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Representation of Indo-Pakistan relations in Hindi cinema:

Analysis and comparison of the films *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*
with the main focus on border crossings

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On oath

I declare in lieu of oath that my Master Thesis was independently authored by myself. All information derived from the work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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झेलम वह जो हिंदुस्तान से शुरू होकर पाकिस्तान में बह निकलता है, जिसके नीले ठंडे पानी में इस पार एक पंडित आगमन करके सूर्यनमस्कार करता है तो उस पार एक मौलवी नमाज़ के लिए अर्ज़ अदा करता है कुदरत के बेशुमार नेमतों की तरह यह दरिया का पानी तो इंसान इंसान में फर्क नहीं करता फिर फर्क इंसान के दिलों में क्यों

Jhelum, the river, who originate in India and then flow into Pakistan. On the banks of its cool, blue waters a paṇḍit here, ritually salutes the rising sun while a maulvi there prepares to perform his namāz. Like the innumerable gods of nature, this river does not discriminate between people then why do humans create differences in their heart?

(Henna, 00:3:12 – 00:3:40)

Abstract

This Master's Thesis discusses the research question: To which extent has the form of the plot and the depiction of symbolic elements of the Indo-Pakistan relations changed in selected films *Veer Zaara*, released 2004 and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, released 2015?

The Independence of India resulted in the creation of a new state, Pakistan, and a newly established border, which soon became a topic in the Hindi film industry. This Thesis deals with border crossing aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations. The selected films *Veer Zaara* (dir. Yash Chopra, 2004) and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (dir. Kabir Khan, 2015) recognize cultural and religious differences that create barriers between India and Pakistan. The films were well accepted in both states, in contrary to most Hindi films on this subject, which were banned in Pakistan.

The screenshots and dialogues were analyzed using the film analysis method combined with Borderland Studies. Under Cultural Studies the importance and meaning of the films were examined.

Political circumstances have changed during the eleven-year gap between the release of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. This can be observed in the selected films as a moderate change in the depiction of practical aspects (especially visa and border crossing issues) of the historical development of state affairs in Indo-Pakistan relations.

As a by-product of this analysis, it is also observed that the depiction of Indo-Pakistan relationships became more humorous and friendly with time, resulting in increased popularity of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* in Pakistan.

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1. Introduction

“वह कहते है यह तेरा देश नहीं, फिर क्यों मेरे देश जैसा लगता है...वह कहते है मैं उस जैसा नहीं, फिर क्यों मुझ जैसा वह लगता है...” *They say that this is not my country, then why does it look like my country...he says that I am not like him, then why does he look like me...* (Veer Zaara, 3:06:27- 3:06:45)

An innocent Sikh, after 22 years sitting in a jail in Pakistan due to sacrificing his identity for the honor of a Pakistani girl, finally gets his freedom and identity back. After being released, Veer (Shah Rukh Khan) gave a speech with these words in front of the Pakistani court. This scene of Shah Rukh Khan, standing in front of the court, giving the speech with melodramatic music in background, is one of the most famous scenes from the film *Veer Zaara*. Both protagonists Veer and Zaara are from Punjab. However, the province Punjab is divided - Veer comes from the Indian part and Zaara from the Pakistani part of Punjab. Through his monologue, Veer suggests that there is no reason for the troublesome relationship between the nations of India and Pakistan.

On the 15th of August, 1947, India became an independent state. Its freedom led to the partition of the land, which led to the creation of Pakistan. It was the Independence, followed by the Partition, which left a stamp of trauma on millions of people. It was a tragedy accompanied by massacres, rapes, abductions, conversions, millions of refugees which inaugurated war between the new states and caused the hatred in the relationship between Pakistan and India, which is visible still today. After the Independence of India, the relationship between India and Pakistan in the first 5 years was very tense. They were involved in three major cross-border wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971. One could argue that the Kargil face off of the 1990s represents a fourth major cross-border war, although some scholars don't consider it a major one. However, it produced further tensions in the relationship between the two nations (Bharat, Kumar 2008: ix). The Independence of India, also known as the Partition, left a traumatic memory that was recorded by known writers like Saadat Hasan Manto, Intezar Hussain and Chaman Nahal¹, who made notes of their experiences almost immediately after the Partition. The Partition and its aftermath has drawn

¹ See Saadat Hasan Manto (2008): *Bitter fruit: the very best of Saadat Hasan Manto*, New Delhi, Penguin Books India; Bhalla Alok, Adil Vishwamitar, Husain Intizar (2004): *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories*. Oxford University Press; Chaman Nahal (1975): *Azadi* (Freedom). Arnold-Heinemann & Boston Houghton Mifflin.

a significant amount of attention in the Indian academic community since 1997, which marked 50 years of independence for India and Pakistan. The main topics that were analyzed were the political aspects of the Partition, gender perspectives on the Partition, the Partition and memory, and representations of the Partition in literature. This literature is known as the Partition literature, but almost nothing came from the cinema industries about this topic. It is understandable that people didn't want to talk about the whole drama that happened during the Partition, and they especially didn't want to see it on the cinematic screens. Nevertheless, after this dreadful event, "India had no museum, memorial or designated site commemorating the partition that gave birth to the two nations" (Bhatia, 2017:1). We can say that until 2016, in October when The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT) initiated The Partition Museum Project, India had only novels and films that were remembering the nation of this historical event. This was the world's first Partition Museum, established at Amritsar's Town Hall. The development of The Partition Museum Project was driven also by the need to educate young people about the Partition. "The stories are important...We need to document them for the future generations" (Ibid.). After seven decades of the Partition, this museum is the first one that presents the memorial of this event. Nevertheless, one could claim that stories, novels and films as well have been a part of the historical heritage and collective memory of the Partition and its aftermath. Cinema, especially, in India has its popularity between the societies, with its presentation of the historical events' influences, the recognition and memory of the Independence of India as well. Therefore, the importance of the nexus of film, history and collective memory is presented in this thesis.

In the earlier days of cinema, shortly after the Independence, the topic of films was concentrated on the Indian nation-building, with references to the makers of modern India: Gandhi, Nehru and Shastri (Bharat & Kumar, 2008: ix). But remarks on the violence and trauma of the Partition and the process that led to the Partition and the other nation, Pakistan, was avoided. Nevertheless, after a while, not only did historians and writers took the role of a historiographer to portray of the Partition and its aftermath, but also the biggest film industry in the world – Bollywood, since some known filmmakers were inspired by the Partition. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the issue of the Partition and Indo-Pakistan relations started to be shown in Hindi cinema screens.

One of the main topics of the new Indo-Pakistan relation films is love. A love between a Sikh/Hindu man towards a Pakistani girl or a woman. Love became a main topic for Hindi cinema, which is used as an instrument that brings both nations together. We could say that

love is the easiest way for the public to identify with it and to show how to overcome the cultural and religious borders between the nations.

As the biggest film industry in the world, Bollywood produces over 200 films annually. With all Indian regional cinema together, India produces in excess of 900-1000 films each year (Dudrah, 2014:1). Nevertheless, Bollywood is most popular by the audience size, both nationally and internationally. Its films are viewed in all of South Asia and abroad. They depict the culture, religion, daily life and problems of the people in India. One of the important roles of the Bollywood industry is that it took a part in the support for cross-border peace between India and Pakistan. Although some Bollywood films are banned in Pakistan cinema halls, through piracy video routes, these Bollywood films have been also a part of Pakistani popular culture.

Due to the influence of Hindi cinema, it is important to be aware of what is filmed and what impressions/messages those films convey. One of the known scholars for Hindi cinema, Rachel Dwyer stated that: "...Hindi cinema, whose interpretations of India over the last two decades are, I argue, the most reliable guide to understanding the nation's dreams and hopes, fears and anxieties" (Dwyer, 2014:7).

In this thesis, I will deal with a critical analysis of the films. The films will be compared and will show the changes in the presentation of Indo-Pakistan relations. The focus will be especially on the presentation of the border, border crossing, cultural and social differences in India and Pakistan as well as religious symbolic themes that present a 'reunion' between both nations. The films used for analysis are *Veer Zaara* (dir. Yash Chopra, 2004) and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (dir. Kabir Khan, 2015).

1.1. Personal Motivation

During my studying, the esthetics of Hindi and Sanskrit languages caught my attention, which motivated me to study their structural properties and to master their use in practice, especially for Hindi. One of the appealing sources for practicing and improving my Hindi were Hindi films. After watching them over and over, just to improve my Hindi, I started realizing that in order to gain a deeper understanding, one needs to analyze not only the grammatical structure and vocabulary, but the body language and facial expressions as well. The essence of the Hindi language is properly understood when considered together with the gestures and other subtleties of expression. The interest in language only through Hindi films soon developed into interest in Hindu society in general, which was an expected consequence of analyzing aspects of films.

Since the subject of my bachelor's thesis was Partition memories, it was natural for me to search for its reappearance in films. In the BA thesis, my main focus was on the literature, especially on the Anis Kidwai book, *In Freedom's Shade*. As I have already done research on the topic of Partition, my idea for my Master thesis was to extend it towards Hindi films.

One would think that the depiction of relations between India and Pakistan had already been used-up in the Hindi cinema, but suddenly on the 17th July 2015, a new film was released, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Its portrayal of Indo-Pakistan relations, symbolically presented in the example of the two individual life paths of a Hindu male and a Pakistani girl, contains some examples of common prejudices and differences in Indian and Pakistani society. We could also see similar topics with a similar presentation of a society in the second film, *Veer Zaara*, released in 2004. Both films are chosen, among other reasons, because of their acceptance on both sides of the border, India and Pakistan.

1.2. Research Question and Hypothesis

This Master's Thesis deals with the representation of Indo-Pakistan relations in Hindi cinema. The depiction of Indo-Pakistan relations in the films, *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* provide a valuable opportunity for an analysis of differences and similarities in the Indo-Pakistan relations, which they share together. Both films deal with the border-crossing thematic in their own way. Since they were released in different periods, the following research question arises naturally:

To which extent has the form of the plot and the depiction of symbolic elements Indo-Pakistan relations changed in the selected movies, *Veer Zaara*, released 2004 and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, released 2015?

Throughout my analysis, the main research question is split into the following three sub-questions, which are answered separately for each film:

- How are the borders between the Indian and Pakistani countries, cultures and religions shown and what similarities between both countries are presented?
- How is Pakistan, as a state, presented in these films?
- What kind of message about the Indo-Pakistan relation may Bollywood convey to the audience?

The gap of eleven years between the releases of the selected films influenced the depiction of various aspects of the Indo-Pakistan relations. In this case, it is interesting to see to what extent the films changed their depiction, with what kinds of emotions, dialogues, pictures and music they are dealing with. Both similarities, as well as differences, in the depiction will be compared. It is important to note the criteria of the selected films that were chosen for the analysis. The criteria are:

- The films should be released in the 21st century and screened from Bollywood.

I have chosen 21st century films because the topic of Indo-Pakistan relations is not fresh and new, as it was immediately after the Partition time. Therefore, it is interesting to see how the Hindi cinema portrays this topic on screens after the time of violence and tragedy has passed away.

- The films should be hits in both countries.
- They should be officially released in Pakistan.

Most of the films on this topic are banned in Pakistan. However, the selected films *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* were officially shown in Pakistani cinema and are very well accepted by the audience.

- The films should present the differences and similarities between both nations and the way they deal with them.
- The conflict of the Indo-Pakistan border and a presentation of the animosity between the two countries should be shown.
- There should be a gap between the releases of both films. This criteria is important in order to see how the depiction on this topic has changed over time.

Veer Zaara and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* fulfill all of the above-mentioned criteria. Since *Veer Zaara* was a big hit and won the hearts of neighbors, the Bollywood industry extended its audience and releases to another well-accepted film, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, released only two years ago.

Another important aspect which should be taken into consideration is the political situation in India during the release of the films. The political situation in India has changed in these

eleven years. In order to pull the parallel between state politics and the depiction of state relations on the cinematic screens, a brief survey on the political situation between India and Pakistan during the film releases is required.

After careful study of the situations in the films and taking the political situation into account, I form the hypothesis:

The depiction of the analogous situation encountered in one film and in the other reflects some practical aspects of the historical development of state affairs in Indo-Pakistan relations.

Various films with the topic of Indo-Pakistan relations that came out between *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* were not officially shown in Pakistan because of their lack of respect towards the Pakistani state. Due to the humorous way of dealing with this complex relationship, without offending any nation, *Bajrangi* won the hearts of Pakistanis. It can be interpreted that the sensitive and traumatic time of the Partition has been left behind in the new generations and, therefore a new genre on this topic found fruitful ground. Since Bollywood extended its audience with this film, one could also make a second hypothesis:

Through a rather positive or neutral depiction of Pakistan, furthermore love stories and comedies about the complex relationship between India and Pakistan, the Bollywood industry is trying to find more audience in Pakistan as well.

Stereotypes, border crossing problems, societal differences, love, etc. are portrayed either in a dramatic or in a humorous way. Nevertheless, cinema is one of the most popular cultures in the lives of people in India and Pakistan, and as such takes a major part in forming the opinions and perceptions of an average Indian.

1.3. Aim and Relevance

India is the country with the most films produced per year in the world. Over 1000 films are made in the various Indian film industries (Dudrah, 2014:1). Going to the cinema and watching a film in India influences the reality of the audience, to a certain extent. Films portray social identities and cultural differences of India and Pakistan, showing how they can be crossed through love. Academics and filmmakers have become more conscious of the importance of cinema. "Cinema is considered as the most powerful visual media, which needs

to be studied for its presentation of the stereotypes, constructions and deconstructions of tradition” (Bharat & Kumar, 2008: xi).

Therefore, a film analysis is an important medium of popular culture to gain more knowledge and understanding of the way a society thinks, acts and desires to be. They don’t show the real world, but deep in the plotline, certain truths about social behaviors are hidden and enable viewers to notice similarities to their own lives.

The relationship between India and Pakistan in Hindi cinema has already been an interesting topic for scientific film analysis, nevertheless, since the Mumbai film industry is active in producing the films, we can see development on this topic. It is the relationship of self- versus other that is used to create a feeling of belonging to one group in comparison to another. In the book *Bollywood travels*, Rajinder Dudrah analyses two popular films, *Veer Zaara* and *Main Hoon Na*, specifically for the presentation and interpretation of the ‘borders’ between India and Pakistan. He questions the use of the term border as a boundary and differentiation of the Indian and the Pakistani identities (Dudrah, 2012:17). Dudrah’s book had an impact on this thesis. Although this topic has already been interesting for the scientific research, it remains interesting to look closer at it since Hindi cinema didn’t stop with the production of films on this topic. Literature of *Veer Zaara* is vast, however there are not many published papers and articles regarding *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* due to its recent release. Both films got mostly positive critiques from both states and were officially released in Pakistan.

1.4. Methods

This thesis deals with film analysis and comparison of the films *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Film analysis is used as the method for this thesis, accompanied with the literature research that provided the necessary information required for carrying out research from a cultural theoretical perspective. The Cultural Studies scholars, especially those in cultural media are cited to provide the importance of the cinematic culture. Further theories will be on the Borderland studies, since the main concentration of the film analysis will be on the border and borderlands in films.

Main references for the film analysis are Werner Faulstich, *Grundkurs Filmanalyse* and Hickethier, Knut, *Film und Fernsehenanalyse*. These authors provide useful guidance for the film analysis in the technical part, such as camera settings, character analysis as well as the transmission of film messages. As Werner Faulstich describes, film analysis is used to find something new about the film; it is not only the discussion of the film plot that is important

(Faulstich, 2013:23). There is an inherent sociological aspect of the film, best understood by the hermeneutical approach. It helps to understand the meaning of a certain subject or story.

“Filme müssen analysiert werden weil es sich beim Spielfilm um ein emotionales Erlebnis, eine Art Traum handelt, aus dem man gleichsam erwacht, wenn der Film zu Ende ist und das Licht im Kino langsam wieder hell wird. Wie im Traum äußert sich auch im Spielfilm über die Identifikation und Projektion das Unterbewußte, das Verdrängte: Ängste, Wunschvorstellungen usw...” (Faulstich, 2013:23).

The technique of the screenshot analysis alongside dialogue is used. Selected sequences and shots will be used to analyze specific traditions, emotions and border presentation. Shots are sequences of pictures and the smallest unit of a film, as Gray describes, “Shots were then put together in a system to create sequences, like words are put together in a sentence using grammar and syntax, and thus to create meaning” (Gray, 2010:56). Sequences are scaled regarding their content, time, certain places and certain aspects of the development of the story. The screenshots are used to catch a part of a sequence. The sequences, out of which screenshots are taken, will be determined based on the plot and the characteristic point of view. Content analysis of selected sequences and shots relevant to the research question, that is, specifically referring to the border presentation and differences between India and Pakistan, will be given. Dialogue gives precise information on how the character feels while the screenshots intensify the images, making it easier to picture it. The screenshots are analyzed from a character-centric perspective: where exactly are the characters positioned, which camera angle does the shot use to provide information about the relationship of the characters to each other and what colors are utilized to highlight the characters. This technical part of the screenshots, such as camera position and light build one of the main impressions on the viewers.

Existing literature on the film *Veer Zaara* is used as well. The analysis of Rajinder Dudrah and Nirmal Kumar is presented. However, since no scientific analysis of *Bajirangi Bhaijaan* exists it is carried out by myself.

1.5. State of Research

Scientific literature on various aspects of Hindi cinema is vast, as well as the literature on cinema and film in Cultural Studies. A brief introduction on the importance of cinema and films is provided, referencing known scholars of Cultural Studies: Nelson et al 1992 and Stuart Hall 1996. Furthermore, a part of the Cultural Studies, media and cinema is examined referencing Gordon Gray 2010 and Douglas Kellner 1995. Through these literatures the

development of cultural studies and cinema as powerful media, which influences people's lives and perceptions, is presented.

An introduction to Hindi cinema is examined in this thesis, using the works of Rachel Dwyer 2014, Claus Tieber 2009, Rajinder Dudrah 2006/2012, Nihalani and Chatterjee 2003 as well as Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel 2002 and Tejasvini Ganti 2012. These scholars received credit for their contribution to the Hindi cinema analysis, deepening the understanding of the cinematic culture of India. Their focus lies on the Hindi cinema-- or Bollywood industry, described as the most successful film industry in the world.² Chatterjee and Nihalani pronounced, "There is nothing in the world quite like Hindi cinema. It is a unique, inimitable brand of cinema..." (Nihalani & Chatterjee, 2003:3). Their *Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema* takes us to the world of Hindi cinema from its beginnings to its leading role in the world of celluloid. Furthermore, an interesting contribution to the films and Cultural Studies with the main focus on the Bollywood industry, was made by Rajinder Dudrah in his book, *Bollywood: Sociology Goes to the Movies* (Dudrah, 2006), which explains the relationship between cinema, culture and society with the help of media studies, Cultural Studies and sociology.

In the theoretical part, this thesis examines the studies on border and borderlands. Willem van Schendel and Michiel Baud shaped the science of Borderland Studies in their article *Toward a Comparative History of Borderland*, which is used as the main reference on the topic. Furthermore, the articles of the scholars David Newman 2006, Dhananjay Tripathi 2015, Noel Parker & Nick Vaughan-Williams 2012 as well as Navtej Purewal 2003 are introduced. The literature with the focus on the Indo-Pakistan border and borderlands were easy to find since this border has drawn the attention of the scholars from the respective field. Navtej Purewal with *The Indo-Pak border: displacements, aggressions and transgressions* analyses the importance and value of the Indo-Pakistan border.

An overview of the Partition films and their depiction of diverse aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations is examined. One can find various scholars whose focus lies in different aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations. Both countries have been involved in a cross-border confrontation, which caused the tense relationship that can be felt still today. Violence and bitter experiences during the Partition, Indo-Pakistan wars, social and cultural confrontations, as well as a message for peace and better understanding between the two countries, became the main topic on cinematic screens.

² See Claus Tieber 2009, Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel 2002 and Rajinder Dudrah 2008/2012.

One of the significant articles on this topic, *Revisiting 1947 through Popular Cinema: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan*, written by Viswanath and Malik tries to fulfil the gap in the cinematic interpretation of the Partition events. They note that the “defining moment of Partition has been the focus of the academic attention in India since 1997, a year that marked 50 years of independence for India and Pakistan” (Viswanath & Malik, 2009:61). The Hindi film industry draws its own history from the year 1913 with mythological and religious films. From the 1960s a new topic, Partition of India, occurred in Hindi industry. Various scholar’s articles and books on the Partition focusing on the political and historical issue, as well as on the fiction literature and personal experiences, of this event can be found. Since the Hindi cinema industry started with the depiction of this event, a new approach on the Partition occurred in scientific circles. Viswanath and Malik examined how cinema deals with the violent depiction of the Partition and to what extent the cinema can provide a realistic view of the Partition. They also show a development of the various genres surrounding the Partition through time. Their conclusion is that popular cinema on the Partition “may be understood as one of the several ways of doing history” (Viswanath & Malik, 2009:69). As cinema can be seen as doing history, it can also be included in the theories on collective memory. Since the films on Indo-Pakistan relations are dealing with the historical events of the Partition of India, they are evoking memories of the Partition. Therefore, this thesis includes the theories of a collective memory using works from Maurice Halbwachs 1992, Jan Assmann 1992, Parthe Mitter 2013 and Misztal Barbar 2004.

Meenakshi Bharat and Nirmal Kumar, with their book *Filming the Line of Control*, chart out the history of Indo-Pakistan relations presented in the cinema. The book studies ways in which the Line of Control is constructed and represented in films. Through various articles from different writers, Bharat and Kumar present “how films are reflective of the tensions that simmer along the line of control, and how cinema ultimately becomes a means to understand the complex agenda of forging a sense of ‘nationality’ and the concept of nationhood in films and how it sometimes moves away from political rhetoric to iterate the need to maintain links of love and common heritage” (Bharat & Kumaar, 2008: xi).

Although we can find many various films on this topic, Nihalani and Chatterjee criticize the “perfunctory look in the Partition films” (Nihalani & Chatterjee, 2003:70). According to these authors, the Hindi cinema could have done much more as the Partition was one of the most tragic events in Indian history. This kind of perfunctory nature of dealing with the traumatic event is not surprising, since most of the directors were refugees themselves and this topic would be too personal and traumatic to show it minutely on the cinematic screens.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how Hindi cinema introduced this topic and inspired many scholars in its analysis. While researching the Partition films, one stumbles upon the various aspects of this traumatic event and its presentation in the films. Dudrah's book *Bollywood Travels* contributed to this topic as well. Although the book's main focus does not lie on Indo-Pakistan relations in the cinema, one finds an important and significant article on the analysis of *Veer Zaara* and *Main Hoon Na*.³

With the Independence of India, the question of religious ethnicity, terrorism, gender and citizenship arose. One of the scholars explores these aspects in the visual culture in her essay *Visual culture and violence: inventing intimacy and citizenship in recent South Asian cinema*, written by Kavita Daiya. In it she analyses films *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* and *Fanaa* with the attention to the female figure, and *Sarfarosh* with the focus on the ideal citizenship and the nation-state. The focus is shifted towards a presentation of good vs. bad Muslims as well, thus connecting Partition to contemporary terrorism in India (Daiya, 2011:590). This kind of presentation of Muslims in film draws the attention of some scholars who especially focused their study on Muslim society and nation in the films. Yacoobali analyses the position of Muslims in the Indian state through the film *Sarfaroosh*. She explores mainly how the Hindi cinema "otherings"⁴ the Muslim society. She emphasizes the importance of the film and its establishment of a natural order of things through the metaphor of *ghar* (home) such that all identity and culture can only be naturally located in a territorially rooted homeland (Yacoobi, 2002:183). Maidul Islam criticizes the Bollywood industry for its presentation of Muslims as terrorist, anti-national, villain or anti-social characters. "Hindi cinema as a popular cultural medium generally disseminates the idea of mistrust and suspicion towards Muslims" (Islam, 2007:405). On the other hand, Ganti believes that the Hindi industry "became one of the few sites in India where Muslims are not marginal, but actually enjoy some prominence and success" (Ganti, 2004:23). Some of the most popular stars, as well as directors, screenwriters or lyricists are Muslims. Not only did the presentation of Muslims in film occupy the scholars but also the presentation of the Sikh community. Singh Chanda explores through *Amu* and *Khamosh Pani* the depiction of a religious identity and gender and finds that they are deeply embroiled in Indian history and nation building. She focused on two main protagonists in the film who are challenging the religious identities thrust upon them, Sikhism and Islam.

³ *Veer Zaara* analysis is carried out in the fourth chapter. All the films mentioned are examined in detail in the third Chapter *The Hindi film industry and Indo- Pak relationship through films*.

⁴ Yacoobali uses the term "otherings" to indicate a society of Muslim separation from the Hindu majority.

Bollywood films are not the only films that have dealt with the Partition. Sundar explores a Punjabi film, *Khamosh Pani*, with the focus on the soundtrack. She shows how the film uses sound and music to write the history of religious violence from the perspective of women survivors (Sundar, 2010:277-290). The wars between India and Pakistan opened another aspect of their relations, a topic presented in the various films and analyzed by Adrian Athique 2008.

The current political situation in India, as well as Indo-Pakistan relations during the releases of the films, should be taken into consideration while analyzing the films. Kasturi Dadhe shows how Hindi cinema is influenced by Hindutva⁵ ideology. Since the 1990s, two major genres of films have proven to be successful –romantic family films and films that address issues of terrorism, partition or borderline infiltration (Dadhe, 2009:10). She shows that both kinds of genres address the Hindutva ideology in the form of family or nation building. “Films like *Roja* (1992) and *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001) have distinctly projected communal divisions in the name of a patriotism, which in turn involved bashing and criticizing Muslims or proclaiming Islam a religion of fanaticism” (Dadhe, 2009:10). In the 1990s, the Muslim character was portrayed as a villain or a terrorist who is against India. Generally, this ‘bad’ Muslim character is coupled with another ‘good’ Muslim who is a nationalist and fights for India, like Salim in *Sarfarosh*. If the film is a classic Hindu-Muslim love story, the hero is a Hindu (*Veer Zaara*, *Gadar*, *Bumbay*...). As Farouque Shaikh puts it, the hero is invariably Hindu because they want to release the film to a larger audience. The majority had to be catered to (Shaikh, 2005)⁶.

The genre of the films plays an important role in the depiction of this relationship. Various genres invoke different emotions in the audience that influence the nature of a desired message of the film. “Melodrama and the ‘national family’ are cinematic representations of Hindu nationalism as a discourse that seeks to integrate a historical memory of trauma (generally partition) into a purified space of the Hinduised nation” (Dadhe, 2009:11). The melodrama genre plays an important role in the depiction of Indo-Pakistan relations. This genre is used by a majority of films. One possible explanation is that through the melodrama, emotions such as nostalgia and compassion towards the protagonists are easily awakened in the audience. Nevertheless, newly released films on this topic do not necessarily belong to the

⁵ Hindutva can be understood as the predominant form of Hindu nationalism. See Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1923): *Hindutva. Who is a Hindu?* Veer Savarkar rakashan, Savarkar Sadan, Bombay 28.

⁶ <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2005/07/02/stories/2005070203520100.htm>

melodrama genre. Hindu cinematography turned its attention towards other genres, such as comedy.

Literature on the chosen example *Veer Zaara* is vast. They are references on this film from the same books about Bollywood industry mentioned above as well as specific articles on this topic. Therefore, the film analysis of *Veer Zaara* was supported by the works of Rajinder Dudrah, Meenakshi Bharat and Nirmal Kumar. Their analysis focuses on the physical audio and technical presentation of the border in the film. However, there is not much literature on *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* since the film is newly released. It consists mostly of online reviews. Therefore, this thesis is the first work containing analysis of the second film with respect to border crossing focus.

1.6. Outline of the Chapters

The first part of this thesis introduces the theoretical approach. It deals with theories and definitions essential for the thesis topic and the films. First theories on the popular culture and social meaning of the cinema will be examined borrowing methods of the field of Cultural Studies. Furthermore, the significance of the border and borderlands is explored in detail. In this part the studies on borders and borderlands will be taken into consideration by drawing a parallel on the Indo-Pakistan borders. The next chapter introduces the Hindi film industry, referencing the most important aspects of the Hindi films. A historical summary summarizes a cinematic work that has been done in the Hindi film industry portraying Indo-Pakistan relations. Here the attention is drawn also to the regional film industries, since some of them have made remarkable films on the topic. Through the presentation of films on the Indo-Pakistan relations, a brief historical background as well as the importance of the cinema and collective memory will be introduced in this chapter. The second part of the thesis, and the most important one, deals with the film analysis. The first subchapter contains a short introduction to the plots and details of the films *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Furthermore, the analysis of the films is divided in two subchapters, the first one deals with the similarities and differences in the portrayal of Indians and Pakistanis. The screenshots of a depiction of India and Pakistan and religious differences are highlighted and analyzed. The second subchapter is focused on the border and border crossings in films. Not only is the physical border considered, but the mental, personal inner struggle of the characters is examined as well. The last subchapter of the film analysis presents a message for peace conveyed in both films. The screenshots, as well as the lyrics of the songs and dialogues are analyzed. The analysis of the films is followed by the comparison of the films in the last

chapter. Here, the depiction of various aspects, their similarities and differences, in Indo-Pakistan relations in both films are analyzed. This last chapter provides important information, identifying the change in the depiction of complex aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations, influenced by the gap of eleven years between the releases of these two films.

In this thesis, the film titles, translated Hindi dialogues from the films and Hindi transliterated words are in a cursive script. For the transliteration of Devnāgarī script, I have used a standard system for transliterating Hindi words presented with diacritics. The names of the protagonists and film titles are not transliterated. They are written in roman type without diacritics.

2. Theoretical Approach

This chapter examines the theories relevant for the core of this thesis. The importance of film in Cultural Studies, as well as its role in cultural conveyance is discussed. The relationship between film and history, the importance of the film and its presentation of historical events is also taken into consideration in this chapter. Further on, the studies on border and borderlands will be introduced for the understanding of the border and border crossing depiction in the selected films.

2.1. Cultural Studies and Films

“We are immersed from cradle to grave in a media and consumer society and thus it is important to learn how to understand, interpret, and criticize its meanings and messages.” (Kellner 1995:1)

Newspaper, television, cinema and films surround our lives in this modern century. Through the various rhetorical styles these media transmit a certain message that influences the nation and the whole society. Therefore, just as Kellner above mentioned, it is important to be aware and to understand and criticize its meaning and messages.

The study of film belongs to the discipline of Cultural Studies, more precisely, it can be selected under the category of media, which belongs to the Cultural Studies as well. The definition of Cultural Studies has multiple meanings. It is not easy to define it, as well as the culture itself. Since the term culture is a central concept of these studies, the definition of culture has to be explained. Originally, the term culture derives from the word ‘colere,’ which is connected to agriculture, and means ‘to crop the harvest.’ Since then, the term culture has been defined and discussed by various renowned anthropologists and sociologists. Stuart Hall explained: “Culture is one of the most difficult concepts in the human and social sciences and there are many different ways of defining it” (Hall, 1997:2). William defined culture as “a way of life, material intellectual and spiritual” (Williams, 1976:1). It is hard to grasp the term in one sentence since it is present in the everyday life of human beings (Ibid, 1976:16). Culture explained by Burnett Tylor, as well as by Stuart Hall, is a complex term which includes a various field of the society, such as knowledge, belief, arts, laws, customs, etc. (Tylor 1871:1, Hall, 1997:2). Bennett mentions the main aspects of culture, defined by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, as an integral part of social life (Bennett, 2015:546). Therefore, it can be said that people create their societies and identities through culture. It shapes the identity of the nation. As Hall explained, the culture is involved in the exchange of meaning between the members of a society or a group. “To say that two people

belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other” (Hall, 1997:2). In this process, the media culture is involved as well. Before turning to the media and film, the definition of Cultural Studies will be explained.

According to Nelson, “Cultural studies is thus committed to the study of the entire range of a society’s arts, beliefs, institutions and communication practices” (Nelson et al., 1992:4). In the year 1964, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was founded in Birmingham under Richard Hoggard and was followed by Stuart Hall, who became the director a few years later. The aim was to research the cultural forms, practices and institutions and their relation to society and social changes. They demonstrated a wide range of subjects that fall under the category of Cultural Studies, such as media studies, racism, feminism, popular culture, etc. (Connell & Hilton, 2015:287). Rodman explains that there is no fix or particular text belonging to Cultural Studies (Rodman, 2015:55). Cultural Studies concentrate on the relationship between forms of popular culture (cinema, television, advertising, etc.) and wider issues such as political ideology, class or gender. “The study of cinema can provide us with significant insight into areas of a society of a different time or place that might otherwise be difficult, or even impossible, to access” (Gray, 2010: x). Cinema and film are regarded as a part of society (Gray, 2010:140). Cultural Studies began to analyze media as a form of a text. Here the text includes cultural products like cinema.

Film in the Cultural Studies is a topic which is interesting for this thesis. Film is a part of popular culture as well, but it is rather analyzed in the category of media culture. Media culture consists of films print media, newspapers, television, etc. It is a culture of the image and often includes sights and sounds. According to Kellner, “Media culture provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, or sexuality, of us and them” (Kellner, 1995:1). It shapes the view of the world as positive or negative, moral or evil. Kellner examines ways that media culture intersects with political and social struggles and helps to shape everyday life, influencing how people think and behave, how they see themselves and other people, and how they construct their identities (Kellner, 1995:2). Media culture has an influence on society and its social and cultural life. According to Akbar Ahmad, cinema can be a legitimate metaphor for a society; the social values, group behavior, speech, and clothing in society is reflected in the cinema (Akbar, 1992:289). This can be employable for the Hindi cinema as well, as Ashish Nandy states, “Studying popular film is studying Indian modernity at its rawest, its crudities laid bare by the

fate of traditions in contemporary life and arts” (Nandy, 1999:7). The society is able to identify itself with the filmic world and to see their own social and cultural values. The film has an impact on reshaping the ideas of one nation, as Gillespie and Cheesman describes it, “...the media play a crucial role in circulating narratives and symbols of collective belonging and ‘othering’ that command loyalties, promote and sustain political conflicts, legitimate wars, and justify state violence” (Gillespie & Cheesman, 2002:127).

As described above, film and cinema reflect and influence a nation’s culture, society, ideas, etc. Film also has an impact on historians and the representation of historical events. Historical facts are usually represented through written documents, nevertheless some historians broke the chain of the 19th century and started to consider movies as a source of history, or rather as a different form of history (Deshpande, 2004:4456). One could not take every film as the historical source, therefore Deshpande describes two types of historical recreation. We have documentaries that provide the public with the exact dates and information of the past and on the other hand we have historical films, which are mainly fictional and do not present historical facts in detail (Deshpande, 2004:4457). Deshpande claims that such films concentrate more on the recreation of a human feelings in realistic social situations (Deshpande, 2004:4459). Love, humiliation, hatred, anger, emotional repression, etc. are emotions and experiences that can be shown through the films, but only inadequately through the written history. Further on, Rosenstone explains how fictional films, through the individual problems of the protagonists, tend to substitute itself for the solution of historical problems. “The personal becomes a way of avoiding the often difficult social problems pointed out by the film” (Rosenstone, 1995:55). Nevertheless, we have to take into consideration that what happens on the screen does not depict, but rather points out the events of the past. Film stands adjacent to written history, as it does to other forms of dealing with the past, such as memory and the oral tradition (Rosenstone, 1995:65).

In this case we have complex relations between India and Pakistan, which draws its animosity from the 1947 Partition of India. The Partition, Indo-Pakistan wars and their relationship in the aftermath have been written down by historians. The biographical accounts of the survivors, as well as the novels and films, refer to the history of the Partition of India that can also be considered as a kind of a historical document used to transmit the history to new generations. There is a number of films made on this topic with the various film genres, from thrillers, comedies, horrors to the melodramas, etc. Hindi films especially consist of more genres in one, which is known as a *masāla* film. *Masālā* means a blend of spices, applied to

films it means that it contains music, romance, action, comedy and drama. The cinematic presentation of Indo-Pakistan relations presents a historical event in its own way. In one of the interviews that was done by Vishwanath and Malik, people were saying that they became aware of killings and abductions during the Partition after they had watched films on that topic. They conclude that for the generations that were born after the Partition, “cinematic images are one of the most powerful ways by which the past is made available” (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:65). It can be said that some films are taking responsibility for the presentation of history. In the case of the Partition of India, they cannot be considered as valuable information about the truth of the event, but they cannot be taken as false either. We can say that films are presenting only a part of the historical event. They are usually focused on one of the aspects of the Partition, such as politics, migration, abduction, etc. Nevertheless, they awake the memory of the Partition. Therefore, film is reconstituted and revised memory, as Silbey presents it (Silbey, 2014:30). Film is considered as a reflection of past events as well as a construction of present understanding and consciousness. The film can present an exact place and time of the past events, these characterizations can be found in many films on the Partition. They mostly mention the exact date of the Independence of India, the 15th of August. We can see the film as a memory of the past, constructed by the director itself. They present a personal experience of the director himself (Silbey, 2014:31). These are very common in our case, since most of the directors experienced the Partition personally.

Most of the Partition films could not be categorized under some specific genre, since they include many different genres in one, from the historical genres and melodrama to comedies and romantics. Nevertheless, the dominant mode in which they are presented is the popular genre of melodrama. “In the melodrama, ideological conflicts are personalized through the drama of emotionally encumbered family situation” (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:67). Like in the films *The Partition* (2007) or *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001). Melodrama literally means ‘melos’ (music) + drama and is considered to be a hybrid of various sub-genres, like romantic drama, psychological thrillers, historical costume drama, and so on (Mercer & Shingler, 2004:4). Nevertheless, the melodrama genre has the ability to provoke strong emotions in the audience, from tears of sorrow and identification, to derisive laughter. Thomas explains that the Hindi film audience expects a kind of drama that shows a crisis and then resolves it within the moral order. So, the film has to have a moral universe to construct the resolution (Thomas, 1995:164).

This thesis deals with the selected films *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. The detailed historical facts are not highlighted in these films, but rather they show their influence on society and the resulting relationship of the two countries. The hatred and animosity between Hindus and Muslims, Pakistanis and Indians was caused by the Partition of India, so this is the most prominent cause of the complex relationship portrayed in the film. Both films cannot be categorized as historical films, because of the lack of historical facts mentioned in the film. Nevertheless, through the individual problems of the protagonists, the film portrays the social and cultural clash of the current situation in India and Pakistan, which is the result of the historical facts.

2.2. Border and Borderland Studies

“Borders not only join what is different, but also divide what is similar.”⁷

Borders and Borderland Studies build a wide, scientific discourse in various fields. They are briefly introduced with the main concentration on the Indo-Pakistan border. The border between these two states awoke the interest of scholars from various fields and gave enough space for its analysis in Borderland studies.

Firstly, I wish to introduce the terminology of borders, boundaries, and frontiers as many studies have dealt with the issue of defining these terms. In 1987, political geographer Prescott defined the boundary as the abstract line that separates states' territories. A frontier is a zone category and borders are areas adjacent to a territory (Prescott, 1987:13-14). His three terms are used more or less synonymously today and “border” has gradually become the dominant keyword. Furthermore, according to Newman and Paasi, boundaries and borders are “conceived as being no more than lines separating sovereign territories while frontiers were assumed to constitute the area in proximity to the border whose internal development was affected by the existence of the line” (Neewman & Paasi, 1998:189). However, there are two kinds of frontiers: the political one that is affected by the existence of the international boundary and the settlement frontier that describes “an uninhabited region lying within the state territory and representing the spatial margin of the state’s ecumene.” (ibid.). However, Van Schendel distinguishes boundaries and borders by claiming that “the term boundary is often used in discussion on the precise location of borders, but it has also a more general meaning, pointing the dividing line between different people and culture.” (Baud & van

⁷ Willem van Schendel, 2005:9.

Schendel, 1997:213). Newman and Paasi describe the same by claiming that boundaries may occur not only between territories, but also between groups that creates an “us” and “other” identity. (Newman & Paasi, 1998:191). I will adjust to these definitions and the definition of boundary that’s used in this thesis describing the cultural and religious separation between communities, in this case between Hindus and Muslims, as well as Indians and Pakistani.

The borders, during the 1950s -1970s were described as being physical and static lines under the influence of the politics of states. Borders can tell us much about states because they present a clear line between geography and politics (Schendel, 2005:3). Newman shows the different studies and their perspectives on borders. For example, for a sociologist and anthropologist, borders are abstract lines that make a distinction between groups described as “us/them, here/there, inside/outside”. Conversely, for geographers, territories remain a major focus in the study of borders. Furthermore, political scientists study the borders as the nature of power relations and the ability of one group to determine and perpetuate lines of separation (cf. Newman, 2006:146-147). Albeit many different studies across all disciplines focus on borders, determining the nature of groups. Another focus of border studies is the relationship between borders and identity formation. This is done through the process of the demarcation that not only marks the drawing of a line on the map or construction of a fence in the physical landscape, but also helps to determine the criteria of inclusion/exclusion, be they citizenship in a country, membership of a specific social or economic group, or religious affiliation. Regarding borders, some theorists have made a distinction between natural and unnatural borders according to the geography of the region. For example, rivers, watersheds, and mountains are often considered perfect natural borders. Other theorists have tried to do the same with unnatural borders like culture, ethnicity, and language. The differences in language and culture have often been manipulated in the service of nationalist ideologies. In some cases, the people from the “other” sides cannot be recognized through the clothing, language, or behavior. A good example would be the border between Bangladesh and India, formerly part of one state and separated by religion.⁸

Borders have an impact on the people living around border zones, or borderlands. Borderland studies is quite a young discipline in comparison to a long tradition of border studies. As Dudrah explains, “if borders are physical construct(s), then borderlands are more contested

⁸ For the closer analysis of the border between India and Bangladesh, see “*The Bengal Borderland*”, Willem van Schendel, 2005.

spaces of, around and in between the borders.” (Dudrah, 2012:26). These areas of borderlands are usually studied within the contexts of conflict, separation, and partition as contrasted with peace, contact, and unification. In this, the studies on the Partition of India fits very well.

Newman defines borderlands further as, “Borderlands do exist around borders, but they vary in their intensity and the extent to which they equally affect people on both sides of the border” (Newman, 2006:150). For example, the people that live in Punjab near the border between India and Pakistan are more influenced from the border situation between these two countries than the people who live in Delhi. However, the exact extent of the borderlands around borders cannot be measured. According to Anzaldua, “a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (Anzaldua, 1987:3). Willem explains borderlands as a “zone, or region, within which lies an international border, and a borderland society is a social and cultural system straddling that border “ (van Schendel, 2005:8). He deals mainly with the border separating India, East Pakistan (Bangladesh from 1971), and Burma which he calls a Bengal Borderland. He explores how new borderlands take shape and what impact they have on the relationship between borderlanders and their states. His thesis is that the history of borderlands is determined by the spatial dimension which are geographically defined areas that can be drawn on a map (Ibid, 1997:221).

The questions are also: How far can we extend the territory of the borderland inland from the border, and when can we say that the influence of the border declines in importance to the people? These question can be best approached by acknowledging the social networks in borderlands. Van Schendel and Baud define three geographical zones:

1. The border heartland – where social networks are shaped directly by the border
2. The intermediate borderland – the region in which the influence of the border is always present, but it is rather weak
3. The outer borderland – in which only under some specific circumstances the effect of the border is felt

They also distinguish the five stages in the life-cycle of borders. The first stage is called “infant borderland” which exists just after the border line has been drawn. The people on both sides of the border are connected by close kinship and the preexisting social and economic networks are still visible. This border is still not a social reality, but rather a potential one. The second stage, “adolescent borderland”, is the border that is now an undeniable reality, however, its genesis is still recent, and many people remember the period before it existed. The third stage becomes a firm social reality, “the adult borderland” where social networks

are now accepted and follow the contours of the border. Cross-border social and kin relations may continue to exist, but they became scarcer and are increasingly viewed as problematic. These second and third stages could relate to the Indian borderlands. For example, there are still enough people that have their relatives on either side of the borders and that can remember the period before borders existed. Furthermore, the “declining borderland” is the result of a border losing its political importance both to the governments of the state as well as the population of the borderlands. This process can be violent as well, and as a last stage one can define the “defunct borderland” or the “relict boundary”. This is the time when the border is abolished and the physical barriers between the two sides of the borders are removed.

In the context of India and Pakistan, the border demarcation has been done by Sir Cyril Radcliff who arrived in India on the 8th of July 1947 and got the duty to carry out the division of the Punjab and Bengal Provinces. He had no knowledge of the country and was under time-sensitive pressure, so he did not manage to visit the areas which he was dividing. It is reasonable to believe that if he had been given more time, he could have made a better assessment of where exactly the borders should run (Talbot & Singh, 2009:154). The important thing to emphasize here is that the borders were officially known two days after Independence, which created a lot of uncertainty among the people and confusion about which place belonged to which country (Pandey, 2002:42). On the 15th of August 1947, India celebrated the first day of Independence from British rule. On the same day, the event of Partition occurred, which is marked by the mass migration and erupted violence in the provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Two states, India and Pakistan, two nations’ theories based on the religions of Hinduism and Islam were separated in the same night of their Independence. The last British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, interceded for a fast separation of the South Asian population according to the religion. The boundaries between India and Pakistan were established based on Hindu and non-Hindu majorities in the regions of India, which gave birth to East and West Pakistan. The Partition led to enormous social dislocation which was unforeseen. The mass migration presented huge problems because although some migration has been voluntary, most of it was a response to violence. It was the world’s most unprecedented population exchange; between 200,000 and two million people died, almost 100,000 women were abducted and raped, and around fifteen million people became refugees (Talbot & Singh, 2009:2). We see that the Independence and the Partition of India was characterized by the political debate, nevertheless, it had a huge impact on the lives of millions of Indian citizens. History, movies, songs, and poems bring back the memories of the

division of India. Through those scientific and popular cultural depictions of the Partition, more light was shed on its actual dynamics. Although historians have the intention to undermine the significance of the Partition for the central structures of Indian society (Pandey, 2002:7), the accounts of the survivors reveal the turmoil and violence deeply engraved in the history of the Indian national entity⁹.

Today, India and Pakistan are divided by a border which represents a geographical line between two different political systems, religions, and nations. The borders between India and Pakistan are demarcated by fences, flags, walls, and other landmarks. Through these precautions, both states are able to maintain the control over their territory. If the relations are strained, then the state can use their networks to pull down their neighbor. This is mostly the case in Kashmir, where we can find a repeated war between India and Pakistan ongoing today. “Borders do not only ‘exist’ as lines on maps but became symbols through continual rituals performed at the border, such as the showing of passports, the confessionary matrix at the airport, and the removal of clothing” (Parker & Vaughan, 2012:729). Purewal defines the Indo-Pakistan border as a “constructed, monitored and contested boundary” (Purewal, 2003:540). It also shows that this border has physical and symbolic significance of the movement and displacement of people, processes and ideas (Purewal, 2003:540).

The creation of a border between India and Pakistan is connected to the immense feeling of human suffering although the freedom struggle remained predominantly non-violent (Tripathi, 2015:196). The conflicts over the borders are continuous territorial disputes. There is an unresolved issue of the borders which caused the creation of several lines of separation like the “Line of Control” in Kashmir. It is easy for the people of Pakistan or India to travel to Europe but hard to cross the borders between their neighboring countries, especially after 9/11 with the beginning of the “War on terror”, when the already closed and heavily guarded borders in South Asia became more rigid¹⁰. Some initiatives have been taken to normalize life around the borders, such as opening the Wagah border. Each day at sunset, at the check post

⁹ Urvashi Bhutalia’s work „*The Other Side of Silence*“, sought to individualize these killings through interviews with the people who had witnessed or did some killings themselves. The important contribution of these interviews is that those killings were not seen anymore only through the numbers but through the narrative accounts which gave them a human dimension and contributed to the advancement of human rights.

¹⁰ “Borders in South Asia are closed, heavily guarded and regarded as essential lines depicting nationalism” (Tripathi, 2015:197).

at the Wagah border in Punjab, a ritual¹¹ is performed which is a symbol of border maintenance (Purewal, 2003:548).

In the picture below we can see the borders between India and East and West Pakistan established in 1947. Later out of East Pakistan emerged Bangladesh.

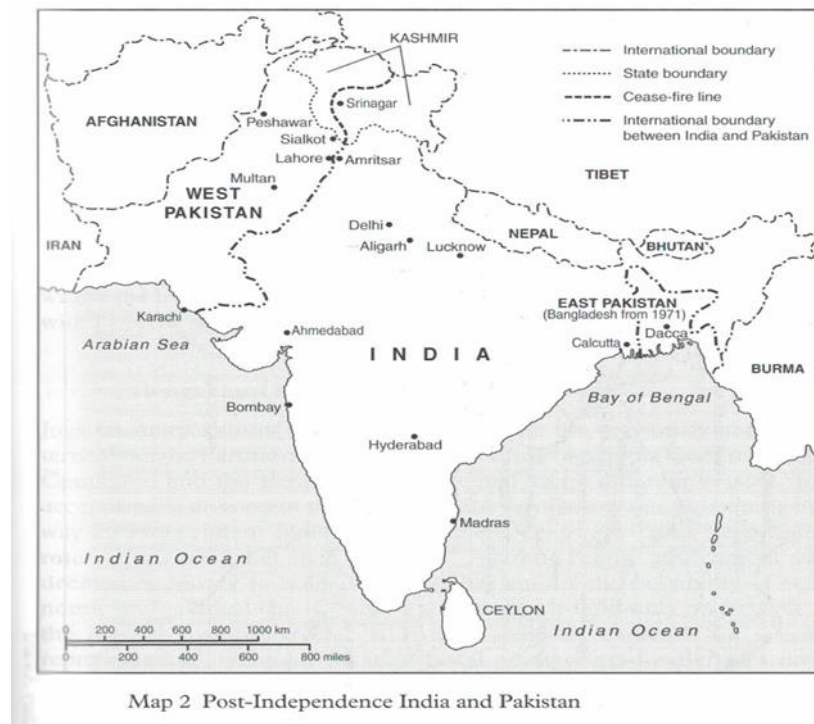


Fig. 1: Borders of India and Pakistan (Talbot & Singh, 2009:47)

The border between India and Pakistan covers nearly 3000 kilometers of land and divide the provinces of Sindh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kashmir, and Punjab. The border territorializes and nationalizes local populations and identities (Purewal, 2003:547). The symbolic and practical implication of the border exhibit both border aggressions, acts ensuring its sovereign status is maintained, and border transgression, and acts which defy or challenge the processes it symbolize. Although this border between India and Pakistan is an extensive land border, it offers only two places for a crossing – the pedestrian and vehicle crossing at Wagah and a few miles south at Attari, and a train track (Kalra & Purewal, 1999:55); they are both located in Punjab. For Indians and Pakistanis, the only possibility to cross is at the Attari train station, whereas the Wagah border is only for the international tourists possible.

¹¹ A description of the ritual see in the chapter “4.1.2. Border crossing”.

Going back to the opening quote of this section, one can conclude that borders divide people who are living on both sides who may have had a long, common history of cultural and social contact. At the same time, this shared border unites them in the experience of closeness to the border and dependence on it. Borders not only present the lines on the map, as many scholars already claimed, they are “consistent both in the terms of dividing lines between two states and also in the socio-political life of people in South Asia” (Tripathi, 2015:198).

In this thesis, border and borderland studies will be used in the chapter of the film analysis. In the selected films, we will see how these border and borderland theories are incorporated in the scenes of the films. Since both selected films depict the physical border as well as the cultural and religious boundaries, the theories mentioned in this chapter are applied in the film analysis.

The films not only show the physical border between India and Pakistan, but also the borders which the protagonists need to negotiate and overcome. Therefore, “the filmic text become attempts at illustrating borderland spaces through the particular lens of Bollywood cinema” (Dudrah, 2012:26). In *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we can see that the films create their own borderlands through their audio and visual style and show that while crossing a border may cause shifts in its boundaries, this does not necessarily result in its removal (Kalra & Purewal, 1999:56). Through the film analysis, we can see that “the boundary does not limit itself merely to the border area or landscape itself, but more generally manifests itself in social and cultural practices and legislation, as well as in films, novels, memorials, ceremonies, and public events” (Newman & Paasi, 1998:196).

3. The Hindi Film Industry and Indo-Pak Relationship Through Films

“We have many states in this country, all of them are Indian states, but each has its different culture, tradition and style.... There is one more state in this country, and that is Hindi cinema. And so Hindi cinema also has its own culture.” (Kabir 1999:34f)¹²

This part of the thesis focuses on the Hindi cinema, more specifically, Bollywood and its depiction of Indo-Pakistan relations in films. We can find many films on this topic as well as the various film genres that deal with the same topic. Some of them are called “Partition films”, and others are called “war films” or “over-cross border love stories”. However, in the end, all of them represent the differences and similarities between India and Pakistan in their own way. Bollywood is the most popular film production industry in India. Nevertheless, there are other regional film industries that have also been producing films depicting Indo-Pakistan relations which will be mentioned later in this chapter.

Bollywood, with its own colorful, melodic, and cheerful characterization in films, presents its own world, or “state” as Kabir is cited above. Like it is said, India has many states, each with its own culture and language. This can also be applied to Hindi cinema if considered as one of Kabir’s “new states”. It has its own history and its own presentation of culture and traditions. It’s not only that the political and economic situation in India has an influence on the Bollywood industry, but Bollywood also influences the society in India. Bollywood music can be heard on the streets, Bollywood dance has become popular, and it also influences behavioral and thought patterns, such as the concept of romantic love along with moral and political perceptions. As Apte describes it, “with the cinema has come new concepts of speech, dress, life-style, values, family relationships, dance and music” (Apte, 1978:9).

3.1. Hindi Cinema and Regional Film Industries

Hindi cinema, or Bollywood¹³, is used as synonym for the mainstream Hindi speaking produced films, and regarded by many scholars as the Indian national cinema. Although the term is not liked to be used by other film industries, it has become the standard term in

¹² Kabir, Nasreen Munni (1999) Talking films. Conversation on Hindi cinema with Javed Akhtar. Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press.

¹³ The term Bollywood is an international term for the popular mainstream Hindi cinema made in Mumbai (Bombay priori). At first it had a negative connotation, because it was thought that Bollywood was a cheap imitation of Hollywood production. Furthermore, Bollywood made same good films which were accepted by the Western audience, which brought another light on the Bollywood industry. Today Bollywood is almost a synonym for a new modern globalized India (Tieber, 2009: 7).

journalism and beyond. For a long time, the term Bollywood was associated with low-quality produced films that were not really popular with the audiences. It was also associated with quick, fun, action-loaded films appropriate for families. Hindi films are often criticized for their length, song and dance sequences, and colorful costumes. However, it's exactly these attributes of Indian films that make them unique. The cinema has an impact on the visual culture in India. The songs from films are played in homes and the posters of famous characters hang in the streets. We can say that "Hindi commercial cinema has become part of everyday life, parts of its habit and speech, dress and manners, background and foreground" (Dwyer & Patel, 2002:8). Although there are many different cinema productions in India, Bollywood cinema, or Hindi commercial cinema is the national cinema of India (Dwyer & Patel, 2002:8). It is called "Hindi" because Hindi is the most widely used language in the industry and the films themselves. Filmmakers decided on the spoken language, called Hindustani, a mixture of Hindi and Urdu that served as a lingua franca in north and central India (Ganti, 2004:12). Bollywood cinema is not only successful in India, but it is screened across India and dubbed into local languages.

In India, we can find diverse languages and cultures; there are at least 15 languages and over 200 dialects (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2003:129). Beside Hindi, we can find many popular films produced in other languages, such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, etc.

Tamil language produced films are made in Tamil cinema, based in Chennai in the district Kodambakkam. Therefore, the term "Kollywood" is used for the Tamil cinema, which derives from the first letter of Kodambakkam and Hollywood. It is the largest film industry in India in terms of productions, producing more films per year than the Hindi film industry (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2003:47/65). Additionally, Telugu films are produced from the Tollywood industry that was built in Hyderabad in the early 90s. It is one of the most important film centers in India in terms of the number of produced films (Ibid., 2003:135) and it addresses primary audiences from Andhra Pradesh and the state of Telangana. Kannada cinema, located in the state of Karnataka was, for a long time, under the shadow of Tamil and Telugu film industries (Ibid., 2003:130). It was established in 1956 in the princely state of Mysore before federal states were reorganized. Located in Bangalore, the Kannada cinema remained in its old fashioned, still known as "Old Mysore" cinema. The language of the films is Kannada and it reaches mostly Kannada speaking audiences. However, the market is not comparable to the Tamil or Telugu film industries.

One of the film industries that should be mentioned is Bengali cinema. Across all regional cinemas, Bengali won for Indian cinema widespread international acclaim (Ibid., 2003:138).

Bengali cinema is often called “Tollywood” like Telugu cinema because it is located in the district Tollygunge, Calcutta. In the 50s, Bengali cinema produced its most iconic stars, Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen. Furthermore, the most famous Bengali film directors are Ritwik Ghatak, Mirnal Sen, and Satyajit Ray whose *Panther Panchali* (1955) won “Best Human Document” at the 1956 Cannes Film Festival (Gooptu, 2013).¹⁴ Bengali cinema reached its peak in the 70s with the beneficial interaction between the literary culture and film culture. In comparison to the Bollywood mainstream industry, Bengali cinema is famous for the arthouse cinema which is mentioned below.

However, out of all cinema industries in India, the Bollywood industry is probably one of the most known in the world. Since the selected films for the analysis are produced from the Bollywood film industry, this is further introduced.

The first film shown in Bombay was from the Lumiere brothers in 1896; nevertheless, this was not an entirely Indian film since it was not produced by Indians. In 1913, D. G. Phalke produced the first entirely Indian film *Raja Harischandra* and became known as the father of Indian cinema (Dwyer, 2006:1). It was a mythological stunt film, and the first of its kind. It set the basis for the further development of the mythological genre, which actually can be considered as first Indian film genre (Dwyer & Patel, 2002:13). Several genres were established during the 1930s, such as social, mythological, devotional, historical, stunt, costume, and fantasy films (Thomas, 1987:304). In the beginning, three major genres were recognizable in Hindi cinema; they were mythological, stunt, and historical. One could say that the mythological film, otherwise known as the devotional, held a steady course during this period (Nihalani & Chatterjee, 2003:65). In 1931 came the first talkies which led to another important characteristic of Indian films – namely songs and the usage of the languages. Since Hindi was promoted as the national language throughout India, the Bombay cinema was automatically regarded as the national cinema industry, whereas others are called regional film industries. Until Independence, Urdu was the language of culture of Punjabi Hindus and Muslims. After the Partition, Urdu became the national language of Pakistan and is associated with the language of Muslims.

The influence of English on Hindi films needs to be mentioned here. While watching Hindi films, we come across English words blending with Hindi. This code switching between the

¹⁴ See more <https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/175-years/revisiting-bengali-films-in-the-100th-year-of-indian-cinema/>.

languages where there are freely interchanged within or between a sentence is called Hinglish. One example is the sentence, “*merā time ho gayā*” (*Veer Zaara*, 00:31:58).

The term Hinglish is composed of Hindi and English, and while the name is based on the Hindi language, it not only refers to Hindi, but it is used with English words blending with Punjabi language (Kothari & Snell, 2011: viii). Kothari and Snell suggest that Hinglish began to emerge with the coming of the British to India where Hindi and English began to inhabit the same geographical space (Ibid., 2011: xii).

Hinglish is used increasingly in dialogue in Hindi cinema and in advertising as well. Rita Kothari argues that Hindi cinema used English in post-Independence Hindi cinema, with connotations of cultural alienation such as Westernization and class elitism. While the part of English refers to the insertion of English words or phrases in the Hindi text of cinema from the 1950s to the 1980s, Hinglish is the code switched language of mainstream Hindi cinema after the 1990s (Ibid., 2011: 113). As Kothari and Snell argue, “we may soon be left with neither Hindi nor English but Hinglish” (Ibid., 2011: xxiii).

Hindi films can be read due to the time they have been released. The social, political, and economic situation has had an impact on the topics in Hindi films. In the book, *Bollywood's India*, Dwyer examines the transformation of Hindi cinema and the changing dynamics of the society and cinema in the last two decades. She defines Bollywood as “one of the best-known and most widely appreciate features of contemporary Indian culture.” (Dwyer, 2014:12). Indian cinema has been important in shaping the national culture in India.

Songs and background music are also an essential contribution to this emotionality and they link extra musical cultural experience such as memory, associations, and connotation through their style (Dwyer, 2014:153). Most of the popular Hindi films are defined by the melodramatic genre. “Melodrama needs to be read metaphorically to understand its typical focus on the family, the suffering of the powerless good (especially through illness, family break-up, misunderstanding and doomed love), often at the hands of a villain who is known to the family” (Dwyer & Patel, 2002:29). Melodrama pleasure is formed in the dialogues, visual presentation of the situations, and, especially in Hindi films, songs play an important role in the melodrama. Another kind of film that is often produced are called “Islamicate” films. Because of the name, we would associate them with the Muslim religion, but nevertheless, those films are “concerned with religion as part of everyday social and cultural life among Muslims, rather than with religion and religious belief per se” (Dwyer, 2006:97). These films are not directly connected with Islam, but they refer to the complex social and cultural history associated with Islam and the Muslims in India. Hindi cinema has its roots in the culture of

northern India, and before the Partition, the majority of the urban population of north India was of Muslim heritage (Dwyer, 2006:98). Therefore, we can find many directors of Hindi cinema with a Muslim background. Today's most famous actors are Muslim, the so called three Khans – Shah Rukh Khan, Amir Khan and Salman Khan. The associated features with Muslim culture are the language, literature, music, and clothing.

Music is central in Hindi cinema because songs provide a more efficient way to depict the romance developing between two characters rather than many scenes of dialogue (Ganti, 2004:81). They are used as a primary trigger to present fantasy, desire, and passion. Hindi films that borrow clichés from music, romance, action, comedy, and drama packed in one film are known as *masālā*¹⁵ films. These kinds of films are known as commercial films that appeal to the largely uneducated audience as opposed to the 'art' films which appeal to the urban elite (Morcom, 2007:2). "Art" films, or "artistic" called by Gokulsing and Dissanayake are realistic and "seek to capture a segment of Indian reality" (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2003:25). Such films are shown at international film festivals in London, Berlin, Paris, etc. The best known directors that are producing such films are Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak.

The commercial films are interrupted by songs that are often seen as unrealistic and illogical presentations of a character. Such scenes are also melodramatic with exaggerated emotions and characters. In this way, Morcom shows that commercial Hindi films are seen negatively in comparison to Hollywood and Indian art cinema, stating that "both of which adopt a linear narrative and psychologically realistic characterization." (Ibid.) However, because films are a big business and songs are essential to the commercial potential of films, it can be argued that the film songs themselves have considerable commercial power (Morcom, 2007:181). Since the films songs are a part of the films, it can be said that they have a commercial power when they are coupled with a Hindi film. Film songs are conceived as a part of particular film and serve a dramatic purpose in Hindi films. It would be unusual to watch a Hindi film without any song sequence since songs and background music are integral components of storytelling in Hindi film. Commercial Indian films are made for mass entertainment and involve several genres; the most popular are mythological, devotional, romantic, historical, social, and family melodramas. However, most Hindi films have always been in the melodramatic mode, involving emotional and moral polarities, large-scale emotions, and big contrasts (Morcom, 2007:179).

¹⁵ See the explanation in the chapter *Cultural Studies and Films*.

3.1.1. Partition Topics in the Regional Film Industries

The Partition saw the arrival of many displaced Punjabis who were working in the cinema industry. Most of the now widely known directors, such as Sunil Dutt, B.R. Chopra, Chetan Anand fled to Bombay from Lahore and other cities in Pakistan. “Bombay suddenly became a Mecca for producers, directors, actors, musicians, writers, and poets in Hindi cinema.” (Nihalani & Chatterjee, 2003:61). As the biggest film industry in the world, Bombay started to deal with the historical presentation of the events (Ibid., 2003:63). This thesis deals mainly with the Bollywood film industry. Nevertheless, I wish to make a short overview of the regional film industries since they have been dealing with the Indo-Pakistan relationship as well.

The Partition at the eastern borders of India was not highlighted on the cinematic screens as was the Punjabi partition. Aside from Ritwik Ghatak’s films and the Bangladeshi film, *Chitra Nodir Pare* (On the Banks of River Chitra, 1999, Tanvir Mokkamel), there are not many (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:63). Ghatak directed one of the best-known trilogies which addresses the trauma of Partition from a victim’s perspective. Ghatak addresses the predicament of homeless refugees for whom the Partition didn’t end in 1947, but rather how its consequences have shaped their lives in the Partition aftermath. His trilogy, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Subarnarekha* (1962) and *Komal Gandhar* (1961), deal with the Partition of India and the refugees from East Pakistan coping with it. We should take into consideration that the Partition caused the creation of East and West Pakistan which differ in cultural affinities and orientations. The impact of the Partition was different in these two regions. Both regions suffered from the number of refugees and the violence on the borders, but the migration in Punjab was an event that lasted from 1947 until 1950, whereas the migration of East Pakistan/Bangladesh continued further. Ghatak’s films want to show the trauma being uprooted from the East Bengal and the cultural trauma of the Partition in 1947. Ritwik Ghatak was born 1925 in Dhaka, East Bengal. During the Partition, he moved to Calcutta, West Bengal, and his films depict the sudden loss of power that middle-class migrants of Bengali experienced in the wake of the Partition (Menon, 2013:56). Another popular regional film was *Roja* (dir. Mani Ratnam, 1992), an Indian Tamil romantic thriller that focuses on Tamil and Kashmiri identity and places Kashmir as the center of the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Another interesting film is *Hey Ram* (dir. Kamal Haasan, 2000) which has been released in two languages, Hindi and Tamil simultaneously. It takes the audience to the journey from religious hatred to love with the theme of the Partition of Bengal in the background. The story is narrated by Saket Ram’s grandson and starts when Ram, a retired archeologist, lying on the

deathbed on 6th December 1999, the 7th anniversary of the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya¹⁶. At the end of the film when the old Saket Ram has been taken to the hospital, he witnesses the Hindu-Muslim riots during the destruction of mosque and asks, “*Even now?*” (*Hey Ram*, 3:09:16). It addresses the continuities of nationalism, communalism, and the watershed events of the Partition. Although it does not play at the time of the Partition, it shows the aftermath results of the Partition. The film shows the hatred between India and Pakistan, between Hindus and Muslims, and offers the view on how people in India perceive Pakistan as a country. Therefore, Kamal Haasan explained that it took him some time to understand that Pakistan was not just another country, it was a religion¹⁷.

As we have seen, the Partition also affected the eastern part of India, but this lack of cinematic presentation of the Bengali partition can be explained on the fact that most of the mainstream moviemakers are from the Punjab and what they brought out on the cinematic screens are mostly personal experiences (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:63).

3.2. Indo – Pakistan Relations in the Hindi Cinema

Cinema as the one of the most popular and influential cultural production in the lives of most people in India and Pakistan, was deeply influenced by the Partition watershed, which we can see in the Hindi cinema interpretations of this event. The event of the Partition caught attention in the academic studies in 1997. There are many studies found on the political aspects of the Partition, Partition and the gender perspective, Partition and memory and the representation of Partition in literature (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:61). The cinematic presentation of this event appeared rather late. As we have seen, the Bollywood industry is not the only cinema industry in India, nevertheless, it is one of the most famous and most successful industries that produces the most films on the Partition of India, especially with the focus on the Punjab Province. Since most directors come from that part of India, their personal experiences and attachments to Punjab were easier to transfer on the cinematic screen rather than the Partition watershed of the Eastern Part of India.

Before I turn to the film examples with the presentation of the Partition of India and Indo-Pakistan relations, I wish to draw attention to the collective memory of the Partition. As Greenberg explains it, we can say that the Partition of India, on the one hand, corresponds to

¹⁶ It is believed that on the same place the pre-existing Ram temple has been destroyed by the Moghul invasion. In order to save their religious sacred place, Ayodhya-the birth place of Ram, Hindu nationalist group destroyed 1992 Babri Masjid mosque.

¹⁷ Interview in Screen, 4 February 2000.

collective memories of trauma and on the other hand, it corresponds to the collective memory of a triumph and the victory of anticolonial struggle (Greenberg, 2005:90).

3.2.1. Partition Collective Memory

In the context of the Partition memories, I will use the term “collective memory” that traces its roots back to the scholar Maurice Halbwachs, who argues that a collective memory is constructed socially, it interacts with the social frameworks of memory, such as religious collective memory and social classes (Halbwachs, 1992:37). Collective memory examines how a certain community perceives the past. Therefore, Halbwachs emphasizes that a complete separation of an individual and a collective memory is not possible. Rather, they are influencing each other (Halbwachs, 2001:203). Each person belongs to several groups, some of which have different memory contents. What distinguishes a person’s individuality is his or her specific combination of group affiliations. According to Halbwachs, society is divided into groups that have specific memory resources and shared knowledge (Halbwachs, 2001:213).

One example would be the family memories that are classified as the memory of a generation. All family members share a common experience that is transmitted from person to person. By passing on their memories, stories, and traditions to their descendants, the sense of belonging of the individual to a collective deepens. This shows that the individual memory is the memory of the other members of the relevant social group.

In the context of the Partition event, one example would be the narrative stories of the Partition survivors retold in their family from generation to generation. The stories of the survivors have been recorded down by Urvashi Butalia in her book, *“The Other Side of Silence”*. Memories are constantly changing and are always newly constructed. Memories not only depend on an individual, but rather they are influenced by outside conditions; they have their limitations and are much more complicate than one would expect. The most important aspect of a narrated memory is its validity, i.e., its truthfulness. We are unable to know whether a person is telling the truth or not, so it’s to be expected that some stories which are told a long time after they occurred are not completely accurate. Memory must not always be consciously remembered; some remembered things resurface only when the situation helps for it to come out (Chakrabarty, 1996:2143). Partition trauma and riots surfaced when any communal conflict between Hindus/Sikhs and Muslims arose. Butalia mentions the event when the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 by her security Sikh guards. For days afterwards, Sikhs all over India were attacked in orgies of violence and revenge. The

older people who had come to Delhi as refugees in 1947 said that “we didn’t think it could happen to us in our own country. This is like Partition again” (Butalia, 1998:5). The same reaction can be seen in the film, *Hey Ram* (dir. Kamal Hasan, 2000) from the protagonist Saket Ram who witnesses the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay that followed the destruction of the mosque and he asks, “*Even now?*” Through this scene, the film addresses the continuity of communalism and the watershed event of Partition. As we can see, the Partition trauma and massacre came to the surface every time any conflict between Hindus and Muslims, along with India and Pakistan occurs.

Here, I come to the correlation between memory and history. Since the academic historiography consists of the scientific approach of the human past, the importance of memories of individuals is often underestimated. Butalia’s intention is to show that oral narratives can offer a different and important perspective of history which should be taken into consideration. Gyanendra Pandey stresses the same intention in which he, with his book, “*Remembering Partition*”, wishes to reconstruct the history by emphasizing the people’s struggle for their lives. He identifies two ways of narratives through which the survivors implicate the violence of the Partition. The first is through the continuity of retelling the stories and experiences of war and trauma the “community consolidate and commemorate themselves and through it they produce the boundary which distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them’ (Pandey, 2002:176/7) while the other way of dealing with the violence is through denial by the survivors that the violence happened in their village. Pandey stresses that these fragmented historical documents should not have their one-sided view on the history, but rather include the memories of individuals, because individual memories form an awareness of the nation (Pandey, 2002:11). He also said, “who is it, in fact who lives in a fragmented universe, and turns every trace into a historical document? This is not my history and – probably – not the history of the majority of people across the globe” (Pandey, Ibid.). Memorialization is recalling the past either in terms connected with trauma or in nostalgia. According to Pandey, the Partition has left behind “an extraordinary love/hate relationship... on the other, a considerable sense of nostalgia, frequently articulated in the view that this was a partition of siblings that should never have occurred...” (Pandey, 2002:2).

Furthermore, Halbwachs separates history from memory and insists on the emotional truth of collective memory in a society. He takes history to be essentially a text, whereas collective memory is a living entity that takes an active part in the formation of identity. A disciple of

Halbwachs, Pierre Nora¹⁸ notes that the collective memory of one community may not intersect with that of other communities. We can see this in the particular experiences of individual communities in an event such as the destruction of the Babri Masjid. The Hindu community and the Muslim community have surely different experiences and remembering of this event. Mitter suggests that a collective memory “has a dialectical relationship with historical reconstructions of the past because both contribute to the idea of nation-hood” (Mitter, 2013:163). She argues that a nation serves to beat into shape a sense of unity that creates a feeling of “us” versus “them”. This unity is obtained through the invocation of collective memory which can be selective, constructed, and reconstructed (Mitter, Ibid.). In India, competition became inevitable from the nineteenth century on, when Hindus, the majority of the population, formulated an exclusive ideology with special claims to India’s past that in effect excluded other communities (Mitter, 2013:164). As Vishwanath and Malik conclude, the individual stories of survivors form the content of Hindi cinema and constitute history in both a small and large scale. It is small because it is the story of individuals and communities, yet large because it transcends the specificities of the individual life to stand in for the nation and eventually is a metaphor for the passage of time itself (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:69). According to Ira Bhaskar, cinema as such is an alternative discourse of history telling, and in this way authenticate lived experience and cultural memory (Bhaskar, 2007:36). As Paul Grainge explains it, “... cinema has become central to the mediation of memory in modern cultural life.” (Grainge, 2003:1).

As we have seen, the memory of trauma demands a certain narrative form that we witness as the growing importance of cultural memory, “which assists the construction of the central role of trauma and victimization through cultural means and cultural forms” (Misztal, 2004:75). The term cultural memory has been further explored by Jan Assmann who expands the theories of Halbwachs. The cultural memory transmits memories as symbolizations in which the meaningful content of experience has found a different shape through the later generations (Assmann, 1995:52). Cultural memory is maintained through cultural formation (text, rites, monuments, etc.) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance, etc.). The characteristics of cultural memory include formation, organization, obligation, and reflexivity (Assmann, Ibid.). In contrast to the collective memory which commits to a lasting common

¹⁸ See Pierre Nora’s ‘Les lieux de mémoire’, translated in M. Roudebush, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7–24. See also J. Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. by S. Randall and E. Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

memory and aiming for a unification of past events, cultural memory is characterized by its openness and complexity. Assmann distinguishes two kinds of cultural memories: passive memories and functional memories. For example, a passive memory can return to a functional memory when it is up-to-date, just as those parts of a functional memory can fall back into the passive memory when they have lost interest. The continuous shift between remembering and forgetting shows the complexity of the cultural memory and reveals the difference to the collective memory. Therefore, we can say that the traumatic events of the Partition of India are not forgotten but are characterized as the stored or passive memories that resurface again according to the present situation in India. As Urvashi mentions, the “Partition came back to revisit many who had been mere spectators and others who had been victims and participants. Stories of ‘that time’ resurfaced” (Butalia, 1998:348). Urvashi started to hear the stories of the Partition after the event of 1984, the Sikh massacre. 1984 was preceded by several disturbing developments, such as the violence in Punjab, the growing influence of the Hindu right, the destruction of Babri Masjid by Hindu communalists, the Muslim riots that followed, etc. All these events have brought the memories of the Partition back into the present. These cultural forms are distributed across social institutions and cultural artifacts such as films, monuments, statues, souvenirs, and so on. “Cultural memory is embodied also in regularly repeated practices, commemorations, ceremonies, festivals, rites and narratives” (Misztal, 2004:75). Cultural forms such as museums or monuments that present the memory of the Partition couldn’t be found in India until 2016. In 2016, The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT) opened the Partition Museum Project in Amritsar’s Town Hall. It serves the purpose to educate people about the Partition and the people’s tragedies that followed with the Partition. However, it is remarkable that until 2016 we couldn’t see any Partition museums in India. In her article, “*Demanding the impossible: exploring the possibilities of a national partition museum in India*”, Anindya Raychaudhuri presents the various opinions on the discussion of the establishment of the Partition national museum. On the one hand, some scholars think that the country needs a national museum that will facilitate the healing of wounds associated with group trauma (Akhtari, 2008)¹⁹. In contrast to the oral narratives that can be easily forgotten, a physical memorial would not be easy to ignore. On the other hand, Butalia is afraid that such a museum would be one-sided, and Krishna Kumar explains the absence of the partition museum because it would provide a brutal proof of the Hindu-Muslim conflict (Kumar, 2002:26). Similarly, Meenakshi Mukherjee argues that it is almost

¹⁹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/A-partition-museum/articleshow/2667150.cms>

impossible to imagine ever having a Partition Museum either in India or in Pakistan, because “deep into the roots of our cultures which traditionally posit less value to material artefacts than to an aural archive consisting of stories, songs, legends and folklore” (Mukherjee 2009:447). However, we can see that the Partition Museum has been established in Amritsar. In “*Monuments and Memory for Our Times*”, Partha Mitter suggests two kinds of monuments: durable and ephemeral. Durable are characterized through the public buildings that are built out of durable material, some of them sacred such as temples or mosques that have a specific social function. Modern media, on the other hand, creates ephemeral monuments that contribute to a nation’s memorialization.

After the Partition, a collective amnesia has been set in both India and Pakistan. Mitter argues that “perhaps it was difficult to admit that two communities that had shared a culture for centuries could embark on acts of brutality on such an unprecedented scale” (Mitter, 2013: 165). As we have seen, the traumatic events of the Partition of India have been memorialized in text and narrative forms, as well as in the newly opened Partition museum and films. Films represent various characteristics of the Partition event. Mostly, we can see the stories of the separated families and the suffering of lovers due to their religious distinction. The relationship between India and Pakistan after the Partition is presented in war and terrorist films, as well as in the fictive stories that present the religious conflict between Hindu and Muslim, Indians and Pakistani. As Raychaudhuri says, “Partition has been invoked to support, justify or explain everything from the wars in which the two countries engage periodically, to the communal riots such as the Babri Masjid riots in 1992 or the genocidal attacks on Gujarat Muslims in 2002” (Raychaudhuri, 2012:175).

We can say that a collective memory on the Partition event can be found in the narrative forms of the survivors and on the cinematic screens. Vishwanath and Malik examine the memorialization of the Partition on the Indian subcontinent in 1947 through mainstream cinema. They show how popular cinema in India and in Pakistan is influenced by the Partition watershed, both as industries in the respective countries as well as at the level of diegetic content and narrative styles of individual films. “Indian cinema uses the underlying connotations of the word Partition to imply a mistake, a part of the homeland unjustly separated” (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:61f).

Furthermore, I will present the various films dealing with the topic of the Partition. I selected them under the various film genres.

3.2.2. Drama, Romance, and Literature

The first film referring to the Partition and on communal crises is *Dharmputra* (dir. Yash Chopra, 1961), based on a novel written by Acharya Chaturseen. The film is set at the end of the British rule and the Independence of India. It was Yash Chopra's last film which depicts political and social issues during the Partition. *Dharmputra* can be categorized as a social drama with the attention on the religious conflicts, nationalism, and prejudices within the society. Chopra chose the love story theme until 2004, where he once again touched the relation of India and Pakistan in film *Veer Zaara*, which shows the religious harmony between two states. Due to Vishwanath and Malik who recognize three phases of a Partition films, *Dharmputra* belongs to the first phase, which marks the film's release 15 years after Partition (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:63). Here, most of the narratives are about the migration as well as abducted women and their recovery. The second phase would be the one around the 1970s when the events of the Partition was not fresh in the memories anymore. This period gave a space for emotions, dealing with repressed issues within the society, and communal conflict. Two of the best-known Partition film came out in this period, *Garam Hawa* (dir. M S Sathya, 1973) and *Tamas* (dir. Govind Nihalani, 1987). *Garam Hawa* is set in the aftermath of the Partition, and shows a Muslim family who stayed in India and suddenly feel as strangers in their own home. As Dwyer expresses, this film is one of the "most powerful films made about the impact of the Partition" (Dwyer, 2006:125), due to its depiction of the suffering of one Muslim family on their loss of values and hope for a better future. *Garam Hawa* shows the violent elements of 1947 for the first time. This was the courage of Hindi film industry to depict these horror elements on the cinematic screens for the first time in 1973 (Bharat & Kumar, 2008:72).

Furthermore, a known historical novel *Tamas*, written by Bhisham Sahni in 1975 that won a Sahitya Academy Award²⁰ was filmed. It is a depiction of riots which occurred in a small Indian town at the time of the Partition and its aftermath. It was adapted into a film by the same name by Govind Nihalani in 1987. In 1988, it was shown in mini-series on *Doordarshan*. Literature and cinema are co-related with each other as we will see it in further examples. Although these films depict a tragic event from the Partition, the period between the 60s and the 70s did not produce as many films on this topic as the period of the 90s and onwards. Moving on to the third phase by Vishwanath and Malik, this period starts right after the demolition of Babri Masjid. In this period, the films negotiated issues of identity. The

²⁰ It is the second – highest literary honor in India.

stereotypes and prejudices against the “others” (Pakistan and Muslims) are talked about openly. Here, we also find a number of films based on literature. A well-known film, adapted from the literature is *Train to Pakistan*, a tragic saga written by Kishwant Singh 1956 and adapted into a Hindi film by Pamela Rocks in 1998. Furthermore, the novel *Ice-Candy- Man*, written by Bapsi Sidhwa is adapted on the cinematic screens as *Earth 1947* (dir. Deepa Mehta, 1998). It is a story narrated by a Parsi girl whose family stayed neutral during the communal violence between Hindus and Muslims during the Partition. The film is a powerful and disturbing reminder of how a civilization can suddenly crack under certain pressure which we see in a group of friends, Muslims and Hindus, who become enemies overnight. This novel, as well as the novel *Pinjar*, were written in 1950 by Amrita Pritam and directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi in 2003. They have some autobiographical elements of the authors since they experienced the Partition on their own. The common denominator of these films is the concentration on the female characters that are in danger of being abducted and/or raped or endure these horrific experiences.

Another well received film from the Indian perspective, with a similar focus as the two above mentioned films, is *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (dir. Anil Sharma, 2001). Anil Sharma’s *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* was an international box office hit. It is a cross-class, inter-ethnic romance between a Sikh truck driver, Tara Singh, and an elite Muslim student, Sakina, in the context of the 1947 Partition. *Gadar* produces an ethno-nationalist vision of India in which Pakistan functions as the nation’s “other”, threatening its secularism and its inter-ethnic families with dissolution (Daiya, 2011:592). *Gadar* shows a Sikh man versus a Muslim man (all Pakistanis) in a jingoistic rhetoric way against Pakistanis. It also presents the female view on the Partition and a portrayal of the complex relationship between two religions Hinduism/Sikhism on the one hand and Islam on the other. *Gadar* was criticized due to its negative portrayal of Islam as a violent and cruel religion and Pakistan as well. Nevertheless, it is one of the biggest hits in Indian film history because it was an all-India hit; this was also the first Partition film that found a large audience (Dwyer, 2014:55).

The romantic melodramas became a popular genre of films on the Indo-Pakistan relations. One of the oldest and well-known films is *Henna* (dir. Randhir Kapoor, 1991). Here, the love between an Indian man, who accidentally found himself on the Pakistani side of Kashmir, and a Pakistani Muslim woman, who found him and took care of him. The river Jhelum is depicted as a dividing place between the two countries and the two nations; it shows the one bank of the river belonging to Pakistan and the other bank belonging to India. The film makes the

audience think about how generations of hatred and barbaric living between both communities is able to overpower a pure form of love.

The plots of all these films are mostly romantic stories between two protagonists from different religions states or they show a woman struggling during the Partition and afterwards. Most of these films, except for *Gadar*, were not negatively orientated towards Pakistan. Furthermore, the films which we call *post-Gadar* era are dealing differently with this topic. Some of them are made on the Indo-Pakistan wars, which occurred after the Partition.

3.2.3. War Films

India and Pakistan have been involved in the three major wars and one minor one (Lyon, 2008:80) which have influenced the film industry and provided ideas for films. The unfinished issue of Kashmir caused major disagreements and conflicts between two states. For example, just before Independence, Kashmir was ruled by a Bogra maharaja who hesitated about his state's future causing the first Kashmir war between Indian and Pakistani troops trying to condemn the future of Kashmir. The war lasted for more than a year and ended with the intervention with a cease-fire by the United Nations. With this deal, India managed to secure three-fifths of Kashmir while Pakistan occupied one third of Kashmir (Lyon, 2008:82). The second war erupted in 1965 when the Pakistani troops infiltrated Kashmir and sought to foment a rebellion in Jammu, Kashmir under the code-name, Operation Gibraltar. This resulted in a military stalemate and a diplomatic settlement, brokered by the Soviet Union and the USA. While the third Indo-Pakistan war did not involve the issue of Kashmir, it did involve the tensions and conflicts between East and West Pakistan. After the Independence of India in 1947, the new state of Pakistan consisted of two geographic lands: West and East Pakistan which are separated by many hundreds of miles of Indian territory. The ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences of the two Pakistans spread out into a movement for East Pakistan's autonomy. Thus, on December 16th, 1971 the Pakistan regime agreed to an unconditional surrender and Bangladesh was established as an independent nation-state (Menon, 2013:89). The fourth clash between the two states emerged in 1999 known as the Kargil war where Pakistani troops captured Indian army posts. However, the Indian army retaliated and recaptured the posts soon after.

In the 1990s, Indian cinema experienced a major shift in the martial themes. War films emerged in Indian cinema after the successful "terrorist" film, *Roja* (1992) directed by Mani Ratnam. India and Pakistan have been involved in three major wars and their depiction can be found in Hindi cinema. One of the first film which mentions Pakistan is *Upkar* (1967) which

deals with the Indo-Pak war of 1965. The film portrays a Hindustani patriot through the character of Bharat, who went to war as a soldier to protect Mother India. The film, *Hindustan Ki Kasam* (1973), which is set during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, refers to Pakistan as the enemy by using anti-Pakistan slogans; through this process, it discovers Indian national identity. The film is based on Operation Cactus Lilly in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 and was directed by Chetan Anand.

One of the most well-known directors, J.P. Dutta, established his reputation as a “war film” director with the films, *Border* (1997) and *Refugee* (2000). The films can be considered innovative given that Pakistan is named as the enemy. Prior to this film, the censor board set specific guidelines such as, “*friendly relations with foreign States are not strained*” as to not to jeopardize relations between India and Pakistan (Ganti, 2004:42). Nevertheless, the film, *Border*, was the first war film that makes an open reference about Pakistan as an enemy. According to Ganti, the political situation had changed heavily and this film had an influence on it while the nationalist party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) also grew in power. *Border* presents a dramatic account of the battle in western Rajasthan during the 1971 war. Therefore, because the film was based off historical events at the Battle of Longewala during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and the Bangladesh Liberation war, according to the director, the enemy’s name was necessary to be mentioned. The film employs the classic features of a war film. For example, we are introduced to a group of soldiers who are protecting the Indian border when they are suddenly attacked by a large Pakistani force. Ultimately, it intends to make an appeal against war, particularly with the ending scene showing dead soldiers and the trauma that happens to their family members with the background song, “*Mere Dushman Mere Bhai.*”, the lyrics written by Javed Akhtar. This final montage provides a formal notice of the equilibrium that had been established throughout the film: the border has been maintained and can, if respected, offer the hope for peace (Bharat & Kumar, 2008:29). In contrast, *Refugee* focuses on the Indian Pakistan border of the Indian Gujarat and Pakistan Sindh. It focuses on the cross-border transgression of a young man called “Refugee”, who works as a smuggler of goods. The complexity of the Indo-Pakistan relation receives more recognition, the question surrounding nationalism and Muslim identity are considered, and the people of the border regions are given more sympathetic treatments. Dutta insists that both films can be understood as promoting peace between India and Pakistan. Nevertheless, *Border* has been accused of being anti-Pakistan and has therefore been banned in Middle Eastern markets where Hindi films are exported. It can be assumed that because of this, *Refugee* had better audience reception even though it made less profit in India than *Border*,

which gained massive box office success, media controversy, and numerous Film Fare Awards. Another one of Dutta's war films is *LOC-Kargil* (2003) which is based on the 1999 Kargil War between India and Pakistan where the confrontation on the border is presented simply as an unprovoked Pakistani invasion of Indian Rajasthan. It's one of the longest Indian films ever made and is based on the 1999 Operation, Vijay as well as the Battle of Tololing around the Line of Control. Dutta's war films incorporate her own personal experiences since her father is a refugee from the Western Punjab and her brother died serving in the Indian Air Force. Based on this, her films suggest that the true meaning or definition of borders arise from the perceptions of humans rather than geography.

Another film based on the Kargil war is *Lakshya* (dir. Farhan Akhtar, 2004) stars Hrithik Roshan, Preity Zinta, and Amitabh Bachchan. *Lakshya* has achieved a cult status among the audience arguing that it's Hrithik Roshan's best performance to date.

As we have seen, many films on the topic of war between India and Pakistan have been made; however, none of these have been officially shown on Pakistan's cinematic screens. Furthermore, it can be said that the Bollywood industry had a production period of war films which were, from the Pakistani side, not recognized as neutral.

3.2.4. Terrorist Films

Moving on, the topic of war was left behind as terrorism became more noticeable in films. The terrorist films are mostly dealing with a Muslim terrorist and depicting Muslim as the dangerous "others". According to Dwyer, analysis of "Islamicate" films shows that this terrorist phase is a new type of "Islamicate" films. A couple of films that depict Muslims as terrorists or enemies of India are *Roja* (dir. Mani Ratnam, 1992), *Mission of Kashmir* (dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 2000), *Faana* (dir. Kunal Kohli, 2006) and *Fiza* (dir. Khalid Mohamed, 2000). *Fanaa* (2006) and *Sarfarosh* (1999) connect the Partition to contemporary terrorism in India (Daiya, 2011:591). *Sarfarosh*, directed by John Mathew Matthan, came out in the summer of 1999 amidst the Kargil War and is marked as a political thriller that addresses contemporary issues of terror, nationality, and citizenship connecting contemporary violence, discrimination, and India-Pakistan conflict to the 1947 partition. Additionally, the film raises the matter of the pain and loss of belonging for the Muslim migrant of 1947 but delegitimizes it with its connection of contemporary terror and violence in India. Put simply, "...it establishes a 'national order of things' through the metaphor of *ghar* (home) such that all identity and culture can only be naturally located in a territorially rooted homeland." (Yacoobali, 2002:183). Through the Muslim characters of Salim and Gulfam, the film

presents both good and bad Muslims - those that belong to the national order of things and those that do not.

Main Hoon Na, was the hit of summer 2004, it has been made as a classical *masāla* film, with action, romance, melodrama, song and dance scenes. Its plot draws on one of the predominant mythical and religious texts of India, the *Ramayana* (Dudrah, 2012:18).

The Indian-Pakistan conflict largely focuses on the Kashmir Province. This is evident in the fact that Kashmir has been the location for many Hindi films since the 1940s.

As we can see, after the release of the anti-Pakistan film *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001), films moved more toward positive presentations of the relationship between the two countries. Another reason for pro-Pakistani films is an attempt to ease the political situation between the two countries. For example, in 2004, the box-office hit film *Main Hoon Na* (dir. Farah Khan, 2004) was released, which presents Pakistan in a more neutral light. The easing in the political relationships between the countries opened the door for films such as *Veer-Zaara*, which through a romance verbalizes a better relationship between the countries.

There are a number of films that were released in the 1990s and 2000s which focused on Indo-Pakistan relationships, many of which deal depict the various aspects of the relationship from female perspectives, religious bigotry, terrorism, and war.

3.2.4. Recent Comedies

Here, I have shown an overview of the films from 1960s until early 2000s. Moving on, I wish to exemplify films from 2010 and beyond.

In 2010, the film *Lahore* (dir. Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan, 2010) came out which portrays Indo-Pakistan relations through sportive events. In this film, a cricketer returns as a kick-boxer to avenge the death of his brother. Similarly, *Bhaag Mikha Bhaag* (2013) is an Indian biographical sports drama, directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra. It performed very well at the box office and was eventually declared a "super hit" domestically and overseas. The plot follows a runner who is haunted by memories of his past which pull him to the time of the Partition where his parents were killed. These two films can be categorized under the genre of sports-drama with Indo-Pakistan relations as the overarching theme.

Ek Tha Tiger (2012) is an Indian action thriller, directed by Kabir Khan who also made the film *Bajirangi Bhaijaan* (2015). The film was released on Independence Day, 15th of August 2012, in India and overseas where it got very good receptions. In spite of its success, however, it was not screened in Pakistan. *Bangistan* (2015) is a Bollywood comedy satire film, produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani released the same year as *Bajirangi*

Bhaijaan. The story follows two men who are trained suicide bombers that come from a fictive country, *Bangistan* (where Hindus and Muslims have their headquarters). Both men are guided by their own leaders and their mission is to blow up a gathering of religious leaders from all over the world. Their mission has twists and turns that are presented with humor, nevertheless, and although the film was the first war/comedy film, it performed poorly at box-offices. This can also be said about films released shortly *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, such as *War Chhod Na Yaar* (dir. Faraz Haider, 2013), which tells the story of two brigade captains on the border who develop a friendship on the battlefield. A romantic comedy called *Total Siyapaa* (dir. Eeshwar Nivas, 2014) tells the story of a Pakistani man and an Indian woman in love settled in London. The family of the girl finds out that her boyfriend is a Pakistani and thus begins a chaotic series of events. Ultimately, the film was not regarded funny.

Not long after *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, another comedy came out named *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* (dir. Mudassar Aziz, 2016). The story is about an Indian girl called Happy who runs away from her wedding and accidentally ends up in Lahore, Pakistan. She comes in the house of a reluctant politician who tries to hide her from the local media. Nevertheless, his plans of hiding her take a turn when a group of Indians cross the border to find Happy. Overall, the film deals with the cross-border differences in a comedic way.

Additionally, *Filmistan* (dir. Nitin Kakkar, 2013) is a comedy that won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi. It was also declared as a tax-free film in Maharashtra because of its ideas of binding India and Pakistan (Biharprabha News, 2014).²¹ The plot follows an Indian man who goes with an American crew to remote areas in Rajasthan to produce a documentary. One day, he is kidnapped by a Muslim terrorist group that hold him hostage in a house that belongs to a Pakistani Muslim in contrast, of the border whose trade stems from pirated Hindi films. The intent of this film is to show how they (the characters) share a human cultural bond and how cinema can be the universal panacea for co-existence.

While newer Hindi films don't make a direct reference on the traumatic Partition event, they do focus on the stereotypical depiction of differences and similarities between two states through comedy. Enough time has passed since the traumatic events of the Partition which is why films that focus on Indo-Pakistan conflicts are more humorous. Based on this, the Hindi film industry now has built up courage to show the Indo-Pakistan relationship through a more light-hearted mood.

²¹ <http://news.biharprabha.com/2014/06/movie-filmistaan-declared-tax-free-in-maharashtra/>

3.2.5. Conclusion

There are various presentations of the Indian and Pakistan relations we can find in films. As discussed, older films deal mainly or directly with the Partition and its influence on the people. During the Indo-Pakistan wars the films changed the plots according to the current situations. The newer films deal not directly with the Partition, but rather with its aftermaths followed by Muslim and Hindu conflicts. Through historical films Muslims were long presented as the royal rulers and aristocrats, almost never as peasants and workers. These films are regarded as the “Islamicate” films. Looking beyond of the “Islamicate” films, we can see that Muslims are presented as the “others”. It was in the 1970s that the film industry started to show lower-class Muslims rather than aristocrats. Some films on the Partition try to show that Muslims and Hindus are really the same, like a Hindu extremist comes to know that he was born a Muslim (*Dharmputra*, dir. Yash Chopra, 1961), how other bonds are broken in the upsurge of violence (*Tamas*, dir. Govind Nihalani, 1986 and *Pinjar*, dir. Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, 2003) or *Gadar*, which shows a Sikh hero marrying a Muslim woman but not asking her to change her religion. Nevertheless, this specific film presents Pakistan in a negative way. It’s Pakistan which underlines the problematic representation of the Muslim in Hindi film, and this is typified in films that deal with the issue of Kashmir (*Roja*, dir. Mani Ratnam, 1992, and *Mission Kashmir*, dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 2000). In other films, terrorists usually have Pakistan connection, as in *Sarfarosh* (dir. John Matthew Matthan, 1998) or films about the Bombay riots, such as *Bombay* (dir. Mani Ratnam, 1995) or *Fiza* (dir. Khalid Mohamed, 2000).

According to Nihalani and Chatterjee, the mystery of Hindi cinema is that it didn’t take perfunctory look in the Partition films because they refer only to a few good films such as *Garam Hawa*, *Tamas* and *Gadar – Ek Prem Katha*. Conversely, they mention that other cinemas such as Ritwik Ghatak in Bengali, made more poignant films. This is partially due to the fact that many of the directors themselves were refugees after being uprooted from their homes (Nihalani & Chatterjee, 2003:70). One could say that enough time has already passed from the terrible event and the directors got the courage to deal with India’s relations with Pakistan in various ways. In my opinion, the topic of Partition became more obvious in mainstream Hindi films and therefore got more attention after 2000.

All these films are, for the most part, banned in Pakistan because of their unfriendly depictions of Pakistan from the Pakistani view. I now turn my attention on the analysis of the two films, *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* which were officially shown in Pakistani cinemas. One could also say that they were very well welcomed in both countries.

4. Film Examples

The following films, *Veer Zaara* and *Bajirangi Bhaijaan* are analyzed in this part of the thesis. Selected images and dialogues show a various aspect of the Indo-Pakistan relations. Both films are released in 21st century and are dealing with the complex relationship between India and Pakistan on their own way with the same message – love crosses the borders over all cultural differences and conflicts. *Veer Zaara* presents a romantic love story between an Indian man and Pakistani woman, whereas the love in *Bajirangi Bhaijaan*, presents not a romantic love but a love for a child. Analysis of these films builds a core of the thesis through which the research question can be answered. Furthermore, the comparison of these two films will be taken into consideration. This will show how the same aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations are depicted differently in both films.

The analysis of each film is divided in a three-subchapters. The first sub-chapter, the portrayal of Indian and Pakistanis differences and similarities beholds various aspects, such as religion, clothing, gestures and languages. The second sub-chapter, border crossing represents the physical borders between India and Pakistan as well as inner boundaries in the protagonists drawing the connection to the theories of Borderland studies.

The last part of the thesis analyses the main monologues of both films showing that both are providing a peace message between India and Pakistan. The analysis is based on a selected images and dialogues from the films.

4.1. Veer Zaara

Name: Veer Zaara

Release date: 12. November 2004

Director: Yash Chopra

Genre: romantic drama

Length: 196 min.

During the time of festival Diwali and Eid 2004 on the 12th November, *Veer Zaara* was released. It made a great success not only in India but it was also known as an international hit and becoming *An All Time Blockbuster* of the year. The film opened a new era of the Partition films, known as *post-Gadhar* films, which are representing Pakistan in a positive way. Shah Rukh Khan plays the main role with the famous actresses Preity Zinta and Rani Mukerji the Pakistani counterparts. The film was one of the most successful films of the 2000s. *Veer Zaara* was Yash Chopra's penultimate film. Eight years later, 2012 his last film *Jab Tak Hai*

Jaan was released which was the same year that Yash Chopra passed away; he was one of the most successful directors in Hindi film industry and started his own production company, Yashraj Films in 1973 (Ganti, 2004:101).

The Film starts with a dream sequence of a prisoner with the prison number 786 (Shah Rukh Khan). A beautiful unknown landscape is shown, not specifically defined. It could be in India as well as in Pakistan. The dream is interrupted with the voice of a pistol shot that brings us to the present situation - in a Pakistani jail. The state of Pakistan has decided to reopen some cases of Indian prisoners. Pakistani lawyer Saamiya Siddiqui (Rani Mukerji) is ready to help prisoner 786 to give him his identity back. Here we come to know that the prisoner is already 22 years sitting in jail without saying any word to anyone. After Samiya called him by his real name, Veer Pratap Singh (which he didn't hear for 22 years), he starts retelling of his story of how he comes to be captured. We get to know that the prisoner's identity is Squadron Leader Veer Pratap Singh, a pilot of the Indian Air Force. Afterwards we learn more about Zaara (Preity Zinda). She comes from a rich Muslim family in Pakistan. Zaara's Bebe²² (Zohra Sehgal) comes to Pakistan during the Partition with Zaara's grandfather and served his family the whole life. Her last wish is that her ashes are immersed in India, in Kiratpur²³, where here ancestors are. On the way to Kiratpur with Bebe's ash, Zaara had a bus accident. Here she met Veer who saved her from the fallen bus. Veer decides to accompany Zaara to Kiratpur. The ritual for Zaara's Bebe was done and Veer invites Zaara to his village for the Lohri²⁴ festival. In Veer's village Zaara meets his aunt and uncle who are taking care of Veer since the death of his parents. After the Lohri celebration, Veer brings Zaara to the Attari train station where he meets her fiancé Raaza Shirazi (Manoj Bajpayee). Nevertheless, before train moved on, Veer confesses his love to Zaara but she enters the train nonetheless with her fiancé and leaves Veer standing on the platform. The first part of the story is finished. They met in India, Veer's love toward Zaara is shown and her journey in India is finished. Zaara's father, Jahangir Haayat Khan (Bomani Irani) is shown, a Pakistani politician, who arranged the marriage for his daughter. The preparations for the wedding are ready. Shabbo (Divya Dutta), Zaara's maid calls Veer to tell him to come and take Zaara away because she is not happy here. Veer comes for the engagement ceremony and meets Zaara with her whole family. Zaara's father had a shock and is lying in his bed. Zaara's mother Mariam Hayaat Khan

²² Bebe is used in Punjabi language to address a grandmother.

²³ Kiratpur is a place in Punjab Province, where Gurudwara Patal Puri is located on the bank of river Sutlej, where Sikhs take ashes of their dead.

²⁴ More about Lohri festival see in the chapter "*Portray of Indian and Pakistani differences and similarities.*"

(Kirron Kher) meets Veer and tells him in what situation her husband is. After their conversation, Veer decides to talk to Zaara and convince her to marry Raaza for the health of her father. They said goodbye to each other and Veer goes back to India. Police officers comes to the bus and took Veer to prison by identifying him as Rajesh Rathore, working for RAW.²⁵ Veer is blackmailed and wrongly imprisoned by the intrigue of Zaara's fiancé. His identity of Veer Pratap Singh died allegedly in a bus accident. In order to not threaten save Zaara's happiness and honor Veer stays in prison and pledges the vow of silence. With this the story is finished, and we are again back in the present situation. Saamiya, the lawyer, decides to fight for Veer's identity. To find the witness for Veer's identity, she travels to India to his village where she meets Zaara and finds out that since Zaara heard that Veer died in a bus accident, she started to live in his house in order to fulfill Veer's wish of helping his aunt and aunty in the village. After listening to Zaara's story, Saamiya comes with her back to Pakistan and due to her confession, Veer's identity is proven and he is released. The scene in court culminates with Veer's statement in which he emphasizes the peace between India and Pakistan. The film ends on the Wagah border, where Veer and Zaara cross the border together toward India.

Veer Zaara with its romantic story between an Indian man and a Pakistani woman, compare to other Partition films, handles the relationship between India and Pakistan differently, "It carries it sensitively and graciously" (Rashed, 2006). The beautiful landscape of Punjab, the music, the drama and the romance carries the audience to the soul of the film. Film tries to induce the emotion of nostalgia of the Punjab region. It emphasizes the unity of Punjab and similarities between the parts of the Punjab region. The film is made during the loosening of the Indo-Pakistan relations and the political climate between the two nations was growing highly positive.²⁶

This film will be analyzed in the next two sub-chapters, *Portray of Indian and Pakistani differences and similarities* and *Border crossing*. The analysis will be focused on the depiction of differences and similarities between India and Pakistan and the physical presentation of the borders.

²⁵ Research and Analysis Wing is known as foreign intelligence agency of India. It is known as an acronym in India for an organization whose detail character and activities are not well-known. It was established 1968 to handle internal intelligence (Lyon, 2008:140).

²⁶ The bilateral relations between India and Pakistan during 2003 and 2004 will be explained later in the chapter of "Comparison of the films".

4.1.1. The Portrayal of Indian and Pakistani Differences and Similarities

Veer Zaara is a cross - border romance, which shows the division of a couple by the political border, but their “Punjabiness is greater than divide” (Dwyer, 2014:144). Through their love, the film makes an emphasis on the similarities between two states rather than on the differences. Nevertheless, the differences in the dressing and religion is one of the main distinguishing objects between the characters that must be acknowledged rather than be seen as a point of conflict.

In the analysis of *Veer Zaara*, I will concentrate first on the depiction of India and Pakistan. The picture below shows the Indian part of Punjab. The landscape of India is represented very colorful and cheerful. In this sequence, the background music is *Aisa Desh Hai Mera*, which refers to the aspects of a unity and similarity of these two countries. Colorful women dancing through the wide green fields of Punjab is a typical presentation of the Punjab province in Bollywood films. Whereas when the film leads us to Pakistan, the depiction of It’s different. In *Veer Zaara*, the significant parts of Pakistan are shown either in the dark prison cell of Veer, in the law court or Zaara’s family where the depiction is concentrated on the Muslim culture. The first two places present the arms of the Pakistani state that can be interpreted as Kumar says: “...*Veer Zaara* is shot mostly in closed spaces, perhaps emphasizing that It’s people who make and mark differences” (Bharat & Kumar, 2008:133).





Fig. 2: Colorful Punjab and Lohri celebration (00:38:43/01:02:39)

Veer sings *Aisa Desh Hai Mera* in the praise of India, showing Zaara through the lyrics how India beautiful country is. In the extended version of the song, Zaara answers Veer singing that she is already familiar with this country, because this country is the same as hers. We can see how they make no difference between two states. Especially the emphasize lies on the unity of the Punjab Province. It shows that India and Pakistan are more alike than different. This aspect of the similarities comes once more at the ending scene when Veer recites a poem²⁷. Here through lyrics we see an interesting play with the Hindi and Punjabi language. Punjabi language is interfering in some parts and makes the audience feel the emotion of oneness Punjab.²⁸

किन्ना सोना देश है मेरा,
 धरती सुनहरी अम्बर नीला
 धरती सुनहरी अम्बर नीला हर मौसम रंगीला
 ऐसा देश है मेरा हो ऐसा देश है मेरा...

*Such is the beauty of my country
 The earth is golden and the sky is blue,
 The earth is golden and the sky is blue, every season is colorful
 Such is my country*

²⁷ See the Chapter “A message for peace.”

²⁸ Only part of the songs are written here.

मेरे देश में मेहमानों को भगवान कहा जाता है,
वह यहीं का हो जाता है जो कहीं से भी आता है....

*In my country guests are considered as God,
He becomes a native to this country even if he comes from anywhere*

तेरे देश को मैंने देखा तेरे देश को मैंने जाना,
जाने क्यों यह लगता है मुझको जाना पहचाना
यहाँ की वहीं शाम है वहीं सवेरा
यहाँ की वहीं शाम है वहीं सवेरा ऐसा ही देश है मेरा
जैसा देश है तेरा जैसा देश है तेरा जैसा देश है तेरा
ऐसा देश है मेरा जैसा देश है तेरा
ऐसा देश है मेरा
जैसे देश है मेरा

*I have seen your country, I have learned about your country,
I don't know why it feels to me very familiar
Here you have the same evenings and the same mornings
The same evenings and the same mornings
Such is my country too, just like yours
Your country is just like mine is
Such is my country too, just like yours...
(00:36:20 – 00:43:15)*

The lyrics are not copied word-by-word but rather demonstrate the content of the song.

The song lasts seven minutes, and in the last stanza Zaara, sings back to Veer expressing the sentiment that her land is familiar with India – *jānā pahachāna*. They share the same day and night as well as each other. In the first verse, he is singing how beautiful his country is by describing the landscape as represented by the colorful and green landscape in the picture above. *Mehmānō ko bhagvān kahā jātā hai* is a saying that means that the guest is like God in India, and he and his aunt and aunty proved it with the heart warming hosting of Zaara at his village. In the last verse, Zaara sings to Veer that she has already seen this. By singing that the mornings and evenings are the same here and there, she emphasizes not only the similarities in the culture, but in the landscape as well. Since the film is placed in Punjab between India and Pakistan, Zaara makes the remark that both parts of Punjab are the same regarding culture as well as within the landscape. Ultimately, the unity and the nostalgia for the oneness Punjab is highlighted here. Yash also wanted to highlight the beauty of Punjab through this song and was very keen that the three interludes be based on Punjabi folk songs. Thus, the three

interludes were planned on Mahiya, Jugni and Sarke, three very popular traditional Punjabi folk pieces (Madan Mohan, 2011).²⁹ *Aisa Desh Hai Mera* is replayed once more at the end when Veer crosses the Wagah border; however, the melody is slower and feels more patriotic. This song carries a message that India and Pakistan share the same land and the same people, but states that war and the people separated them. Like the first image, the second picture (an image taken from the Lohri³⁰ celebration) is a display of colorful Indian Punjab. In the film, this is where Zaara wears a Punjabi cloth on the festival. This festival is shown without distinction of religion as it's celebrated together by Hindus and Sikhs, and in this case by Zaara, a Muslim girl. Dwyer notes that in the industry, "festivals, life rituals, etc. are celebrated together, whatever the community." (Dwyer, 2006:134). "Two months after the release of *Veer Zaara*, people celebrated Lohri festival in the same way as in the film and new tradition of courtship started" (Dwyer, 2006:160).

However, Hindi film sometimes show that religion is something that differentiates people. Thus, it can build boundaries and create hatred; however, love can and often does overcome it. Such situations can be seen in the films like *PK*, where the main protagonist, Amir Khan learns about the religion and concludes that people make differences between each other because of their religion. Furthermore, most Partition films like *Henna* or *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* represent how a love relation between a Hindu and a Muslim has a hard time being recognized by and within society.

Furthermore, I will proceed to the presentation of Pakistan. The scenes of Pakistan outside the prison and Zaara's family are very rare to find in the film as the only place which is depicted outside is at the bus station. Because of this, I have chosen this image as a representation of Zaara's family. Zaara comes from a successful, political Pakistani family and we can see in the picture below that her father dressed as a typical Muslim man performing a Muslim prayer.

²⁹ http://www.madanmohan.in/html/tribute/events/makingvz_aisadeshaimera.html.

³⁰ Lohri is one of the most popular festivals of Punjab. It is a folk festival celebrated by Sikhs and Hindus from the Indian part of Punjab and Haryana. It marks the end of the winter and signifies the harvesting of the Rabi crop. See more at <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Punjab-celebrates-the-Lohri:-From-culture,-an-invitation-to-a-springtime-of-peace-and-unity-26972.html>.



Fig. 3: Veer Zaara - Muslim Culture (01:40:36/01:34:16)

In the first picture, we see Zaara's father making *namāz* in the morning. He sits in a usual position for performing *namāz* on a praying carpet, dressed as a Muslim man with a typical Muslim cap. He is positioned in the middle of the image and we can see a room around him. The room of Zaara's father is darker with little decoration in comparison to a typical Hindu house that is mostly colorful and full of small altars around the rooms. However, the furniture which we can see in both images above, i.e., a bed and sofa, such as the decorations, a glass lamp, and large curtains give the impression wealth among Zaara's family. The second picture shows a sequence in which Zaara's father is telling her about the importance of her wedding. In both images, we see typical Muslim dress with Zaara's father in a long black *śervāni* cloth and Zaara in a Muslim wedding dress. He looks very serious talking about Zaara's wedding whereas Zaara sits on a sofa with a serious look down. Through her body language, we can see that she is not happy about the arranged marriage.

Since Veer and his family are not religiously presented, there are not any religious aspects depicted from their side, such as prayers. Nevertheless, we can see the differences in the depiction of colors. Muslim culture is portrayed with darker colors in contrast to India which is presented as very colorful. The Muslim cloth is highlighted here. Zaara's father wears a beard and a small Muslim cap, stereotypically portrayed, as it's described above. For formal occasions Pakistani Muslims wear *servāni* - a kind of frockcoat that Zaara's father is wearing in the picture with Zaara.

In addition to the clothing on colors, I wish to emphasize the differences in the languages, Hindi and Urdu, as well as the importance of faith depicted in the film that plays an important role in the melodrama of the film. As Dwyer notes, in Hindi cinema, the melodramatic genre makes an emphasis on the world created by God and focus is usually on faith and destiny which we can see also in *Veer Zaara*. Melodrama in Indian cinema creates a new order, a faith whereas "in Hindi cinema, the world never becomes random, and never becomes a world without God like the world of western secularism" (Dwyer, 2006:157). Hindi films pare more serious regarding faith and destiny. When we are introduced to Veer, we are not familiar with his identity, but rather comes to know him as prisoner 786. This number is a holy number of Muslims and it's often mentioned in other Hindi films as well. Therefore, it's so important that Veer's lawyer, Saamiya, explains to the policemen relations of the holy number and the prisoner.

Saamiya: क्या आपने कभी सोचा है कि इनका नंबर ७८६ कैसे पड़ा?

Police officer: क्या?

Saamiya: कभी गौर किया है अपने कि हज़ारों कैदियों के बीच में बिस्मिल्ला ³¹का यह नंबर इकलौते हिन्दू कैदी के हिस्से में कैसे आया...यह कोई मामूली इत्तिफाक नहीं है, यह अल्लाह ताल्ला का करिश्मा है | यह उनका आप सब को बताने का तरीका है कि देखो यह खुदा का बंदा है...उसकी इज्ज़त करना|

Saamiya: *Have you ever thought why his number is 786?*

Policemen: *What?*

Saamiya: *Have you ever wondered, from the thousands of prisoners here, how come this lone Hindu prisoner uses Allah's holy number? This is not a coincidence, this is God's great*

³¹ *Bismillā means in the name of God, In the name of Allah.*

miracle. His way of telling all of you that this is God's own man...respect him. (01:30:21 - 01:30:57)

Through the presentation of a Sikh man imprisoned in Pakistan under the Muslim holy number, the film shows that for God cares for all people. Regardless of their religion. Saamiya explains that Veer's holy number of Allah is intentional on the part of God. Through this statement, we can say that the director intends to show the equality between people of different religious groups. As a Pakistani lawyer, Saamiya is ready to take the case of an Indian prisoner, saying that her job is not to prove or disprove whether Veer is an Indian spy, but to restore his true identity. Saamiya, as an idealistic and newly approved Pakistani lawyer, shows that the political states of India and Pakistan have interfered in the separation of the two people and have ultimately failed to deliver the truth.

Furthermore, the influence of the Urdu language can be seen in this dialogue. Since Saamiya comes from Pakistan, she speaks Urdu, the main spoken language in Pakistan. For example, words such as *kaidī* (prisoner), *ittiphāk* (coincidence), and *khuda kā bandā* (God's man), come from the Urdu language. The differences in the languages can be seen between Veer and Zaara as well. After Veer helped Zaara to spread the ashes of her Bebe, she wants to repay Veer, and although he hesitates to say what he really wants, Zaara has made a promise:

“एक पाकिस्तानी ने एक हिन्दुस्तानी से वादा किया है...अब तो मेरे मुल्क की इज्ज़त का सवाल है अगर चाहूँ भी तो मुकर नहीं सकती ”

“A Pakistani has made a promise to an Indian, now my country's honor is at stake. Now, even if I want to, I can't back off.” (00:47:53 – 00:48:57)

The same sentence, but with the pure Hindi language, has been said by Veer:

“एक हिन्दुस्तानी ने एक पाकिस्तानी से वादा किया था...अगर पूरा नहीं करता ..तो मेरे देश की आन में दाग नहीं लग जाता “

“It was a promise from an Indian to a Pakistani, if I didn't fulfill it my country's honor would've been tarnished.” (01:19:15-01:19:30)

In the two sentences above, we can see the usage of Hindi and Urdu words. Zaara speaks Urdu, whereas Veer speaks Hindi. Both are using different words for the same meaning.

Zaara uses *mulk kī izzat* for the honor of the state, whereas Veer uses *deś kī ān*. Both terms have the same meaning. Through these statements, we can see Veer and Zaara's respect toward their countries, especially considering that neither of them break their promises for the sake of the honor of their country. Zaara goes with Veer to his village as he wished, and Veer created a good, life-long memory for Zaara as he promised. These characters and behaviors reflect the presentation of their states and are presented as role models of their countries.

Further regarding language, Veer speaks Hindi whereas all Pakistanis speak Urdu, the Punjabi villagers speak a mixture of Punjabi and Hindi, and all educated characters occasionally speak English (Dwyer, 2006:105). Hindi is a neo-Indian language with some words from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. It's a relatively similar language to Urdu, or as Dwyer says, they are two versions of one language (Dwyer, 2006:102). The differences between Hindi and Urdu is in the script and some vocabulary. Urdu consists of more Persian and Arabic words and is written in Perso-Arabic script, whereas Hindi is written in Devnāgarī. By the end of the nineteenth century, Hindi language became the official language of Hindus and Urdu of Muslims which goes back to the Hindu nationalist movement, Hindutva³², which identified itself with Hindi (Veer, 1994:171). Urdu was more common in the North where most Muslims were living before the partition (Dwyer, 2006:98). It can be said that the Bollywood industry is one place where the Urdu language is kept alive (Ganti, 2004:22). In songs and dialogue, we come across Urdu vocabulary that is repeated in almost every film, such as love (*iśk*, *mohabbat*), honor (*izzat*), blood (*khūn*), law (*kānūn*), etc. The analysis of Hindi and Urdu is further mentioned in the analysis of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*.

Veer comes from the Indian part of Punjab. Through the film we can see that religion does not play any special role in his life and he works as a Squadron Leader in Air India Force rescuing people. In contrast, Zaara comes from a very well-known family in Pakistan. Her father is a known politician, who is going to marry Zaara to another Pakistani politician to make a political bond. However, despite Zaara's father being a very strict Muslim, she is raised rather freely. Zaara is presented as a very self-conscious, educated woman and, similar to Veer, religion does not play an important role in her life either. Nevertheless, she is dressed

³² Hindutva was a form of political Hinduism that sought to organize and militarize the Hindus as a nationality, written by Savarkar Vinayak Damodar, see Ashis Nandy (2014): A disowned father of the nation in India: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and the demonic and the seductive in Indian nationalism, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 15:1, 91-112. For the content of the Savarkar's Hindutva see, Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar, (1923) 1969. *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Bombay: Veer Savarkar.

quite traditionally in comparison to Veer. Although both fell in love, problems begin to arise within Zaara's family. Because she is supposed to marry a man for the future political success of her father, their love (Veer and Zaara's) cannot be accepted by the family. This is because Zaara's arranged marriage as well as Veer's nationality create a barrier between Veer and Zaara. Naturally, one would expect that both will fight for their love, nevertheless they don't go against Zaara's parents' decision. Therefore, they decide not to go on with their relationship and to stand behind the wishes of their family. Because of this decision, Zaara decides that she will marry Raaza and Veer decides that he will go back to his village and take care of it. Based on this, audiences can see that both characters are very similar because they follow the wishes of their parents and respect them. Veer and Zaara's obedience to their parents reflects the similarities of the education between India and Pakistan where the society is depicted as patriarchal. As a higher authority, a father's words and values are put in the first place in the family. Generally, the importance of a family is of utmost importance whereas one's own needs are pushed aside.

Veer is portrayed as an open-minded man with respect and the understanding toward the traditions. This respectfulness is seen in a conversation with Zaara's mother. Zaara's mother comes to Veer, asking him to give her daughter back (to the family), otherwise, her husband will die because he cannot accept Zaara marrying someone from India. This image on the conversation between Veer and Zaara's mother can be seen below. The image shows a house of Shabbo that stands in the background on the left with a part of her body hidden behind the doors. Shabbo and Zaara's mother sit in the frontal shot and are dressed in typical Muslim style clothing with Shabbo in a Punjabi suit and Zaara's mother in a black sari. In contrast, Veer stands in the middle dressed in more modern clothing, i.e., trousers, a t-shirt, and a jacket. This distinction is important because traditionally, clothing is a sign of religious or caste identity. Muslim men usually wear a cap and often have a beard, whereas Hindus wear *tilak* and women *bindi*. Men are easier to distinguish than women because Muslim women generally always wear *sari*; albeit they usually wear *salvār kamīz* or a Punjabi suit. Sometimes, they even wear *śarara* (a long culotte-type skirt) and have a *burkā*, or veil over their heads. Maidula Islam discusses the stereotypical way of portraying Muslims and says that "this portray is extremely unjustified to show only a one-dimensional stereotyped image of Muslims in the media wherein the beard, cap, burqa and *chaddar* become the so-called Muslim cultural symbols" (Islam, 2007:405). We do not really know how many Muslims dress like that or how many Muslim communities are reflected by those cultural symbols,

nevertheless, the Hindi film industry presents the Muslim community primarily using those cultural symbols.



Fig. 4: Veer Zaara - Conversation of Veer and Mariam (02:01:42)

Mariam: सुना है आप लोगों की जान बचाते हैं | जारा की जान भी आपने ही बचाई थी ...तो आज उसके अब्बू की जान बचा लीजिए ...मैं आप से भीख माँगती हूँ |

Veer: एक माँ अपने बेटे से कभी भीख नहीं माँगती, सिर्फ हुक्म देती है...

Mariam: तेरे मुल्क का हर बेटा तेरे जैसी है क्या?

Veer: यह तो नहीं पता पर हाँ मेरे देश की हर माँ आप जैसी ज़रूर है |

Mariam: *I've heard that you save lives. You saved also Zaara's life. So now, save her father's life. I beg you*

Veer: *A mother never has to beg her son. She just has to order.*

Mariam: *Is every son from your country like you?*

Veer: *I don't know that, but yes, every mother in my country is exactly like you.*

(02:01:37 – 02:05:07)

Veer won the heart of Zaara's mother because he showed her (and the tradition) respect. This ultimately means they won't fight for their love without having the blessings of their parents. By stating that every mother in India is like Zaara's mother, Veer further emphasizes the similarity of two countries, like when Veer states that a mother doesn't need to beg a son, but she can just order him. Although he comes from a different country, he appoints Zaara's mother as his own ultimately "affirming the oneness of the cultural associations with

motherhood across the border.” (Bharat & Kumar, 2008:134). In India as well as in Pakistan, it’s very common to address others with the role of the family members, such as aunty, mother, father, etc. Here, Veer and Zaara’s mother do this with each other even though they come from different countries, showing that they show that this is the common feature of both countries. After this conversation, Zaara’s mother decides to give Veer an amulet at the bus station, to protect him on his way back to India and states that she will pray to Allah to give Zaara to Veer in every other life. This is a compassionate action of Mariam that would accept and support daughter’s relationship with an Indian man if the situation with Zaara’s father was not like it is. Here, Veer plays an important role with his understanding of Zaara’s parents and accepting their wish. The hero/protagonist is usually depicted as a man that does not fight the system, but rather worships old values by respecting the elders and obeying the patriarchal order. He mostly confirms the wishes of the family and his community. As Dadhe describes, “he does not struggle with the system or her family but tries to win her through his adherence to the traditional norms of chivalry. Love and an unquestioning respect toward his elders and their reservations” (Dadhe, 2009:13).

Veer represents Sikh men although he is not typically dressed. This is unique because the presentation of Sikh in Bollywood Industry has been mainly stereotypical (Roy, 2014:204). For example, Sikhs wear usually turbans called *pagri*, however, Veer wears neither *pagri*, nor Indian dress. Although you can find on the internet comments that this film is about the love of a Hindu and Muslim, the name “Veer” and his necklace are entirely Sikh. As Dwyer writes, Veer’s uncle and aunt are his adoptive parents, a Punjabi Hindu and a south Indian Hindu, but his uncle’s last name is Singh, It’s a Sikh’s name (Dwyer, 2006:129). The presentation of the Sikh community in *Veer Zaara*, depicted positively. When we look at the history, their community was devastated by the Partition, with many of their sacred places being difficult for them to access in Pakistan, they are shown without any bitterness. Zaara’s nanny, Bebe regards Zaara’s family as her own, while the Sikh priest tells Veer that Zaara’s devotion is such that anyone would be moved by it. Veer’s uncle Chaudhury Sumer Singh (Amitabh Bachchan) and aunty welcomed Zaara with the open heart at their village and are very pleased to have a Pakistani girl as a guest at their home. Furthermore, Veer’s uncle in the conversation with Veer tells him that he doesn’t care from where she (Zaara) comes, if it’s China, Japan, or Pakistan, love is important. This positive representation of Sikh characters is not inherently new as Hindi films have been presenting Sikh characters in a more sympathetic light since the late 1990s with the film *Border* where a Sikh man plays a role of a soldier. The film *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* sets a new cinematic trend by presenting Sikhs not as martyrs in war, but

rather as martyrs of love (Roy, 2014: 208). This is also the case for Veer. We can see that Indians are generally positively depicted when compared to Pakistanis. We cannot find any negative character from India, but we can find some negative characters from Pakistan, who are responsible for the intrigue between Veer and Zaara. Compared to Sikhs, Muslims are shown to be very rigid and strict in Bollywood films such as *Bombay* (Mani Ratnam, 1995) where a Muslim protagonist declares that she wishes to marry a Hindu man. Afterwards, her father draws a knife on him. In *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*, the Muslim protagonist suffers because her family cannot accept her marriage to a Sikh man. The situation is similar in *Veer Zaara*, in that Zaara's father is very strict and rigid about marriages because of his political ties and would therefore not be able to accept Zaara marrying someone from India. Additionally, "her (Zaara's) fiancé was so vindictive that he made a plot against Zaara's lover and put him in the Pakistani jail for a long period of time" (Khan & Bokhari, 2011:13).

To summarize this chapter, one can say that the main differences in the depictions of India and Pakistan are religious. With these images above, Pakistan is clearly presented as a Muslim country, whereas India does not emphasize the Hindu religion as intensely. India is depicted rather in the bright various colors, whereas Pakistan in darker, more monochrome colors. Nevertheless, looking at the similarities and differences in this film, I would say that *Veer Zaara* highlights more the similarities and oneness of the two states. Through the dialogues and songs mentioned above, we can see how this film plays with the narrative form of confirming the similarities between the two countries. It should also be noted that the differences are shown more as the facts that should be acknowledged but not discriminated. A representation of the similarities is also highlighted in the film title. *Veer Zaara* builds an inseparable compound which emphasizes the unity and attached relationship of these two people. For instance, Veer belongs to the Sikh community from the Indian part of Punjab and Zaara, as a Muslim girl, comes from the Pakistani part of the Punjab - a Province which is shared by both countries.³³ The title not only refers to the romantic relationship between the two protagonists, but it also highlights the unity of the Punjab province.

4.1.2. Border Crossing

In this film, we come across many scenes in which borders between India and Pakistan are shown not only physical borders, but cultural as well. *Veer Zaara* interprets and creates

³³ For the details on the Partition of India see the Chapter *Indo-Pakistan relations in the Hindi Cinema*.

meaning about the border in its own way. As Dudrah says, *Veer Zaara* evokes pleasure of border crossing and gives a rather simple possibility of crossing it (Dudrah, 2012:22). The physical form of the border appears only twice in the film, once at the Attari railway station and in the final scene at the Wagah border. The film tries to encourage audiences to think about the Indo-Pakistan border “at the level of plot, dialogue, and audio and visual style” (Dudrah 2012:22). Although we only see characters cross the border twice, it can be said that the border is crossed countless times during the film. In one scene, we see Veer in the Pakistan prison talking to Saamiya and a few seconds later, India is shown. Through this constant changing of a scenery from India to Pakistan, one could say that the film crosses the border in a narrative aspect. Additionally, the border is also mentioned in dialogues of Veer and Zaara as well as in some song sequences.

The first scene where the physical border is shown is Attari train station where Veer brings Zaara to the train to Pakistan. When they arrive to the station, we can see a metal grilled fencing with barbed wires constructed between the two train lines: one which operates a train from India to Pakistan and one the other way around. This can be clearly seen in the picture below. On the left side, we can see Attari written on the sign and to the right, we see a bridge and a tall barbed wire separating the train lines. Over the wires is a bridge that brings people either to the trains toward Pakistan or toward India. While crossing the bridge to the side where trains are driving off to Pakistan, Zaara's fiancé appears and the three of them meet in the middle of the bridge.





Fig. 5: Veer Zaara - Meeting Zaara's fiancé at the Attari train station border (01:21:30/01:22:01)

Before Veer and Zaara took the stairs together to get to the other side of the train station, the music in background is friendly and cheerful and it makes the audience wait for them to confess their love to each other. However, the music and the atmosphere gets interrupted by the background music that “associate with Islamic sounds and the stature of an aspiring Mogul” (Dudrah, 2012:24). Through this audio style, the audience is warned that something or someone will interrupt the cheerful and happy conversation between Veer and Zaara. The figure of Raaza, Zaara's fiancé appears on the bridge; he is dressed in the black *servāni* style. We see Raaza through the space in the middle between Veer and Zaara, on the left side is Zaara's figure while on the right is Veer's figure. Here, we see the separation of Veer and Zaara by the interruption of a third person. Both of them are in front of the scene, shown from their back, while Raaza is in the background, shown frontally. Through the music and the images, the audience gets the impression of the separation of the lovers and the negative impression of Raaza's character is also depicted. A Pakistani is shown here as a negative person, interrupting the love between Veer and Zaara. This image depicts Raaza as an outsider in the whole picture because he is the only one dressed in a black, while on his right side a Sikh man dressed in a white *kurtā* and *turban*. This contrast is used for the depiction of the differences between Indians and Pakistanis. Despite not knowing Raaza or the place where this image is done, audiences can still immediately distinguish the people due to the clothing: a Muslim man and a Sikh next to him.

The scene on the border is not finished by the interruption of Raaza. Before Zaara's departure, Veer confesses his love to her to which she stays completely silent and speechless. Raaza

joins them soon and in the conversation between Raaza and Veer, he almost confesses to him his love toward Zaara. Compared to Veer, Zaara stays silent at the Attari station. Here, her silence can be interpreted as the boundary of a culture and a religion that she cannot cross or confess her love to Veer. This scene occurs at the border and “a negotiation is taking place with the woman as the site of transaction” and she remains quite in the middle of the two men (Dudrah, 2012:24). It’s interesting to note that the border-crossing between India and Pakistan is not depicted in any sequence as an issue, but rather the relations between Indians and Pakistanis regarding their cultures and religions are shown as an issue at the border itself. Nevertheless, the scene continues with the imagination of both. The music in the background starts and both Veer and Zaara imagine how they are singing and confessing their love to each other. “The song sequence is deployed in one of the conventional formats of its usage in popular Hindi cinema as a narrative accelerator, it’s used as part dream like to enunciate the unspeakable in a conservative social setting at a border crossing” (Dudrah, 2012:24). When the dream ends, Zaara greets Veer with *ādāb*³⁴, both emotions remained unexpressed fully and their identities as Indian and Pakistani came out as the difference and obstacle to overcome. “This bears all hallmarks of a classic Hindi film’s emotional and melodramatic moments” (Dudrah, 2012:25).

Not only do the music and the imaginations of Veer and Zaara cross social boundaries in this sequence, but Veer’s last sentences to Zaara mentions a border as well:

“अगर कहीं कभी भी कोई दोस्त की ज़रूरत पड़े तो बस इतना याद रखना की सरहद पार एक ऐसा शक है जो आप के लिए अपनी जान भी दे देगा।”

“But wherever, wherever you need a friend...just remember that there is a man across the border who will give his life for you” (01:25:06-01:25:29).

Here, we can see that through dialogue, the film makes an emphasis on border crossing. *Sarhar pār* (across the border) is a term mentioned several times in the film and once in a song sequence. Additionally, in the song “*Main Yahaa Hu*”, one verse refers directly to the border – “*kaisī sarhadē kaisī majbūriyō*” – these borders, this helplessness. Dudrah explains

³⁴ This gesture involves raising the right hand towards the face, so that a hand is in the front of the eyes and the finger tips are almost touching the forehead, as a head is bent little forward.

that the border “*is referenced as either crossed or to be negotiated in terms of a barrier to the lovers meeting*” (Dudrah, 2012:23).



Fig. 6: Veer Zaara – *Pranām* to India (03:14:05)

Another scene in which we can see the physical border is the last scene of the film which the Wagah border plays an important role in. After 22 years in the Pakistan prison, Veer can finally return to his homeland. Standing at the Wagah border, he bows to Mother India while the music of *Aisa Desh Hai Mera* plays in the background. In the photo above, we can see three colors which present an Indian flag and *Bharat* written in a golden letter of Devnāgarī. Veer is in a frontal shot, behind him is a sign of *Bharat*, and on his right side, we can see the legs of Zaara. Before stepping foot on the land of his country, Veer shows a respect toward his homeland, bows down, and makes *pranām* (bowing down, putting his hand afterwards on his heart). People from India usually bow down in front of their parents, teachers, and temples as a sign of respect and honor toward it. Before they cross to India completely, Saamiya gives Veer a *sindūr*³⁵ to put it on the forehead of Zaara as a sign that she is his wife. The *sindūr* is a mark of a Hindu wife, thus, this scene can be interpreted as Zaara’s conversion to Hinduism. The critic of Dudrah to the ending scene is that “this dominant ideological conclusion, which lasts for around 3 minutes, is disproportionate to the three-plus hours of border crossing that the film has just professed” (Dudrah, 2012:26). This act got some criticism, but nevertheless it didn’t destroy Yash Chopras romantic love story.

³⁵ A red powder used by married women on their foreheads.

Finally, both protagonists cross the Indo-Pakistan border, say, goodbye to the other, and turn toward their own lands Saamiya to Pakistan and Veer with Zaara to India. The last scene ends with the picture below.



Fig. 7: Veer Zaara – Ending scene on the Wagah border (03:14:41)

As both protagonists cross the Wagah border together, theories of the borderland studies can be interpreted in this image. As we have seen above, they indicate that borders do not only separate countries, but that they also provide a kind of communication between two states. In the ending scene, we see a border and two characters holding each other together going through the border. The border is shown here, not as a separation, but rather as a path for a kind of a conversation between the two countries.

The Wagah border stands not only for the opportunity of border crossing, but it's also a place visited by many tourists. The ceremony of the lowering flags at the border is practiced daily from the Pakistani Rangers (PR) and Indian Border Security Force (IBSF) that attracts Indians, Pakistanis, and tourists alike. In this image, we can see only BSF soldiers wearing khaki uniforms which are “ornate red, yellow, and black cummerbunds around their waists and vivid, tall, impressive turbans with tassels” (Menon, 2013:44). In contrast, PR soldiers wear long military green *kurtā* over matching pants and the same hats as Indian soldiers.³⁶ This flag ceremony keeps the account of Partition alive to legitimize the state monopoly of violence (Menon, 2013: 47). “The Wagah ceremony displays the magnificent power of the state at the same time that it dramatizes the antagonism between India and Pakistan” (Menon,

³⁶ For the closer description of a ceremony at the Wagah border, see Karla and Purewal, ‘The Strut of the Peacocks: Partition, Travel and the Indo-Pak Border’, Menon 2013:44, <http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20150429-indias-bizarre-border-ritual>.

2013:48). Van Schendel refers to Wagah syndrome as the link that stands between states and violence in South Asia (van Schendel, 2007:44). The Wagah ceremony is arguably one of the major reasons that most people travel to the border as “there is no borderland or site of cultural hybridity at the Indo-Pak border, but instead a sense of something unknown, something dangerous” (Kalra & Purewal, 1999:60). The Wagah border also stands as the only road link between the two countries as it’s located on the old Grand Trunk Road between Lahore and Amritsar and only 3 kilometers distanced from the Attari railway bordering. The border stays open from 10 am until 3:30 or 4 pm, in this time the border can be crossed, afterwards the immigration counters and border gates are closing (Butalia, 2013).³⁷ Although the border is heavily guarded, border attacks are still frequent (BBC News, 2014).³⁸ In order to loosen the tensions between India and Pakistan, acts such as releasing the Pakistani prisoners over to authorities at the Wagah border post can be seen (Hindustan Times, 2017).³⁹ As we have seen, the Wagah border plays an important role, on its own way, in the communication between two states.

In this chapter, the significant feature of the border depiction is the ease of which it’s easy to cross the border. For example, there are no passport controls, no immigration counters, no visas, etc. from the administrative border control shown in this film. The director, Yash Chopra, purposefully excluded these control issues of the Indo-Pakistan border and concentrated on the audio, visual and narrative style of the border crossings.

4.1.3. A Message for Peace

As we have seen in the chapter *Indo–Pakistan Relations in the Hindi Cinema*, as a state, Pakistan and Muslims as a group have been negatively depicted in numerous films. One could say that the focus of those films was on the building of the nation of India by showing its neighbors as enemies. Nevertheless, the pattern of depicting Pakistan as an enemy has been broken in the Hindi cinema and we can find many other films that indicate a good, friendly relationship between both countries. However, this chapter mainly focused on *Veer Zaara*. For example, in this film, the final lines refer directly to the good relations between India and Pakistan. Saamiya had to fight the case of Veer with her ex-boss Zakir Ahmed (Anupam Kher). After winning the case, Zakir goes to Saamiya and congratulates her by saying:

³⁷ <https://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/16/stepping-across-the-line-at-wagah-border/>

³⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-29875879>

³⁹ <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-releases-11-pakistani-prisoners-at-wagah-border/story-7PIF8GVumylvVNAE6WvX8N.html>

...आज समझ में आया कि इन दोनों मुल्कों की तक्रदीर तुम जैसे नौजवानों के हाथों में है जो इंसान को छोटे बड़े, मर्द औरत या हिन्दू मुसलमानों के तराजू में नहीं तोलते जो हर बात पर १९४७, ६५, ९९ की कड़वी यादों पर नमक नहीं छिड़कते जो सच्चाई और सिर्फ सच्चाई से आने वाले कल को सँवारना चाहते हैं।

“...now I understand that the future of both countries is in the hands of youngsters like you who do not measure humans as big-small, man-woman, Hindu-Muslim, who don't rake up bitter (rub salt into the wound) war memories of 1947, 65 and 99 on every pretext, who wish to address the future with the truth and only the truth...”

(03:10:25 - 03:10:56)

This confession by Saamiya's oppositional lawyer refers to India's Partition and subsequent wars between India and Pakistan. Throughout the film, specific historical facts are not mentioned until the end. While hatred between India and Pakistan, Muslims and Hindus has its roots in the Partition, this is not the main topic of this film, although it is mentioned at the end as an important facet of a conflict relation between the two states.

What the lawyer wants to emphasize in his statement to Saamiya is that the future of India and Pakistan lies in the hands of the youngsters, i.e., present and future generations. This is because he believes that youngsters will have no bitterness toward other religions and other people who have not grown up amid the wars and hatred of the two countries and would fight only for the truth without bringing up previous conflicts. Furthermore, the last and most famous of Veer's monologues which calls for the good relations between India and Pakistan is presented here as the major point of the film.



Fig. 8: Veer Zaara – Veer at the Pakistani court (02:58:03)

In Figure 8, we see Veer standing in front of Zaara; in this scene, he is seeing her for the first time in 22 years. In the background, a picture of Mohammad Ali Jinnah hangs on the wall, and on the left and right sides stand the Pakistani flags as well as a court people. This picture is a representation of the Pakistani court and state standing behind Veer's identity while his future depends on the decision of Pakistan. Nevertheless, his identity is proven and the Pakistani court apologizes to Veer for his false imprisonment. Below is Veer's monologue from this scene:

मैं कैडी नंबर ७८६ जेल की सलाखों से बाहर देखता हूँ, दिन, महीने, सालों को युग में बदलते देखता हूँ इस मिटी से मेरे बौजी की खेतों की खुबसू अति है...

I, prisoner 786, look through the bars of the jail, I see day, months, years change into ages, this soil emits the fragrance of my dad's fields...

वह कहता है यह तेरा देश नहीं, फिर क्यों मेरे देश जैसा लगता है, वह कहता है मैं उस जैसा नहीं, फिर क्यों मुझे जैसा वह लगता है

They say this is not your country, then why does it feel like my country? He says I'm not like him, then why does he seems like me?

वह कहता है के वह कोई नहीं है, फिर क्यों वह मेरे लिए दुनिया से लड़ती है, वह कहते है के मैं उस जैसा नहीं, फिर क्यों मुझे जैसी वह लगती है

They say she (Saamiya) is nothing to me, then why does she fight the whole world for me? They say I'm not like her, then why does she seem like me?

वह कहते है के मेरा देश उसका नहीं, फिर क्यों मेरे घर वह रहती है, वह कहते है की मैं उस जैसा नहीं फिर क्यों मुझे जैसी वह लगती है

They say my country is not hers Zaara), then why does she live in my home? They say I'm not like her, then why does she seem like me?

(03:05:36 – 03:09:14)

Here, only parts of Veer's monologue are used, however, he is able to put his experiences and lessons from prison into a nice poem that compares the smell, landscape, and people of his own village with the people and landscape of Pakistan. From this, we can see a clear

emphasize on the similarities between India and Pakistan. Ultimately, *Veer* shows that there is no reason to make war or to treat one another as enemies as they are all the same.

Veer Zaara can be categorized as a cine-patriotic and romance family film, as described by Dadhe (Dadhe, 2009:17). This is because the rules of *Veer Zaara* are the same as in other Partition films, most notably, the trope of the Hindu boy hero falling in love with a Pakistani girl. This is a cliché that appears in most cross-border romance films done in Bollywood film industry. While one could say that some Pakistanis are depicted negatively compared to Indians, some of these stereotypes become the cause of the separation of *Veer* and *Zaara*. It should also be noted that this is the only film with this pattern that has officially been shown in Pakistani cinemas. Part of this could be attributed to the problems between the lovers being that fault of the states which have divided the couple, and also partially because of a villain. Ultimately, this film shows how lovers can overcome all barriers which they did with the help of a Pakistani Muslim lawyer (Dwyer, 2006:129). This is further proven by Vishwanath and Malik who state that “the film has deep emotional investment in reconciliation, in bringing two conflicting nations together” (Vishwanath & Malik, 2009:63). Through *Veer*’s last monologue, he refers to the unity and similarities between the two countries and the film left ends positively with a feeling of nostalgia. This does not mean that the borders between India and Pakistan are removed; however, the crossing of the border caused boundaries to shift (Dudrah, 2012:26). Dwyer notes that “perhaps, only India’s top producer, Yash Chopra, could have taken such a risky topic” (Dwyer, 2006:157). *Veer Zaara* swept all the awards for the year and Yash Chopra was invited to a lunch with the visiting President of Pakistan, General Musharraf, where a band played music from the film (Dwyer, 2006:157).

“The films create their own cinematic borderlands that can be made sense of by deciphering their audio and visual styles” (Dudrah, 2012:26). The primary pleasure of Indo- Pakistan border crossings in this scene is through the sight and sounds in the diegetic world of *Veer Zaara*.

4.2. Bajrangi Bhaijaan

Name: Bajrangi Bhaijaan

Release date: 17. July 2015

Director: Kabir Khan

Genre: adventure, comedy, drama

Length: 159 min.

A newer film titled *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was released on 17th July 2015, one day before the Eid festival. It was a great hit in both India and Pakistan and became one of the most watched films in the history of Indian television. The film was nominated for Best Film and Best Actor at the 61st Filmfare Awards and won the Filmfare Award for the Best Story. The story won the hearts of Indians as well as Pakistanis, which is not self-evident for many Hindi cinema films dealing with Indo-Pakistan relations. Fakhre Alam, the Sindh censor board chairman once said that “it was the most positive film on Pakistan that Bollywood has produced in a long time (Bedi, 2015).”⁴⁰ Although some scenes were edited/deleted to fit the guidelines of the Pakistani Film Censor Board, the story was not impacted.

The film begins with the beautiful picturesque landscape of a Pakistani village in Kashmir with a group of Pakistanis watching a cricket match between India and Pakistan on television. Inspired by a Pakistani cricketer named Shahid Afridi, one of the mothers names her daughter Shahida (Harshaali Malhotra), a girl who grew up seemingly unable to speak. Given her condition, her worried parents decide to take her to a wish-fulfilling holy *dargah* (shrine) in Delhi. Shahida’s mother takes her to India along since her father cannot get a visa because of his previous service in the Pakistani army. On their way back to Pakistan, the train is delayed due to a technical failure and Shahida sees a helpless lamb fall into a pit. To save the lamb, she gets out of a train which starts moving again, ultimately leaving her behind in the unknown country of India. She then boards the next train which takes her to Kurukshetra where she meets a devout of Hanuman, Pavan Kumar Chaturvedi, known as Bajrangi (Salman Khan). Wanting to help the little girl, Bajrangi takes her home and together, with his wife-to-be Rasika (Kareena Kapoor), they try to discover the girl’s identity. After a while, they

⁴⁰ <http://www.hindustantimes.com/chandigarh/bajrangi-bhaijaan-wins-hearts-in-pakistan/story-mK1pr6SZNwBXOxj9goStpI.html>

discover that the girl is not vegetarian and that she is a Muslim from Pakistan. This discovery makes Rasika's father angry and he insists that Shahida be taken back to Pakistan as soon as possible. However, because of visa issues, Bajrangi decides to take Shahida back to her parents on his own without visa or passport. This shift from one part of the film sets up the transition and follows the characters further with the story in Pakistan. Bajrangi manages to cross the border illegally but is soon caught by the Pakistani police who label him as an Indian spy. Afterwards, news reporter Chaand Nawab (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) helps Bajrangi find the Shahida's parents by documenting the adventure on his camera and putting it online on YouTube. Throughout this adventure, he also tries to prove Bajrangi's innocence by demonstrating his virtue. In the final scene, people from both India and Pakistan unite on the Thajwas glacier near the Line of Control to let Bajrangi cross the Indo-Pakistan border back to his homeland India. Pakistani people cry out *Bajirangi Bhaijaan* and while he crosses the border, Shahida cries out *māmā* (uncle) and greets Bajrangi with *jay śrī rām*. Ultimately, this end scene demonstrates how the people of India and Pakistan can overcome the cultural borders and improve their real brotherhood.

Many of the similarities and differences between Indians and Pakistanis are presented here as well as the way how people deal with those aspects. The entire plot is shown on a very naive and humorous way through the main protagonist, Bajrangi (Salman Khan). Although the film is about finding one's way home along with searching for the parents of a lost Pakistani girl, the focus is primarily on the male character, Bajrangi. The film builds a very simple story with significant social problems that occur between India and Pakistan built around social, political, and religious issues.

4.2.1. Portrayal of Indian and Pakistani Differences and Similarities

The film opens with a beautiful green landscape of Kashmir which has historically been a very popular shooting place for Bollywood, especially during the 70s and 80s where it was used as the background for romantic song sequences. Because of its beautiful mountain landscape, it's usually associated with the mountains of the Swiss. This romantic presentation of a Kashmir can be seen in films such as *Yah Jawani Hai Deewani* (dir. Ayan Mukerji, 2013)⁴¹, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (dir. Yash Chopra, 2012)⁴² where Kashmir does not play any role

⁴¹ It is about a love story between Ranbir Kapoor and Deepika Padukone shot in Pahalgam, one of the most visited spots in the state.

as a political entity. Using Kashmir as a romantic backdrop changed in the 1990s when it was depicted as a site for Islamist and fundamentalist separatism and terrorism. Thus, Kashmir as a political state and issue was visualized (Kabir, 2010: 383).⁴³ Such depiction of Kashmir as a conflict region is represented in *Lakshya* (dir. Farhan Akhtar, 2004), *Mission of Kashmir* (dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 2000) and *Fanaa* (dir. Kunal Kohli, 2006)⁴⁴. The territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been a point of contention between India and Pakistan since 1947. Since then, the border has experienced constant conflicts and attacks. Nevertheless, the film, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* makes an exception and represents Kashmir without the presence of Muslim terrorists or separatists. Rather, it's presented as a region as a calm, beautiful landscape with friendly Pakistanis trying to help Bajrangi.

Below, figure 9 represents a Pakistani community in Kashmir where the landscape is shown in the background of Pakistanis who are in the frontal shot. They are sitting together conversing about the difficulties of getting visa for India. The conversation is led by Shahida's grandfather who sits on the left with a white beard and a grey cap. Next to him is Shahida's father with a blue cap and Shahida's mother is on the right; note that only the left part of the body is shown and that her head is covered with a shawl. This image of Shahida's family along with the rest of the community sitting around them depicts them as typical Pakistanis as they all wear a typically Muslim-style dress – *salvār kamīz* and a Muslim cap on their heads.

As is common in Indian and Pakistani societies, older people are generally asked for advice which is what we see here. In this image, Shahdia's parents are asking Shahida's grandfather for advice to which he suggests that Shahida's parents to go with her to a Muslim mosque in Delhi which is known for its miracles and wish fulfillment.

⁴² The film contains portions which were shot in Kashmir, such as the song 'Jiya Re' where Anushka Sharma dances in the middle of the Dal Lake. Dal Lake is one of Kashmir's most popular tourist locations.

⁴³ This examples we can find in films: *Mission of Kashmir* (dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 2000), *Fanaa* (dir. Kunal Kohli, 2006) or *Yahaan* (dir. Shoojit Sircar, 2005).

⁴⁴ The story of the films are escribed in the Chapter 3.2.4. Terrorist films.



**Fig. 9: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Muslim Community in Sultanpur, Pakistani Kashmir
(00:7:00)**

Shahida's father: अरे अब्बू दिल्ली हिंदुस्तान में है ।

Shahida's grandfather: तो क्या हुआ...अमेरिका में तो नहीं है ना ।

Shahida's father: अमेरिका जाना उससे आसान है अब्बू । पहले की बात और थी तब एक मुल्क था और अब आप भूल रहे हैं कि मैं पांच साल फौज में था । हिन्दुस्तानी मुझे वीसा नहीं देंगे ।

Shahida's father: *But Delhi is in Hindustan⁴⁵ now.*

Shahida's grandfather: *So what? It's not in America, is it?*

Shahida's father: *It's easier to go to America, father. It was different earlier; it was the same country. And you're forgetting that I served in the army for 5 years. The Indian's won't give me a visa.*

(00:07:15 – 00:08:01)

The problem of getting visa for India or Pakistan is mentioned several times throughout the film. The joking comment in the above dialogue that it would be easier to get a visa for the United States than it is in India is, unfortunately, often true. For example, in September 2012,

⁴⁵ The word Hindustan has been used in Persia to refer to the land lying beyond the river Indus. Hindu is the Persian name for Sindhu, the name for the Indus River in ancient Sanskrit literature. The Persian Hindustan got introduced in India and became very commonly used in Moghul period (Clementin ojha, 2014: 1) When the book *Hindutva*, written by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar came out 1923, this term became a religious term that linked national identity to one language, one religious denomination and one territory. See Catherine Clémentin-Ojha, « 'India, that is Bharat...': One Country, Two Names », *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* [Online], 10 | 2014.

India and Pakistan signed a new visa agreement that came into effect in April 2013. With the new legislation, the visa regime was liberalized so that “Pakistan visitors are allowed to visit five places in India instead of three; a visa on arrival (at Attari checkpoint) is provided for persons above the age of 65 and below the age of 12; entry and exit from different designated immigration check posts is allowed; some categories of businessmen have been exempted from police reporting” (Das, 2014:312-316).⁴⁶ The strict control of Pakistanis at the Indian border and their process of getting visa can be seen according to various examples written in the newspapers (Laskar, 2015).⁴⁷

Later on in the film as Shahida gets out of the train, she boards another one that then takes her to Kurukshetra⁴⁸ right in the middle of the Hanuman celebration. Hanuman is a very popular Hindu deity that appears almost monkey-like. The name of the main character, Bajrangi means “the one who belongs to Bajrang”; it’s also one of the names of the god, Hanuman (Dwyer, 2017:263). The name, however can also refer to someone who belongs to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bajrangi Dal founded in 1984. “It’s viewed as a militant group that seeks to keep India a Hindu nation in light of perceived threats from Muslims and Christian missionaries” (Ibid.). In reality, the character’s name is Pawan Kumar Chaturvedi which means, “the Son of the Wind”; this is another name for Hanuman. (Dwyer, 2017:263).



⁴⁶ <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=90754>

⁴⁷ <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/the-mad-mad-world-of-indian-and-pakistani-visa-rules/story-YtkZGIA7Nk191gFmf8jHTJ.html>

⁴⁸ Kurukshetra is a city in the north Indian state Haryana, known as a setting of the Hindu epic poem Mahabharata.

Fig. 10: Lost Shahida in India (Sq, 00:16:34)

In Figure 10, we see Shahida lost between Indian boys who are dressed as the Hanuman deity. This scene acts as the film's first introduction to India which is represented by a very colorful and cheerful (with the background music "*Selfie Le Le Re*") atmosphere. When comparing the two images, the film very clearly and strictly distinguishes between Indians and Pakistanis, not only through religious symbols and clothing, but also by playing with certain colors and giving a clear message to audiences about colorful India vs. monotonous Pakistan. The film's contrasting emotions through colors are especially seen in the depiction of Shahida and Indian boys in the image above. Here, Shahida wears a dark brown cloth while the faces of the Indian boys are masked and their cloths are red with a golden frame. The people of India, as well as the country, are usually depicted in various colors, particularly the dresses which are known as *sārī* and *dupattā* whereas Pakistanis are usually portrayed in monochrome, usually darker shades of clothing. As a Pakistani girl, Shahida stands out in India in a way that she does not in Pakistan because of her clothing. Additionally, in India, her hair falls down over her shoulders without a scarf or any other kind of head covering; however, in Pakistan she would be dressed as a typical Muslim girl with her head covered.

In addition to clothing, another habit that is considered to be stereotypical is how eating and meals are presented. In the film, Pakistan is depicted as a predominantly meat-eating country. This idea is expressed when Bajrangi comes to Pakistan and has a problem by ordering only vegetarian food. Another example is when he wants to only order vegetables and a Pakistani asked him if he has any health problems (01:25:20 – 01:25:56). Since Bajrangi is a strict vegetarian, as are many other strict Hindu followers, he is horrified. This feeling is further emphasized when Bajrangi discovers that Shahida is not of the Brahmin caste like he originally thought. After watching her eat meat, he began to associate her with the Kshatriya caste because, although the people of this caste eat meat, they are still considered socially fair (00:47:30).

Throughout the film, Bajrangi forms his own idea of Shahida's identity in the form of Munni; this action reflects the phase of idealization of how Bajrangi sees his own identity as a Hindu. The prejudice and stereotypes run deep within Bajrangi, but throughout the film, he learns from Muslims how to overcome the prejudices that he has been taught to see in them (Muslims). Naturally, had Shaida/Munni been able to talk, Majrangi would have had no issues taking her to her parents. However, it's because of this that Bajrangi is able to learn about her story and identity step-by-step while also learning much more about himself and managing to overcome his own biases. It's important to note that Bajrangi's father was a leading figure in

the group, Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS – Association of National Volunteers), founded in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. This group is regarded as the ideological and organizational core of Hindu communalism, or, as Jaffrelot states, “Hindu nationalist sect” (Jaffrelot, 1996:35). Additionally, the RSS defines the term of Hindu as a part of cultural, racial and ethnic concept (Lyon, 2008:139).⁴⁹

Shahida comes from Kashmir, where the conflict between India and Pakistan is still present today. In the film, it’s Maulana Sahab (Om Puri) who tells Bajrangi that Shahida may come from the Pakistani part of Kashmir. Initially, Bajrangi is shocked by the fact that there is also a part of Kashmir belonging to Pakistan. In this moment, the director critiques India by showing them that the main character (Bajrangi) does not know that a part of Kashmir also belongs to Pakistan. Maulana houses them in a Mosque and helps them hide from the police, who are searching for them. However, Bajrangi is reluctant to stay in the mosque because he believes that it can make him impure. This is shown when he finds out that he has been sleeping in the mosque, he stands up in a shock and runs out of the mosque crying, “*Forgive me Bajrangi Bali*” (01:37:28). Bajrangi’s reaction shows how he has a fear of polluting his own religion by going to the mosque. This fear of pollution is like the treatment of lower castes in Hinduism. Eventually, Maulana and Shahida help him to overcome this and Bajrangi starts to learn the value of Islam. As they say their goodbyes, Maulana says, “allāh hāfiz”, to which Bajrangi nearly raises his hand to reply, but ultimately decided to join hands in a prayer, *mudrā*, as Hindus do. Finally, Maulana greets Bajrangi with, “*jay śrī rām*”.⁵⁰ This act does not belittle his Islamic faith and Bajrangi stares on in wonder. He starts to learn from Pakistanis that one can respect the other’s religion without hurting his or her own faith.

In another scene, Bajrangi loses sight of Shahida who has run off to a mosque for prayer; this is where he finally understands her religious heritage. When he approaches the Mosque, Bajrangi acts as if he comes to an impure place and offends Shahida for deluding him. Afterwards, his fiancé, Rasika appears and makes him ashamed of his thoughts. After Shahida finishes her prayer, she runs toward Bajrangi and hugs him with a smile. Here, we can see how Bajrangi’s religious barriers fall because of Shahida’s love. She does not see the difference between them, and in this moment, Bajrangi starts to realize that the things that makes them different, such as religion, are not features that should make them enemies.

⁴⁹ See more in Jaffrelot, 1996:114f and Lyon, 2008:129f.

⁵⁰ Dwyer is told that this part has been cut by the Pakistani censor board (Dwyer, 2017:265).

Through these scenes, we see how the director, Kabir Khan, portrays the Muslim community as friendly and open minded. It's possible to determine here that by crossing the actual physical border of India and Pakistan, Bajrangi starts the process of learning about the other culture and religion; he also starts to learn how to cross his own boundaries of prejudices. Slowly, he becomes more understanding and adjusts himself among different people. In contrast, we have Shahida who encounters a new religious group (Hindus) for the first time. Nevertheless, she is happy to adopt Hindu gestures, making *namaste* for prayers and greetings, and is seen as Bajrangi pendant.

Religion plays an important role in the division of the two states; this is shown very often in films. For example, in the images below, we see Muslims and Hindus praying in their own way.



Fig. 11: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Muslim and Hindu way of praying (01:53:50/ 00:10:01)

In Figure 11, we see Bajrangi with Sahahida and Nawab bowing in front of a monkey, respecting him as the god, Hanuman. These moments of followers bowing in front of each monkey on the street can be found in many parts of the film. All three are shown in the frontal

shot with Bajrangi on the left bowing down with his closed eyes. On the right, Shahida imitates Bajrangi by holding her hands in the same prayer gesture, with the smile on her face. When Bajrangi bows while looking at the monkey, Nawab started to laugh at him. However, as soon as he sees Shahda doing the same thing, he starts to imitate her. Conversely, Chand Nawab stands in the middle imitating with a serious face expression. Here, we could see how Shahida had an impact on an older Muslim journalist by showing respect not only toward other religion, but also toward Bajrangi. Unlike Bajrangi, Shahida is not shy, nor does she possess any kind of barrier that makes her question her own behavior. It can be assumed that this is because of her age, and the fact that she might not yet understand prejudices and stereotypes toward Hindus or Muslims. Ultimately, her relationship with Bairangi shows that the differences between them do not define the relation they share.

Figure 11 also shows Shahida and her mother praying in Delhi at the mosque for the sake of Shahida's health. Although we can see three women in this image, one is blurred while Shahida and her mother are very clearly presented. These two images further emphasize the clear distinction between Hindu's and Muslim's way of praying. For example, while Hindus pray with their hands folded together in front of their chest, Muslims hold their hands with their open palms looking toward their face.

Throughout the film, Bajrangi's devotion and trust in Hanuman can be seen in his acts of bowing to any monkey that crosses his path. Bajrangi's strong beliefs are understood as overwhelmingly confident with him trusting in his ability to achieve everything, even finding Shahida's parents. We (audiences) see this trust in Hanuman when Bairangi decides to go to Pakistan without a visa and passport, saying that he is Hanuman's *bhakta* and therefore he will manage it, which he does in the end.

Another aspect of the state division are the languages, Urdu and Hindi, that come across each other in this film. An example is the scene where the police catches Bajrangi in Pakistan and accuse him of being an Indian spy. After Bajrangi says nothing to Chand Nawab's questioning, by not knowing that Nawab refers to his mission as a spy, Nawab presses him further:

Nawab: अच्छा...तो वतनपरस्त हो

Bajrangi: क्या?

क्या बोलते...देशभक्त

Nawab: *I see...you're a patriot.*

Bajrangi: *What?*

Nawab: *What do they call it? Patriot!*

(01:30:04 – 01:30:11)

Here, we see a difference in the vocabulary used between Urdu and Hindi. For example, Bajrangi didn't understand what the phrase, *vatanparast*; however, Nawab remembers the Hindi word of *deśbhakt*, he gives him a hint. These small language differences come across in the film. In terms of language, before Independence in Northern India, the lingua franca was Hindi and Urdu, or Hindustani. It's important to note that spoken Hindi and Urdu are almost identical and that the separation of Hindi and Urdu during the mid-nineteenth century was due to the political reasons. Historically, Urdu was the language for Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab until 1947 (Dwyer, 2006:103). Despite the Hindi and Urdu separation, Dwyer explains that in Bollywood films, Hindi and Urdu can become one language, called Hindustani (combination of Hindi and Urdu), which did not come when there were attempts to create a Hindustani language (Dwyer, 2006:106). When the first talkies (films with soundtracks that are distinct from silent films) came out, filmmakers decided that the spoken Hindi language, Hindustani, a language that was used as lingua franca across northern and central India (Ganti, 2004:12) would be used. Despite the fact that Hindustani is a combination of Urdu and Hindi, Dwyer claims that the language spoken in Bollywood films is called Hindi mainly for political purposes (Dwyer, 2006:103).

Just as *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* mention the Partition of India and presents it as a source of misunderstandings and negotiations between Hindus and Muslims, the film references the Partition of India and Pakistan in a series of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. Here, we can see Rasika's father's reaction when he finds out that Shahida is from Pakistan.

Rasika's father: ब्राह्मण ब्राह्मण कहकर घर लाया था इसे | दुनिया में बस एक तू ही है दयावान दुनिया भर के दुखियारों का साथी...देखो इस लड़की के देशवासी आये दिन मेरे देशवासियों को बेरहमी के साथ मार देते।

Rasika: इसमें मुन्नी की क्या गलती है?

Rasika's father: लेकिन वह देश तो इसका है न | देखो मैं कठोर दिल नहीं हूँ लेकिन...अब मैं इसे अपने घर में और बर्दाश्त नहीं कर सकता |

Rasika's father: *You brought her home saying she is a Brahman. Are you the only kind-hearted man on this planet? ... Look, the people of her country brutally kill the people of my country.*

Rasika: *But father, what is Munni's fault?*

Rasika's father: *But she belongs to that country. Look, I don't have a cruel heart, but I can't tolerate her in my house anymore.*

(00:59:10 – 00:59:38)

In this exchange, we can see that the trauma caused by the Partition of India has not vanished from people's mind. In addition to this, the mass migration and killings between Hindus and Muslims have caused long-lasting wounds that have not yet healed.

Generalizing people due to the historical events is very common societies and it's often used to depict someone in a negative manner. In this case, we see Rasika's father who accepted Shahida before he had known her origin. As soon as he finds out where she comes from, he states that he can't look at her anymore, despite the fact that she was not personally involved in the Partition violence.

To summarize this chapter, the differences between Pakistanis and Indians that are shown mainly regard religion where Pakistan is exclusively characterized as Muslim and India is shown to be primarily Hindu. On one hand, the film shows Bajrangi who is caught between the differences of two countries, and on the other, Shahida (a child), does not make any distinctions between herself and Bajrangi. Overall, the stereotypical depictions of Pakistan and India are shown through satirical commentaries where the protagonists make the situation relaxed and friendly for audiences of both countries. Compared to *Veer Zaara*, this film mainly depicts the differences between two countries, and through these differences, the film points out that love crosses all borders and boundaries whether they be physical, religious, etc.

4.2.2. Border Crossing

The depiction of Indo- Pakistan borders in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, appear more often than in *Veer Zaara*. In this film, the main locations which depict borders are the Attari train station, borders around Rajasthan and Thajwas glacier, and near the Line of Control. Ultimately, these places depict the borders and border features between India and Pakistan.

Before discussing the portrayal of physical borders further, this article will make the same references to the inner boundaries shown in the film. As discussed previously, Bajrangi crosses boundary lines throughout the entire film. For example, every time that he must step into a mosque, the audience can feel his inner struggle. Additionally, he has grown up in a traditional Hindu family, where his father was a member of RSS. The father of his wife-to-be, Rasika is also a strict Hindu practitioner who doesn't want anyone in his home except for Brahmins. This internal (and external) conflict comes to head when the only one solution to finding Shahida's parents is for Bajrangi to enter Hazrat Amin Shah's shrine. While there, Nawab tells him that he didn't want to go with him because he turns pale every time when he sees a shrine or a mosque. However, Bajrangi breaks these barriers and tells him (Nawab) that he is willing to go to any shrine for Shahida (01:57:40 - 01:58:12). His love toward Shahida makes him cross his own boundaries of tradition and religion and prepares him to help Shahida under every condition.



Fig. 12: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Bajrangi entering the Muslim shrine (02:00:05)

Figure 12 shows Bajrangi's steps toward a Muslim shrine. Bajrangi's shoe is the focal point of the shot, highlighting the importance and difficulty in Bajrangi's mind about the crossing of the boundary. Although the image shows Bajrangi's shoes, during the scene itself, he does not put his feet in the shrine because shoes are forbidden, but rather this depicts the front area of a shrine. In the background, a *ghazal* song in *qawwālī* can be heard. This is important because the important literary aspect of Urdu is *ghazal*, a literary form that has been used in Hindi cinema and Urdu literature's major genre (Dwyer, 2006:106). *Ghazal* is a performative genre, usually sung in *qawwālī* or semi-classic style *that consists* of simple, rhymed couplets

mostly about passionate and unrequited love that is full of misery and woe. “Love often overthrows the bounds of religion, the poet claiming that love has made him an unbeliever” (Dwyer, 2006:107). *Ghazal* is in Urdu language accompanied with a harmonium and a table and in other popular films, it highlights or summarizes the diegesis of the films narrative. Conversely, *Qawwālī* is distinguished by its rhythmic clapping and light melodies which often create a feeling of ecstasy in the audience (Dwyer, 2006:110). As Morcom states, “qawwālī is a devotional song form with a spiritual aim; however, film qawwālīs are mostly secular with truly devotional aims which are always present in film Hindu devotional songs (bhajans), absent” (Morcom, 2007:83). This is one of the most common features of invoking an Islamic atmosphere (Qureshi 1999:82). Most of the films that refer to the Hindu–Muslim relations include *qawwālī*, such as *Refugee* (2000), *Sarfarosh* (1999) or *Veer Zaara* (2004). In the film, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we can find several scenes where Bajrangi’s foot is in the focus of camera as it’s shown every time he manages to cross the boundaries of his religion and culture to help Shahida. In this case, he enters the Hazrat Amin shrine dressed like a Muslim with Shahida sitting on his shoulder seated between Muslims listening to the *qawwālī* music.



Fig. 13: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Shahida and Her Mother Entering India at Attari Train Station Border (00:08:52)

The first depiction of Attari train border is only shortly seen, but more than anything, the scene highlights remarkable features. Here, we get a very realistic image of a real border controls as we watch Shahida and her mother pass through the security check. An Indian woman scans them before entering the passport control. Compared to Shahida and her mother

who are dressed as typical Muslims with shawls covering their heads, this woman does not wear a shawl on her head. Behind them, a train from which Shahida and her mother exit is shown while a table with the inscription, “Attari Lahore” gives the information about the train route. On the left side, in the frontal shot covering almost the half of the image, we can see an Indian officer/policeman from behind, dressed in the army uniform, and standing/controlling the border that is crossed by passengers. The strict regulation of visa control at the border can be seen in the image above. The features that demarcate one border⁵¹ are clearly shown in this sequence. The issues surrounding the Indo-Pakistan borders such as the entry of possible terrorists, the trafficking of narcotics, fake Indian currency notes, and smugglers led to the creation of a “border security force (BSF) in 1965, the construction of fences along the border in the 1980s, the implementation of the Border Area Development Programme in 1987, and, more recently, the construction and operationalization of the integrated check post in Attari in 2012” (Das, 2014:312). The Government of India established an Integrated Check Post (ICP) which at the Attari border requires a vast of x-ray machines. Now, we can find two checkpoints through which trade and travel between India and Pakistan are allowed which are Attari (rail and road) in Punjab and Munabao (rail) in Rajasthan (Das, 2014:315).

In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, mother and the daughter are traveling with the rail connection Lahore-Delhi. The train between these two cities is called *Samjhauta Express*, which can be seen in the sequence before the picture above. After the Kargil war, the *Samjhauta Express* has been restarted in 2004, as a biweekly train between India and Pakistan (Das, 2014:311). Attari train station is in the Punjab state, near Amritsar which is only 3 km from the Wagah border.

Furthermore, the film shows the passport control of Shahida and her mother. Near the control station, a Sikh policeman with the turban on his head and a weapon in his hand looks at Shahida and they exchange a nice greeting with a smile. Aside from strict and serious border controls, this guest makes a positive and pleasant atmosphere at the border. On the way back to Pakistan, the train stops on the Indian side of the border where Shahida gets out from the train to save a lamb that has fallen in a pit. When her mother realizes that she is not on the train anymore, it's too late for her to get off. What the audience comes to realize in this moment she controls and requirements of a new visa to enter India are so strict that the mother was not able to go after her daughter.

⁵¹ This is explained in the chapter of “*Border and Borderland Studies*”. The borders are demarcated by fences, flags, walls or other landmarks.



Fig. 14: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Bajrangi and Shahida at Indo-Pakistan border in Rajasthan (01:20:07)

The next depiction of borders is shown in Rajasthan. The scenes that happen at the Rajasthan border crossing are filmed in the darkness, so audiences cannot clearly see on as pictured above in Figure 14. By using this night effect with the scenes at the border, the film transmits that what Bajrangi is doing is not legal, especially considering that he crosses the border by crawling under the tunnel with the help of an Indian man. Bajrangi is a devout of Hanuman, which is repeatedly shown in film and he doesn't want to cross the border on the sly. Because of this, he waits for the guards to come and to ask them for a permission since Pakistani guards usually ride on the camels patrolling the border every ten minutes. In Figure 14, we see Bajrangi and Shahida at the Rajasthan border on the Pakistani side. Next to them on the left side is a big iron border that skips through the whole image is standing with the spikes on the top of it. Bajrangi holds his hands folded and greets Pakistani soldiers with “*jay śrī rām*” and tells them his story. At first, they beat him and throw both Bajrangi and Shahida into the tunnel that brought them again on the Indian side of a border. However, Bajrangi does not give up and the second time the Pakistani soldier talks to him, he tells him that he has ten minutes to go either back to India or to Pakistan. The Pakistani guard gives up after the third attempt and lets them cross the border; this part is very naïve and childishly outplayed in my opinion. Bajrangi is here depicted very honestly. The way that he greets the Pakistani soldiers along with how he explains to them that he needs to find Shahida's parents, promising them that he will go back to India when he manages to do this. In this scene, he is portrayed as an innocent and stubborn child. The light and camera setting do not show the faces of the

policemen while they are dealing with Bajrangi, but when they show mercy toward the traveler in the end, their faces become visible for the audience. Here, one could say that through the light and camera positions the emotions and importance of the borders are put in front. The guards are on the one hand shown very human and moral, but on the other hand we can say that they do not take the law too seriously since they let Bajrangi and Shahida cross the border without any documents. Pakistani officers are shown in a bright light and aware of the situation, clearly not mistaking Bajrangi for an Indian spy. The trust they had in Bajrangi's story and courage to let him just walk away toward Pakistan is almost impossible. This is particularly true since the borders from the both sides are strictly guarded. This part is very utopian, but it does give some kind a positive influence on the audience and on the Pakistani officers, who are presented as not only the machines who are protecting the border but also as a human being with the understanding.

The border between India and Pakistan as shown above, is located north of Rajasthan astride the Thar Desert. This area is characterized by high dunes with extreme climatic conditions that results in a very thinly populated areas. There we can find some small villages located with great distances between each other. They do not have basic facilities, such as electricity, primary health care etc., and this absence of economic opportunities forced many of the villagers to indulge in activities such as trafficking of drugs to earn money (Das, 2014:308).

This border is not the official one, rather, it's used for smugglers to cross the border illegally. The official place for crossing the border in Rajasthan is Munabao – Khokhrapar (Singh, 2013:505). The closest major city from Munabao is Jodhpur, located circa 350 kilometers from Munabao. The city is connected to Kokhrapar (Sindh) by the weekly *Thar Express* train service. Passengers on the Indian side can board only at Bhagat Ki Kothi railway station close to Jodhpur, although there are other stops that include Barmer and Gadra. The train service, which is the primary link between Rajasthan and Sindh was resumed after a hiatus of over 40 years in 2006; this had been disrupted after the war in 1965 (Express India, 2006)⁵² Compared to other Indo–Pakistan borders, this one remained the most peaceful and it cannot be classified as a conflict zone (Singh, 2013: 505).

With his childish characteristics and good intentions, as Bajrangi would say with the help of Hanuman, he won the hearts of the Pakistanis officers and got the permission for the border crossing. It's important to note that this permission cannot be valued as a legal one since he

⁵² <http://expressindia.indianexpress.com/news/fullstory.php?newsid=63055>

had already crossed the border without the passport and without the visa. Nevertheless, there are other heroes, like here Bajrangi, “...who break the law and associate with villains but whose transgressions are always hedged with mitigating circumstances” (Thomas, 1995:172).



Fig. 15: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – Bajrangi Greets Pakistanis (02:24:51)

Figure 15 represents one of the last scenes in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. After the people from Pakistan opened the gate of the border to let Bajrangi free, he turns toward them and greets them with the Muslim greeting, *ādāb*. This not only represents him crossing a physical border, but also a psychological one. More importantly, the last scene shows the transfiguration of a character, or as Faulstich calls it, “eine persönlichkeitsmäßige Veränderung” (Faulstich, 2013:103). For the first time, we see Bajrangi pay his respects toward Pakistanis by greeting them in their own way. This picturesque scene presents Pakistanis making a path to India for Bajrangi. Bajrangi is standing in the middle, over him we can see a big Pakistani flag and Pakistani people in front of him typically dressed. By greeting the people with the *ādāb* he is paying a respect toward the Pakistanis and Pakistan as well. The police officers from the Pakistani side are not allowed to let Bajrangi cross the border, but they give people a clear sign that they won’t take any aggression toward them. This pushes the mass of Pakistanis to open the border gate by their own force. Bajrangi achieves a miracle of a different order. The people respect the boundaries, they stick firmly to their own side of the border. Guns on both sides have been spiked by the sheer force of his goodness. Soldiers and security officials stood aside, mute spectators to the tearing down of fences that separated hearts and minds. However, Bajrangi wouldn’t manage in Pakistan without the help of Chand Nawab. He was named after a real-life individual from Karachi whose continual botching of a mundane news

report made him a social media sensation some months back, becomes Bajrangi's principal advisor and strategist. He uses a social media as a weapon, mobilizing a massive outpouring of people power at the border to ensure that the human instinct prevails. In the last scene, Bajrangi becomes *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Bhaijaan is a term of respect for an older brother among Muslims. This term is used when Bajrangi enters Pakistan and returns Munni or Shahida to her parents. Salman Khan presents with his name both Muslims and Hindus (Dwyer, 2017:264). For the director it was not easy to fight for the title. In the interview, Kabir Khan says how the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) was against the title (Singh, 2015).⁵³ He explains that he fought for this title because It's a pity that the name Bajrangi is associated with Babu Bajrangi, and he wanted to bring the meaning of the name back what it stands for. He says that he didn't want the right - wing sentiments of Indian politics taking Bajrangi/-, Hanuman as their own. "Hanuman doesn't belong to only one community. Bajrangi is a symbol of our ethos. And the way the audience has taken to the film, it proves that he belongs to entire India".



Fig. 16: *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* – No Man's Land (02:29:19)

The last and the final scene, in which Shahida's first words are "*māmā, jay śrī rām*", Bajrangi heard it and before he crossed the Indian border, he turned back to greet her once more.

⁵³ <http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/salman-khan-bajrangi-bhaijaan-director-kabir-khan-hanuman-doesnt-belong-to-only-one-community/>

Both found each other between two borders and the river flowing by, in No Man's Land. On the left side we see the Indian flag and the border gate and on the right side the Pakistani flag and border gate to Pakistan. The theories of the borderland studies can be composed in this image. As we have seen in the chapter "Border and Borderland studies" the borders are not only here to separate two states, but they are used for the connection between two states as well. It can be said that they open a new kind of conversation between the states of India and Pakistan. The message that this image transmits is that through love we can break all borders and boundaries and the communication can be found in a nice and peaceful way.

When we look altogether at the film and its presentation of the border, we can see that the film is played around the area "which were only separated in 1947, showing a mobility that is difficult for ordinary people today, who now need passports and visas" (Dwyer, 2017:267). The place of the border depicted here is in Thajwas Glacier near Sonmarg (Singh, 2015)⁵⁴, and the Line of Control.

The territory of Kashmir is divided by India and Pakistan. The territory controlled by India is known under the state of Jammu and Kashmir and comprised three divisions – Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh, whereas the territory under the control of Pakistan are AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. "For a number of people living in these territories, the LoC is the agent of division (for divided families) and the object of transgression (for militants and nationalists on either side)" (Bouzas, 2015:6). The state of Jammu and Kashmir is highly militarized space, in order to protect the Indo – Pakistan border and to monitor the people within. This border has to deal with the constant cross- border firing.

When we look at the borders depicted in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, one can say that they are heavily guarded, and the issues of visa and passport controls are better highlighted and more emphasized than in *Veer Zaara*. Despite the border guards, I would say that the way of crossing the border by Bajrangi was rather utopic – the border crossing at Rajasthan and the ending scene of the border crossing when the people from Pakistan opened the gate and made a path toward India for Bajrangi. The theory of Borderland studies that explains that the borders are used as the communication between the two countries and not only as the mark of separation, is reflected in the last scene. Standing in the middle of the No Man's Land, the borderland addresses the socio and cultural space that is created and exist as a possibility that

⁵⁴ Here I would like to note that the film has a mistake. In the monologue of Chand Nawab where he calls the people to come to the border, he says Narowal checkpoint. The Narowal is a place in Pakistani part of Punjab, near the Punjab border, but the picture they show in film is Kashmir, near the Line of Control.

<https://www.edumovlive.com/7-stupid-mistakes-in-salman-khans-bajrangi-bhaijaan-movie/>

can encapsulate the pleasure, pains and politics residing near and sometimes crossing, and at other times wanting to cross, actual borders (Dudrah, 2012:23).

4.2.3. A Message for Peace

Bajrangi Bhaijaan carries a message for peace between two countries. As Veer did it in *Veer Zaara*, with his monologue at the Pakistani court, here a Pakistani journalist Chand Nawab invites people of both sides, India and Pakistan, to unite and stop the hatred between the countries. Before I analyze the monologue of Chand Nawab, it's important to get to the scene, where Bajrangi is demonstrated to be innocent and the reactions of the Pakistani policemen surrounding him.

When the police officer verified the story of Bajrangi being innocent, he called his boss and informed him about it. The boss however says said the decision of who is an innocent and who is not, is not his job, rather he should manage to make Bajrangi confess that he is a spy. Here we see how the higher state positions are negatively portrayed and support the tensions between these two countries. However, the policeman decides on his own that if he has all his life worked toward the glory and protection of his country, to let this man (Bajrangi) in the Pakistani jail for the rest of his life will be against the glory of the country Pakistan (02:16:43 – 02:17:11). The policeman decides to act righteously, seeking the truth against the higher order of his supervisor. By emphasizing that holding Bajrangi in the jail would be against the glory of his country, the director shows how there are many other Pakistanis that do care about other people regardless their nationalities. The respect toward the country and respect for justice, honesty and principles are one of the important aspects of a 'good' character. As Thomas describes it, "The thrust of these values is to construct a world in which selfish desire and individualism are overruled by emotional bonds and generosity of spirit (heart, dil), but both are overruled by social duties and strictures" (Thomas, 1995:165). Pakistanis who do care for the honor of their country are not the ones that distinguish between Hindus and Muslims or Indians and Pakistanis, but rather those who are fighting for the truth, regardless the religion and nationality.

Furthermore, while Bajrangi was imprisoned, Chand Nawab made a *You-tube* (Singh, 2015)⁵⁵ video pleasing the people from both countries to come near the border and help Bajrangi to cross the border without any issues.

Nawab: ...एक ऐसा हिन्दुस्तानी जिसने अपने जान को खतरे में डालकर एक बच्ची को अपने माँ बाप से यहाँ पाकिस्तान में मिलवाने का जिम्मा उठाया। आखिर बजरंगी ने ये सब क्यों किया? दौलत के लिए शोहरत के लिए शानो - शौकत के लिए? नहीं, बजरंगी ने यह सब अपने सच्चे और अच्छे दिल से किया। इसलिए क्या है बजरंगी ने एक पाकिस्तानी शाहिदा को हिन्दुस्तानी नहीं बल्कि इंसानी नज़रों से एक मुहब्बत भरे दिल से देखा ...पर अफ़सोस खुदा का यह बन्दा भी दोनों मुल्कों की नफरत के बीच फंस कर रह गया और आज इस नफरत ने बजरंगी को मुजरिम की तरह पाकिस्तान में छुप कर रहने पर मजबूर कर दिया, बस अब इस नफरत को ख़त्म करो और ये काम हमें करना दोनों मुल्कों के हज़ारों करोड़ लोगों को जो अपने बच्चों को नफरत से नहीं बल्कि प्यार से पालना चाहते हैं। तो चलिए हम सब मिलकर इस नफरत को ख़त्म कर दें।

.... (Bajrangi) is an Indian who put his life in danger to reunite a small child with her parents in Pakistan. After all, why did Bajrangi do such thing? For money, fame...No! Bajrangi did this because he has a clean and honest heart. He did it because, he didn't see Shahida as a Pakistani, but as another human being. But unfortunately, this god-sent is stuck amidst the hatred between the two countries. And today, this hatred has forced Bajrangi to hide like a criminal in Pakistan. Let's end this hatred now. And we need to do this. We the people of both the countries who want to raise our children with love, not hatred. So come, let's finish this hatred.

(02:18:16 – 02:19:12)

This monologue, or rather an inspirational speech from Nawab for Pakistanis as well as for Indians to come to the border, carries an important message of peace. “*Let us just cut all this hatred between two countries and raise our children with love*”. He emphasizes the complex relation between India and Pakistan and calls the people to join together and end up this hatred. It gives a message that the people in India and Pakistan do not make any issues on the differences between the two neighboring states, but rather that the governments of the states have their hands in it and if they unite they can be stronger.

⁵⁵ The *you – tube* channel is banned in Pakistan, this fact is one of the few ‘mistakes’ in film.
<https://www.edumovlive.com/7-stupid-mistakes-in-salman-khans-bajrangi-bhaijaan-movie/>

The film *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* stands out amongst many Indo – Pakistan films that have been made, because of its humorous way of dealing with the Hindu – Muslim, Indo – Pakistan issues and it stays away from the usual jingoism. We can say that the film is a mix genre, as many other Hindi films, nevertheless the comedy genre would be the one that is accentuated in this film. I would say that it opens a “new era” of comedy dealing with the Indo – Pakistan conflict. As we have seen above in the chapter “*Indo – Pakistan relations in the Hindi cinema*”, the comedy genre on this topic has not been made, probably because of the sensitive relations between India and Pakistan. The film has been welcomed in Pakistan as well. Since the director feared that the film could be objected in Pakistan, two Muslims has been taken for the deliberation of a film (Rao, 2015).⁵⁶ *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* reminds that India and Pakistan share geographical and cultural closeness rather than saying that they are the same. The film plays with the Hindu nationalism and prompt it to change its perspectives. The hero, Bajrangi is the one that presents the ideology of Hindutva that might want in real life to ban anything that is Pakistani. This we have seen in 2016 in October when “The Indian Motion Picture Producers’ Association banned Pakistani actors, singers and technicians from working on Indian films” (The Guardian, 2016).⁵⁷ The same did Pakistan. Pakistan banned all Indian TV, radio and Bollywood films, although the ban ended very soon in December. This was all due to the tense relations of India and Pakistan in the Kashmir Province. In September 2016, there was an attack on an army base in Uri, Indian – administered Kashmir, 18 soldiers died (BBC News, 2016).⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Bajrangi, humanized, with the help of his Pakistani friends the right – wing in India. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* draws attention toward the need to respect each other’s religious and cultural norms and defeats all stereotypes. While doing so, it does not humiliate Pakistanis, but rather mocks the main Hindu character Bajrangi, which is one of the reasons the film was popularly received in Pakistan and encourages the people to pursue good diplomatic relations between the countries.

⁵⁶ <http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/censor-panel-with-2-muslims-clears-bajrangi-bhaijaan-with-5-cuts/99/print/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/sep/30/indian-film-producers-motion-pictures-association-imppa-ban-pakistani-actors-crew-kashmir-crisis-escalates>

⁵⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38352847>

5. Comparison of the Films

In this chapter, I wish to turn my attention to the comparison of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Here, the sequences and aspects of Indo–Pakistan relations that have been separately analyzed for each film, will be compared in this chapter.

Given that there is an eleven-year gap between the releases of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, political circumstances between India and Pakistan have changed. When we look at certain aspects of Indo–Pakistan relations (Hindu-Muslim relations, border-crossing) depicted in *Veer Zaara*, and in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we can see how these films deal with the differences. I suggest that these differences depicted are partly influenced by a real political situation between India and Pakistan.

Through the comparison of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we can see that both films represent the same aspects of Indo–Pakistan relations in their own way. The biggest difference is the humorous way of dealing with the aspects of Indo–Pakistan relations in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, which cannot be found in *Veer Zaara*. *Veer Zaara* plays with dramatic romantic emotions, it can be categorized in the genre of melodrama. I would say that *Veer Zaara* was done very carefully as to not cause any ill-will whereas *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was made using irony and humor allowing it to be listed under the comedy genre. The transformation of the main character to a liberal, accepting person is shown with humor. This has not yet been shown in films. The reason for this could be that the relations between India and Pakistan are not any more directly associated with the traumatic events of the Partition. Instead, it's focused on a Hindu–Muslim difference and on what lines conflicts arise in daily lives and how people deal with them.

As previously stated in the analysis of the films with a portrayal of the differences and similarities between India and Pakistan, I wish to first compare the aspects of colors, clothing, languages, and religion are expressed in *Veer Zaara*, and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* as distinguished features between India and Pakistan. In *Veer Zaara*, we are introduced to Pakistan mostly in dark toned colors. Part of the film takes place in Pakistan and occurs mainly in closed places including the court or the prison. Pakistan is also associated with darkness such as when we see Veer sitting in his dark cell or in the house of Zaara's family where Zaara's father is dressed in a black traditional Muslim dress, performing *namāz*. In contrast, India is portrayed as colorful, shiny, and cheerful. A beautiful landscape of Punjab with the greenish and yellowish fields, women in various colored saris running through the fields and the cheerful song *Aisa Desh Hai Mera* present the Indian part of Punjab. We can see a similar depiction of India in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, as well. Joyful boys masked as the Hanuman–deity run around

accompanied by the song *Selfie Le –le-le*. The depiction of Pakistan in *Bajrangi Baijaan* differs from the one in *Veer Zaara*, as we can see the beautiful nature of the Pakistani part of Kashmir with mountains and forests surrounding the place where Shahida comes from. We also see people dressed traditionally and sitting together while talking or watching a cricket match between India and Pakistan.

Visual presentation of Indians and Pakistani are further reflected through clothing. For example, the depiction of Pakistani clothing is the same in both films, i.e., Muslim men wearing mostly beards, a cap, and their traditional, monochromatic dress, and Muslim women wearing *burkā* or shawl over their heads. In contrast, Indian women are shown wearing colorful saris, Punjabis, and *dupattā*. To some extent, we can say that their religious affiliation is defined through clothing. India is depicted as a Hindu country and Pakistan as a Muslim country.

Regarding language, we come across Hindi and Urdu in both films. In *Veer Zaara*, we hear from Veer's uncle an interplay of the Hindi and Punjabi language. Conversely, Veer speaks mainly pure Hindi while Zaara and her family speak Urdu. In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, people from India are speak Hindi, but as soon as Bajrangi crosses the Indo–Pakistan border, we can hear Urdu. Since both languages are very similar to each other, this does not create any inherent misunderstandings between Indians and Pakistani; rather, it serves the purpose to depict a distinction between the languages used by the people of India and Pakistan.

Furthermore, the differences between India and Pakistan are depicted through the religion of the countries. In *Veer Zaara*, no conflict between the protagonists is depicted because the main protagonists, Veer and Zaara, do not have any issues with each other's nationality and religion. However, Zaara's father cannot accept Zaara marrying someone from India and Zaara's fiancé orchestrated an intrigue that imprisoned Veer for 22 years since the Pakistani state failed to prove Veer's identity. Ultimately, this is cleared by the Pakistani lawyer Saamiya who gets involved in the case and engaged for Veer.

In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, the differences between Hinduism and Islam creates a problem for Bajrangi. Throughout the film, he is scared that his religious faith will become tainted, or impure if he steps into a mosque, but through Chand Nawab, Shahida, and Maulana, Bajrangi learns how to overcome his prejudices and fears toward Islam. Here, Pakistani people are presented rather positively, friendly, and open-minded compared to Bajrangi who learns how to accept other religions and communities from Pakistanis. In contrast, in *Veer Zaara*, the open-mindedness comes from Veer and his family while the more conservative, restricted opinions of the other is concentrated on Zaara's family. As stated previously, however, in

Bajrangi Bhaijaan, it's the other way around. Bajrangi comes from the conservative family of Hindu-Nationalists, while Shahida comes from an Indian-friendly family that even takes a trip to India to get their daughter cured. However, as is the case in *Veer Zaara*, in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, it's the Pakistani people that mistrust Bajrangi and capture him, thinking that he might be an Indian spy. Nevertheless, Chand Nawab and the people from Pakistan that gathered at the border near the Line of Control, prove Bajrangi's identity freeing him.

One of the main takeaways of the analysis is that in both films, Pakistani governmental institutions inflict injustice toward Indian protagonists whereas the people of Pakistani, fight for truth and justice, eventually fixing the state's failure. It's because of them that both films end representing a positive view of Pakistani individuals to whom justice is more important than religion and nationality.

Ideals of justice and patriotism/honor are recurrent topics in both films even though the honor of Pakistan has been questioned in both films. In *Veer Zaara*, a lawyer named Zakhir says that the honor of Pakistan lies in the hands of the people who do not distinguish others by their religions and who do not rub salt in the wounds of bitter wars between India and Pakistan. Here, the lawyer wants to emphasize that the future of the both countries should lie in the hands of people that will work toward peaceful relations between India and Pakistan. In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we have Pakistani policeman who discover that Bajrangi is an innocent man although their boss wants them to beat Bajrangi up, forcing him to confess of being an Indian spy. Nevertheless, the policeman decides to free Bajrangi because following his boss' orders would have gone against the state's honor. On the other hand, there is no questioning of honor or justice of the Indian state as this is not a necessary plot-point in either film.

Moving on, I wish to turn my attention to the titles of the films which both build compounds of two names. *Veer Zaara* carries a name of Indian man and Pakistani woman. Veer represents a Sikh man originating from the Indian part of Punjab, whereas Zaara presents a Pakistani Muslim girl coming from the Pakistani part of Punjab. Another important thing to mention is that Veer- *vīr* in Hindi means a "hero". Therefore, we could say that through this name of a hero, Veer stands for a role model character in the film.

On the other hand, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* carries the name of the male protagonist Pawan Kumar, known as Bajrangi – the name of Hanuman and Bhaijaan that means the "elder brother", a term that is mainly used by Muslims. Bajrangi was named Bhaijaan by the Pakistanis at the end of the film after he showed newfound respect toward Pakistani by greeting them with *adaab*, prompting the people from Pakistan to cry out "*Bajrangi*

Bhaijaan". Regardless of who the names are, both titles build a compound of different names that transmit a message of the unity and understanding between India and Pakistan.

The conflict between Indians and Pakistani, as well as Hindus and Muslims depicted in the films traces its roots from the Partition of India. Although none of the films deal directly with the Partition of India, it's mentioned. Through the dialogue between Zaara and Bebe, in *Veer Zaara*, Bebe tells Zaara that she came with her grandfather to Pakistan after the Partition. The details of Bebe's story (whether she has been abducted during the Partition or she was in love with Zaara's grandfather and came with him to Pakistan), are unclear (Kumar & Nirmal, 2008:49). In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, after the father of Rasika discovers the identity of Shahida, states that he cannot tolerate Shahida in his home because the people of her country have brutally killed people from India. Through these scenes, we are introduced to the underlying hatred between the two countries. Although the Partition of India happened 71 years ago, the traumatic experiences along with the killing between Hindus and Muslims have left traces in people's minds; this has allowed tensions between Indians and Pakistanis and Hindus and Muslims to remain present today. Mukherjee shows through her residue of the Partition of India in the 21st century that every time when a religious conflict happens, the memories of the Partition of India are invoked. The violence against Sikhs in 1984, the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 or the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, all these events invoke a collective memory that goes back to Partition to look for a logical continuity in the history of hatred (Mukherjee, 2009:449-450).

The plots of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* present a cross-border love story between an Indian man and a Pakistani girl. In the case of *Veer Zaara*, a romantic love this takes the shape of a Sikh man and a Pakistani Muslim girl is depicted. During the lovers' separation of 22 years, they both remained loyal to each other. This is most notable when Veer does not reveal Zaara's name to save her honor, thus, leaving him imprisoned in a Pakistani jail. Once Zaara hears the news that Veer died in a bus accident, she goes to Veer's family in Punjab-India to take care of their village. Such cross-border relationships are often found in Bollywood films where the cliché story is followed by an Indian man falling in love with a Pakistani Muslim girl. To have this relationship reversed with an Indian-Hindu woman and a Pakistani Muslim male, is almost impossible to find in the love stories of Bollywood films.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ There are some exceptions, for example the film PK (2014, dir. Rajkumar Hirani) shows a love relation between an Indian woman and a Pakistani man, but their relation is not the main subject of the film, but rather a

Given that Bollywood films are produced for predominantly Hindu audiences, Kumar claims that the Indian audience would not be able to accept a story in which “*the Pakistani – Muslim man sexually annexes an Indian woman.*” (Bharat & Kumar, 2008:131). Furthermore, Hussein and Hussain claim that “*Bollywood tactically adopts ‘good Muslim women’ as a discursive troupe to reinforce the Hindu supremacist discourse that ‘Hindu men’ are the protectors of the Muslim women from the ‘bad Muslim’ men*” (Hussein & Hussain, 2015:300). This is also the case of *Veer Zaara*, Veer comes to Zaara’s wedding to save her from the political marriage arranged by her father; this action plays into the trope that Hindu/Sikh men are the rescuers of Pakistani’s women. As Das explains it that through such presentations of a Muslim women, Bollywood helps to maintain a communalized, Hindu patriarchal structure among genders, between Hindu–Muslim communities in India and between India and Pakistan as nations (Das, 2006:373).

In contrast, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* depicts the love for a small Pakistani girl Shahida. Although we have the same scheme of characters, and Indian man and a Pakistani girl, the love relationship is different and can be defined as an uncle–niece love. A Hindu man, known as Bajrangi, tries to find the parents of a lost Pakistani mute girl Shahida. In *Veer Zaara*, we have a separation and suffering of the lovers, whereas *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows a separation of parents from their child. Here the separation brought a positive side of the story, namely the change of a main protagonist Bajrangi through his parental love toward a small child. It’s a love that united not only two protagonists as in romantic love stories, on a larger scale, it united India and Pakistan as is depicted in the last scene at the border, where we see Indian and Pakistani people gathered at the border through the mutual understanding of parenthood and the factor of bringing up children.

Through the love of Veer and Zaara, the film is more concentrated on the Punjabi oneness rather than on the difference. Through the popular music, *Aisa Desh Hai Mera*, this idea of oneness is directly highlighted and refers to the similarities between two countries. Here the focus lies on the similarities, especially similarities of both partitioned Punjab Provinces. When we look on both films It’s possible to conclude that *Veer Zaara* emphasizes the similarities of the two countries while *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* emphasizes the differences. Nevertheless, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows that there are differences that should be respected by

passing story that is mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the film and the main story is about an alien who tries to solve the Hindu – Muslim relation in contemporary India.

both sides and should not create any barrier in the relations and communications between India and Pakistan.

The plots of both films develop further with a religious traveling across the borders. In both cases, we have a religious traveling from Pakistan to India. In the case of *Veer Zaara*, a female protagonist Zaara travels to India, Kirtipur - Sikh holy place, to immerse the ashes of her Bebe in the holy river. On the other hand, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, the mother of Shahida travels to a Muslim mosque in Delhi. Historically, both religions, Sikhs and Muslims have been devastated during the Partition, their holy places can be find in Pakistan and in India. In *Veer Zaara*, the focus is mainly on Sikhs, whereas *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* concentrates on Muslim society. Pakistan is a state with a Muslim majority of people, nevertheless in India the minority group consists of Muslims and we can find many mosques across India. In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, we see that Pakistan has very famous mosques (Hazrat Amin Shah), but the mother travels with her daughter to Delhi's famous mosque. This interconnection of religious places between the two countries is shown in both films. One can interpret that the films show religion as not making any differences between India and Pakistan. Religion does not recognize any borders. Instead, it shows a way of communication and interaction with the neighboring countries.

Borders and border-crossing is presented in both films. In *Veer Zaara*, the physical depiction of a border is shown only twice – once at the Attari train station and again at the Wagah border. Nevertheless, *Veer Zaara* plays more with sound and narrative as ways to express the border crossing. For example, the film is crossing the border several times while Veer is narrating his story from a Pakistani prison. The flash backs of Veer's memory take us from Pakistan to India throughout the film. A physical presentation of the Attari border at the train station or at the Wagah border, does not depict any kind of administrative control at the borders. We cannot see any visa or passport control and it has not been mentioned in any dialogue. The border-crossing in *Veer Zaara* is presented as a pleasure and as a possibility of crossing without any problems. This depiction of easy border-crossing may be influenced by the relations of India and Pakistan during the film release. In 2003 the bilateral interactions between India and Pakistan were growing. A number of train and bus services reopened to increase people-to-people contact. Delhi–Lahore bus services were stopped in 1999 in the wake of the Kargil war and were resumed in 2003. In 2004, the biweekly Samjhauta Express from Delhi to Lahore was reestablished. The rail link between Munabao (Rajasthan) and Khokhrapar (Sindh) was revived and the weekly Thar Express restarted in July 2006. In the

same year, two more bus services from Amritsar to Lahore and Nankana Sahib in Pakistan were inaugurated (Das, 2014: 311/312). This bilateral interaction during 2003 and 2004 opened a door for a more possibilities to travel across the border.

On the other hand, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* offers a different border depiction. Here, not only is the Attari train station featured, but compared to *Veer Zaara*, a strict border control of passports, visas and security scan controls are shown. Another depiction of a physical border is in Rajasthan which features a high iron border with the spike wire is depicted between the states of India and Pakistan in Rajasthan. The soldiers who patrol the borders pass with the camels. This is different than *Veer Zaara* since such soldiers or officers could not be seen in the films depiction of the border. Nevertheless, Bajrangi wanted permission from the Pakistani soldiers before crossing the border, which he got in the end. Although he didn't have a visa or a passport, the soldiers let him go due to his promise that he will return back to India as soon as he finds the parents of Shahida. The issue of visa and border-crossing is mentioned several times in the film. At the beginning of the film when Shahida's parents are talking about going to the famous Muslim mosque in Delhi, the visa issue occurs. The last representation of the physical border is a border near the Line of Control. Here, we can see also see clear physical separation of the two states, India and Pakistan, by a big iron border patrolled by the army. Bajrangi didn't have a problem of crossing this border since the Pakistani soldiers let the people from Pakistan open the border gates and make a path for Bajrangi.

The ending scenes of both films are very similar as they both feature some sort of border crossing. The main characters, Veer and Bajrangi are able to go back to their homeland India by foot. We can see Veer and Zaara hugging at the Indian side of the Wagah border, on the other hand we can see Bajrangi and Shahida in the No Man's Land on the one side is a border of India and In contrast, the Pakistani border. These ending scenes confirm the theories of the Borderland studies that borders do not only separate two states physically but serve also as platforms for communication between India and Pakistan socially and mentally.

We can see a clear distinction in the physical presentation of the borders and visa controls between *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Furthermore, in both films we can distinguish between physical borders, that have been compared above and the inner boundaries that are shown in the protagonists' actions and feelings. In *Veer Zaara*, we do not have many examples of the inner boundaries by the protagonists as in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, however, in a scene at the Attari train station when Veer confesses his love for Zaara, Zaara remains silent. Although she feels the same way that Veer does, she is not able to voice her feelings. The entire scene occurs at the border between India and Pakistan and Zaara stays ripped between

her fiancé and Veer, between her own and a different culture and religion. Here she can't break the boundaries and tell openly how she feels for Veer.

These inner boundaries can be seen mostly in the actions of Bajrangi. For example, we can watch Bajrangi transforming and crossing throughout the film every time a new cultural and religious barrier comes up. Since Bajrangi was raised by a strict Hindu religious father, he grew up with some prejudices toward Muslims. He couldn't go to a mosque because of the fear that his faith will be polluted by having contact with other religious places or people. Nevertheless, because of his love for Shahida, he manages to break through his inner boundaries. In the end, we can see him greeting Pakistani with *ādāb* greeting. Here, one can say that he understood that by respecting other religions, it does not mean that he will become impure of his own as he was of the opinion in the beginning of the film.

Bajrangi's character is strongly influenced by the ideology of Hindu nationalists like his father was. Bajrangi's behavior depicts a stereotypical behavior of a strict Hindu religious person, who is afraid of contact with other different religious groups, in this case with Muslims, because he wants to save his purity. This has been seen in many examples such as when Bajrangi must step into a mosque and behaved as if he had seen a ghost. Another example would be that when he found out that Shahida is eating meat he even didn't want to seat near her at the beginning. Such actions are often subscribed to the extreme Hindu religious people who are influenced by the ideologies of the nationalist organizations, such as RSS and parties, such as BJP. These kind of inner boundaries presented in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* can be reflected by the current political situation in India. This is not a coincidence considering that *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was released in 2015 when discussion on intolerance in India were raised in the media. The discussions on intolerance arose due to the elections of new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and the triumph of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 who won most of the seats in the parliament. The returning of literary prizes from the Indian writers, a beef ban in the state of Maharashtra, and the lynching of a Muslim by a mob in Dadri were the main topics on the increasing intolerance in India during the term of office of the BJP and Narendra Modi (Devichand, 2015)⁶⁰. As a right-wing party, the BJP is one of the two major political parties in India along with the Indian National Congress and it has a variable relationship with the RSS (Malik & Singh, 1992:318). The party's ideology expresses commitment to Hindutva along with its policy is historically reflected by Hindu nationalist positions. Hindutva stresses the political, cultural and religious supremacy of the

⁶⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-34553015>

Hindus by defining Hindus as those for whom India is the land of their ancestors and the birthplace of their religion (Lyon, 2008: 75). Through this notion, Hindutva tends to leave Muslims as the aliens who must respect the rules of the Hindu majority if they wish to remain in India. I would suggest that this kind of the character presentation by the director Kabir Khan may be interpreted as a self – criticism on the events in India that happened during the four years of BJP rule. However, the director presents the character of Bajrangi in a humorous way not intending to hurt the feelings of the audience.

Regarding the Indo-Pakistan borders, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows heavily guarded borders between India and Pakistan. The last scene in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows how Pakistani can show respect toward the borders between India and Pakistan. As the border guards make a room for the people of Pakistan to open the border gate they did not cross the lines or stepped over them further. When we look at the Indo–Pakistan relations during the rule of Narendra Modi, we can see that the relations between Narendra Modi and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif improved positively. Modi started his term with the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to his inauguration (Chaudhuri, 2016).⁶¹ As a positive signal for peaceful Indo-Pakistan relations, was also seen the invitation of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif 2015 for Narendra Modi on his birthday and the wedding of his granddaughter. Although we can say that both acted on good terms, the situation between India and Pakistan turned around. In January 2016, the Indian air force was attacked in Pathankot and in September 2016, Pakistani terrorists killed 18 soldiers in an Indian army base in Kashmir's city of Uri. Afterwards, the Indian army carried out 'surgical strikes' to destroy terror launch pads across the Line of Control in Pakistan. The tense border in Jammu and Kashmir continued further.

One of the most important aspects is the message of the films, specifically in that both along for peace between India and Pakistan. For example, Veer gives a monologue which explains how Indians and Pakistani people share the same culture, customs, and land (the separated Punjab provinces). The unity of the Punjab Provinces and the similarities between the people is highlighted in Veer's monologue. His monologue shows that people can overcome the states' political problems, gain respect and love for each other regardless their differences. In Chand Nawab's case, he's able to use the internet and social media to spread his message whereas Veer stands in front of a Pakistani court. We can say that through YouTube, the film

⁶¹ See e.g. Rahul Roy-Chaudhuri, 'India's polarized election campaign', *IISS Voices*, 13 May 2014.

depicts the importance and influence of media and public fora in both countries. Through this, he managed to set the people of both countries in motion.

I would say that both films present Pakistan as a country in which the people fight for justice, regardless the religion and nationality. The government and the state politics are the ones that create difficulties. It's not the ordinary man that brings the country to war. As a shopkeeper said in an interview with Menon, "*We have not quarrel with each other, It's the governments that perpetrate the divide*" (Menon, 2003:123). A friendly and peaceful relationship between India and Pakistan is transmitted in both films. *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* can both be characterized as films that are transmitting a peaceful solution in the Indo–Pakistan relations.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion serves to once again state the main topic of this thesis and answer the questions that are based on the analysis of *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Before answering the research question, I will attend to my sub-questions regarding the film examples.

How are the borders between India and Pakistan, their cultures and religions shown and which similarities between both countries are presented?

Veer Zaara and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* both depict physical borders between India and Pakistan as well as borders between the cultures and religions of Indians and Pakistanis. The Attari train station border, Wagah border, Indo-Pakistan border in the region of Rajasthan, and the Line of Control are the main physical borders depicted in films. For instance, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* highlights the features of the strict border control, such as security checks, border officers, etc. however, *Veer Zaara* does not depict such control. Despite the borders lack of control in *Veer Zaara*, the film shows that the borders are strictly controlled and that there are illegal ways of crossing the border without visa as Bajrangi did.

The differences in cultures of India and Pakistan are reflected in the religion. Pakistan is depicted as a country of Muslims and India of Hindus. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* illustrates the evolution of Bajrangi dealing with the differences between Indians and Pakistani that is reflected in their clothing, meals (Pakistani are not vegetarians as Bajrangi is), language-Hindi and Urdu, and religion. In both films, viewers encounter language differences that do not necessarily create misunderstandings in the conversations, but are rather shown as one of the distinguish features between India and Pakistan. On the other hand, religion is shown as the main disparity between the people of the two countries as the religious traveling in both films emphasizes the similarities of the people of the two countries. Overall, I would say that *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* emphasizes the differences while *Veer Zaara* highlights the similarities between India and Pakistan. However, both films express that the ordinary people in India and Pakistan are rather similar and do not have any problems with each other, but the governments of both countries are responsible for initiating hatred and tense relations between India and Pakistan. Both films ultimately present the idea that the distinguishing features between India and Pakistan, while visible, should be acknowledged and not disrespected.

As we can see in the chapter, “Cultural Studies and Film”, films are regarded as tools to highlight similarities and differences between people. Films play with stereotypes, similarities and differences that are built up in a society and create idealization of a dream world.

How is Pakistan as a state presented in these films?

Overall, I would say that there are no direct indications of Pakistan being an enemy or a negatively presented state in either film. Since *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* were well received films not only in India, but in Pakistan as well, one could say that the depiction of Pakistan is very positive. This we can see in the online film critics, such as

[The] director wanted to please both Indians and Pakistanis. And they did...the sub-continental diaspora who make a large audience outside of India loved it more because it didn't have the jingoism one has seen lately in the post-Gadar movies which had caused many uncomfortable viewing. (Rashed, 2006)⁶²

Searching for film critics on *Veer Zaara* I found only critics from the Pakistani audience that Pakistani are depicted stereotypical in the film with the constant greeting of *ādāb*, that can be seen in both films and is not so common in Pakistan. The critique on the Urdu language can also be found in the online reviews as audiences criticized the usage of the words *janāb* and *bhaijān* saying that Urdu is much more than only these two words (Daily O, 2016)⁶³. Despite this, the film is mainly regarded as “a very intense, humane, and emotional story” (Gandhi, n.d.)⁶⁴

Bajrangi Bhaijaan was a great success for the Bollywood industry regarding the acceptance of the Pakistani audience. Among the vast of Indo-Pakistan films made in the past *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* got the review that it “stands amongst all of them because this film stays away from the usual jingoism and preachiness” (Bollywood Hungama News Network, 2016)⁶⁵ The positive perception of the film can be seen in the titles of the online newspapers such as

⁶² <http://bollywoodfilmcritic.blogspot.ch/2006/12/veer-zaara-beautiful-romance-across.html>.

⁶³ <https://www.dailyo.in/variety/pakistani-bollywood-fan-open-letter-bajrangi-bhaijaan-salman-khan-veer-zaara-srk/story/1/12756.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.planetbollywood.com/displayReview.php?id=041806060755>

⁶⁵ <http://www.bollywoodhungama.com/movie/bajrangi-bhaijaan/critic-review/>

“*Bajrangi Bhaijaan fever hits Pakistan*” (DNA India, 2016)⁶⁶ or “*Bajrangi Bhaijaan fever in Pakistan: Record number of people leave cinema halls in tears* (Showsha, 2015)⁶⁷” As Indian Express article says, *Bajrangi* enjoyed a decent run over one week in Pakistan.

However, when we look closely into the films’ plot, we can see that the problems which arise are initially created by Pakistan. In both films, the main protagonists are from the Pakistani state accused to be the Indian spies. However, in the honor of the state of Pakistan, the police officer Hamid Khan (Rajesh Sharma), rescues *Bajrangi* and a Pakistani lawyer Saamiya helps *Veer* to come out of the jail. There are some Pakistani in both films represented as being very friendly and ready to help *Bajrangi* and *Veer*. Pakistani are more positively presented as *Bajrangi* himself. It’s shown how *Bajrangi* learns from Pakistani to respect different cultures and religions. This character transformation of the main protagonist is not present in *Veer Zaara*.

Politicians or state officers do not play a role in the film. It’s the trivial people that play the heroes or villains in the scenarios. The contradiction between authorities and subjects is clearly seen in both films by the states’ accusations against *Veer* and *Bajrangi* being spies helped by the commoners who are the heroes saving the protagonists. Both films lay the emphasis on the people that create peace and love in the relations between the states whereas the states’ governments create tumult and hatred. The films show that the relation between India and Pakistan would have been good if the state would not interfere between the people.

When we look at older films on the Indo-Pakistan relations, we can see that Pakistan is mainly negatively presented. Not only Pakistan as a state is indicated as the enemy, but the people of Pakistan as well. Therefore, it was not unusual that the older films have been banned in Pakistan. Coming closer to the 21st century films, we see the difference in the portrayal of Pakistan, such as in *Veer Zaara*, and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. However, Pakistan is still portrayed as the state that makes a mistake toward the Indian protagonists and must make amends in the end of the films. The other way around, namely that India acting unjust toward Pakistani protagonists has not yet been depicted in any Bollywood film. Indian national pride in the Bollywood film industry has not yet allowed films of this kind, making India the wrong-doer.

⁶⁶<http://www.dnaindia.com/entertainment/report-bajrangi-bhaijaan-fever-hits-pakistan-2109200>

⁶⁷<http://www.firstpost.com/entertainment/bajrangi-bhaijaan-fever-in-pakistan-record-number-of-people-leave-cinema-halls-in-tears-2369654.html>

What kind of message on the Indo-Pakistan relation may Bollywood convey to the audience?

Most of Bollywood films show love as the all-conquering power which crosses all borders. For instance, the love between Veer and Zaara unites them as well as Bajrangi's love toward the girl helped him to unite her with her parents. Love can cross a religious barrier as shown in both films, as well as loosening the tension between both states. *Veer Zaara* depicts the oneness of the Province Punjab and shows the similarities between the two countries. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows the differences between India and Pakistan that has to be acknowledge and respected by both sides without any prejudices. In the end, both films lay emphasis on the fact that India and Pakistan were once one country and one nation. Although neither of the two films deals directly with the Partition event, Partition is regarded as the main reason for the hatred between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, we can say that *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* revive the memories of the Partition that builds the collective memory of the nations. As it's described in the chapter on "Partition collective memory", I would suggest that films in addition to the literature and personal experiences surrounding Partition survivors, can be considered as part of the collective memory. The hatred between the different religious groups, the nostalgia for the once-united country, the geographical closeness and similarities in the cultures, and all these aspects of the collective memory of the Partition are reflected in the films.

Especially important for conveying the message of peace and good bilateral relations are in both films the ending. The monologues of Veer and Chand Nawab emphasize the similarities, respect, and love between both nations.

The final scenes of the border crossings by the main protagonists interprets the borders not only as a lines that separate people, but lines that are offering an opportunity for the connections and relations between two nations as well. This interpretation of the borders traces its roots from the Borderland studies that are introduced in the theoretical part of this thesis.

As we have seen in the analysis of the films, the films share the same message – a hope for peaceful relations between India and Pakistan. We could also say that popular culture is shared to a certain extent. Zainab Akhter shows that culture, such as Bollywood, theater and songs can be an alternative medium for improving the people-to-people contact and peace building between the two countries (Akhter, 2016:207). "Culture has been a binding factor among the people of India and Pakistan outside the ambit of politics" (Akhter, 2016:226).

All in all, I would suggest that both films are transmitting a message for the positive and better relations between India and Pakistan.

Returning to the main research question: **To which extent has the form of the plot and the depiction of symbolic elements of the Indo-Pakistan relation changed in selected movies *Veer Zaara*, released 2004 and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, released 2015?**

Both films mirror the current political situations in the relationships and once they're changed in the film, the plots, the depictions, and the art which shows the relationships also changed. *Veer Zaara* was made by one of the most well-respected directors of Bollywood and it's a very classic plot, namely two people from different backgrounds fall in love despite their families' attitudes. The border is only symbolic. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* shows how much Bollywood grew in the depiction of the relation touching the topic through humor and overcoming prejudices. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* takes much more risk as does *Veer Zaara*, especially showing a Hindu nationalist, going thereby against the very conservative core of Hinduism and their interpretation of India as a Hindu nation. Given thereby the fact that *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was a huge box-office hit, it's possible to conclude that people in India are much more open-minded and critically reflecting on Hindu nationalism and the tensions between India and Pakistan.

Looking closely on the analysis of these films, we can find many similarities as well as differences in the depiction of Indo-Pakistan relations. As I have proposed a hypothesis on this question that a political situation during the releases on the films have an influence on the story and presentation of Indo-Pakistan relation, I would like to explain it as an appropriate hypothesis for this master's Thesis.

The gap of the two film release dates counts eleven years from 2004 when *Veer Zaara* was released till 2015 when *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* came out. The political situation during these eleven years has changed and thus, these changes can also be seen in the various aspects of the Indo-Pakistan presentation in both films. *Veer Zaara* was made during the time when the relations between India and Pakistan had calmed down and new bus lines were opened between these two countries. As I have already mentioned in the "Comparison of the films" section, Delhi-Lahore bus services were reopened in 2003. In 2004, the *Samjhauta Express* train from Delhi to Lahore was restarted and more bus services from Amritsar to Lahore were inaugurated. The film presents a border crossing without any references to visa or passport issues. Not even once we are introduced to the difficulties of traveling across the border, but

rather the film transmits a pleasure and easiness of border-crossing. Therefore, I would propose that due to the bilateral interactions during 2003, the film adopts this travel opportunities in its own audio and visual presentation. We can see that the relation between both countries improved during the release of *Veer Zaara*. Overall the film does not highlight the Hindu–Muslim conflicts, but rather, “constantly establishes universalities and cultural melding” (Hirji, 2008:66).

In contrast, by 2015, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* dealt with the border-crossing and Hindu-Muslim conflicts differently. The film has been released one year after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India and his party BJP won most of the parliamentary seats. The character of Pawan Chaturvedi aka. Bajrangi represents people raised in Hindu nationalist families. Bajrangi has grown up in a Hindu Brahmin caste family, raised by a father who was a member of RSS. Through this character Bollywood supposedly criticizes people following this kind of politics. Although Bajrangi is a very kind and good person, the prejudices toward the other religious groups are present in his character. His prejudices toward the other societies are depicted on a humorous level that is done in a very childish and naïve way to not bring up bad feelings. The Hindu nationalist atmosphere in India through the triumph of BJP is reflected in the character of Bajrangi. Nevertheless, the prejudices with which Bajrangi has grown up break down through the presence of an innocent Pakistani girl.

I would say that the producer, Kabir Khan, made the right move by taking an innocent girl that cannot speak as counterpart to Bajrangi rather than a romantic relationship to a Pakistani woman. For the audience It’s easier to understand the love toward a small girl than toward a woman. A love between an Indian man and a Pakistani woman became a cliché for the Indo-Pakistan topic. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* made a step out of this cliché and portrayed a platonic uncle-niece love relationship. This is what makes the film *Bajranig Bhaijaan* different than the other love relations in films on this topic. Still love is an important part of a plot, this might have been also because love is the easiest emotion with whom the audience can identified themselves with. However, I would suggest that through the love toward a small girl the film managed to unite both nations, Indians and Pakistanis, as we could see in the last scene at the border. Indians and Pakistani gathered at the Line of Control in order to support Bajrangi’s return to India. On the other hand, a romantic love relation, like in *Veer Zaara*, might probably not manage to unite the whole nation but only the two protagonists.

I would propose that films like *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* and *Veer Zaara* build bridges for the better relations between India and Pakistan. These films reflect the change in the Indian-Pakistani dynamics, but they do it through a deductive approach, highlighting an individual situation

and not the bigger picture of the states India and Pakistan. The obstacles of real politic are not so easy to overcome.

The other hypothesis that I proposed is that through a rather positive, or at the very least, neutral depiction of Pakistan, more love stories and comedies about the complex relation between India and Pakistan will be produces-, and Bollywood film industry will try to find more audience in Pakistan as well. According to Ganti, “the goals of Hindi filmmakers is to make a ‘super hit’ or a ‘universal hit’ film which appeals to everyone. Since a film must appeal widely, these audience categories operate more as boundaries, rather than niches for whom specific kinds of films are made” (Ganti, 2004:65). It’s important to note that Pakistan is the sixth largest market for Bollywood films. This would mean that Bollywood might have a direct financial reason for not making anti-Pakistan films anymore. Bollywood is much more aware of its responsibility toward the Pakistani audiences and wants to capture the special attention on the Indo-Pakistan relations though border-crossing love relationships. These changes of the presentation of Muslims resulted in a thaw between the Pakistani film board and Indian producers. The ban of Indian films which was introduced in 1965 was partially lifted in 2008. Up to 13 Indian films each year may now officially be shown in Pakistan. Of course there are illegally downloaded Indian DVDs available (Hartnack, 2010:10). It’s no longer embarrassing to sing Hindi film songs or imitate a dance scene from Bollywood movie. This we could see in a film *Filmistan* (dir. Nitin Kakkar, 2013). Since millions of Muslims are more and more among the viewers and fans of Bollywood films, a negative presentations of Muslims seems counterproductive and economically dysfunctional for Bollywood. Already from the earlier ages we can find many Muslim being involved in the production business until now. For example, the known actor, producer, and screenwriter Dilip Kumar born as Muhammad Yusuf Khan, a director Kabir Khan and Farhan Akhtar and most famous three Bollywood Khans: Amir, Shah Rukh and Salman Khan. Additionally, Muslim poet, Javed Akhtar, is still active and famous as the Bollywood film songwriters.

As previously mentioned in the “Introduction”, the presentation of the Partition and Indo-Pakistan relation appeared in the last 1990s on the cinematic screens. The Partition films and the films that depict the Indo-Pakistan relations can actually be put together to the same group of films. However, I would suggest that the topic of the Partition films is dealing directly with the Partition of India and depicts the situation during the Partition event. The Partition films shows the demarcation of the borders and the confusion of the people living around the borders, the escalation of Hindu and Muslim hatred that pushed Muslims out of India and they

had to migrate to Pakistan. Therefore, most of the Muslims in film directly connected to Pakistan whereas films on the Indo-Pakistan relations portrays the aftermath of the Partition, the development of the relations between India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims. In the context of the Partition films and Indo-Pakistan relations films introduced in the chapter “Indo-Pakistan relations in the Hindi cinema”, these two films are not dealing directly with the Partition event, but rather depict the aftermath situation of the Partition: Hindu and Muslim conflicts, Indo-Pakistan tense relations and the borders between the countries. A growth of various genres on the topic of the Indo-Pakistan relations can be recognized. Most films on this topic can be categorized in the melodrama genre with the cross-border romance. According to that *Veer Zaara* belongs to the category of drama and romance. However, in comparison to the other films from that category that depict the lover’s separation due to the Partition of India, *Veer Zara* is set after the Partition event and depicts Hindu-Muslim and Indian-Pakistani difficult relations caused by the event of the Partition. It has been done with the immense of carefulness not to hurt any feelings, as Chopra said: “Veer Zaara...it’s my tribute to the oneness of people on both sides of the border” (Gandhi, n.d.)⁶⁸ Chopra managed that *Veer Zaara* has been welcomed in Pakistan in comparison to the other Indian cross-border romance films that are forbidden.

Bajrangi Bhaijaan made a step forward and presented the Indo-Pakistan relations with humor; therefore, it’s categorized under the comedy genre. However, there are some comedy films on the Indo-Pakistan relations released before *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, such as *War Chhod Na Yaar* (dir. Faraz Haider, 2013) the first war-comedy and a romantic comedy *Total Siyapaa* (dir. Eeshwar Nivas, 2014). These films were not very-well received by the audience. As well as the film *Bangistan* (dir. Karan Anshuman, 2015) that came out the same year as *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Not long after *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, another comedy came out named *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* (dir. Mudassar Aziz, 2016) that as well as previous films wasn’t well received. As we can see, before *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, a few films on the Indo-Pakistan relations in the comedy genre has been released but were not well received. The reason for this is mainly because of a superficial development of characters and the stories. Director, Kabir Khan ended the negative reception with his story and message of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* that has been very well received in the box-offices of India and Pakistan. I would say that the comedy film on this topic should be done very carefully because some funny scenes in the relations of Hindus and

⁶⁸ <http://www.planetbollywood.com/displayReview.php?id=041806060755>.

Muslims can be taken very personally and not considered funny at all. Since *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* is mainly making fun of the main Hindu protagonist Bajrangi, there was no space for complain from the Muslim sides.

Both films have been officially shown in Pakistan, but after *Veer Zaara*, none of the films dealing with the Indo-Pakistan topic have been officially released in Pakistan until *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* came out. The director, Kabir Khan, already made a film on the Indo-Pakistan relation known as *Ek Tha Tiger*, but it was banned in Pakistan. Although the two films, *Veer Zaara* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* do differ from each other in many aspects, nevertheless, I would suggest that *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* is a “re-make” of *Veer Vaara*. A remake not plot wise regarding the star-crossed affair between the protagonists *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* mirrors the intentions of speaking to both Indians and Pakistani trying not to hurt feelings of Muslims or Pakistani. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* promotes as good and peaceful relations between the countries as *Veer Zara* does.

To summarize, both proposed hypotheses are appropriate for the answer on the research question. I would say that the political situation influences a depiction of some aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations in the films and these are depicted in a way that can be accepted by both Indians and Pakistanis due to the strive of the Bollywood industry for a wider audience in both countries. Today, films reflect the political situation in India, with a humorous and innovative art of making films about the relationship between India and Pakistan, presenting Pakistan in a peaceful light. I am of the opinion that it will still take some time before dramatic topics on the relations between India and Pakistan can be seen completely through a humorous light. It takes a lot of courage to ridicule oneself as well as one's own country by depicting neighbors positively in comparison. However, a lot of time has passed since the Partition and therefore comedies are becoming more convenient in the producer's eyes. The generations that survived the Partition of India are vanishing and the younger generations don't have as many deeply personal connections to the event. Therefore, the memories of the Partition event are changing through the time and its presentation on the cinematic screens as well. The conflicts between the countries originated from the Partition are shown not directly but indirectly and in the light of the new developments of the politics between India and Pakistan.

Thinking about the future of the Bollywood industry and its films on the Indo-Pakistan relations, one step forward for the comedy films would be for Bollywood to present a love

between an Indian woman and Pakistani man. However, given current politics, this may still be too much for the Indian audience.

Considering that this thesis was opened with a quote from the film *Henna*, it's only natural that it will close with one as well. In the film, on the one side of the river Jhelum a *paṇḍit*'s making *sūrya namaskār* and on the other side of the same river, a Muslim is making *namāz*. Just as the river provides a peaceful separation to freely practice their religions, so should humans allow one another to freely practice their own religion without consequences. As we have seen in *Veer Zaara*, and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, the governments of both countries create conflict out of the differences between India and Pakistan as well as Hindus and Muslims. What is most important to note, however, is that borders have been drawn by the people separating the state almost 71 years ago. These artificial boundaries are unlike natural ones including mountains, rivers, and fields which are all features that divide the lives of people from both countries and serve perfectly the human nature of differentiation. As it's said eloquently in *Henna*, "*This river (Jhelum) does not discriminate between people then why do humans create differences in their heart?*"

7. Appendix

7.1. Filmography

Bajrangi Bhaijaan (2015): Kabir Khan. Salman Khan Films, Rockline Venkatesh, Kabir Khan Films. India.

Bangistan (2015): Karan Anshuman. Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani. India.

Border (1997): J.P. Dutta. J. P. Films. India.

Dharmputra (1961): Yash Chopra. B.R. Films. India.

Earth 1947 (1988): Deepa Mehta. India

Fanaa (2006): Kunal Kohli. Yash Raj Films. India

Filmistan (2013): Nitin Kakkar. Shyam Shroff, Balkrishna Shroff, Subhash Chaudary, Shaila Tanna, Siddharth Roy Kapur. India.

Fiza (2000): Khalid Mohamed. Santosh Sivan. India

Gadar – Ek Prem Katha (2001): Anil Sharma. Zee Telefilms T-Series. India

Garam Hawa (1973): M.S. Sathyu. Ishan Arya. India

Happy Bhaag Jayegi (2016): Mudassair Aziz. Anand L. Rai, Krishika Lulla. India.

Henna (1991): Randhir Kapoor. R.K. Films Ltd. Digital Entertainment, Eros Entertainment, H.M.V. India.

Hey Ram (2000): Kamal Hasaan. Raaj Kamal Films. India.

Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973): Chetan Anand. Devgan Films. India

Khamosh Pani (2003): Sabiha Sumar. Vidhi Films. India

Lakshya (2004): Farhan Akhtar. Javed Akhtar. India

LOC-Kargil (2003): J.P. Dutta. J.P. Films. India

Main Hoon Na (2004): Farah Khan. Red Chillies Entertainment. India

Mammo (1994): Shyam Benegal. NFDC. India.

Mangal Pandey (2005): Ketan Mehta. Bobby Bedi (Kaleidoscope Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.). India.

Meghe Dhaka Tara (1960): Ritwik Ghatak. Chitrakalpa/Ritwik Ghatak. India.

Mission Kashmir (2000): Vidhu Vinod Chopra. Vinod Chopra Productions. India

Pinjar (2003): Chandra Parakash Dwivedi. Lucky Star Entertainment. India.

PK (2014): Rajkumari Hirani. Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films. Rajkumar Hirani Films. India.

Refugee (2000): J.P.Dutta. J.P. Films. India.

Roja (1992): Mani Ratnam. Kavithalayaa Productions Pyramid. India.

Sarfarosh (1999): John Mathew Matthan. Cinematt Pictures. India.

Subarnarekhka (1962): Ritwik Ghatak. J.J.Films. India.

Tamas (1987): Govind Nihalani. Blaze Entertainment. India.

Total Siyapaa (2014): Eeshwar Nivas. Neeraj Pandey, Shital Bhatia. India.

Veer Zaara (2004): Yash Chopra. Yashraj Films. India.

Waqt (1965): Yash Chopra. B.R. Chopra. India.

War Chhod Na Yaar (2013): Faraz Haider. India.

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8. Abstract: German

Die in dieser Masterarbeit behandelte Forschungsfrage ist: In welchem Ausmaß veränderte sich die Form, Handlung und Darstellung symbolischer Elemente der Indo-Pakistanischen Beziehungen in den ausgewählten Filmen *Veer Zaara*, erschienen 2004 und *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, erschienen 2015?

Die Unabhängigkeit Indiens resultierte in der Entstehung eines neuen Staates, Pakistan und in der Entstehung einer neuen Grenzlinie, welche bald zum Thema der Hindi-Filmindustrie wurde. Diese Masterarbeit behandelt die Aspekte der Grenzüberschreitung auf die Indo-Pakistanischen Beziehungen. Die ausgewählten Filme *Veer Zaara* (dir. Yash Chopra, 2004) und *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (dir. Kabir Khan, 2015) erkennen kulturelle und religiöse Unterschiede, welche Barrieren zwischen Indien und Pakistan schaffen an. Die Filme wurden im Gegensatz zu vielen anderen Hindi-Filmen in beiden Staaten akzeptiert.

Ausgewählte Fotos und Dialoge der Filme wurden mithilfe der Filmanalysenmethode und Borderland Studies behandelt. Mithilfe von Cultural Studies wurde die Wichtigkeit und Bedeutung der Filme analysiert.

Die politischen Umstände änderten sich innerhalb der 11 Jahre zwischen der Veröffentlichung von *Veer Zaara* und *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Dies ist an Veränderungen der Darstellung praktischer Aspekte, speziell Visa und Problematiken der Grenzüberschreitung erkennbar.

Weiteres wurde beobachtet, dass die Darstellung Indisch-Pakistanischer Beziehungen humorvoller und freundschaftlicher wurde, was zu einer erhöhten Popularität von *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* in Pakistan führte.