

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an ethnographic account of everyday life in a conflict zone. This ethnographic journey starts by analyzing the notion of 'normalcy' in Kashmir, one of the most contested places in the world; and, further moves to examine the geopolitics of everyday life in this region. The dissertation asks: if 'normalcy' is understood as an effect of regularly held practices in a repetitive and rhythmic way, then, what is normal in a disturbed area? If ruptures challenge the continuity of the routine, then, what about the everyday lives of the ordinary people where ruptures have become the routine? I focus on the mundane, prosaic, and ordinary aspects of daily life and draw attention towards the struggle and negotiation hidden beneath the apparent routine. Second, by focusing on historical narratives and experiences grounded in the local geography and in social relations, the thesis traces the links between history, memory and the everyday. Third, and more broadly, this study discusses the bodily struggles in everyday spaces accommodating geopolitical pressures and emotions like intimacy and fear. My research is informed by qualitative research methods. My focus as an ethnographic researcher was on participant observation with its emphasis on experience and the words, voices and lives of the participants. This approach combines the processes observed, with specific features of the context in which these events occur, which is itself linked to historical and cultural contingencies. Overall, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the lived realities and the everyday with its inherent ambiguities and contradictions dealing with a range of emotions, beliefs and the precarious nature of life..