fluid modernity is that the power lies in mobility. The ruling elites now constitutes of those who are able to change their location fast, which is also why social relations get weaker (Bauman, 2006). On the other hand, due to its detachment from certain land, the Internet seems to be a very important and powerful tool for more and more scattered ethnic communities. Through this medium people may

undertake grassroots initiatives and achieve their aims together, regardless of their actual location. It is where thoughts and ideas are exchanged beyond boundaries and thus cultural consciousness created and maintained globally. Currently, as already mentioned, the need seems particularly strong among the young generation of Kashmiri Muslims.

Who are the Kashmiri people?

Muslims comprise the majority in 17 out of 22 regions of which the historical and geographical Kashmir consists, constituting 68% of the population. The centre of their activity is the Valley of Kashmir by the river Jhelum, with its capital in Srinagar.

Islam arrived to Kashmir around 11th century AD and its first Muslim ruler, who was a convert from Buddhism, acceded to the throne in 1320. Before it was governed by Hindus and Buddhists. During the British Raj, the power was taken over by Sikhs and then again Hindu princes. The Kashmiri society was both nonsectarian and multiethnic and the people generally coexisted in peace. Religious identity did not influence people's regional identity which later on turned to national identity (which emerged in the 30s). The situation though began to change slightly due to the British, whose *divide et impera* principle was applied on the whole subcontinent, including Kashmir. The rivalry between Hindus and Muslims appeared partly because of the distribution of power and influences on the basis of the religious criteria. In Kashmir the dichotomization was not that much severe as the society remained united around a common enemy. Nevertheless, in the 20th century the Kashmiri identity started to be linked with a Muslim identity, referred to in terms of *Kashmiriyat*, opposite to the Hindu identity of Kashmiri Pandits[2]. The roots of the idea are traced back to 16th century, in the activity

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[2]   As the narrations of those two groups vary and sometimes are contrary, the distinction should be made in any research on modern Kashmiri society. In recent years, the relations between Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims have been fluctuating, regarding political moods. In the 90s a notorious banishment of the Pandits from the Valley took place, which became the axis of Pandits' narration on history. On the other hand, radical Muslims accuse Pandits of supporting Indian forces, perceived as enemies. Currently voices encouraging Pandits to return to the Valley are often heard. Many Kashmiris, as newspapers and magazines report,

of the poets and saints Muslim Nund Rishi (also known as Nur-ud-Din) and a Hindu Lal Ded. The values credited to them and adopted as integral part of Kashmiri identity are equality, tolerance, unity (Khan, 1994).

Historical memory and Kashmir

Such as childhood is an integral part of one's identity, although he knows it only from other people's account, similarly the identity of a nation is naturally something more than a conglomerate of its members' individual identities. As Benedict Anderson states, it has neither a beginning nor end and thus, to maintain continuity some narration about the past constructed against the time, starting from the present, needs to be created. Inevitable pars of this process are experiences, forgetting and then re-telling them, which is never the same as he facts themselves (Anderson, 1997). Nevertheless, the historical consciousness that emerges from those stories, is worth investigating as a manifestation of symbolic culture, or maybe even the only thing we can explore.

In the case of conflicted regions, such as Kashmir, forming if historical consciousness and preserving the historical memory has some specific aspects. Firstly, it stems from the psychological conditions of conflict witnesses.

> The overt presence of military in the society has a different kind of effect since it strips the local populace of even the basic human dignity—daily identity checkups, concertina wires on   roads, search and cordon operations, undeclared night curfews, surveying the local population, and photographing them form a part of daily humiliation process. Where the camps are nearer to localities, people have to ask the army even to enter their own homes. A larger picture that comes out of this humiliation process is self-hatred or self-flagellation forming the basis of Kashmiri Psyche (Majid and Amid, 2016).

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calmly live along each other as neighbors regardless of faith. However, there is a religious context of the conflict which cannot be eradicated and which is being egged on by consecutive governments, starting with the British up to the current Narendra Modi's rule.

Secondly, some difficulties in access to those peoples' testimonies appear. According to Idrees Kanth (Kanth, 2011), touching this issue in the Kashmiri context, the research requires some other methodological approach which has not yet been developed and that will enable the scholars to overcome numerous hardships that occur. In the Kashmiri field, this is basically a limited access to sources. As Kanth states, in spite of a rich political discourse, there is utterly no historic discourse on Kashmir. For him, the lack of institutional support is to be blamed together with the lack of records. At the same time, he states that "the need to document Kashmir history has also stemmed from an associated anxiety embedded in a feeling that a "Kashmiri culture" is waning under the influence of modernity" (Kanth, 2011). Therefore, it seems crucial to reach for the personal narratives of the people, and, despite what their critics say, modern technologies may very well facilitate the access to those testimonies. It is the Internet that enables a relatively free communication in a place where freedom of speech as well as social activity are being restricted by the authorities and also which spreads that globally. It is beyond doubt, that whatever goes on there considering the issue, adds to the Kashmiri discourse.

Lost Kashmiri History

[T]he collective memory and political mobilization of Kashmiri identity has fundamental left a deep impact on Kashmiri society, creating the narrative for resistance and independence. Contemporary Kashmiri Muslim identity and self-consciousness as a nation and separate group has not only been shaped by the repeated assertion of Indian state's control over Kashmir's territory, but by collective resistance and counter-assertions to this perceived aggression. As such, in a sense India itself catalyzed the process that has cultivated contemporary Kashmiri national identity, prompting its population to adopt strategies of resistance (Zargar, 2016).

The above statement by a Kashmiri journalists, Haris Zargar, manifests pretty well in the Lost Kashmiri History platform. The initiative occurred in 2013, and is meant as a kind of an archive, which collects the data on Kashmir to preserve them for future generations. It consists basically of

articles, mainly borrowed from other sources, people's accounts and the stories of the conflict victims.

The six main tabs of the website are: articles, cases, my story, sevens, search Kashmir and books on Kashmir. Among the Articles, a Kashmir Body Count is published regularly, the most recent one from December 2018. Each count consists of the number of both civilians and militants, as well as activists killed by Pakistani forces, Indian forces, unknown forces of in a crossfire. The source of these tolls is not given. Other articles focus mainly on historical topics. The headings are for example "Heroes of Kashmir" (a series of articles), "Remembering Handwara Massacre" (January 25, 2018), "Remembering the Sopore Massacre" (January 6, 2018), "Last days of Maqbool Bhat" (December 29, 2017), "Kashmir floods: a chronology" (December 9, 2017), "Seven times India awarded killers of Kashmir" (November 29, 2017), "1909: Kashmir on canvas" (November 12, 2017), "Stories from 'Azaad Kashmir'" (October 28, 2017). For now, the oldest available article of this section was published in January 2017.

The section "Cases" focuses on personal accounts of the historical events related to the Kashmiri conflict. These third-person narrations come from different sources, for example the report *Structures of Violence – the Indian State in Jammu and Kashmir. An IPTK and APDP Report*, the internet magazine *Kashmir Reader* or *Human Rights Violations in Azad Kashmir*, which refers to the situation in Pakistani Administered Kashmir.

Picture 1: An illustration to the article *My story: Raped in an Army Camp* by Umar Mushtaq published on February 10, 2018, retrieved from *Kashmir Reader* internet magazine. **Source**: Lost Kashmir History.

The section "sevens" present some lists of persons and places rendered important for the Kashmiri history by the editors. These are for example: "Seven architectures unique to Kashmir", "Seven Kashmir journalists you must know", "Seven infamous torture centers in Kashmir", "Seven Muslim reformers in Kashmir history", "Seven influential Kashmiri women you must know", "Seven historic routes to Kashmir", "Seven renegades you must know" and "Seven quotes for a history geek" (all published in 2017). This last article contains words related to history in general uttered by different famous people known from the English-speaking world. These are activists, such as Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey, writers such as Maya Angelou or Michael Crichton as well as politicians, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Interestingly, the editors decided to keep away from Indo-Pakistani culture, making no reference to any person of Asian origin.

The last tab available on the website is "Books on Kashmir", which is some kind of a digital library devoted to the subject. It contains 130 positions, available for download in their scanned versions, with a note that they are intended only for educational purposes and anyone is free to ask for removal of a book if he or she claims that copyright has been infringed. The books included in this repository fall within various aspects of the Kashmiri historic discourse. These are for example works discussing early history of the region (*The History of Medieval Kashmir* by Jonaraja and Shivaraja, *Kashmir under the Sultans* by Mohibbul Hasan), the issue of Indo-Pakistani conflict (*The Strugggle for Kashmir* by Michael Brencher, *Kashmir in Flames* by Sunaullah Bhat or *Kashmir: the Case for Freedom* by Tariq Ali, Hilal Bhatt and Arundhati Roy), Kashmiri society (*Hijras of Kashmir* by Aijaz Ahmad Bund, *Kashmir Social and Cultural History* by G.M Rabbani, *Kashmir Untold Story of Men and Matters* by B.L. Kak), literature (*Folktales of Kashmir* by Rev. J. Hinton Knowles, *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir* by K.L. Lalla), language (*Trilingual Aspects of Language Learning and Teaching* by Sheetal Gupta, *1885: the Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* by Omkar N. Kaul), religion (*The Untold Story of Jehad in Kashmir* by Arif Jamal, *Muslim Religious Trends* by Mushtaq Ahmed Wani, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh* by J.N. Ganhar) and politics (*Article 370* by Mohan Krishen Teng). What is interesting, among those books some documents are also available, such as *Our Real Crime* by Yasin Malik, *An*

Appeal to the World Conscience by Amanullah Khan, authored by two leaders of the two wings of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, a pro-independence political organization active on both sides of the Line of Control and abroad. Propagating such content may be condemned by the Indian Authorities, which might be the reason why so little information is revealed about the editors identity. What they state about themselves is

> [w]e are a group of volunteers striving to keep alive our historical memorabilia through this   platform. This is not our personal property. This effort is as much ours as it belongs to each of you out there. Together, we shall bestow ourselves a bright future, based on the sacrifices of our reckoning past (LKH Desk).

The texts by the LKH desk are published exclusively in English, with varying regularity, usually every couple of months. The most recent article was published in January 2019. The posts are dated, though the authorship is not always provided. The website is interactive, functions as a platform where comments can be left. The content may also be shared on most popular social websites, such as Facebook, where Lost Kashmiri History has its profile as well. The website seems to nourish particularly the memory of aggression, tragic events and preserve the images of atrocities. It commemorates the people's lives under the occupation, which constitutes the main axis of the narration. The language used can be described as rather emotional; the narration reveals a victim perspective, represents an oppressed community which is being deceived. The materials create an image of Kashmir as a land dominated by militarism, which intrudes people's consciousness in a pretty harsh manner, leaving them with a trauma. The struggle for dignity, lost among aggression, is also noticeable. The overall narrative seems to underline the dichotomy between We-Kashmiris versus Them, the Occupiers.

Kashmir Lit

"We cannot sleep for as long as Kashmir burns;
So with our furious scribbling pens
And frantically typing keyboards,
We turn ourselves into the
Foggy windows of its suffering"

Syamantakshobhan Basu,
Why do we write about Kashmir? (Kashmir Lit).

Another platform established for and by Kashmiris to preserve their cultural heritage, is Kashmir Lit. Since 2008, it gathers people writing on Kashmir in Kashmir and abroad. It was founded by Ather Zia, a poet and a political anthropologist residing in the USA, who is simultaneously the chief editor. She is supported by Huzaifa Pandit, an academic living in Kashmir, the author of a book of poems entitled *Green is the Colour of Memory*. As scholars, the editors denies any connections to both political and non-governmental organizations.

The website is divided into 8 sections: Articles, Gender, Interviews, Books and Book Reviews, Photo Essay, Creative Writings, Translations and Poems. Materials sent by the readers constitute a vast and core part of the publications. The editors desk encourages their Kashmiri readers to contribute to the development of the website by sending their own literary works, either short stories or poems, on the regional subjects. These are being published along with some pieces of visual art related to recent events in Kashmir, though this tab is not yet that much developed. What seems of much value, are the translations of Urdu and Kashmiri poems into English, which is the basic language of Kashmir Lit, provided together with the originals.

The website is mainly of cultural character, with literature as a key field of interest. Though, as the editors suggest, the word literature is not what Lit in the name of the platform stands for—it comes from the verb light, meaning set afire, burning. All of the present editors reside in Kashmir and are members of the academic society. Thus, the content, as far as articles are concerned, is of the academic and popular-science character. They are written by scholars, journalists or writers and refer to broadly understood Kashmiri issues, including also some reviews of academic books regarding

Kashmir, and interviews with people engaged in activities for Kashmir, such as journalists, scholars, social activists from all over the world. Not all the content is though original, some papers come from other resources.

Although Kashmir Lit is meant as an online literary journal, it encroaches also into social issues. Particular focus in visible on the women's issues, to which the whole tab "Gender" is devoted. The chief editor being herself a female, sees a need for other Kashmiri women to utter their views and thoughts, marginalized in other spaces. The website contents include interviews with women activists (*This Is How Kashmiri Women Are Risking Their Lives* published on April 6, 2017), personal accounts (e.g. *When the army men hanged my panties, bras on the wall hooks, littered my sanitary pads…* by Sara Ahmad published primarily by The Rumbling Reporter on July 31, 2017) or academic articles (*A Historical Overview of Kashmiri Women in Politics & Resistance* by Dr Shazia Malik, published primarily by *Kashmir Life* on December 14, 2016). The platform is where those living in the conflicted reality, usually deprived of voice, can express freely what they are coping with as mothers, daughters, sisters of the killed and missing men, civilians risking their lives, and some of them also artist. Kashmir Lit provides space where they can present their literarily skills, which most probably will remain unheard otherwise, and thus contribute to the Kashmiri culture, of which they are an intrinsic part. On the other hand it enables everyone interested in the subject an access to the scholarly knowledge and builds

Picture 2. Poster of Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day. **Source**: Kashmir Lit, 23 February 2018

a field of exchange between Kashmiris in Kashmir and living in diasporas all over the world, whose identification with the region is often quite strong.

The event, organised from 2014, commemorates the victims of mass rape and torture in the two villages of Kunan and Poshpora in Indian Administered Kashmir, that took place on 23rd February 1991. The poster was published on the Kashmir Lit website together with some excerpts from the book *Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora* by E. Batool et al. (ed.).

Kashmir Lit is also a platform through which Kashmiris, both male and female, may become a piece of resistance literature, associated more with the akin Israeli-Palestine conflict. Moreover, such an initiative allows people's memories to be preserved and constitute a part of the general narrative on conflicted Kashmir as from the point of view of its common citizens, inscribing into the trend of perceiving history as a people's history, no longer a set of facts and figures. Thus, from texts published on the Kashmir Lit website an image of cultural identity – *kashmiriyat*, emerges, as manifested in people's personal accounts of history. This 'Kashmiriness' determines some particular way of perceiving the world, interpreting and understanding the facts and directing individual actions.

Conclusions

The above analyzed examples both though differently illustrate how Kashmiris demonstrate their historic consciousness. The Lost Kashmiri History website proves that a need to preserve own historic and cultural heritage is strong. It is a manifestation of cultural resistance movement, which gains power among young Kashmiris. The necessity to commemorate the traumatic past expresses itself on various fields, be it literary, academic, or popular discourse, as proved by Kashmir Lit portal. The virtual form of the Kashmir Lit journal is not as encouraging to contemplate the works of literature it provides. Nevertheless, it makes it more available, adds to the readership and legitimizes its authenticity as non-fiction.

As Anthony Smith notices, the key element of a cultural identity is a subjective perception and understanding of common history (Smith, 1991). The establishment and development of websites such as Kashmir Lit or Lost Kashmiri History proves its existence pretty much. The grassroots initiatives

of the Kashmiri Muslims' community attempt to present it as a self-conscious entity with history as a chief point of reference. This common past unites the people, centering them around traumatic experiences of the conflicted reality. Thus, it may not be perceived as purely instrumental, motivated only by politics.

A brief look at the source content proves that the Kashmiri identity is mainly linked to the experience of militarization. Simultaneously, the Internet as a virtual space situates the community in a new dimension, softening the division between the identities in Kashmir and in diaspora. Therefore, it seems that Kashmiris may be referred to as an imagined society with own cultural identity, for whom Kashmir bears a symbolic meaning. The Internet functions for this community as a medium to document the past events as seen by their witnesses, but also as a creative, emotionally laden space, which strengthens its nation-building potential. It seems also important to pinpoint that most of the content is in the English language which leads to a conclusion that language as such is in this case not an identity-building factor. On the other hand, using a universal tool such as English, may add to enhancing the readership and globalize the issue. Thanks to that all, an alternative narration may be brought on a conflicted region of Kashmir, coming directly from the people, which, regardless of historical appropriateness of the data, can be seen as a valuable source of knowledge about people's cultural consciousness and identity.

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