

# **Epistemic Violence in The Case of Kashmir: A Thematic Analysis**



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# **Epistemic Violence in The Case of Kashmir: A Thematic Analysis**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of MS Peace and Conflict Studies

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Islamabad**

**2021**



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST BENEFICIENT,  
THE MOST MERCIFUL

*'By the morning light, and the night when it is still. Your Allah Has not Forsaken Thee, nor is He Displeased. And verily what is to come will be better than what has gone by.'*

(Surah Al-Duha: 93)

Al Quran

## **THESIS ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE**

It is certified that the contents and form of the MS thesis titled “**Epistemic Violence in The Case of Kashmir: A Thematic Analysis**” written by Ms. Mahnoor Alvi (Registration No. 00000319893) of Centre for International Peace and Stability has been vetted by the undersigned, found complete in all respects as per NUST status/regulations, is free of plagiarism, errors and mistakes and is accepted as partial fulfillment for the award of MS/MPhil Degree. It is further certified that the necessary amendments as pointed out by the GEC members of the scholars have also been incorporated in the said thesis and have been found satisfactory for the requirement of the degree.

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## **Author's Declaration**

I, Mahnoor Alvi, hereby state that my master's thesis titled, "Epistemic Violence in The Case of Kashmir: A Thematic Analysis" is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time, if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation, the university has the right to withdraw my master's degree.



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## **Dedication**

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to my parents, friends, and family for their unwavering support. Their love, kindness, and prayers are the reason I have been able to come this far. Finally, I would like to take this moment to specially thank my husband for being patient with me, for helping me at every step of the way, and for being an anchor during the process of this research.

## Abstract

This thesis aims to problematize the concept of epistemic violence (E.V) and to explore how it unfolds in the case of Kashmir. A generic understanding of epistemic violence is the cornerstone for navigating the study. The focus of the study is to explore the ‘existence’ of epistemic violence or injustice and to find out ‘how’ it manifests in the context of Kashmir. The overarching theoretical framework that has been utilized in this research is that of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The noteworthy point is that Spivak defines epistemic violence as the imposition of non-local discourse, primarily settler-colonial, westernized terms that are frequently deployed in the literature, usually with no intention of causing direct harm in general. But the repetitive nature of these practices causes harmful repercussions for the indigenous communities. General indicators of epistemic injustice were distinguished and clustered through a comprehensive literature review. Qualitative exploratory research is deployed to analyze the epistemological motives behind the usage of common themes in the mainstream academic discourse. This will enable us to understand *how* these themes can rightfully be characterized as players of epistemic violence. For this purpose, the data was collected by utilizing Google Scholar and Web of Science databases and selecting well-cited and relevant articles (spanning from the year 2003-2020). Specific common themes repeatedly deployed to contextualize the reality of Kashmir were singled out to perform the research methodology of thematic analysis. The recurrent themes in the mainstream discourse were found to be nationalism, nuclear, terrorism, security, territorial, reality, bilateral, perception, agenda, and resistance. The epistemological implications due to the repetition of these themes in the mainstream academic discourse have been exhaustively analyzed in the backdrop of general indicators of E.V identified initially in the literature review. These indicators are power-knowledge nexus, absence of dialectal conversation, conditions of subalternity, vulnerability to legitimized violent tactics, construction of epistemes informing practices of domination, epistemic gap vis a vis subaltern’s articulation of truth, and naming & framing. The findings of this study establish that these themes can rightfully be characterized as players of epistemic violence. Therefore, it is safe to say that the mainstream discourse around Kashmir is a breeding ground for the leading indicators of epistemic violence.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Conceptual Background

Epistemic violence occurs through discursive practices that inflict harm against certain subjects. This overarching framework operationalized by Spivak postulates that alienation of specific voices within the Western scholarly discourse instigates the cycle of epistemic violence or injustice (Foucault, 1972). This injustice transpires when the accepted manner of being human is restrained by the knowledge-generating structures, leading to an absolute negation of praxis of being human other than those that align with the pre-established norms (Chakravorty, 1999). Under this framework, these silenced voices are of the ‘subaltern.’ Since Spivak’s comprehension of discourse is rooted in Michel Foucault’s, it is prudent to view the problem of epistemic violence in the backdrop of power-knowledge nexus, underscored by Edward Said based on the ideas of Foucault. The notion of ‘otherness’ is embedded in this particular framework as well. Gramscian influence also holds importance in Edward Said’s conceptualization of ‘otherness.’ This is rooted in Gramsci’s articulation of ‘hegemony’ while comprehending the dominance of Orientalist imageries and fabrications about the ‘Orient’ by the ‘Occident’ to exert power and influence over the former<sup>1</sup> (Foucault, 1972). Spivak’s work defines epistemic violence as an imposition of non-local discourse-predominantly western and colonial terminology in the mainstream literature, which may or may not intentionally cause harm. Still, it creates an undesirable locale of abstraction due to such a practice's repetitive nature (Henderson-Merrygold, 2018).

## 1.2 Research Questions

Borrowing from this overarching framework and specifically building on Spivak’s work, this research project aims to contextualize ‘*how*’ epistemic violence unfolds in the case of Kashmir. The **niche** of this research centers upon finding the ‘existence’ of epistemic violence in the context of Kashmir. The study explores whether the prevailing themes repeatedly used to explain the

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<sup>1</sup> Said postulated that Occident and Orient work in binarily oppositional terms, so that the Orient was manufactured as a negatively dichotomous entity from the focal point of the Occident (i.e., the West) (Foucault, 1972).

Kashmiri realities be established as enablers of E.V. Do the Kashmiris fulfil the conditions of subalternity conceptualized in the literature? And does the mainstream narrative build around Kashmir sharing specific themes serve as an establishing and reinforcing ground for generic indicators of epistemic injustice?

The indicators for identifying the *existence* of epistemic violence that will be dwelled into are as follows:

1. Alignment of widely accepted meaningful utterance in the discourse with the overarching power dynamics at play. Knowledge domain aiding the geopolitical objectives of certain factions (Ayyash, 2021).
2. Failure to mechanize a dialectal conversation (Dotson, 2011).
3. The conditions of subalternity spearheaded by ahistoricism and binary oppositions (Pandit, 2020) in a dichotomous frame of reference (Ayotte & Husain, 2005).
4. Vulnerability of subaltern entity to be subjected to violence (Henderson-Merrygold, 2018).
5. Role of perceptions in aiding epistemic injustice and construction of epistemes that inform exercise of domination in academia (Norman, 1999).
6. An epistemic gap grounded in the unavailability of a contextual framework results in an entity's inability to articulate its truth (M. A. Lone & Islam, 2020).
  - 6.1 Rejection or marginalization of the subaltern's elucidation of their own reality & concealment of the subaltern's capacity as a 'knower' (Wikipedia, 2020)
7. The naming and framing mechanism (censorship and control of terminology) to modify the narrative (M. A. Lone & Islam, 2020).

The **objective** of this study is to explore the existence of the indicators mentioned above in the context of Kashmir. For this purpose, articles holding relevance and a considerable number of citations were selected from a pool of literature. From these articles, specific common themes (having meaningful utterances) that are predominantly deployed to contextualize the reality of Kashmir were identified and clustered. The context was given utmost importance during the coding of themes. Eventually, the methodological tool of thematic analysis was utilized to analyze these themes. In the discussion section, the data analysis and results have been incorporated

together by cross-examining the identified and analyzed themes under the ambit of generic indicators of E.V.

### **1.3 Significance**

The research project has revealed an epistemic lacuna regarding the availability of scholarly spaces for the subaltern Kashmiri to articulate their truth freely. The maintenance of selective silences in contextualizing the Kashmiri realities has deepened an epistemic blur, translating into an ontological murkiness. Moreover, the research has ascertained that knowledge production domains continuously deploy the analytical tools of non-European-European, and North-South binaries to conceptualize colonial tactics. Even though these knowledge domains hold critical significance, such dichotomous conceptualizations translate into a literature gap regarding the modern nation state's utilization of colonial-era tools for validation of militarist, colonialist, and imperialist practices.

This thesis is divided into a total of five chapters. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive thematic literature review. Chapter 3 comprises data collection and the methodology used for data analysis. Chapter 4 integrates the discussion around themes with the data being analyzed. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the research project.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

A landmark text by Gayatri Chakravorty **Spivak** “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” is regarded as a pivotal work in **operationalizing** the discourse on epistemic violence, more narrowly in the **imperialistic** domain, which provides us with an approximate analogy of the generalized violence that can transpire from an **episteme** (Spivak, 2003a). However, this more generic form of epistemic violence stems from the work of Jacques **Derrida**, whose work has substantially guided Spivak and whose transformative work of Grammatology has been translated by her (1997). In his book, Derrida has all inclusively dealt with the notion of epistemic violence, comprising of both the general and narrow sense. Although Spivak has been meticulously interrogative about her significant predecessors, for example, **Foucault’s** patent focus on oppressed knowledge, Derrida has constantly remained a diagnostic point (Ranković, 2012). Gayatri Spivak’s work “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” altered the course of analytical tools deployed to study colonialism through a stirringly resolute vindication that proclaims the present-day significance of Marxist ideology. At the same time, Spivak uses the procedural deconstructionist framework in exploring the global distribution of resources and the “worlding” of the global scenario by capitalist entities. This unique academic expression rightfully focuses on the ground realities that thwart the prospects of being heard for those who dwell in the fringes of a temporal and spatial domain (i.e., the subaltern). It is an inquisitive questioning of the repercussion of having **inaccessibility** to the mainstream course of action, being devoid of any right to express subjectivity, and existing in the **differential domain** that is further made burdensome by the capitalist environment (Morris, 2010).

The **postcolonial** theorizations describe the **subaltern** as belonging to the lower strata of the society and the groups that are **othered** and pushed to the **peripheries** of the societal fabric. The **imperialistic** notion of subaltern symbolizes an *individual stripped off their right to human agency, owing to their social rank* (Young, 2020). However, Gayatri **Spivak** (2003), an Indian literary theorist, and scholar warily problematize the overly simplistic application of the term subaltern. She articulates that the *subaltern is more than just a complete substitute for the ‘oppressed’*. In the postcolonial literary theory, every entity that is devoid of accessibility to



imperialistic culture is subaltern, i.e., positioned in a spatial domain of predetermined difference. Such inaccessibility is not equivalent to being oppressed; for instance, the working class can be deemed oppressed but not subaltern. Numerous segments claim to be subaltern, but they can prove treacherous in the grander scheme of things because facing discrimination and wanting their piece of the pie while having access to the hegemonic discourse and not being permitted to do so is different from **systemic exclusion** from the discourse in its entirety. (De Kock, 1992).

## 2.2 Definitional underpinnings & Implications of Epistemic Violence (E.V)

Borrowing from Gayatri Spivak's framework, Heleta (2016) defines epistemic violence as the **subjugation** and repression of erstwhile colonial natives via **Eurocentrism** and dominant westernized ideological framework in the knowledge domain. Post-colonial and decolonial academics and theorists have time and again probed into the mechanisms that enable the cycle of Eurocentrism and **epistemic racism** in the academia of Western universities. The critique is substantiated to challenge the deep-rooted traditional basis of these theoretical mechanisms. The problematic **generalizations** made during this process are hailed as the *only logical explanations*. Hence the discourse is premised on these deep-seated theoretical frameworks that inform the conceptualizations of the westernized social sciences discipline. The critiques also bring up the potential occurrence of *all-inclusive knowledge in the anthropological domain*. The production of knowledge anthropologically has predominantly been mobilized by the mechanisms of drafting meaningful conclusions about the '**Other**' yet failing to entirely realize the 'Other' as a rational actor which can uniquely **aid** the knowledge production domain. (Boidin et al., 2012)

Grosfoguel (2012) postulates that the epistemological practices of the patriarchal European colonizers have effectively given them **entitlement** to the systematic process of knowledge production, which in turn made these epistemologies **standardized** in a **universal** sense (Schutte F., 2019). The violence perpetrated in the epistemic domains is *hard to measure*, but the damages that it brings about are not permissible. The resulting harmfulness is not lesser in extent than that of more tangible forms of sexual and physical violence. This happens when the knowledge-producing systems relentlessly limit the *praxis of being human*, resulting in an outright **denial** of recognition of humanity beyond the predetermined criterion (Chakravorty, 1999).

Bell Hooks, an American author and social activist, has cross-questions on how academics interact with the *non-Western Other*. To operationalize an impartial communicative apparatus, the academic or *researcher* would **detach** from their idea of having expertise and legitimate central authority in the infamous *binary dichotomy of Us vs Them*. The researcher's aim is centred on the question of *learning 'how' to learn from the subaltern*. In the **pre-existing literature**, the academic shows inclination of wanting to listen to experiences of natives but is **opposed** to downright **acceptance** of subaltern's elucidation of their **reality**, hence overshadowing the ability of the subaltern to be interpreted as a **'knower'**. The claim of the Western academic as a *sole entity possessing the tools to express 'truth'* has infiltrated deep into the academic discourse, hence normalizing the capitulation of the subaltern (Wikipedia, 2020)

Additionally, it is crucial to explore the overarching definitional underpinnings of epistemic violence in **diverse literary frameworks**. Andrew Norman subtly identifies how **perceptions** lead to mainstreaming of the phenomenon of epistemic violence. He points out that the term 'epistemic violence' would not have commonly been perceived as essential violence owing to its *academic nature rooted in respectability and decorum*. But it is violence in its entirety and demands to be visualized for what it stands for. According to Enrique Galván-Álvarez, epistemic violence, i.e., violence paving its way through or against knowledge itself, is one of the primary elements of the procedure of **domination**. Domination is not attained solely by profitable economic exploitation or entirely by subordinate politico-military structures, but arguably by thorough **structuralizing** of the epistemic frameworks that strengthen the practices of domination in the academic domains (Galván-Álvarez, 2010).

Thomas Teo exhaustively covers the unfolding of epistemic violence in the domain of **empirical social sciences**. It is postulated that the unravelling of violence is more of a **personal disposition** than a structural one because it includes action, an object, and a subject, irrespective of the nontangible and incidental aspect. The *subject* being the researcher, the *action* includes the data analysis and interpretation ultimately presented as true knowledge, and the *object* is the **Other**. A speculative example is used to address the problem of the various interpretative mechanisms in empirical research when the discussion is centred on the Other. The phenomenon of epistemic violence is observed to materialize in the way this data is *interpreted*, which provides ground for the *problematization and inferior projection of the Other*. This continues to happen even when the *information at hand permits equally workable interpretations that can fit well as a substitute*.

These interpretations become actions that harm the entity being labelled as the Other. These actions are deemed **epistemically vicious** since the data is extracted from an academic backdrop and is eventually incorporated into the literature as knowledge (Teo, 2010).

However, it is equally possible to **question** the initial theory or concept for generating data. The researcher can *test* as to what extent it is **constructed** socially, or the focus can be placed on the genuine **aspirations** of the researcher, the likelihood of *lucrative interests* attached, or the *critical* analysis of the methodologies being used. All these steps would be permissible. However, Thomas Teo's work's argument is centred on the *data analysis and interpretation and the absence of cognizance in the hermeneutical domain*. The **scientific weight** attached to these interpretations can cause negative repercussions for certain groups, even though the data allowed for alternative conclusions (Teo, 2008). The clash of narratives, comprising beliefs, rationale, and shared memory, draws out **imagery** of the other side, orchestrating an "Us vs Them" understanding, hence making a conflict *ostensibly irresolvable*. Formulating these representations can result in the normalization of **stereotypes**, strengthening a deep-seated internal negative bias amongst all individuals. **Naming practices** and labelling occurrences, places, and people constitute a fundamental practice in the narrative formulation. Naming and framing exercises become embedded in the cultural domain and **subtly** pave how we **perceive** things and understand the world we live in. The ideological factors and the moral aspect can be organized for *powerful vested interests* (Peteet, 2005).

**Implications of E.V:** The privileging of selected knowledge domains at the expense of other knowledge domains by academics harms the latter because the former is often regarded as having **universal application**. The different bodies of knowledge are consequently deemed inadequate or flawed. *Decolonization* can be conceptually and theoretically manifested in the practice of *indigenization*. The definitional scope of epistemic violence is also suggested to be a kind of **non-coercive** means that aspires to **eradicate** the knowledgeable influences of the marginalized (Dotson, 2011). In addition, the epistemically violent process entails **mainstreaming** interpretative techniques that *tacitly or outrightly* contribute to the **construction** of the 'Other' as a problematically substandard entity, *despite the availability* of practicably multiple *alternatives* (Teo, 2010). In the words of Michel Foucault: "**Discourse** transmits and produces **power**; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (Boidin et al., 2012). The definitive historiographical accounts essentially regarded as objective

truth have been *destabilized* by both Michel Foucault (1972) and Gayatri Spivak (2003), by *unveiling* the underlying **power equations** at play. This historiographical literature obstructs **diverse** ways of knowing and state of being. The one-dimensional **hegemonic** answers to how we know what we know are detrimental because false generalizations are repeatedly reinforced. The historiographic framework substantiates the European categorization as the sole analytical unit. Dangerously enough, **history** is made to appear as **nonpartisan science** while disconnecting the **White European subject** from the practice of **narrative building** (Dozono, 2020).

Similarly, another significant implication of epistemic violence is the **alienation** of specific segments of people who do not fulfill the criterion of being suitably human, hence facing a *refusal of acknowledgment that makes them worthy of human rights*. **Vulnerability to violence** increases manifold when an individual is not deemed worthy of humanity. It is systematically normalized to deploy **containment** and **policing** strategies on these people, thereupon isolating them further and increasing their vulnerability. Spivak's work is based on defining epistemic violence as *enforcement of non-native discourse, primarily colonial, western consultative terms* that have frequently been deployed in the literature with no *intention* of causing direct harm. Still, the **recurrent nature** of these practices tends to result in undesirable consequences (Henderson-Merrygold, 2018).

### **2.3 Variables of Epistemic Violence**

Exploring the associated variables is crucial in understanding how epistemic violence unfolds in literature. One of the main indicative variables is **pernicious ignorance**, which results in an *outright testimonial refusal*-deliberate or otherwise-on part of an audience to ensure reciprocity in a communicative exchange. This ignorance can transform into **reliable ignorance** if harm is caused to another entity contextually. Once initiated, reliable ignorance tends to follow a *foreseeable pattern* informed by an epistemic breach in cognition. This implicitly refers to the probable harmlessness of reliable ignorance. Due to the epistemic lacuna, the perpetrator is unaware of their action and is caught up in the ordained pattern. Hence, identification of different forms of indicative ignorance becomes contextually limited. The degree of harm caused by epistemic violence because of pernicious ignorance demands a *case study approach*. This implies that ignorance that may be ostensibly innocuous in one social setting may reach perniciousness in

another epistemic domain. Nonetheless, the enactment of epistemic violence is visible in the *failure to mechanize a dialectal conversation* (Dotson, 2011).

Moreover, the thematic notion of positionality holds primacy while utilizing the exploratory tools delineating the intricacies of epistemic violence. The insinuated conceptual bearing is that one cannot outrightly profess a *locale of abstraction*. Nonetheless, the researcher must divulge their positionality. Epistemic violence can be regarded as a systemic issue and should not be reduced to singularities. There is a colossal uncharted territory within scholarly discourse to conceptualize the multiple processes through which dissemination and subsequent epistemic violence occur (Brunner, 2016). Someone's capacity as a knower being irreversibly damaged is specifically a theorization of epistemic injustice. The first indicator of injustice, *testimonial ignorance*, is caused by *biasedness in the capacity of the knower to be credible in their account*. While the second indicator, i.e., *hermeneutical injustice*, transpires when this prejudice gets *structuralized* in the economy of hermeneutical resources in totality (Fricker, 2007).

Likewise, the notion of **positionality** also constitutes as a variable of E.V. To carry out an earnest examination of the field of knowledge production and how one's positionality is intrinsically linked with it, followed by how it can be subjected to manipulation, Miranda Fricker imparts two essential analytical tools: 'hermeneutical injustice' and 'testimonial injustice.' One of the tools deals with the labelling of marginalized as insufficiently knowledgeable and maneuverings that **reduce their credibility as knowers** because of their identity. The other one accentuates the *epistemic lacunae*-an entity confronted with seemingly insurmountable challenges when attempting to articulate their **truths**, owing to the *absence of conceptual apparatus*. This impediment is rooted in popularizing *linguistic practices* by powerful entities that are not reconciling and substantial to their core. This is also indicative of the grave reality that these tools are not permissible to be utilized by the marginalized despite their availability. The Kashmiris are subjected to the tactics above (M. A. Lone & Islam, 2020). Hence, The literature needs to incorporate the tools that recognize the scale of damage caused by this *noncoercive methodization of violence resulting in the recurrence of individualistic neoliberal ideologies* (Colombo, 2020).

### 2.3.1 Examples of Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic violence can transpire in the process of production of knowledge when the academic arenas aid the **geopolitical aims** of entities. This process has become an integral part of the modern system. To cite an example of an inherent **orientalist text**, one can take the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA). There is a failure to formulate a concrete opposing ground to the core issue with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The core issue that needed to be tackled was the cancellation and silencing of Palestinians and Palestine. The conservative colonial arrangement is simply repackaged in the JDA. *Any Palestinian who dares cross-question the rationality of the Jewish majority or a Jewish state (at the cost of Palestinians) is disobliging and antisemitic.* Identical to Israel's unilateral seizure of Jerusalem, the JDA **unilaterally** decides the question of **accepted action and speech** in the political domain, completely erasing the minute possibility of considering the Palestinian experience of Zionism, discarding this experience as necessary in formulating a decisive course of action. This is how epistemic violence unfolds in an orientalist text (Ayyash, 2021).

Palestinian example also shows how the **systematic modification of history** to control narratives has been institutionalized. The maps that have been an indispensable part of the Palestinian struggle have been *removed from all official records* or online sources, for instance, google maps. The maps have been deployed as mechanisms of 'epistemic violence'. The technologies for **mapping** have translated into legislation. The regional committees have ignored the areas that do not find their place in official records (Sadiyasa, 2020).

#### **Context of Kashmir:**

An operative example of epistemic violence in the context of Kashmir can be found in the travelogues of Victor Jacquemont. These accounts are prime examples of fiercely asserting the superiority of the West while supplementing the literature with the desirable **imaginings** of the East. The writer's **eurocentrism** could not be remotely minimized while articulating his direct encounters with the residents of India by and large and of Kashmir specifically (Parray & Rehman, 2020). Moreover, the Kashmiri diaspora is rich in multivariant interlinkages on socio-political, cultural, and economic domains, but these dynamic networks are **concealed** by nationalistic rhetoric from all sides. In a strictly critical epistemic domain, the manifestation of Kashmir needs to adopt a focal point that is not rigidly ordained. There can be *no decisive culmination of the*

*situation without mechanizing a consultative domain that ensures direct involvement of the subaltern Kashmiri* (Zia, 2019a). Hence, the violence being perpetrated in Kashmir is operationalized as epistemologically as it is physically, with an underpinning relationship between the two. The frequent *citing of the nature of the conflict as extremely ‘‘complex’’* reeks of complicity, mainly on the part of **mainstream** academics. There is a *reluctance towards engagement in the Kashmiri question while working in postcolonial studies, subaltern studies, feminist studies, and partition studies* (Kanjwal, 2019).

Moreover, the **historical underpinnings** of the discourse on Kashmir painstakingly *sideline the native struggles for self-determination against the monarchs dating back to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and materializing again in the 1930s*. Therefore, it is imprudent to **mark the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 as a starting point of the present-day political conflict**. In this conceptual framework, the *political and historical underpinnings of the Kashmiri conflict remain subaltern to the epistemological and historical accounts of the Indian side*, which predominately operates in **binarily oppositional terms** (Pandit, 2020).

In the same context, **naming and framing practices** to modify the narrative can be observed in the Kashmiri cause. Hermeneutical injustice is carried out when people are left with *little or no alternatives that they can use to describe their experiences aptly*. In the Kashmiri case, it happens due to the **ensorship** around the term ‘‘occupation’’. There are diverse ways in which this injustice materializes, and one of the most dominant ways is *via impairing or changing the epistemic domain of specific terms*. For instance, *the word ‘peace’ only means suppressed agitation, and the term ‘violence’ refers to nothing but a longing for peace*. When terms with opposing means are played in the media, they infuriate people for legitimate reasons. In the words of Agha Shahid Ali, ‘‘*they make a desolation and call it peace*’’. Creating **illusions** of peace and stability after destroying people's ordinary lives would inevitably be condemned by the people. This translates into not only epistemic injustice but also epistemic violence. This not only institutionalizes violent tactics but also rips off the **true meaning** and essence of the *words being used* (M. A. Lone & Islam, 2020)

In any situation plagued by protracted conflict (e.g., Kashmir and Palestine), the younger strata of society unveil a *dimension* that demands acknowledgment from all sides. According to research, it has been affirmed that the *younger generation of both Kashmir and Palestine can be deemed as*

*subaltern actors* (Chakravorty, 1999). Owing to their mental resilience and ideological inclinations rooted in resistance, children act as a symbolic functional entity via active and passive means of deciding the course of the conflict. Notwithstanding this unquestionable relevance, the mainstream literature *falls short of incorporating tools* for generating an impartial consideration of these actors. A collective consciousness of a whole entity is represented and unified behind these children. Research has shown that children hold a significant position in shaping the responsive apparatus in a perpetual conflict (Schumacher, 2020). The *representational significance of the resistance* on the part of the children holds pre-eminence over the actual resistance. Ironically enough, the academic discourses working on the subaltern further contain the subaltern entity's voice (Chakravorty, 1999). This does not stop at the stripping away of the individual agency but silences *the subaltern sub-society* in a coordinated manner (Chakravorty, 1999).

In addition, widespread **perceptions** surrounding the Kashmiri struggle are framed to depict India and Pakistan as the most dominant actors. Kashmir dispute is ostensibly reasoned to be creating a deadlock between two **nuclear-armed nations**. A paradigm shift is needed to unveil a genuinely Kashmiri perspective (Spencer, 2013a). The *role of perceptions and interplay of binaries* can be discerned in the epistemic tradition of the *neocolonial notion of Islam as an inferior entity to the West*, e.g., ‘women of Islam’ are all depicted as belonging to the Middle East or Asia, outrightly ignoring the mammoth growth in the Muslim populace in Europe and the Americas. Hence, the *formulation of ‘Islam’ is subjected to an Orientalist subjectivity to an opposite pole in contrast to a dichotomous frame of reference, i.e. the ‘non-Western* (Ayotte & Husain, 2005).<sup>[10]</sup> The harm caused by this phenomenon can be seen to surface in the Kashmiri cause. A significant chunk of leftist anxiety about Kashmir is associated with the mainstream projection of Islam. The Kashmiri struggle has been labelled as violent and non-secular before the war on terror. *With the war on terror further shifting the narrative*, there is little to no room for an in-depth discussion in academic forums. The Kashmiri self-determination movement has been gravely harmed by the *logic hegemonized* in the wake of the global war on terror. The anti-colonial movements with Muslim majorities have been strategically collapsed under the weight of binaries by the beneficiaries of such representations of Islam (Kanjwal, 2019).



### **3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

The collection of data for this research has been done through the analysis of highly cited and relevant articles. Two different databases have been utilized for this purpose, namely Google Scholar and Web of Science. A limited number of articles have been selected to strictly adhere to the principle of relevance and specificity of research. The selection of these articles is based on the presumption that the works that have been further cited within the chosen articles have deployed the same framework to explain the reality of Kashmir. A comprehensive model of analysis has been selected throughout to stay true to the niche of the research. This process is characterized by the identification of the recurrent themes that have enabled a mainstreaming of the specific carefully cultivated phenomenon in academia, which resulted in the normalization of widespread acceptance around the dehumanization, silencing and alienation of indigenous Kashmiris who do not conform to the superior ‘national identity’ of the nation-state.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

#### **3.2 Data Extraction and Analysis**

In order to perform the thematic analysis, the steps discussed by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) and Castleberry and Nolen (2018) have been used to identify the most relevant and highly cited articles ranging from 2003-2020. This process was used to synthesize the results based on the research objectives of the study, and by using two databases, Web of Science and Google Scholar, ten themes were selected for analysis. Furthermore, the statements that were used by the author in the search engines of Google Scholar and Web of Science are as follows:

- The issue of Kashmir
- The reality of the Kashmir problem
- Kashmir in the mainstream academia

**Figure 1: Articles Screening Process**

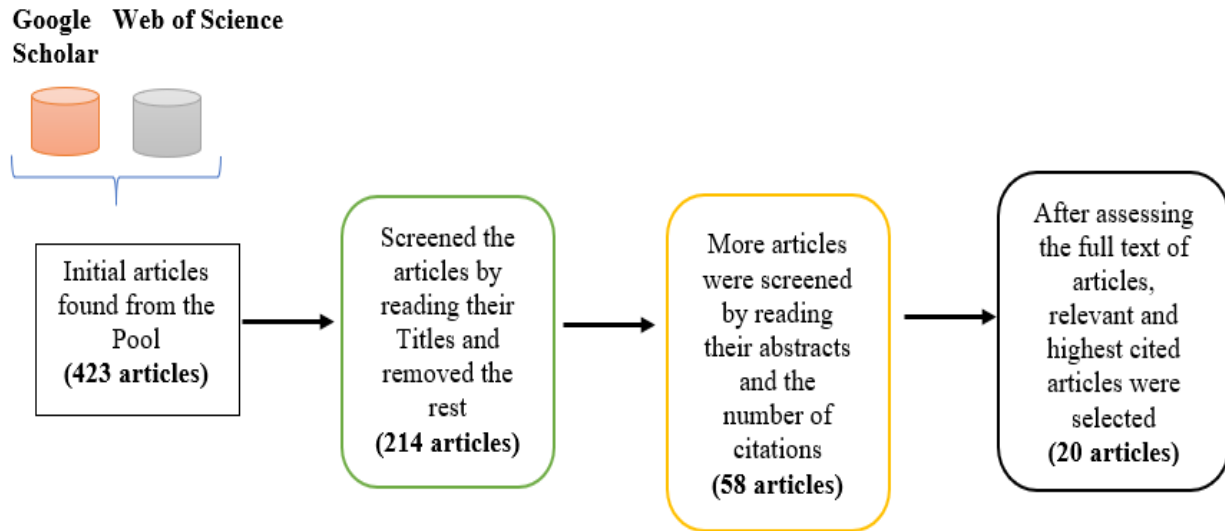


Figure 1 shows the selection process of the articles based on the search results. The most relevant and highly cited articles were singled out from a literature pool after analyzing their titles and introductions. Moreover, the basic information regarding the chosen articles has been portrayed in table 1.

**Table 1: List of Thematically Analyzed Articles**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Publication Year</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Symbol: P</b>	<b>Journal</b>
Sumit Ganguly & Michal Smetana & Sannia Abdullah & Ales Karmazin	2018	India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir dispute: unpacking the dynamics of a South Asian frozen conflict	P1	Asia Europe Journal
Ahmad Ejaz	2016	U.S policy on Kashmir dispute In the Post-cold war period	P2	Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society Lahore

Friya minhas	2015	Use of Print Media for Conflict Resolution and Peace Building: a case study of Kashmir dispute	P3	NDU Journal
Seema Kazi	2008	Between Democracy and Nation: Gender and Militarization in Kashmir	P4	London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom)
Nitasha Kaul	2018	India's obsession with Kashmir: democracy, gender, (anti-)nationalism	P5	Feminist Review
Sumit Ganguly	2004	The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect	P6	Book: Frank Cass and Company Limited
Mahapatra, Debidatta Aurobinda	2017	Conflict Management in Kashmir: State-people Relations and Peace.	P7	Cambridge University Press
Dalbir Ahlawat Satish Malik	2019	Kashmir Imbroglio: Geostrategic and Religious Imperatives	P8	Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs
Nyla Ali Khan	2007	The Land of Lalla-Ded: Politicization of Kashmir	P9	Journal of International

		and Construction of the Kashmiri Woman		Women's Studies
Haley Duschinski	2010	Reproducing Regimes of Impunity	P10	Cultural Studies
Abdul Rashid Moten	2019	Kashmir between India Pakistan: The Unfinished Agenda	P11	Intellectual Discourse
Manisha Gangahar	2013	Decoding Violence in Kashmir	P12	Economic and Political Weekly
Stephen Philip Cohen	2002	India, Pakistan, and Kashmir	P13	Journal of Strategic Studies
Stuti Bhatnagar and Priya Chacko	2019	Peacebuilding think-tanks, Indian foreign policy and the Kashmir conflict	P14	Third World Quarterly
Rajat Ganguly	2007	India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir insurgency: causes, dynamics and prospects for resolution	P15	Asian Studies Review
Muhammad Haris bilal Malik and Muhammad Abbas Hassan	2020	The Evolved Security Dynamics of South Asia: Challenges to Pakistan's Nuclear Threshold	P16	Insight Turkey

Ather Zia	2019	Blinding Kashmiris: The Right to Maim and the Indian Military Occupation in Kashmir	P17	International Journal of Postcolonial Studies
Abdul Majid & Mahboob Hussain	2016	KASHMIR: a Conflict between India and Pakistan	P18	South Asian Studies
Navnita Chadha Behera	2010	Re-framing the Conflict	P19	India International Centre Quarterly
Chitralkha Zutshi	2015	An ongoing partition: histories, borders, and the politics of vivisection in Jammu and Kashmir.	P20	Contemporary South Asia

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

The second-rater was provided with the listed themes along with definitions and examples and 20% of the data to perform the reliability analysis. The second-rater created a coded file, which was utilized to conduct the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) in SPSS and validate the consensus on the listed themes. The interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) had a value of .60, i.e.,  $ICC > 0.60$  for all the themes (see appendices). After this confirmation ( $ICC > 0.60$  on 20%), the researcher coded the remaining text.

**Table 2: Themes of Subjugation with Definitions and Examples from the Selected Articles**

Themes	Context	Examples (quotes)
Nuclear	The predominance of this theme in discourse has built a narrative that has proven to set strongholds of suffocation in academia, resulting in an epistemically violent space that does not cater to the nuanced reality of Kashmiris. The state-making enterprise characterized by Indo-Pak rivalry has indulged in competitive power accumulation in the nuclear domain, hence defining the reality of Kashmir hegemonically as a ‘nuclear flashpoint’.	<p>‘‘The discourse of <i>nuclear war</i> is constructed and legitimized <i>through</i> meanings of gender in ways that pre-empt democratic debate and, as the examples of India and Pakistan indicate, in ways that uphold social hierarchy.’’ (P4, p. 80)</p> <p>‘‘Essentially, <i>nuclear nationalism</i> sought to unify ‘Hindus’ by casting Muslims as the other/enemy and by extension, beyond the pale of ‘the nation.’ By ‘unifying] the Indian masses against the apparition of the evil Islamic Pakistan’’ (Mathur 2001, 4) (P4, p.132)</p>

		<p>“...dominant understandings of militarization in Kashmir are monopolized by...Indo-Pakistan <i>nuclear</i> impasse over Kashmir, relatively little attention is paid to the profound and lasting damage inflicted by the just mentioned intersecting streams of violence on Kashmir’s citizens.” <b>(P4, p. 162)</b></p>
Nationalism	<p>The ambit of democracy conceals an active process of state metamorphosis in majoritarian terms deeply embedded in the nationalist imaginations, which pave the way for possession of Kashmir even if it translates into destruction of Kashmiris themselves.</p>	<p>“The region is often stereotyped as ...wallowing between competing <i>nationalisms</i>. Thus, it is one of the longest, most underreported, and misunderstood conflicts in South Asia.” <b>(P17, p. 776)</b></p> <p>“Ideological underpinnings of the crisis of militarization in Kashmir...legitimized by an across-the-board political consensus that <i>represents Kashmir in ‘national’ terms</i> - a representation that successfully deflects the issue of state accountability even as it legitimizes militarization in Kashmir.”</p> <p><b>(P4, p. 32)</b></p>
Terrorism	<p>All forms of dissent, indigenous resistance efforts or secessionist attempts are academically vilified and severely punished under the rhetoric of terrorism, specifically after 9/11.</p>	<p>“Indian discourse that subsumes Kashmir’s historical demand for a democratic sovereignty and challenges the reductive and ahistorical portrayal of the Kashmiri Tehreek as Pakistan’s proxy war or reducing it to the erroneous stereotype of “<i>Islamic terrorism</i>” or relegating it to a domestic law and order</p>

		situation (Duschinski et al. 2018).’’ (P17, p. 778)
Security	The language around Kashmir has been repeatedly circulated with reference to the ‘security’ of the nation-state. Widespread, systemic criminalization and rising insecurity of Kashmiris go sufficiently unquestioned in the discourse as the supreme purpose of ‘state security’ takes a significant chunk of the literature. Legitimization of occupation is grounded in a securitized understanding of the region.	<p>‘‘Puar describes the right to maim as a key element in the racializing biopolitical logic of <i>security</i>.’’ (P17, p 776)</p> <p>‘‘State violence thus becomes legitimized through a dominant ideology of <i>nationalism</i> and patriotism, and through a prevailing narrative that frames the killings as necessary for ensuring the <i>security of the state</i>.’’ (P10, p. 112)</p> <p>‘‘...processes through which violence and terror become fictionalized and fantastic, with Kashmiri bodies gaining a heightened visibility in a falsified form within a national cultural <i>imaginary of national security</i> interests...’’ (P10, p. 112)</p>
Territorial	The oft-repeated element of territoriality reasserts that the reality of Kashmir is more about either of the two rival states more than it is about the self-determination and indigenous identity of Kashmiris. Terms such as state-building, state-making, and statehood are taken	<p>‘‘Kashmir is projected as a mere <i>territorial</i> issue while ignoring the Kashmiri people and criminalizing their demand for self-determination and independence.’’ (P17, p. 783)</p> <p>‘‘By casting Kashmir’s political struggle in exclusively <i>territorial terms</i>, the Indian state ‘‘wills away the local politics of discord...to</p>

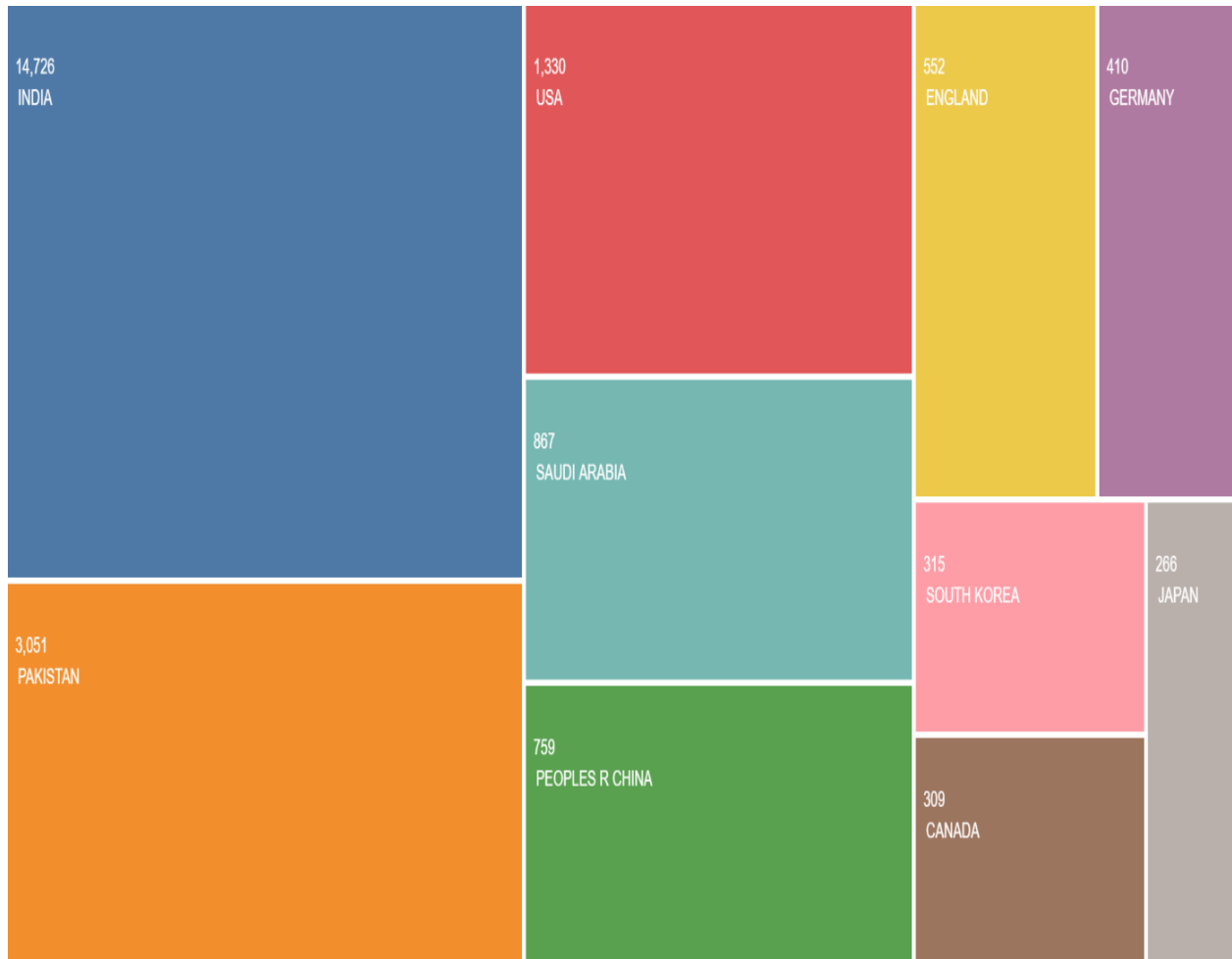


	<p>in a similar context in this research.</p>	<p>obscure the grievances of ...the Kashmiris behind the rhetoric of <i>terrorism</i>.” (Prashad 2003, 7). <b>(P4, p.164)</b></p> <p>“Hindu <i>nationalism</i> legitimized <i>territorial</i> ‘defence’ of Kashmir (against ‘Islamic’ Pakistan) by <i>nuclear</i> means even as it consolidated state power in Kashmir by waging war against a people it characterized as a ‘threat’ to ‘the nation.’” <b>(P4. p. 165)</b></p>
Perception	<p>A significant portion of the literature focuses on state perceptions. The popular imaginations being fostered because of these perceptions have been exhaustively covered, hence overshadowing the needs and perceptions of Kashmiris to the point of erasure. Imagination and perception have been taken in the same connotation during this research.</p>	<p>“...feminized understanding of Kashmir... makes the possession and control of Kashmir an integral part of the Indian nationalist <i>imagination</i> of itself.” <b>(P5, p. 131)</b></p> <p>“The conflict in this Kashmir is as much a clash between identities, <i>imagination</i>, and history, as it is a conflict over territory, resources, and peoples. Competing histories, strategies, and policies spring from these different <i>images</i> of self and other.” <b>(P13, p. 45)</b></p>
Reality	<p>The mainstream discourse has constructed the reality of Kashmir. The terms ‘construction’ and ‘reality’ have been searched to analyze this</p>	<p>“...privileged centers of power have always constrained <i>reality</i> by imposing their ideological schema on it, which underpinned their powerful positionality.” <b>(P9, p. 22)</b></p>

	<p>theme where they appear in the same context.</p>	<p>“...Kashmir lent tremendous strength to the construction of India as a vibrant, secular, and pluralistic state.” (P6, p. 14)</p> <p>“ Kashmir lives in the unpleasant <i>reality</i> of Indian and Pakistani dominance...” (P9, p. 27)</p>
Agenda	<p>Discourse talks about the agenda of different stakeholders in an extensive manner. Kashmiris are not amongst the central actors in verbosity surrounding Kashmir-related agendas. This implies that the language of influential stakeholders holds much more relevance in the epistemically violent domains than that of the natives within the Valley.</p>	<p>“In line with its state project which combines the <i>agendas</i> of economic growth with Hindu <i>nationalism</i>...government has prioritized engagement with corporate-funded think tanks...” (P14, p. 1510)</p> <p>“...foreign jihadis are more interested in a communal agenda than in fighting a political war for Kashmir.” (P15, p. 324)</p>
Bilateral	<p>Greater emphasis on bilateralism in the discourse halts a potential pathway for amplifying a tripartite perspective building around Kashmir, silencing the subaltern Kashmiri's voice in the decision-making mechanism regarding its fate.</p>	<p>“The Kashmir dispute has been permanently in the forefront of bilateral relations and has remained highly salient in the domestic politics of both countries.” (P1, p. 132)</p> <p>“ Viewing Kashmir as a bilateral issue, the Indians do not accept any outside interference.” (P2, p.31)</p>

Resistance	<p>The details and intricacies of an inherently Kashmiri resistance are barely focused. A large portion of the literature shows how all voices of dissent, peaceful or armed resistance, or calls of self-determination are labelled as anti-national or more so as ‘religious fanatics’ backed by Islamist terrorist Pakistan. The theme of resistance was chosen in the context of innately Kashmiri resistance, and a deafening silence has been discerned in the mainstream domain regarding the contextualization of purely indigenous resistance.</p>	<p>“...popular resistance against militarily backed centralized hegemony began to be cast in ‘national’ terms. “ <b>(P4, p. 141)</b></p> <p>“ The <i>resistance</i> in Kashmir stimulates further violence, which negatively impacts the general prospect of success fully transforming the frozen conflict through peaceful thawing.” <b>(P1, p. 135)</b></p>
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**Figure 2: Web of Science Regional Published Articles Data Set**



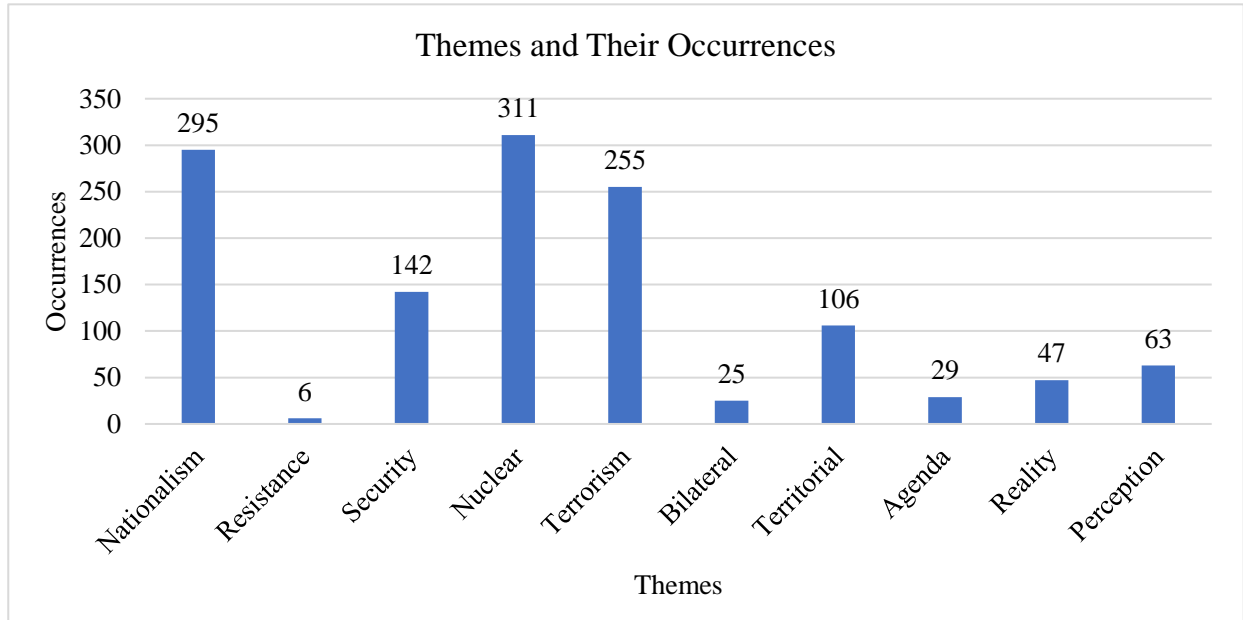
*(Source: By using the tools available on the Web of Science, 22,585 articles from the last two decades (collected from Web of Science) were analyzed)*

Figure 2 shows that the research around Kashmir is far from considered a ‘bottom-up’ analytical domain. As depicted, India is the largest source of a knowledge-production entity with regards to Kashmir. The state narrative, hence, becomes a center stage for constructing the reality of Kashmir. This practice is replete with a plethora of terminology designed to serve vested interests and reinforce ahistoricism. The hegemonic narrative has normalized the subjugation and colonization of the ‘othered’ entity, i.e., Kashmir, under the misrepresentation of development, democracy, and nation-building projects.

## 4.2 Discussion

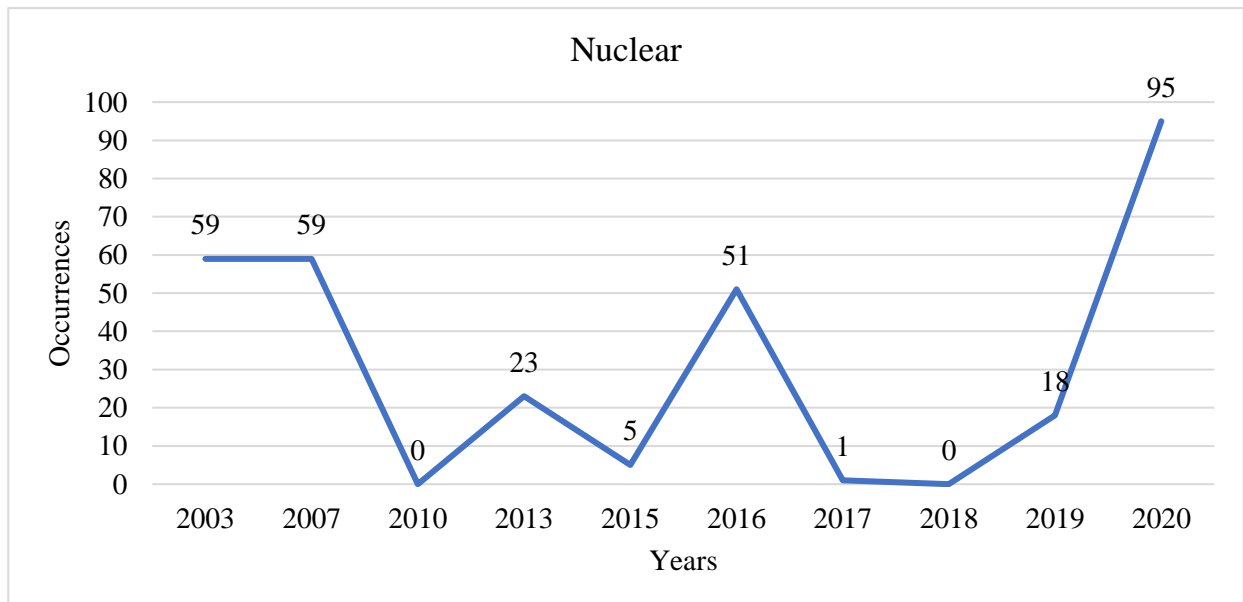
The common themes shared across mainstream narratives, and their respective occurrences have been illustrated in figure 3.

**Figure 3: Themes and Their Occurrences**

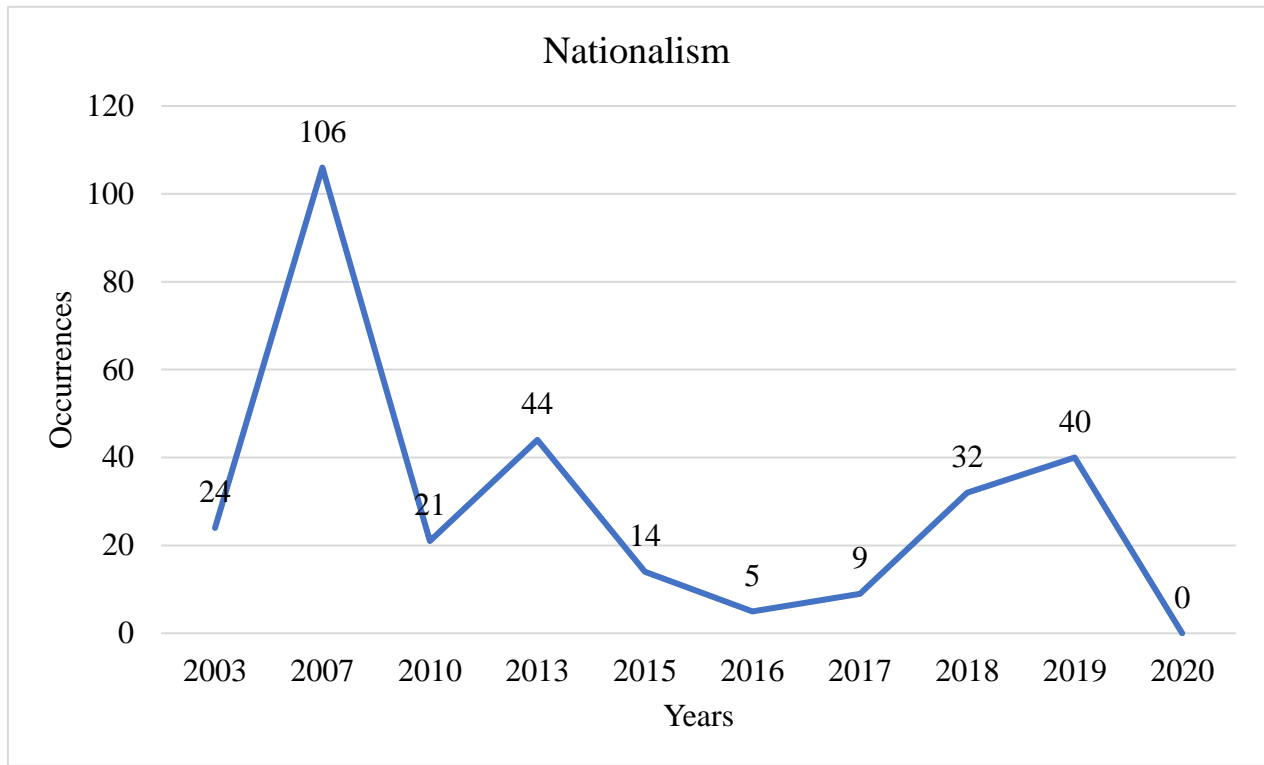


The following graphs show the pattern of occurrence of each theme separately from the year 2003 till 2020.

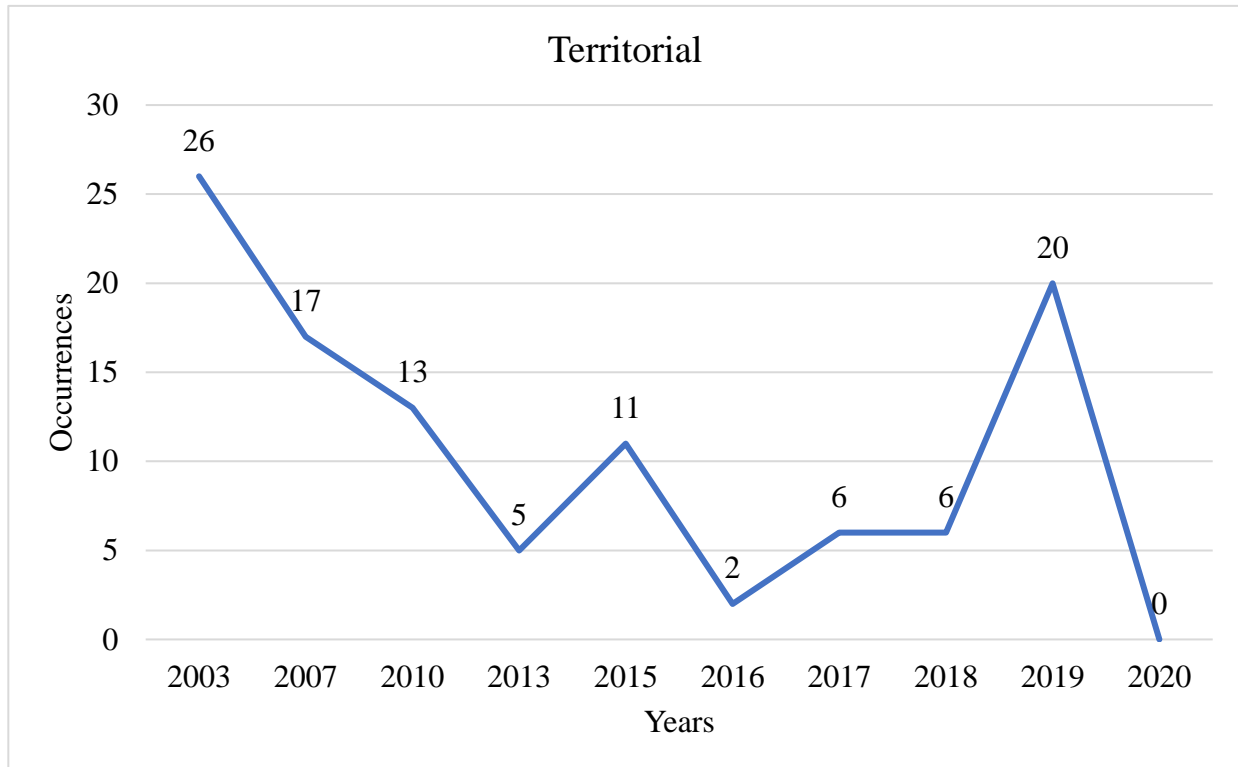
**Figure 4: Occurrences of Theme 'Nuclear' From the Year 2003-2020**



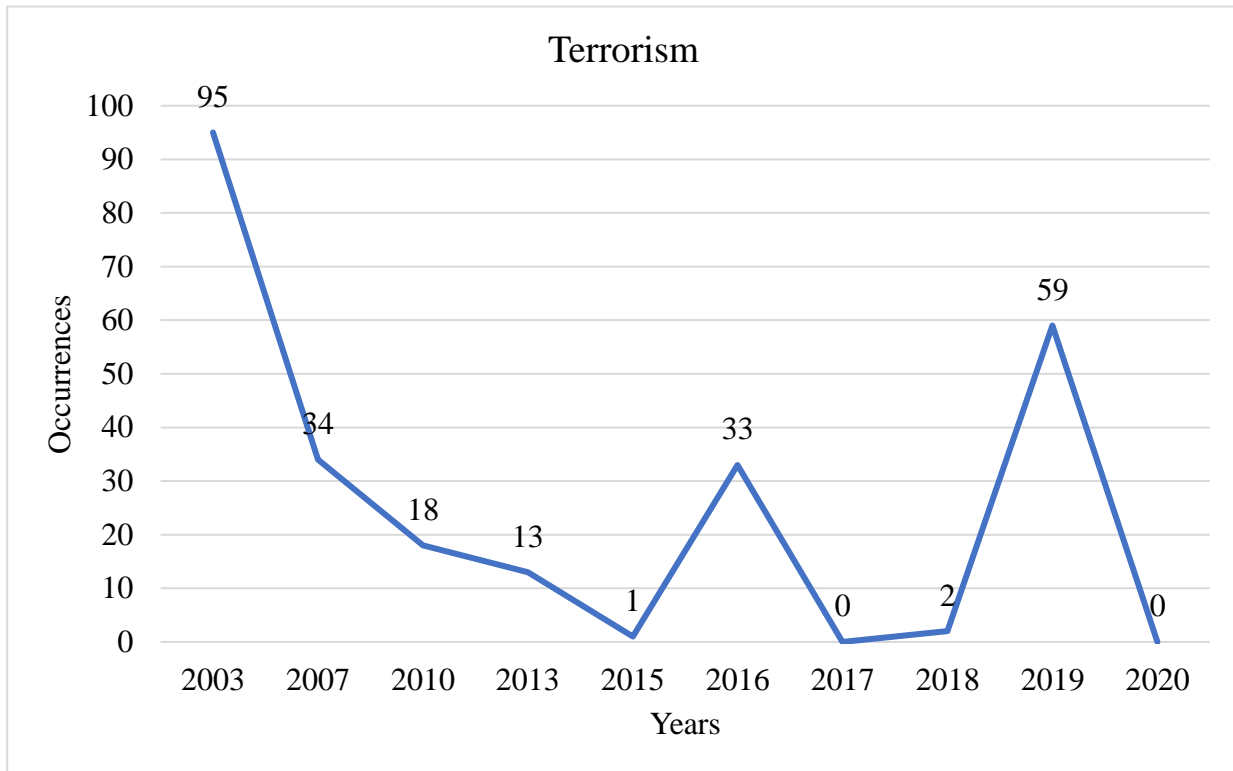
**Figure 5: Occurrences of Theme 'Nationalism' From the Year 2003-2020**



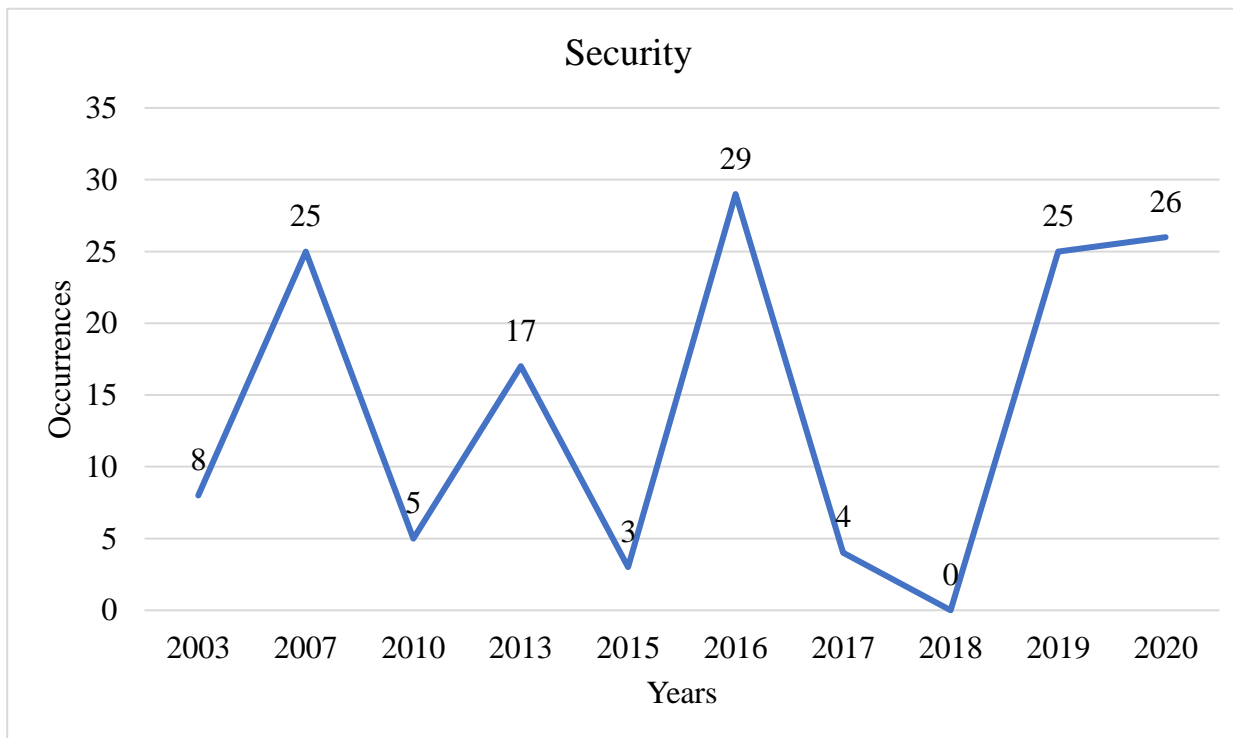
**Figure 6: Occurrences of Theme 'Territorial' From the Year 2003-2020**



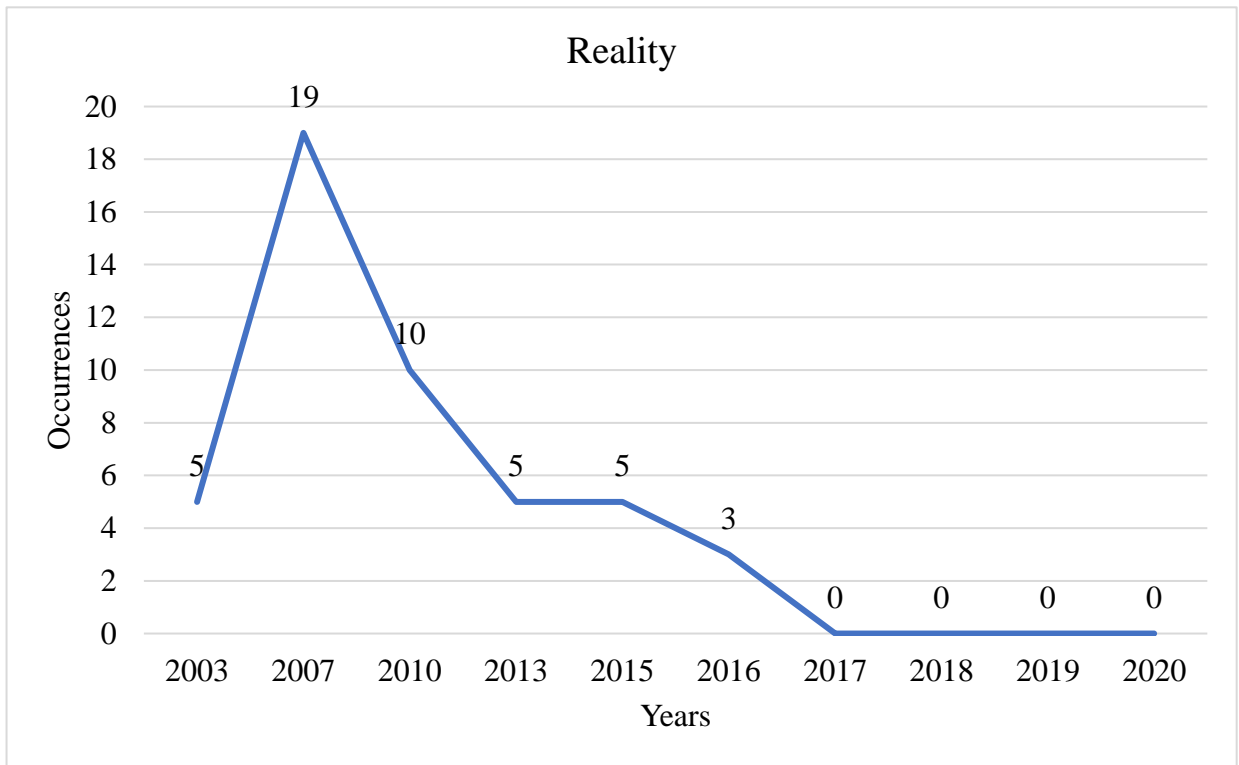
**Figure 7: Occurrences of Theme 'Terrorism' From the Year 2003-2020**



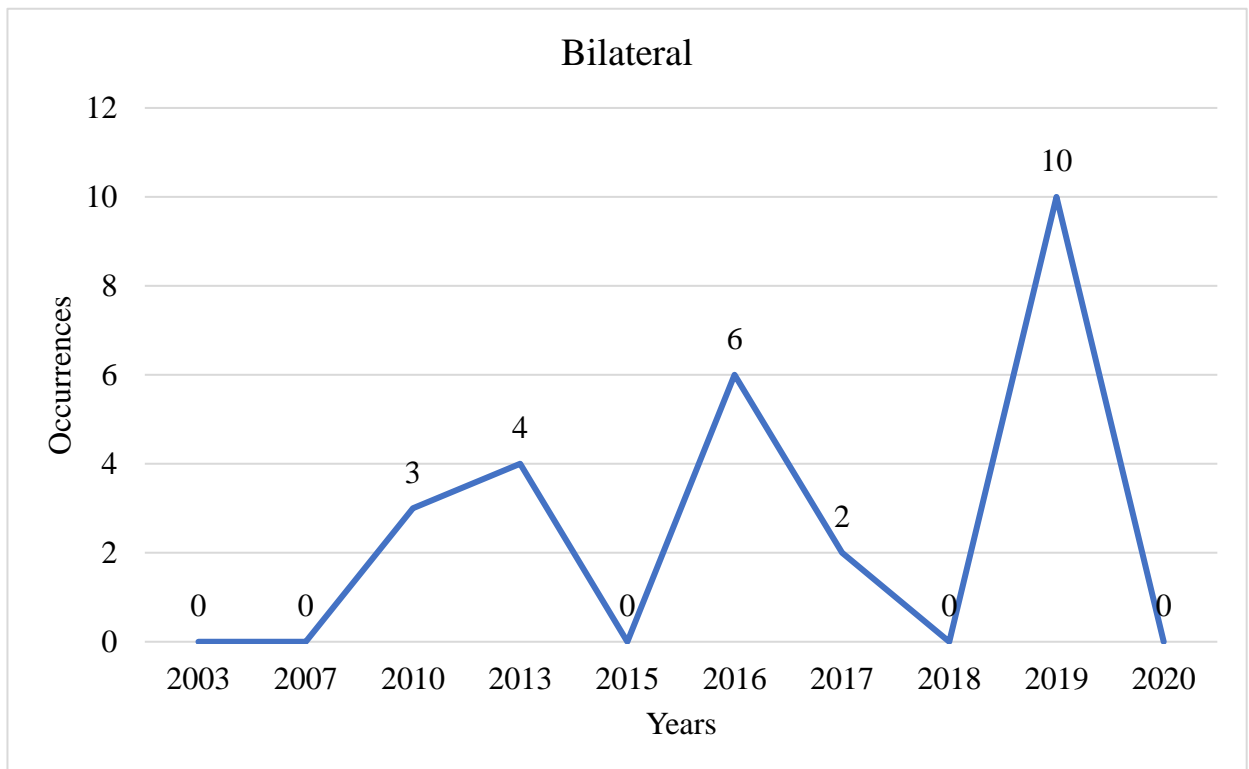
**Figure 8: Occurrences of Theme 'Security' From the Year 2003-2020**



**Figure 9: Occurrences of Theme 'Reality' From the Year 2003-2020**

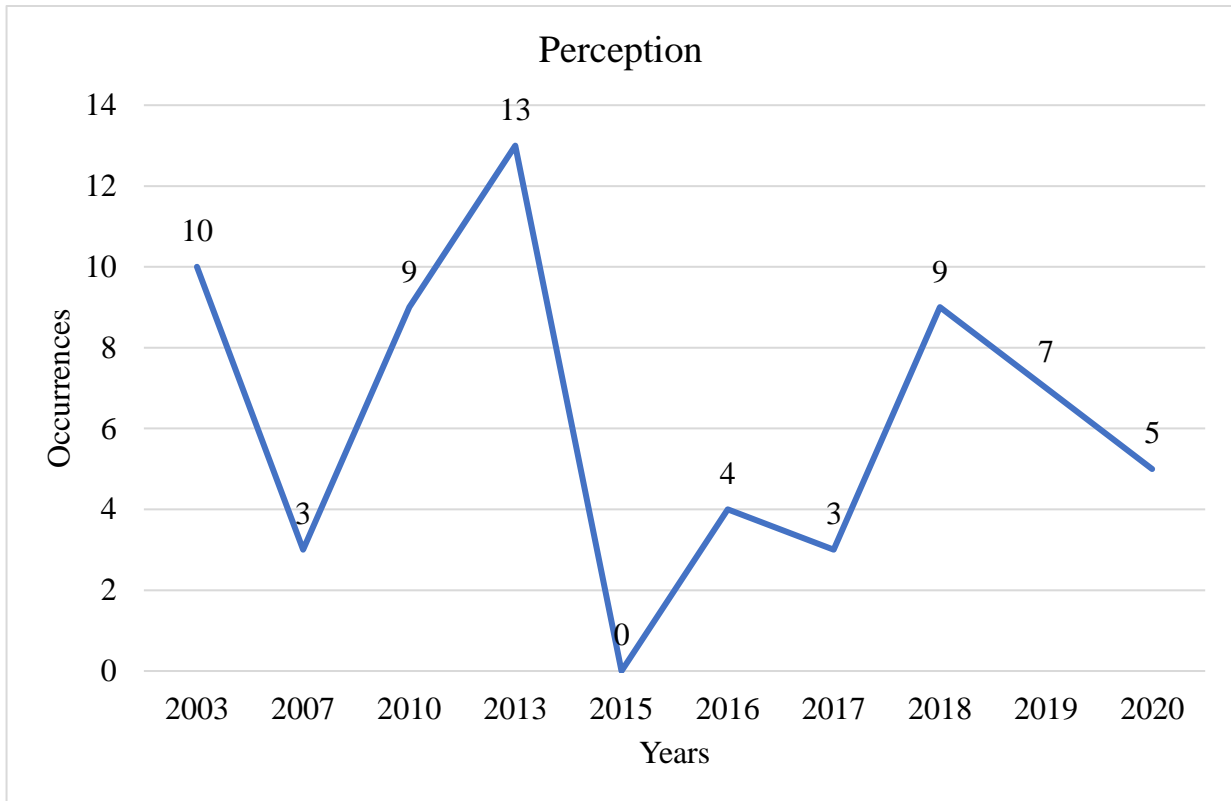


**Figure 10: Occurrences of Theme 'Bilateral' From the Year 2003-2020**

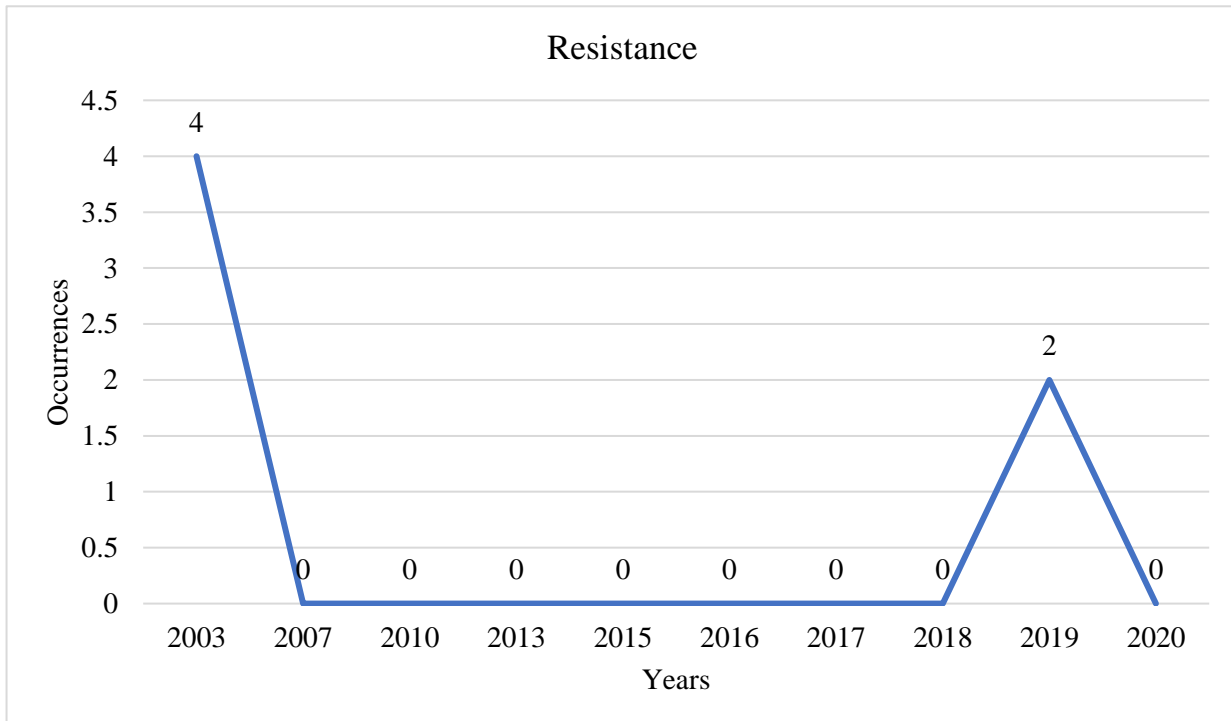




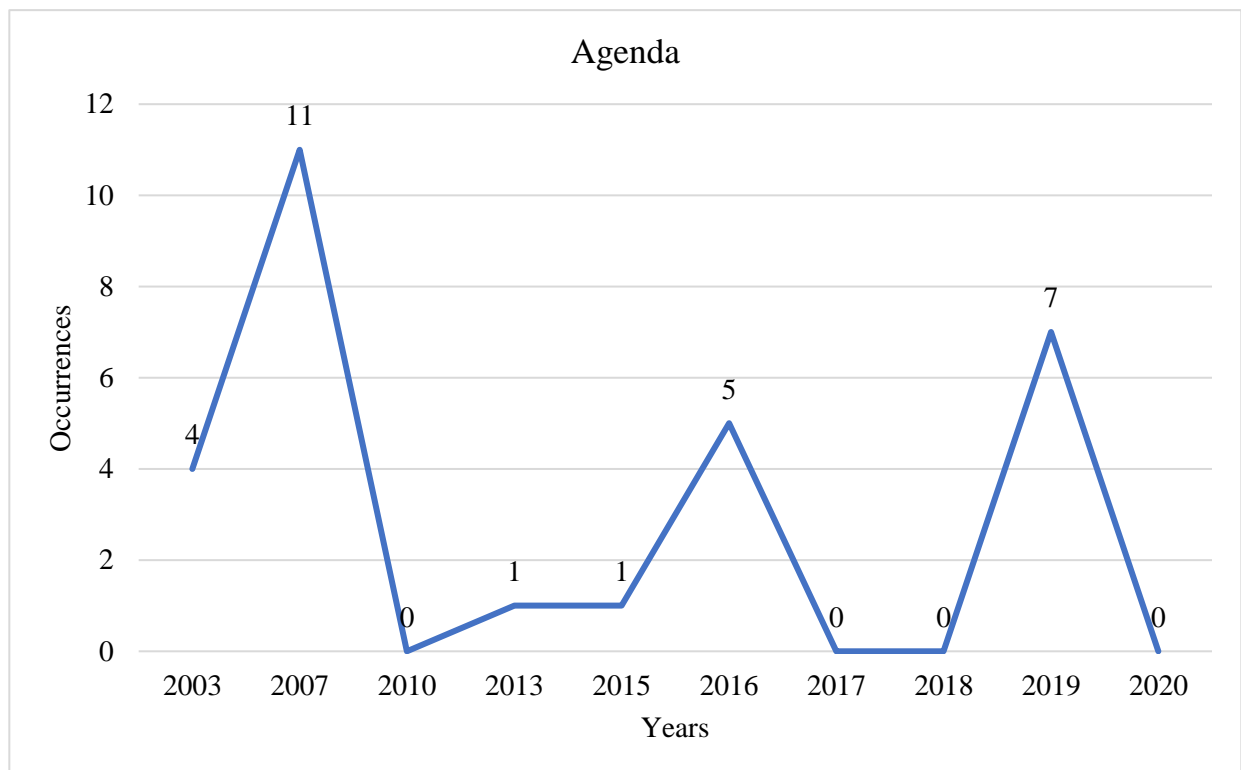
**Figure 11: Occurrences of Theme 'Perception' From the Year 2003-2020**



**Figure 12: Occurrences of Theme 'Resistance' From the Year 2003-2020**



**Figure 13: Occurrences of Theme 'Agenda' From the Year 2003-2020**



The discussion is built around cross-examining the **indicators for the ‘existence’ of epistemic violence vis a vis the mainstream themes being analyzed.** These seven **indicators** of the concept of epistemic violence, in general, have already been delineated in the introductory chapter of this research project. The question of **‘how’** epistemic violence unfolds in the scenario of Kashmir has been answered by *exploring how these themes provide a breeding ground for the indicators of epistemic violence.* The following discussion shows that the themes are embedded in the backdrop of the seven leading indicators of epistemic violence, hence *establishing their existence as **themes of subjugation** or **players of epistemic injustice.*** In other words, the relationship of the ten identified themes (repeatedly been used to contextualize the situation in Kashmir) with the indicators of E.V have been explored to find the ‘existence’ of epistemic violence.

Further into the discussion, this research project deciphers how each theme holds relevance under the ambit of each indicator of epistemic violence. *The themes tend to reoccur and overlap in the discussion part of this study due to their repetition in mainstream literature. Their relationship with each indicator remains distinct and crucial to establishing the existence of epistemic injustice.* Therefore, the indicators have been clustered for the sake of clarity and comprehension.

#### 4.2.1 Indicator 1: Power-Knowledge Nexus

The analyzed themes have a direct resonance with the maintenance of the power-knowledge nexus.

**Explanation:** The backing of the state ensures the *sustainability of the mainstream narrative* around Kashmir. Attempts that take exception to this narrative are met with retribution from the state (Bajoria, 2018). According to a Haitian historian, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, such narratives are centralized and rationalized by ‘**silences**’ (Trouillot, 1995). In the case of Kashmir, these silences can be discerned by thoroughly reviewing both the scholastic **historiography** and the **widely accepted imaginations** of Kashmir as an entity (Bajoria, 2018). Assimilation of Kashmir within India by vigorously and systematically linking its image to the ‘**national integrity**’ is the focal point of the state-conformist narrative building exercise

The examples of both Pakistan and India depict that genuinely representative and egalitarian forums for disseminating information get limited because of how the mainstream ‘**nuclear**’ **discourse** has **been constructed** and rationalized (Kazi, 2008). Hence the *hierarchical social constructs* remain entrenched in their places without much challenge. This means that the formal declarations of competitive ‘power’ in their external exchanges and a seemingly revered process of **state-making** and nation-building through military modes share a common origin rooted in *political reasons*. The region of Kashmir proves to be a *converging point* concerning the phenomenon at play (Kazi, 2008).

Moreover, the transformation of the nuclear capability from being a hallmark of secular novelty and national accomplishment to an emblem of national Hindu strength and individuality means that the ‘**threat**’ perception of Hindu nationalist order was on both domestic and foreign fronts (Kazi, 2008). The BJP undertook painting social resistance movements as internalized ‘**threats**’ to the nation-state. In the case of Kashmir, however, this project for ‘*threat*’ *construction* took a sinister and treacherous external turn (Kashani et al., 2003; Kazi, 2008). The reduction of the ground roots of Kashmir resistance to merely a **territorial dispute** with Pakistan enabled the state to pursue a heavily militarized mobilization project to ‘**protect**’ **the territory** of Kashmir. The particular theme of ‘*ethnicity as danger*’ inform the state induced mobilization, which runs parallel to the portrayal of Kashmir in ‘**national**’ terms and the perceived ‘threat’ caused by Kashmir to the uncompromisable integrity of the state, both of which *equip India’s nation-building enterprise* in Kashmir with greater magnitude (Krishna, 1999, p. 34).

In the same manner, the preconceived notions of **security** in post-colonial states of India and Pakistan are extracted more from an ideology of *securing 'national identity'* and pursuing '*secular modernism*' than from European IR principles of 'security' in a profoundly anarchic international order (Cooke, 1996). Even though the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan ostensibly draws from an IR discourse on realism but it has been observed that this *fixation on nuclearization* has been driven more by *ambitions for accumulation of 'power'*, than by recognizable **security threat** posed to the nation-state from outside (Perkovich, 2001, p. 14 & 448).

The above discussion substantiates that the nucleus of the *modern state-building project* is based on conditions of favouritism and exceptions, existing in parallel to the conditions within the same system that *authorizes state violence and state terror against Kashmiris under the ambit of legitimized efforts of the state to protect and sustain the nation's law and order* (Duschinski, 2010). The question of how the state creates an air of legitimization around such barbarity in a casual manner can be analyzed through the way Philip Abrams (1988) has approached the notion of state. He has conceptualized the state as an all-powerful system and as a physical representation of an abstract idea. Aretxaga (2003, pp. 400-401) considers it a 'fabricated truth,' which wields power through doctrinal force by *disguising or novelizing state-sponsored violence* and then *justifying* it as necessary for the greater public good. For instance, this terrorized environment is manifested when an extrajudicial killing of a Kashmiri civilian is carried out and effectively *concealed* and subsequently *re-orchestrated and sketched* in a whole new version that frames it as a killing of a Pakistani infiltrator. This killing is thus hyped up in the public domain, which includes *academic representations* and media outlets, that intensify the focus on the difference between the sheltered and ordered realm of the state and the chaotic and vicious domain of the non-state (Duschinski, 2010).

Spike Peterson draws on the confluence between the eternal power of the state and ideological and philosophical groundings by stating that the processes of legitimization translate into the *reproduction of state authority*, hence serving a determining role in the accurate understanding of that power (Peterson, 1992). The understandings of current colonial designs in the contextual framework of Kashmir can be enhanced under the backdrop of **geopolitical alliances** that *strengthen the powers* of the colonizers and sustain the occupation (Osuri & Zia, 2020).

#### 4.2.2 Indicator 2: Absence of Dialectal Conversation

Recurrence of identified themes results in eliminating the potential for dialectal conversation.

**Explanation:** Representation of the oppression and subsequent resistance in Kashmir as a **bilateral** matter unilaterally *eliminates a 'tripartite' vantage point* and primarily build on an abundance of unbiased standpoints and authoritative narratives that verbalize in place of the controlled population, *turning the subaltern into arbitrated subaltern* (Mandokheil, 2019). The Kashmiris have a rich history of always resiliently standing up against injustice and putting up a relentless fight for their well-deserved freedom from their oppressors. Still, *their reality continues to be cloaked beneath the false colours of disinformation*. The discourses play a crucial role in cultivating a **decisive domain** that eventually formulates the common understandings regarding the dominant and authoritative identities. The occupier's strategies to consolidate control, coupled with the power structures of knowledge production, foster such *polarization between the center and the subaltern* to the extent that the gap eventually becomes unbridgeable (Mandokheil, 2019).

Consequently, the innocent civilians (subaltern Kashmiris) are made to bear the brunt of militarization rather than any segment that poses the exaggerated threats. The added **Islamic** element in the post 9/11 representations of Kashmir ends up entitling the involved states to fixate on the *essentialist 'territorial'* factor in a primarily India-Pakistan rivalry, where one state is defending its boundaries against **pan-Islamic Pakistan-sponsored** terrorism (Kazi, 2008). The increasing Hindu nationalism sentiment used the attached Islamic element of militancy to construct an unparalleled weapon for disinformation (Kazi, 2008). The perfect narrativized confirmation of a wicked plan of the arch-rival Pakistan to use the Indian Muslims in dismantling the Indian unity had been curated. The staunch standard of Hindu **nationalist** presupposition had been met in the form of a disloyal Indian Muslim siding with Pakistan conspiring against Mother India (Bose, 1998, p. 144). This gap translates into a warzone of conflicting truths that thwart the prospects of dialectal conversations.

#### 4.2.3 Indicator 3: Conditions of Subalternity

The themes have been scrutinized to explore a probable link with the conditions of subalternity (i.e., **ahistoricism**, and dichotomous frame of reference, which entail '**Othering**' and **binary oppositions**). The fulfillment of these conditions confirms the 'existence' of epistemic violence.

**Explanation:** Firstly, silences in the academic domain are maintained by **specific common themes shared across the majority of the historical accounts** (Louis, 1999). The year of **partition 1947** is taken as a **point of departure** in the majority of the literature (Zutshi, 2012). This departure point, like many others, is not impartial and goes on to assist an **epistemological motive** (Clifford, 1980). Choosing this *departure point* time and again allow historians to contextualize the **reality** of Kashmir as being *predominantly about a tussle for a disputed territory* between two nuclear-armed rivals (Ganguly, 2004). The epistemological motives can be explored further.

Firstly, the legitimization of the *initial accession of Kashmir to India* is **framed** entirely as the redemption of Kashmiris from the shackles of Pakistan-backed ‘savages’ hailing from the tribes of NWFP (Hyman, 1994). Henceforth Kashmir remains fully integrated into India (F. N. Lone, 2009). It became far easier to **frame** the insurgency in the Valley entirely as **Islamic Terrorism** sponsored by Pakistan rather than an armed resistance by indigenous people against the Indian occupation, specifically in the wake of events following 9/11 (Swami, 2003).

Likewise, **ahistoricism** also unfolds when the mainstream narrative *disregards* the *formative pre-historic events*, specifically between 1846 and 1947 of Kashmir and builds on the limited approach that **objectifies** Kashmir as a subject of confrontation between Islamic Pakistan and Secular India (Zutshi, 2012). There are scholars like Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, Sucheta Mahajan, and K.N. Panikkar (2012), Prakash Chandra (1985), and Sumit Sarkar (1989) who do apply a wider historical context. Still, *they gravitate towards overlap* the Kashmiri struggle against Dogras spearheaded by late Abdullah and the ‘nationalist’ strife of Indians in the face of British colonial rule (Mridu, 2004). This overlap is secured by assumption rooted in *ahistoricism*, which considers princely rulers as instruments of the British colonial project (Kumar & Dar, 2015). The depth of these **silences** is intensified by *unattainability and erasure of crucial archival records*, specifically of the post-1924 era in Kashmir, both in the National Indian Archives and that of the state (Trouillot, 1995).

The **ahistorical** accounts present an ambiguous version of the Kashmiri identity by defining it in dominant frameworks that conceal an unprejudiced representation of Kashmiri-ness (N. Ali, 2002; Tilly, 1989). It is crucial to recognize that one of the attributes of **nationalism** is to benefit from **essentialist** accounts for representing a nation (N. Ali, 2002). As defined by Diana Fuss,

essentialism is characterized by a uniform, quintessential interior that forms an unchangeable course of action rooted in its nature irrespective of the conditions. In other words, essentialist accounts are inherently ahistorical (Fuss, 1990). Essentialist narratives around nationhood overpower the meaning of being a Kashmiri to the point that a genuine embodiment of being a Kashmiri has been pushed to the shadows to the end of invisibility (N. Ali, 2002).

Secondly, the dichotomous frame of reference entrenched in ‘othering’ and **binary oppositions** confirms subalternity. The Hindutva ideology through militarization and **nuclearization** did not limit itself to the international domain for exhibiting the strength of militarized **Hindu nationalism** in the face of real or imagined threat, but it turned out to be exceedingly menacing in the *domestic domain* (Kazi, 2008; Praful & Achin, 2002). The **othering** of Muslims to consolidate the narrative of **nuclear nationalism** is time and again used by unified Hindutva ideology. The most effective instrument for creating an undying spirit of unity amongst the masses is to unite them against the threat of wicked Islamist Pakistan (Mathur, 2001, p. 4). **Nuclear nationalism** amplified the hostility between the two neighbours, defining the identity of the *Indian state in binarily opposite terms* concerning Pakistan, and *by expansion, the Indian Muslims altogether* (Kazi, 2008). Prakash Karat has articulated the nuclear aspect as part of the political plan built on the **intellectual mobilization** of people revolving around hostile anti-Muslim rhetoric to solidify an *enduring divide* between Muslims and Hindus to legitimize an oppressive state (Karat, 1998). The addition of **nuclear** dimension to this definition is a significant point to note.

Similarly, Puar (2017) has contextualized the right of a state to ‘*maim*’ as a pivotal component in categorically incorporating *bio-political reasoning of ‘security,’* which she has studied in the international political domain. In the context of Kashmir, this racial profiling is grounded in the cultural and religious identity of Kashmiris, which is constructed as the Muslim ‘**other**’ in the Indian mainstream narrative (Rai, 2018; Robinson, 2013). It has been unearthed that the categorization of Muslim ‘other’ is carried out by the **construction** of a Kashmiri body as a *rogue traitor* bringing harm to the sovereignty of the Indian nation and labelled as deserving of being killed in the *nationalist imagery*. This right to kill is flaunted and exercised by the government without consequences and contrition (Whitehead, 2007; Zia, 2019b). Runa Das accurately points out that the undertones in the nuclearization discourse premise on a Hindu nationalist ideology, which manufactures an internal consensus by ‘othering’ Islam and Pakistan to rationalize an *uncontested* nuclearization agenda (Das, 2003).

Henceforth, the presentation of a *killable entity* serves a vital role in solidifying the mission of Indian **statecraft** and eventually concretizes national consensus on its proclamation of unquestionable ‘sovereignty’ over the Valley (Kling, 1966). The emphasis, however, is not on the state’s right to kill, but its unquestioned right to *incapacitate the civilians*-amidst the killings-and the importance of understanding the link of this *nuance to the pretense of democracy* in Kashmir, with intensified militarization and projection of all kinds of **resistance** as anything other than a political right (Junaid, 2013). For this purpose, a *well-established concord* in the public domain is sustained through a violent **construct** directed at selective portions of the citizenry which have been systemically deemed as ‘**others**’ through keeping them at the *margins* or on the *outer side of the socio-political contract*. Lissa Malkki (1995, p. 88) has termed these frameworks of **othering** as contextualizing the attribution tactics of identities that aid in *imagination and construction of divisions* in the socioeconomic domain.

These circumstances entail the state’s necessary and absolute control over these **othered** sections of humans via lethal means of **subjugation**, imprisonment, deprivation, and institutionalization of paralyzing actions (Nagengast, 2002). This process eventually ensures the *public’s agreement explicitly or implicitly* over the **unworthiness of these othered individuals** concerning fundamental rights and the **legitimacy** of their shared space of dehumanization. Their *deaths are not tragic or non-legitimate* because concerns of national integrity or sovereignty have necessitated them. These criteria of legitimacy are *socially manufactured* and regulated, and are conducted on the marginalized, economically impoverished, **subaltern**, and generally all those who are rendered defenceless in the face of ‘**othering.**’ Kashmiris in India fall into the category of those segments who pose a **threat** to the state’s vision; hence the role of security forces is necessitated for defence (Scheper-Hughes, 2002, p. 373) The utmost protection of the state from the enemies within, calls for oppression of these *othered* actors. The spectrum of *ethnic cleansing and genocidal violence* offer apt understandings of *how modern states work around exerting their absolute authority* by eliminating certain people under the **perception** of serving a greater purpose for the betterment of the citizenry. Still, these frameworks do not find adequate space in the hegemonic discourse (Duschinski, 2010).

Therefore, the people of Kashmir have been subalternized by the dominant narratives build by repetitive discursive practices (Ali, 2014). Ananya Jahanara Kabir has accurately described Kashmir as being sealed in a lonesome topography yet proclaimed by all sides as the most



distinctly enchanting place, which has surfaced as a confronting ground for **competing nationalisms** (Ghosh, 2002). The relentless race towards its **territorial** occupation has converted it into a war zone. Events such as that of 1987 vote-rigging and subsequent rise in militancy aggravate the situation leaving the Kashmiris empty-handed and despondent after the never-ending theatrical promises from both rival nations. A recurring projection of Kashmir as **a nuclear flash point** became normalized in the wake of both bordering states acquiring weapons of mass destruction (A. S. Ali, 2014).

There is overall reliability on blatant exploitation, harmful *typecasting*, and alienating representations which paves the way for a normalized depiction of certain people and their land as *a justifying ground for non-discriminatory annihilation of the terrain and the natives due to an actual or perceived external threat* (Pirzadeh, 2019). The **Us vs Them** binary has secured such disputes indefinitely and resulted in socio-economic disturbance, assassinated countless precious lives, and accepted a full-time existence of heavy militarization within the Valley (Gregory, 2011; Pirzadeh, 2019; Simatei, 2005).

#### **4.2.4 Indicator 4: Vulnerability to Legitimized Violent Tactics**

It is an indication of epistemic violence when a segment of people is made vulnerable to institutionalized violence.

**Explanation:** By revolving the subject matter solely around **competing nationalisms** of India and Pakistan, the state of India systematically *legitimized a heavily militarized environment* in Kashmir (Bhan et al., 2018; Osuri, 2017). *Suspension of fundamental human rights* of the people of Kashmir and deploying technological means to clamp down on dissenting voices has thus become normalized (Hyman, 1994; Kling, 1966; Lamb, 1997; Schofield, 1996). In the same way, besides furthering the state's 'power' and interests, it also helps curate an **imaginative doctrinal nationalism** that thrived on the representation of Muslims as the 'other' entity (Ananth, 2003, p. 317). Henceforth, the dominant legitimizing themes of nationalism in the form of securing 'territorial' integrity of Kashmir in confrontation with **Islamist** forces from Pakistan through '**nuclear**' modes, while stealthily accumulating state dominance in Kashmir by *engaging in war* against the elements '**threatening**' the **national security** of the state (Kazi, 2008).

An understanding of the philosophical and ideological underpinnings of militarization as a concept is crucial to ascertain the inherent linkage between the process of *militarization* and **nationalist** mobilization (Kazi, 2008). This holds relevance in India, where **nationalism** acts as a juncture between **nuclear** and military integration at the outset while **legitimizing** internal oppression on the inside. When strengthened across all platforms, these foundational ideological dynamics reinforce the representation of Kashmir in mainly ‘national’ terms, enabling the state to operate with *complete impunity* while actively tyrannizing a segment of people in the form of *military rule* (Kazi, 2008).

For this purpose, Indian discourse around Kashmir is centred on the blame game regarding rampant violence, while the *state’s militarism is depicted as legitimate* (Lamb, 1992). However, the work of a segment of critical scholars shows that underneath the hegemonic reasoning, the state’s territorial objectives and military antagonism have been masked. This has been made possible through *indoctrination of selective silence* in certain areas and inconsistencies in others (Lamb, 1992; Osuri, 2017; Schofield, 1996; Snedden, 2013). Hence a distinctive mechanism is reinforced in the *dominant narrative* regarding the *justifiable violence authorized by the state* owing to the supreme purpose of safeguarding the ‘**national security**’ and the intolerable brutality carried out by enemies of the state for vested interests. The law legitimizes the former while regards the latter as a horrendous crime under the legal structures. Maintaining these hegemonic legalistic and political structures demands a large segment of onlookers amongst the general populace who lack political determination to discern the acts of state persecution, disappearances, and extra-judicial killings as utterly obnoxious and violent (Duschinski, 2010).

The materialization of language that centers on etching the ‘national’ purpose through military means in Kashmir happens in the form of declarations about *going at any length for securing the ‘territory’* even if it means nullifying the original claims of **nuclear** arsenal being only an instrument of deterrence and foreign policy and threatening to deploy them for actual use (Cohen, 2004, p. 60). Hierarchical strongholds in the ideological and political domain mobilized based on safeguarding ‘**national integrity**’ are the same hierarchal pillars that implicitly control the people against showing resistance in the face of concentrated authority (Kazi, 2008). Unity on **national** fronts and reinforcing the sacredness of the **nation** serve as the *most protective shield for military advances* (Kazi, 2008).

The theme of ‘territoriality’ also aligns with the same stream of thought. The cruciality of the **territorial** element concerning Pakistan and its assistance towards specific secessionist movements underpin a scenario through which the Indian endeavour of securing the Kashmiri ‘nation’ from outside combined to bring about a nationalist sentiment from within Kashmir. **The militarization inside Kashmir gradually became inseparable from militarization over Kashmir** (Kazi, 2008). Besides symbolizing the state's uncontested ‘power, ’ added nuclear dimension to the situation,’ also actively reinforces the powerful status quo inside Kashmir (Kazi, 2008). Paul Bracken has aptly stated that the venture into weapons of mass destruction and intensification of the war-centric narrative in Kashmir are *disastrous dimensions* of the BJP’s policies to entice the *darker and violent forms of Indian nationalism* to widen the support network (Bracken, 1999).

#### **4.2.5 Indicator 5: Construction of Epistemes That Inform Practice of Domination**

The themes being analyzed aid the construction of epistemes that dominate the discourse around Kashmir:

**Explanation:** When it comes to the **construction** of popular **imaginings**, Kashmir has been moulded in the literature as ‘**integral**’ to the state of India utilizing a *powerful combination of religious ‘nationalism.’* Representations like ‘*heaven on Earth*’ (Hashim, 2011) and ‘*crown of India*’ strengthen the narrative that Kashmir has no ‘right’ whatsoever to leave the Indian state because ‘*a crown cannot be removed*’ at any cost (Bajoria, 2018). Such **imageries** are representative of an unabated, powerful narrative that stands unchallenged. Likewise, historian Ronald Inden has elucidated how the Valley has been typified as a ‘*privileged locale*’ by drawing on early writings and contemporary films and literature (Kabir, 2009).

The broad spectrum of violence, ranging from a vicious cycle of brutality to the toned-down version of customed impoverishment, does not operate in isolation from each other (Lutz, 2002). The *non-visibility of violence*, silencing tactics and **hiding certain aspects of reality does not negate** violence as a complicated fact. This fact is one of the key constituents of modern **statehood** revolving around multi-dimensional frameworks that are institutionally ingrained with multifaceted connotations (Pandey, 2006, p. 8). These institutionalized tactics are rationalized

through narrative formulations that build on **themes** of order and disruption, deemed imperative for the absolute collective betterment of the citizens of the Indian state (Duschinski, 2010).

In this manner, an unquestioned patriotic faithfulness to the nation is strengthened by **visualizations** of the nation-state as a feminized *epitome of a 'Mother'* in the colonial and post-colonial spaces (Kabir, 2009; N. Kaul, 2018). The recent past is characterized by a loud and powerful cheering of the Hindutva ideology, hence crafting out *binary signifiers* for those deemed loyal possessing an unequivocal 'nationalist' devotion and those who are deserving of vilification' for being '**anti-national**' (N. Kaul, 2018). There exists an underlying motive underneath the *essentialist, singular and all-pervasive description* of **Kashmir as the 'head' of Mother India** and projection of the matter as holding **existential importance** for the state of India. The mobilization of the conformists and devotees of the Bharat Mata towards their spiritual purpose of *defending the sanctity of Mother India* at all costs is premised by these narratives. The *objectification of Kashmir* in the popular Indian **imaginations** as a tremendous treasure aligns with the British imaginations of India as its 'jewel in the crown' (N. Kaul, 2018).

These constructions are rooted in politics of concealment. Carolyn Nordstrom has articulated the politics of concealment by pointing out how the **predominant narratives** go on to *proliferate and reinforce the hegemonic discourse* by conceptualizing violence as a tool for reasonable actors in the military, mainly prudent soldiers who keep checking on the menacing factors and eruptive chasms innately found in human society (Nordstrom, 2004). The masses are made to *perceive* these actions as driven by a purpose of gain on social and professional fronts, hence ensuring the containment of state violence under *acceptable portrayals* (Duschinski, 2010). Mapping and infusing these accepted portrayals into the larger frame of "'Mother India'" or Bharat Mata plays a self-determining role in manifesting this imagination. Alongside, the historical accounts in the academic domain conceal the history of Kashmiris before 1947, subsequently strengthening the narrative that presents the events in the Valley under the ambit of '**bilateralism**' between Pakistan and India (Bajoria, 2018). Owing to its geographical position in the north of India, the portrayal of Kashmir as the *'head' of Bharat Mata is systemically aligned with the territorial representation of India as a feminine body* (Brecher, 1953).

In the wake of such constructions, the dissenting discursive positions and counter-narratives are sensationalized as an act of '*beheading*' *Mother India*. Any attempt at including the intricate

historical underpinnings of Kashmir's relation with India—for instance, the blatant isolation and othering of a major part of the population and vilification of various resistance drives— is instantaneously **framed** as anti-national, provocative, and deserving of violence, as it jeopardized the existence and sanctity of the *Mother*, which is to be dutifully protected by every patriot (Joseph, 2000; Kabir, 2009; N. Kaul, 2017). This becomes more crucial in the backdrop of Hindutva ideology, owing to its interlinkage with *militarily mobilized masculinity* entrenched in strongholds of *patriarchy*. Moreover, the mobilization and unification of Indians in the esteemed services of nationalism resemble *the movement of anti-colonial aggression* in the past. No other purpose comes close to *securing the Mother from being beheaded* (Ahuja, 2017; Marino, 2010). The *added sentimental and psychological vehemence* gets an aggrandized push by continual Indian slogans orchestrated by the **nationalists** that unapologetically exude a potentiality for desensitization and dehumanization of Kashmir in more ways than one (N. Kaul, 2018). *Both powers* on either side of the Line of Control contribute to the vicious cycle of narratives that have *overridden the crucial details regarding the Kashmiris' historical and evolutionary political consciousness*. *The politicization of democratic values* has succeeded in institutionalizing the predominant narrative of large-scale mobilization and *reality construction* (Karmakar, 2021).

In retrospect, the Orientalist essentialist epistemes dating back to the British colonial era, *constructing Kashmir as a 'desirable territory'* paved the way for an exploitative Dogra rule, forging an **illusion** of organizing an otherwise unmanageable entity through a process of catering to its multifaceted and diversely layered nature (Kabir, 2009, p. 157). **Political tools** enabled this fetishized and *conformist tradition* from the *European Orientalist to the post-colonial Indian nationalist*. The arbitrators of this process, such as those belonging to the tourism sector, now find themselves divided between the unabated Kashmiri consciousness distancing itself from the Center and the collectively hegemonized nationalist Indian desire for Kashmir is focused on the periphery's reductionist appropriation (R. Ahmad, 2011).

A rising spatial domain of **epistemic haze** exists between the two, in which an active **fabrication of 'reality'** occurs, which transpires into a literal and metaphorical collateral territory. This domain symbolizes and institutionalizes a *confirmation bias towards the 'Orientalist' desire* of the Centre (India), and in due course, *conceals and betrays the 'realities'* of Kashmiris (Taussig, 1987, p. 123). The post-colonial space is turned into an area of 'epistemic violence' when disseminating the Western Orientalist tradition *onto the 'colonial' desires* (for Kashmir) of Indian nationalism

without constraint. This conformity is modified and mobilized by the postcolonial nation-state's elite by utilizing similar tactics of manufacturing imageries and exercising power across the spheres of culture, tourism, politics, technology, and academia. This *twisted reciprocity between the realms of domination and desire* categorically establishes a pompously broad space of **control** (Torgovnick, 1991, p. 245). Discourses are used as an instrument of domination to create and sustain a cycle of cultural amplification of fear and construction of reality and truth (Taussig, 1987, p. 4-6).

Sumit Ganguly's work, 'The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect' (2003), can be taken as a relevant case in point (Ganguly, 2004). This work asserts certain hegemonic representations of the issue, including Kashmir, as an inherently relentless and **bilateral** dispute between Pakistan and India (Ganguly, 2004; Zutshi, 2012). The oft-repeated discussion around **territoriality** and **national security** of the two main stakeholders **conceals** the insurgency (*resistance*) by indigenous people of Kashmir against the Indian occupation spanning over decades. Also, the work by Parveen Swami titled 'Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir in Theory and Practice' *trivializes the Kashmiri struggle* by approaching the question of *insurgency* in a manner that *paints* all the groups operating inside Kashmir as embodying the alliance of "terrorists". This argument is backed by the accusation that is owing to their fundamental intent of causing harm to the Indian state; it is *useless to formulate a process of distinguishing them on ideological basis* (Swami, 2003). **This also explains the results of our thematic analysis that have shown minimal to non-existent coverage of the theme of resistance in mainstream narrative.**

#### **4.2.6 Indicator 6: Epistemic Gap vis a vis Subaltern's Articulation of Truth**

An epistemic lacuna has been ascertained regarding the availability of scholarly spaces for the subaltern entity to articulate their truth freely.

**Explanation:** The intervention tactics of both states tend to take a divergent course of action contrary to the perceptions and hopes of Kashmiris themselves because upholding the agenda of the status quo trumps everything else (Kazi, 2008). The complete *absence of avenues* for indigenous *Kashmiri voices* amidst the haze of '**competing nationalisms**' depict that even Pakistan's rhetoric around upholding the Kashmiri self-determination movement is devoid of the required amount of impact and resolve (Balachandran, 1996, p. 122), with powerful interests

overshadowing the *visualization* and manifestation of Kashmiri's struggle for Azadi in its entirety. It has been asserted that Pakistan's appropriation of the Kashmiri resistance movement has not been able to do complete justice to the principles and political underpinnings as a whole because without a *merited Kashmiri representation* on both sides of the border, it has *been far easier for India to construct* an opportunistic frame of reference which irrevocably scaled-down the resistance movement as being a confronting ground between 'fundamentalist Pakistan' and 'secularized state of India' (Kazi, 2008, p. 125). The activity on the part of Pakistan has paved the way for India to exercise unabating authority *within* Kashmir through mobilization of a domineering narrative around obligatory external '**territorial**' defence of the Valley (in response to Pakistan) (Kazi, 2008, p. 149).

Reproduction of dominant narratives rigorously controlled and steered by militarized domains, armed skirmishes, bombings, and grave Indo-Pak **nuclear deadlock** obscure the formidable *reality* of Kashmir, which is *shaped* by the convergence of outlets that unleash violent control over the citizens. An analyst from Kashmir stresses the unfathomable trauma continually inflicted upon Kashmiris residing amidst violent exchanges between belligerent segments of militants or between forces of insurgence and counter insurgence. Generations have been enduring denial of the right to breathe in a balanced socio-political reality (Oberoi & War, 1997, p. 7). Hannah Arendt and Miriam Cooke have delineated the innate defect of a monopolized, one dimensional 'national' narrative by stating that regardless of the administrative interests being served, the consequences are always alike: the dominance of power in a unitary manner eventually *paralyzes and dwindles the authenticity of diverse origins* of veritable and democratized power in the state (Cooke, 1996, p. 95).

The discursive practices surrounding Kashmir have exhaustively focused on the politicization of the issue and the roles of power states-submerged in their respective nationalist projects. They *fall short of making space to include the ethno-political inclinations and desires of the Kashmiris in an equitable manner* (Bhatia, 2005). The overarching dominance and exclusivity of the '**territoriality**' of the dispute cunningly pushed all other crucial dimensions of the Kashmiri **reality** into the margins. The discourse *should have centralized* Kashmiris as the significant player resisting the occupation and control of the Indian state's nationalism. But the discourse tends to persistently concretize the reality of Kashmir around the politics of the privileged segments that

resulted in an orderly expansion of the Hindu **nationalist** narrative using oppositional verbosity based on nationalism, religion, and regional politics (Bhatia, 2005).

Osuri and Zia (2020) have articulated the practice of savage *colonizing of 'peace' within the discourse* in this verse: "they want us to write in blood, and only write of peace". The contemporary understandings of the colonized and the colonizer in the decolonial and postcolonial discourse have been subverted by Agha Shahid Ali (2009) and Ather Zia (2017) explanation of the *colonized ideas of peace*. These areas of knowledge production continue to deploy the *analytical tools of North-South, non-European-European binaries to conceptualize colonialism* (Bhabra, 2014). Although these strands of scholarship hold significance and critical importance for comprehending the repercussions of slavery, settler-colonial projects, and European colonialism, they have a **literature gap** when it comes to exploring the process through which *present-day post-colonial nation states utilize colonial era tools to validate their system of militarism, colonialism, and imperialism* (Anand, 2012; S. Kaul, 2020; Osuri, 2017). Partha Chatterjee from Subaltern Studies Collective has postulated that India's correlation with Kashmir reveals a far more **complicated form of internalized colonialism** than the typical British colonial project model in India (Chatterjee, 2019). The *shadows of the nationalist drive in the anti-colonial era* raise questionable repercussions for the subaltern. Postcolonial nation-states' resulting fixation on the notions of '**territoriality**' represents an eternal cycle of destructive practices (Krishnan, 2020).

In the same context, Sankaran Krishna unravels the tale of state-building in the context of post-colonial nations (Krishna, 1999). The *central element of justification for violence* across all domains becomes ingrained in this exercise of *state-making* in this story. This happens when the **mega narrative** of the *West* becomes the quintessential blueprint for the construction of a nation-state. This scheme *falls flat* when applied to a multitude of diverse identities with diverging realities. But the statecraft requires **hegemonic** enforcement of this model and top-down proclamation of **truth** for conceptualizing their pasts and a preconditioned sought-after future (Krishnan, 2020). India must retreat from the normative hierarchical principles strictly guided by monopolization over the **construct of the reality** of nationhood because the past decades indicate the ineffectiveness and perils of such **imaginations**.



*Imagery through tourism* is utilized in the contemporary scenario to disintegrate the indigenous identity and absorb it into the overarching ‘nationalist’ discursive practices; to propagate and normalize the state’s violence under the impression of maintaining a state of necessitated ‘peace’ and political ‘rationality.’ Hence the deviousness of suppressing dissent continues under a systemic pretense of socio-economic development and protection of cultural legacies. In addition to further deepening an ‘**epistemic**’ blur, this process reconstructs an ‘**ontological murk,**’ hence erasing and splitting the identity of the indigenous actors in a dehumanizing manner (R. Ahmad, 2011).

#### 4.2.6.1 Subaltern’s incapacitation as a ‘knower’

A subaltern is not deemed worthy of being a ‘knower’ with regard to reality.

**Explanation:** An entirely ‘**territorial**’ narrative equates to brushing the Kashmiri political struggle conveniently under the carpet and conceals decades of disservices and atrocities on Kashmiris under the parochial rhetoric of **terrorism** (Prashad, 2003, p. 7). The marginal, subaltern, peripheral actors are rendered silenced by the central hegemonic actors. The latter mobilize and control the robust discourse across all realms, be it *academia*, political ground, or religious sphere. This is materialized by manufacturing a structure of authority that is indisputable. In the case of Kashmir, this structure is witnessed through an *active endorsement of this mainstream expression* in India and Pakistan across all domains, translating into a distancing from the voices of the Kashmiri populace. A state of perpetual agitation due to *terrorization and trauma* has sabotaged Kashmiris's cultural identity and socio-political life. (Khan, 2012).

Arundhati Roy identifies a *deepened discord* between the ground **reality** of Kashmir, the sentiments of Kashmiris about it, and the popular narrative propagated around the **reality** of what is happening (Roy, 2004). The tragic *loss of intellectual liberty* in Kashmir is an irretrievable loss for Kashmiri society. Paradoxically enough, the **Kashmiri vision**, which is intrinsically centred on the principles of humanity, justice, and inclusivity, ultimately gets engulfed by the law of the gun, hence demanding the lives of the proponents of this vision (Kazi, 2008). This loss of visionary intellectuals reflects the *depth of catastrophe* for Kashmiris, primarily the Muslims of Kashmir (Kazi, 2008).

Surinder Singh uses a Kashmiri Pandit’s elucidation to encapsulate the tragic consequences for Kashmiri Muslims in the form of **incapacitation of the entire civil society** due to *obliteration* of

Kashmir's *intellectuals* (Kazi, 2008). At this stage, a complete withdrawal of militarized influences from Kashmir would eradicate the primary impediment in the demilitarization of Kashmir. Still, it would not undo the *isolation of Kashmiris* spanning over years of repressive tactics (Kazi, 2008). This isolation is rooted in the crippling fixation around unitary 'national' identity frameworks. The ontological hierarchical structures in place further generate a 'separatist' sentiment when oppressive militarization blinded by the pursuit of '**national interest**' erode the credibility of the power-driven nation-state in the eyes of those who are silenced and brutalized (Kazi, 2008).

#### 4.2.7 Indicator 7: Naming and Framing

The epistemically violent framing of Kashmiri 'resistance' in the Valley (with selective silence being maintained about nuances of resistance) & related naming practices have been observed in connection with usage of the themes.

**Explanation:** With the systematic enforcement of state power and control in Kashmiri streets, civic **resistance** in opposition to concentrated hegemonic militarization began to be represented under '**national**' nomenclature (Kazi, 2008). In the face of a growing predicament of forced state legitimization and the emergence of **territorial nationalism** with vigorously orchestrated '**nation-state consciousness**' (Balachandran, 1996, p. 122), the Kashmiri uprising began to **be assigned a meaning** of evidently *Kashmiri (Muslim) betrayal* to the state of India with an inseparable feature of posing a mounting **threat** to a **unified national** domain. Despite continual turbulence, Kashmiris have fearlessly sustained their value system and zestful heritage in the face of an unprincipled game of politics between rival neighbours (Khan, 2012).

In the words of Sumantra Bose, attempts of collective **resistance by Kashmiris** were fabricated as 'Kashmiri Muslims' *stabs to wreak havoc through a 'second partition' of India (Bharat Mata)* as part of a joint conspiracy. In Bose's opinion, such framing in the discourse indicates a desperate pre-emptive action to unify a tremendously divided and ruptured nation (i.e., India) by crafting out an *easily shared grave national threat supposedly caused by pan-Islamic radicalized plot* (Bose, 1998, p. 141). Correspondingly, political strife (Kashmiri resistance) rooted in *questioning* the outright rejection of democratic rights began to be predominantly **cast and visualized** in a **myopic unitary framework of 'nationalism'** (Kazi, 2008). As Ballentine and Snyder identify, this characterization signifies an attempt to put forth questionable justifications for sustained backing

for 'nationalist' ideology and to dismantle the possibility of any *dissent* (Snyder & Ballentine, 1996). The portrayals go at length to magnify the **perception** of '**threat**' facing a nation by outside forces and blatantly *disregard the internalized insecurities and proportion of threats elicited by a state's doings*, eventually downplaying the irreversible damage caused by prioritizing '**nationalist**' agenda through a hegemonic militarized scheme (Snyder & Ballentine, 1996, p. 11). This understanding unveils how Kashmir acts as a representative and tangible confluence between the binary **dichotomies of within/without**, interior/exterior surfaces of states that practice naming and framing around militarized, concentrated, **securitized**, and **nuclearized** narrative building. Balraj Puri points out that one of the most civilized communities of the subcontinent is *systematically dehumanized* under the hegemonic understandings of the necessitated securitization of the disputed **territory** from *outside*, paralleled by an active military consolidation on the *inside* (Puri, 1990).

Ideologies are crucial since they might not be as explicitly powerful as physical enforcement. Still, they do *subtly yet strongly* fortify the reinforcement and proliferation of hierarchal orders (Peterson, 1992, p. 39). The *deviance between the ideas of nation and statehood* constitutes a factual attribute of the South Asian post-colonial nation-states (Sahadevan, 2002). The fitting example of Pakistan and India illustrates how these states have had to pursue a **manufacturing program for nationhood** for cohesion (Mustafa & Viren, 2001, p. 111). However, a major pitfall in this endeavour arises when both states' territorial limitations become *incoherent with the division of sub-national sections* falling between both states, particularly Kashmiris. Hence a *unitary narrative of the 'nation'* falls short of its hegemonic applicability in the region of Kashmir (Kazi, 2008). Therefore, the European model and its characteristics that incorporate internal politics within the nation-state cannot be impeccably applied to these states owing to this *palpable disconnect between nation and state* (Mitra & Lewis, 2019; Turpin & Lorentzen, 1996).

According to Ayoob, India is a vibrant democracy (as suggested by mainstream frames). Still, its **reality** is best analyzed through an intensifying role of military decision-makers in the region of Kashmir, where *the state is confronted with undeniable defiance in its state-building enterprise* (Ayoob, 1991, 9. 25). The region of Kashmir eventually endangers the status quo's fixation on 'Hindu unity in a **national** frame of reference (Kazi, 2008). The **Hindu nationalist segments use the resistance movement in Kashmir against the occupation** to substantiate their assertion of any uprising being backed or spearheaded by jihadist terrorist backing from Pakistan to split the

nation of India (Butalia, 2014; Kazi, 2008). The state's outright incompetence-masked by naming and framing- in establishing a fair system for Kashmir has been translated into a pernicious exercise **of nation-state establishment**, fading the ground realities of the Valley under the murkiness of heavy militarization (Kazi, 2008).

Additionally, naming and framing manifests through an abundance of **denominational terminology** used in the literature to describe the diverse **territorial** and contours of the issue-like Pakistan occupied Kashmir, Indian occupied Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Administered Kashmir, Azad Kashmir-indicates the *non-existence of even an elementary concord regarding the Kashmiri identity* (N. Ali, 2002). Amid abundant literature being produced that aligns with the discipline of International Relations; there is a **dearth of literature** articulating the interconnection between a sizeable Kashmiri diaspora and the evolution of a unique Kashmiri identity (N. Ali, 2002). Muhammad Junaid has indicated that prioritizing the *experiences of the indigenous population* to dissect the *features of occupation* can unveil the illogical strategies through which occupation has operated in Kashmir. These strategies center on nonsensical chants and rhetoric of elections and democracy, supplemented by the ceaseless production of **hegemonic narratives and discourses which legitimize the occupation** (Junaid, 2013, p. 162-163). Indigenous conceptualizations, if thoroughly incorporated, can eventually *pave the way for framing Indian occupation and state-sponsored violence* rightly as imperialism, colonialism, and dismissal of sovereignty (Anand, 2012; S. Kaul, 2020).

### **4.3 Role of Certain Think Tanks in Politics of Concealment**

According to Pautz, an inherent linkage between liberal capitalist democracy and organizational workings of certain think tanks can be *critically established* in the light of a **Gramscian frame of analysis** that conceptualizes intellectualism, civil society, and hegemony in a thorough manner (K. Mathur, 2009). According to Desai, think tanks gather, filter, and conserve particular chunks of ideas and disseminate them extensively, making them "*second-hand dealers of ideas*" (Desai, 1994). In a similar context, Parmar has emphasized the *importance of checking the social influences* of the think tanks that have a decisive role in sustaining a think tank-state cooperative mechanism, which eventually concludes in the validation of foreign policy objectives via intellectual assembly (Parmar, 2004). According to Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith (1973),

elites and private organizations legitimize state interests and think tanks in India symbolize the two. (Gramsci et al., 1973).

Gramsci has also conceptualized the interconnectedness between *tangible conditions and ideas* which steer the conduct of think tanks, formulating theoretical underpinnings for the relationship between state and society that transcends the notions of ideas and elites (Gramsci et al., 1973). Historic groupings are manufactured through the *active participation of intellectuals in formulating strategies in a political landscape*. This observation is based on a critical analysis of political society and civil society (Pautz, 2011). While this **negotiatory process** between the state and civil society prevails, it is essential that the *conceptualization of ‘organic intellectual’*, is informed by their **positionality** in the institutions and their *social context* during the formal foreign policy formation process (Pautz, 2012). Gramsci emphasizes the part played by ‘organic intellectuals’ in orchestrating the ideas and *inclinations of the class* to which they belong (Gramsci et al., 1973).

According to Parmar’s argument, a strong state must *assemble its ‘organic intellectuals’* to ensure the authorization of its reforms in the foreign policy domain (Parmar, 2004). Henceforth, the relationships of state managers with intellectuals are crucial to be examined when they are generating discourses in the backdrop of the position they hold in their class (Bhatnagar & Chacko, 2019). Certain intellectuals are thus precisely called ‘*knowledge elites*’, as they *actively engage with the state* while utilizing their expertise in moulding ideas that inform policy. They remain deeply involved with the State while enabling and ensuring that the state's interests get sufficiently promoted. Gramsci articulates this institutionalized process of forming concord on the state’s behalf as ‘**state spirit**’, which at times oversee some aspects of decision making while affecting the general public’s opinion in others (K. Mathur, 2009; Mukherji, 2014; Pautz, 2012).

Certain events have shaped the role of these think tanks in the decision-making domain. In 2008, post-Mumbai attacks discourse reenabled the *national security elite* inside the defence think tanks. Since then, the narrative has been centred on implementing a purely militaristic approach towards Kashmir and controlling the archrival Pakistan (Bhatnagar & Chacko, 2019). Junaid contends that states use democracy to fulfil the *requirements of ‘territorial nationalism’* in the discourse that presents **occupation** as a *repercussion of an evolving war on the borders* (Osuri, 2017). Henceforth, this tactic glues the nation in a collective sentiment that is contrived to be obligatory

upon all people (Junaid, 2013, p. 166). And the case of **Kashmir is thus presented as a litmus test** for India's 'national' unity, and this supreme purpose is used as an excuse to walk all over the rightful needs and exigencies of the disheartened and stranded individuals (Junaid, 2013).

#### **4.4 Counter-hegemonic efforts**

Language of *occupation, colonialism, and imperialism* defies the **hegemonic pattern of IR**, which fixates on representing the Kashmir issue as a dispute that needs a **bilateral** resolve on the part of India and Pakistan, owing to its nature as a **territorial** conflict between two **nuclear**-armed nation-states (Behera, 2007). The *counterhegemonic discourse* aims to amplify the voices of Kashmiris' calls for self-determination through the lens of their writings and experiences. Shifting the narrative around Kashmiris under Indian rule makes these accounts intelligible for a **global readership** (Osuri & Zia, 2020).

There are many difficulties associated with *research in Jammu and Kashmir*, owing to the perpetual state of turmoil in the civil domain and the circumstances associated with military occupation (Zutshi, 2012). Seemingly scholars residing within Kashmir have greater access to resources. Still, they must *endure a deeply ingrained politicization of the past*, under which *particular historical and political aspects* are magnified while the others are subjected to utter antagonism. Thus, few undaunted scholars within Kashmir and other diasporic academics have attempted to generate discourse around long-lost crucial elements of history regarding the genesis of identity in Kashmir. These works try to surpass the acrimony that is rampant in the existing accounts covering the conflict. Scholarly work has *materialized from the margins*, which contradict the mainstream discourse and includes the historical demands of the Kashmiris and *defies the dehumanizing and inaccurate representation* of Kashmiri resistance stereotypically as '**Islamic terrorism**' (Duschinski et al., 2018)

Generally, the discourse on the ongoing political scenario of Kashmir is loaded with information but not edifying enough, owing to the **recurrent** focus on the *traditional elements* of the issue (Zutshi, 2012). The policy recommendations are often grounded in a predictable pattern that aids the mainstream narrative built over the years without bringing about a meaningful turn in the conservation. Specific *exceptions to the mainstream narrative* are brought about by social and political scientists who *indulge in extensive fieldwork* through *unearthing ground realities* that add something substantial to the larger picture. According to the proposed solutions in Bose's and

Duschinski's work-with, the former focusing on state-level and political groups from Kashmir and the latter focusing on the organizations working outside the political domain-an indelible solution can only be guaranteed if *inclusivity of a representative subset* from the society, as well as women, Islamist groups, and Pandit organizations are ensured in the decision-making process regarding the future course of action (Bose, 2005; Duschinski, 2009).

Recent years have seen a rise in researchers who have shifted focus on *themes of subjugation or violence, justice, and law through anthropological studies* of state tyranny and political violence (for example, Argenti-Pillen, 2013; Hinton, 2004; Mahmood, 1996; Manz, 2005; Nordstrom, 1997; Sanford, 2003), alongside learning of representative and systemic violent tactics that enable repetitive patterns of social anguish, collective desertion, and social demise (for example (Biehl, 2013; Bourgois, 2002; Farmer, 2006; Scheper-Hughes, 1993). Rishabh Bajoria (2018) *attempts to challenge the mainstream discourse* by highlighting the Treaty of Amritsar and the Kashmiri struggle against the exploitative Dogra Regime. This effort shifts the hegemonic historiography in two aspects: firstly, the necessary emphasis on historical contingency of the administrative entity of Jammu and Kashmir has been placed by *taking the departure point as 1846 rather than 1947*; secondly, the Kashmiri *resistance against the Dogras has rightly not been enveloped in the Indian nationalist movement* (Bajoria, 2018). The *Kashmiri resistance of the 1920s* has also been focused on to make the reader critically evaluate the unquestioned *legitimization of the Instrument of Accession* on part of official authorities (Duschinski, 2010). This work has also *diverged from the legalistic and liberal explanations* of Kashmir which regard it solely as a human rights issue. One of the Kashmiri voices Arif Ayaz Parrey maintains that even in the occurrence of *immediate cessation of all human rights transgressions*, and overnight removal of the entire Indian military from the Valley, there *would not be an end to the Kashmiris resistance movement* because in addition to fighting for human rights, this movement is also upholding the *political right of the Kashmiris for self-determination* (Parrey, 2010).

Rishabh Bajoria's work *attempts to unveil the aforementioned "silences"* in the historiographical accounts. It **reveals** that the present entity of 'Jammu and Kashmir' was constructed in 1846 by the Colonial State of the Britishers for solely governmental purposes (Bajoria, 2018). On similar lines, the work uncovers the resistance movement by Kashmiris against the Dogra rule dating back to the 1930s. The *legitimization of 'The Instrument of Accession'* is made questionable by this historical fact (Bajoria, 2018).

Therefore, contemporary times call for a *humanization and sensitization* of discourse around Kashmir and its people. Kashmiris have been mired in brutalization for many decades, both at the hands of state actors and non-state factions. One cannot conclude the reality of the Valley *without accounting for the experience* or instance, without talking to a native woman who has lost her husband to death or state-supervised disappearance (Khan, 2014). Likewise, the sheer trauma and suffering of a father who has seen his son taken away by the state deployed security personal on suspicion of being associated with militants, *if not incorporated* in the **‘real’ picture** built around Kashmir, renders the *existing dominant narrative greatly distorted*. Mindful and responsible *inclusion of ground realities* in the voices of Kashmiris themselves depicts the potential in generating a discourse that can have a grounding of its own, separable from Pakistan and India and the ensuing official narratives regulated both states (Karmakar, 2021).

This incorporation creates a space where Kashmiri reality is *more than that of an instrument for agendas*; instead, it becomes a framework that prioritizes the *intricacies of a population of 12.5 million humans*. This way the issues and needs of the people breathing in a heavily militarized zone facing alienation on various levels can be *brought to the surface*. The Indian students are contemporarily learning about Kashmir through the *focal point of religion or national security*, which is a *misfortune* given the evolved technological state of the world (Karmakar, 2021). Contrary to the *widespread projections*, Kashmiri history does not have much to do with *religion*. There has always been a *political struggle* to get the state’s acknowledgement and uncorrupted acceptance of their distinct cultural and political identity. Still, the official narrative does not recognize or explore this struggle (Karmakar, 2021).

Kashmir needs a *well-grounded revisiting of the frames* through which its history has been viewed and deserves a **refocus on its indigenous historical reality** that dates to the pre-partition era. The official historical accounts mostly *sharing the departure point of 1947* as the start of the Kashmir issue is deceptive and ignorantly erase the multilayered, dynamic, and rich heritage of Kashmir in the cultural, political, and ethnic domains (Karmakar, 2021). The *self-serving facets* being highlighted are those that are essentially deceitful. Such as Kashmir represented as a breeding ground for insurgents, as a hub for religious radicals, and filled with disloyal secessionist elements, in turn criminalizing all those who voice a reasonable, legitimate, and intelligible criticism of the Indian state. The *unfinished agenda of invading spaces* that could have unveiled a uniquely Kashmiri narrative continues relentlessly on both sides of the border, leaving *no place for*



*mainstreaming* or equitably sharing the experience of Kashmir's separate heritage (Karmakar, 2021; Khan, 2014).

The authoritative Indian discourse-stereotyping the '*dreadful*' Kashmiri insurgent as *anti-national*, in contrast to the '*exemplary*, Indian-is utterly incapable of comprehending the multiplicity distinguishing Kashmir. The valley is *beyond the oversimplification* imposed by apathetic and criminally ignorant *binary visuals* of the ruling elite and the public adhering to their norms. Kashmir calls on values grounded in tolerance, affinity, and spaces of impartial realizations, not polarities emanating from binaries (Mridha, 2008). Antonio Gramsci has elucidated the way capitalist systems sustain their hegemony through nation-states (Stoddart, 2007). The socio-cultural and political domains are inclined to advance the hegemonic interests (Watkins, 1994). The title '*subaltern*' was adopted by Gayatri Spivak (Spivak, 2003b). She acutely points out that it is always someone else who talks in place of the subaltern about the reality of the subaltern. In the rare case of the subaltern speaking for themselves, they are trapped in a space with no echo for their voices, leaving them unheard and fazed by the hegemony.

Hence the *subaltern is assigned the marginalized spaces*, and *hegemony is centralized* through no mechanism or concept of an evenly distributed discourse (Liu, 2013). *Spivak's conception can be deployed in the context of Kashmir* to analyze how the powerful domains and dominant structures silence the voices of the subaltern Kashmiri. This inherently hazardous and ostensibly indestructible hegemony *needs a counter-hegemonic narrative-building exercise*. The *diverse and ultra-globalized avenues* of the modern world can *aid the subaltern* in finding an equitable space for voicing their truth, dismantle the existent structures of power, and acquire mobilization in the societal domain (Ramapurath Chemmencheri, 2015). This **potential for change** is conceptualized by Gayatri Spivak's noteworthy observation about the *identity of the subaltern being dynamic and evolving and not static*, hence holding immense potential for utilizing the modern avenues to counter the incessant control and dominance (Mandokheil, 2019).

The contextual underpinnings of Kashmir entail a *reconceptualization of the approaches* through which the tactics of colonialism, occupation, and imperialism are perceived or analyzed in the present times. As mentioned before, it is an inadequate presumption to restrict the analytical **understandings of colonial powers** solely based on *western and non-western dichotomy* (Osuri, 2017). Present times *necessitate a rethinking of the ways that enable post-colonial nation-states*

*to institutionalize their practices of asserting imperialistic and colonial sovereignty.* The situation in Kashmir illustrates how the *Indian nationalist capital*, having thrown British raj, has crafted a current status of a secular democracy, which paved a pathway for a particular geostrategic framework for Kashmir (Osuri, 2017). Such discursive framework discloses the imaginatively sly ways *gambits of 'power' hailing from the British colonial era get implemented in post-colonial states.* A critical refocus on these strategies is more likely to incorporate a thorough discussion of *Kashmiri sentiments towards resistance and self-determination*, hence crafting **futuristic aspirations** that are based on just and equitable notions of sovereignty instead of the oft-repeated rhetoric mired by grotesque tirade between India and Pakistan and India's repeated rationalization of holding onto their territorial integrity as a sovereign nation (Osuri, 2017).

The words of Eqbal Ahmed describing Kashmir as a place where restorative justice can be made to prevail by mending a region ripped apart by dominant frames of militarization, **nuclearization** and belligerence, depict why the notions of **security** embraced by both states remain unworkable until and unless the **narrative under security gets shifted to 'secure'** the dignity, morals, and justice of the Kashmiris, which they are thoroughly deserving of (E. Ahmad, 2020; Krishnan, 2020). Secular modernism and national unity can only thrive through a *changed narrative* centred on interlinkages of cultures and enunciation of democratic norms both in theory and practice. A **reasonable intellectual** is mindful of the cardinal principle of making sure that the *binarily dichotomous frame of reference is never utilized* to pre-determine the articulation of any kind of circumstances ignorantly and conveniently (Cooke, 1996, p. 40). Gayatri Spivak rightfully endorses the perspective of El Habib Louai (2012, p. 7), which describes that the job of an academic intellectual is to facilitate the subaltern entity and permit them to have a voice of their own while articulating their reality. Irrespective of the disciplinary and methodological basis, it is obligatory upon the researcher to guarantee that their voices are 'heard' and accordingly studied to do justice to their representation in the spaces where they would have been censored castigated otherwise (Spencer, 2013b).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have established the ‘existence’ of epistemic violence in the context of Kashmir. The seven indicators of epistemic violence clustered through a comprehensive literature review (based solely on the concept of epistemic violence in general) have been found to align with the themes recurring in the mainstream discourse built around Kashmir. Henceforth, these recurring themes can be named ‘themes of subjugation or oppression.’ The context of usage of identified themes has been mainly prioritized. It has been unveiled that repetition of these themes enforces and maintain silences in the academic domain. These silences are further deepened by ahistoricism, and a dichotomous framework. The epistemological motives served by the themes have been exhaustively scrutinized. The problem of epistemic violence is eventually discerned by analyzing how the predominant narrative contextualizes the reality of Kashmir. This research project has revealed that the scholarly domain of the post-colonial turns into an area of epistemic injustice in the case of Kashmir.

The discussion has been incorporated with the analysis and results of the research to ensure homogeneity. It has been established that Kashmir as an entity fulfills the condition of subalternity. This study also revealed that a reconceptualization of the approaches to contextualizing occupation, imperialistic tactics, and colonialism in modern times is needed. Restricting the analytical domain of coloniality to solely western non-western dichotomy is highly inadequate and falls short of credibility when applied in the post-colonial world of nation-states. An epistemic haze has been identified to formulate an ontological murk, hence dehumanizing the realities of indigenous Kashmiris. This epistemic gap is widened by manufacturing accepted ‘reality’ that has both metaphorical and literal consequences. This aspect shows that the Western model of statehood (in mainstream discourse) falls flat when applied to the post-colonial domain, owing to the latter's non-coherence between nation and state. Moreover, there is a lack of literature regarding the availability of equitable space for a subaltern Kashmiri to articulate their reality as a ‘knower.’ The essentialist accounts for nationhood representation are predominantly rampant and familiar in academia. Confirmation of the existence of indicator 6, i.e., Epistemic gap vis a vis subaltern’s articulation of their own ‘truth,’ holds a *significant place* in findings of this research project, owing

to its indication of a literature gap, providing a reference point for futuristic aspirations of the researcher.

Through the problematization of epistemic violence in the context of Kashmir, this research project contributes towards paving a pathway for an informed discourse that is based upon identifying the subtlety of violent tactics by recognizing their systemic and representative nature. This thesis has identified the deep-rooted recurrent patterns that cause collective silencing of the subaltern entity, i.e. Kashmir. Hence, the study is an effort towards sensitization and humanization of discourse around Kashmir. The research responsibly highlights the pertinent need for a shift in a narrative built around Kashmir. By deciphering the subaltern position of Kashmiris, this thesis lays a preamble for the inclusion of their voices while articulating their truth.

## **5.1 Future Research**

The analytical apparatus can further act as a blueprint for futuristic research in this domain. The repercussions of widely accepted imaginations for the discourse around Kashmir and the confirmation of the Valley as fulfilling the conditions of subalternity can be a basis for the study. The analysis has unveiled the subtle ways through which power gets accumulated and exercised through discourse. These ways entail a deeper conceptualization of violence in the context of Kashmir in futuristic understandings. Specifically exploring epistemic violence in Kashmir has a potential for deconstructing and readjusting the narrative building exercise around Kashmir.

## **5.2 Limitations**

Detailed study regarding the evolution of ‘identity and ‘nationhood’ of Kashmiris bifurcated across the border of India and Pakistan (and Kashmiri diaspora) is beyond the scope of this research.

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# APPENDENCIES

## Nationalism

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			Sig
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	
Single Measures	.868 <sup>a</sup>	.810	.909	14.187	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.930 <sup>c</sup>	.895	.953	14.187	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Security

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			Sig
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	
Single Measures	.817 <sup>a</sup>	.740	.873	9.935	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.899 <sup>c</sup>	.850	.932	9.935	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Nuclear

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.871 <sup>a</sup>	.815	.912	14.540	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.931 <sup>c</sup>	.898	.954	14.540	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Terrorism

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.679 <sup>a</sup>	.558	.772	5.237	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.809 <sup>c</sup>	.716	.872	5.237	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Bilateral

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.660 <sup>a</sup>	.533	.757	4.874	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.795 <sup>c</sup>	.695	.862	4.874	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Territorial

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.737 <sup>a</sup>	.633	.815	6.606	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.849 <sup>c</sup>	.775	.898	6.606	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Perception

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.729 <sup>a</sup>	.622	.809	6.384	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.843 <sup>c</sup>	.767	.895	6.384	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Reality

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.783 <sup>a</sup>	.694	.849	8.226	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.878 <sup>c</sup>	.819	.918	8.226	99	99	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

- The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
- Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
- This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

## Agenda

### Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.855 <sup>a</sup>	.791	.900	12.755	99	99	.000
Average Measures	.922 <sup>c</sup>	.883	.947	12.755	99	99	.000

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Epistemic Violence in The Case of Kashmir: A Thematic Analysis



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